

GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC HISTORY INTERNSHIPS

The Internship Experience

The internship is a critically important experience in the training of a public historian. It provides an opportunity to apply skills and knowledge acquired in course work to an actual work setting, and to be evaluated by professional supervisory personnel. A successful and well-documented internship gives you a distinct advantage in the job market. The internship is defined by the Western Michigan University Career Education Council as a "specific career-related work experience, with direct supervision." It is distinct from what the Council recognizes as a work experience, volunteer experience, practicum, or other arrangement. Internships are regulated closely by the Department of History under Public History Coordinator, Dr. David Benac. The Department has internship arrangements with many museums, historical agencies, governmental units, and other organizations. WMU public history students have enjoyed internships at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum, the Fort Miami Heritage Society, WMU Archives and Regional History Collection, Mackinac State Historic Parks, USA, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, Michigan Historical Center, the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum, and many other institutions.

In planning and carrying out your internship, please consider the following:

- Introduction to Public History (HIST 3404) is a prerequisite for the Public History Internship (HIST 4950).
- Planning for the PUH internship should begin the semester before the semester in which you plan to register for internship credit. Consult the Public History Coordinator or the Department of History Advising Office to learn about internship opportunities.
- All internship arrangements must be approved in advance by the Public History Coordinator. Written acknowledgment and description of the internship from the intended field supervisor is required for registration for internship credits. The Public History Coordinator will supply students with the appropriate call number for registration.
- The person who supervises your internship in the field normally should have a Masters degree or its equivalent. If this is not the case, special arrangement may be made for faculty evaluation of the internship experience.
- The Department of History does not accept internship experiences carried out before admission to the Public History program, or without prior consultation with the Public History Coordinator.
- The minimum PUH internship should result in approximately a half-time commitment during a Fall or Spring Semester, or a full-time commitment in a Summer I or Summer II Session. To ensure this level of contact and experience, the Department of History uses a widely accepted formula of

granting one credit hour per forty clock hours involved in an internship. Six credit hours of internship will account for 240 clock hours of work in a semester.

- Documentation is crucial to a successful internship experience. Interns are required to maintain journal records of their daily work hours, assignments, and other matters during the experience. This journal must be submitted to the Public History Coordinator before credit is awarded. Interns will also provide a reflection paper (750 words) on the internship as a learning experience and an appropriate photo of their experience for potential use on the Department of History web site.
- Your field supervisor will provide an evaluation of your work at mid-semester and at the conclusion of the experience. Some agencies may use evaluation forms designed for this purpose.
- HIST 4950 is graded on a credit/no credit basis.
- The Department of History has designed its internship program to conform to guidelines established by the American Historical Association, the American Association of Museums, the National Council on Public History, and the Michigan Civil Service Work-Study Program. Your careful adherence to these provisions will enhance the value of your internship both to yourself and your host institution. The Department of History strongly recommends that students participating in internships acquire basic liability insurance coverage.