

# HISTORY: MUSEUM STUDIES (M.A.)

<https://cola.unh.edu/history/program/ma/history-museum-studies>

## Description

The Department of History at the University of New Hampshire offers an option in Museum Studies for students pursuing the Master of Arts degree in history. The Museum Studies program combines practical museum experience with solid academic training to prepare students for a variety of positions in museums and other forums for public history. Located near the seacoast of New Hampshire and southern Maine, within easy driving distance of Boston as well as much of central and northern New England, the University of New Hampshire is ideally situated to take advantage of its close proximity to numerous historical sites and museums.

## Requirements

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The MA in History: Museum Studies requires the completion of at least **30 graduate credits**. Students pursuing the option in museum studies will be required to take ten courses in the History Department, including HIST 871 Museum Studies, either HIST 872 Studies in Regional Material Culture or HIST 880 Special Topics in Museum Studies/Material Culture, and two internships at museums or other historic sites. In developing academic concentrations, students work with a nationally recognized faculty with a broad range of expertise.

The final requirement is either a one-hour oral examination demonstrating competence in museum studies and another field of history (e.g. Early American History, the Atlantic World, Women's History, etc.) chosen by the student in consultation with the Graduate Director OR completion of a major project related to the student's interest in Museum Studies. Both require a three member supervisory committee of UNH History faculty.

### Internships

As part of the Museum Studies program, students enhance their academic training through internships offered at local historical sites. In the past, interns have worked side by side with museum staff on a variety of singular projects as well as regular museum work, including:

- researching and designing exhibits
- cataloging and interpreting collections
- developing and implementing education programs for elementary and secondary school students
- conducting oral histories
- public programming

The internships allow students to put their academic knowledge to work in specific settings while introducing them to the network of museum professionals. The internship coordinator for the department will help place students in suitable sites.

Please consult the History Department's Graduate Student Handbook for additional details.

## Professional Opportunities

Many of our students earning masters and doctorate degrees have gone on to careers in museums and other public history venues. In recent years, one student completing his doctorate took a position as assistant director of the Margaret Chase Smith Library; several graduates of the masters program work in local museums, including the American Independence Museum, Canterbury Shaker Village, the Currier Museum of Art, Strawberry Banke Museum, and the Wright Museum. One doctoral student has been hired as a Program Officer with the New Hampshire Humanities Council, and several others have participated in public lecture series. Given the past success in placement and the continued interest in public history, the Museum Studies option provides exciting professional opportunities for graduate students at the University of New Hampshire.

## Student Learning Outcomes

N.B. MA students with a concentration in Museum Studies/Public History are reviewed twice, since they are members of the regular MA program and are assessed there, as well as being evaluated under the following assessment:

In addition to demonstrating mastery of the requirements for the MA in History—historical content knowledge, familiarity with historiography in US, European, or a field of their choice, critical inquiry, research and writing skills—museum studies/public history students will be able to do the following:

- understand and adhere to the highest and best practices of the field.
- demonstrate knowledge of the sub-discipline of museum studies, its history, its historiography and the current, overarching paradigms, theories, and ethics that define professional practice.
- master current methods and skills in historical documentation and interpretation to make history accessible and useful to the public, including basic technology skills and/or use of experiential archaeology.
- embody a set of professional dispositions and abilities critical to the success of museum professionals, including: flexibility, empathy, leadership, and diplomacy. They will be able to work collaboratively, organize and manage projects, and communicate effectively both orally and in writing.
- understand the institutional landscape of public history, including a familiarity with the governance and organizational structures and funding support for non-profits and the federal sector.
- become active members of their professional communities by undertaking two formal, professional internships.