

English 630: Professional Humanities Careers

Prof David Porter with Stacy Hartman
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Office Hours: Thurs 3:00 – 4:00 and by appt

Winter Term 2018
Mon 10:00 - 12:00
North Quad 2155

Course Description:

Doctoral students in the humanities are pursuing an increasingly wide array of career pathways both within and beyond the academy. This new two-credit course will address the evolving nature of humanities professionalization by broadening students' awareness of and contact with a full range of attractive career opportunities available to humanities PhDs. Moreover, it will enable students to identify, articulate, and further develop specific aptitudes that their doctoral training prepares them to bring to a variety of organizational contexts, whether in the academic, non-profit, or for-profit sectors. Intended primarily for advanced (third-year or above) doctoral students in any humanities field, the course will consist of a structured series of workshops, discussions, site visits, research projects, and written assignments. It will incorporate resources and expertise from Rackham's professional development programs and the MLA's Connected Academics program, but also build on local resources, such as University of Michigan alumni and the larger humanities ecosystem of Southeast Michigan. By engaging with both scholarly and practical, hands-on approaches to rethinking the role of professionally trained humanists in today's workplace, the course will empower students more actively and holistically to chart their own professional pathways both inside and outside of the university.

Required Course Texts:

1. Rita Felski, *Uses of Literature* (Jan 22)
2. Peter Brooks & Hilary Jewett, eds., *The Humanities and Public Life* (Jan 29)
3. Martha Nussbaum, *Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities* (Feb 5)
4. Bill Burnett & Dave Evans, *Designing Your Life* (Feb 12)
5. Doris Sommer, *The Work of Art in the World* (Feb 19)
6. Susan Basalla and Maggie Debelius, *So What are You Going to Do with That?* (Mar 5)

Course Requirements and Grading:

1. Regular attendance and participation (20 points)
2. Weekly forum posts: five brief reflections of 1-2 paragraphs on any of the week's assignments, posted to the [class Canvas page](#) any time at least one hour before our weekly meetings (20 pts)
3. Reflection paper: short (5-6 pp) essay taking up a central question or argument from one of the longer assigned readings (optional assignment - 20 pts)
4. Organizational profiles: three one-paragraph annotations of for-profit or non-profit organizations, representing at least two different sectors, that either currently employ humanities PhDs or are currently advertising positions that might be suitable for them and that you could imagine working for. These annotations will be published on a public, web-based directory of potential employers for professional humanists and should be composed with this audience in mind. [This list of regional partners](#) and websites marked as OP in the [Resources](#) section below will be especially helpful in identifying suitable organizations; you might consider consulting [LinkedIn](#) or [GlassDoor](#), among other sources, for insights into the organization's mission, structure, and work environment. Sign up to profile your selected organizations [here](#); please avoid duplication. (20 pts)
5. Informational interviews: three 2-3 page write-ups, including introduction, summary, and reflection, of 30-minute interviews with humanities PhDs currently in full-time positions doing anything except college or university

teaching. You may choose up to two contacts from [the provided list](#); the websites listed under [Resources](#) below are a good source of additional leads. We recommend reading chapter 6 of *Designing Your Life* (about prototyping) before conducting your informational interviews. You might also wish to consult this [recent blog post](#) as well as this [MLA handout](#) for additional guidance. (20 pts)

6. **Job ad analysis:** identify three current job postings for non-academic positions of potential interest in at least two different sectors. For each one, write a two-paragraph translation interpreting the organization's hiring needs (what kinds of projects are they working on, what kinds of problems are they trying to solve) and explaining the contributions a professional humanist might make towards meeting these needs (20 pts)
7. **Job application packet:** prepare a cover letter and resume tailored to one of the three positions identified for the previous assignment (20 pts)
8. **Dissertation manifesto:** a 2-3 pp distillation of your training and expertise that captures what is unique and distinctive about them in terms that will be accessible and compelling to a non-academic audience (eg a hiring manager at a non-profit or start-up firm). The manifesto should ideally be organized around a series of 3-5 Big Questions that you've learned to think about in a sustained and nuanced way and that might plausibly resonate with problems of interest to non-academic organizations. We're aiming here to explore the sweet spot between the local particularities of your project (eg specific authors, texts, histories, and theories) and bland generalizations about advanced training in the humanities (eg skills in research, communication, critical thinking). (20 pts)
9. **Life design plan:** based on the Odyssey Plan proposed in *Designing Your Life*, imagine three possible (and very distinct!) lives for yourself. Represent all three visually in a PowerPoint or Prezi format, then zero in on one particular life and imagine that one in more detail, including what you would need to do in order to make it a reality. Examples will be provided. (20 pts)
10. **Final presentation:** each student will have the opportunity, during the final class session, to present conclusions from one of their projects for this course (20 pts)

Course Policies:

- The success of this course depends, perhaps more than most, on forging a trusting and supportive community, which requires, in turn, consistent attendance and participation. Please plan your Mondays accordingly!
- Apart from the video conferencing equipment we'll use to teleport Stacy Hartman from New York to North Quad, our class sessions will be a gizmo-free zone, absent pressing need. Please put away all phones, tablets, computers, e-book readers, headphones, and juice extractors before class begins.

Class Schedule:

Jan 8 - Opening Up the Academy: Grafton & Grossman, "[No More Plan B](#)"; Cassuto, "[What do you mean, 'job'?](#)"; Segran, "[What can you do with a humanities PhD?](#)"

Jan 22 - Transfer / Translation: Bartha, "[Skill](#)"; Jones, "[Qualitative Research](#)"; Felski, *Uses of Literature*; complete interests and skills assessments on [ImaginePhD](#) website

Jan 29 - Values Articulation: Schram, "[Integrating Values into Your Career](#)"; Brooks, "Introduction" (in HPL); Butler, "Ordinary, Credulous" (in HPL); Berube and Ruth, *Humanities, Higher Education, and Academic Freedom*, [two opening chapters](#); complete values assessment on [ImaginePhD](#) website

Feb 5 - Public Humanities: Nussbaum, *Not for Profit*

Feb 12 - Career Mindsets: Gale, "[The Trajectory of the Public Scholar](#)"; Shram, "[Designing Principles for Exploring your Career](#)," Burnett & Evans, *Designing Your Life*, intro and chaps 1, 5, & 6

Feb 19 - Site visit: Stateside (9:20 am start time); Somer, *The Work of Art in the World*, pp 1-80; Organizational Profiles due. Site visit location: Michigan Radio, 535 W William St, Suite 110. Preparation for Stateside visit: Do some preliminary research on the kinds of stories [Stateside](#) typically produces. Develop a 1-2 minute pitch for a segment that you will present during our visit. Your pitch should answer the following: What is the topic or question you want to explore? Why should Michigan residents care? Who should we talk to?

Mar 5 - Networking: Basalla & Debelius, *So What Are You Going to Do with That?*, chaps 1-3; *Designing Your Life*, chaps 7-8; Informational interview reports due

Mar 12 - Site visit: Menlo (visit be be 10-11:30am; meet at location by 9:50); optional Reflection Paper due. Site visit location: 505 E Liberty St LL500, Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Mar 19 - Position analysis: Basalla & Debelius, *Careers Outside Academia*, chaps 4-5; Job Ad Analysis due

Mar 26 - Site visit: Michigan 826; Sommer, *The Work of Art in the World*, pp 81-156; Life Design Plan due 115 E Liberty St, Ann Arbor, MI 48104. Preparation for Michigan 826 visit: Read the material provided in the [Canvas Announcements](#) section about Michigan 826's mission, values, and current work. Develop at least two actionable ideas that you can contribute to a working group meeting about expanding the organization's recruitment of volunteers, researching the practices of similar organizations while also taking into account the particularities of Michigan 826.

Apr 2 - Resumes and cover letters for humanists: Basalla & Debelius, *So What Are You Going to Do with That?*, chap 4

Apr 9 - Mock interviews with feedback : Basalla & Debelius, *So What Are You Going to Do with That?*, chap 5

Apr 16 - Final presentations; Job Application Packet due; *Designing Your Life*, chaps 9-10. Also: please complete online course evaluations & sign up for debriefing session!

Apr 23 - [No class]; Dissertation Manifesto due

Additional Web Resources:

- [ACLS Public Fellows Program](#) (OP) - two-year funded placements for humanities PhDs
- [Connected Academics](#) - extensive resources on career options for literature PhDs
- [Designing the Professional](#) - Stanford course model
- [Digital Methods Initiative](#) - visual analysis methods for digital humanities research
- [Humanities PhD Project](#) - see especially Student Voices section
- [Imagine PhD](#) - career exploration and planning tool

- [Non-Academic Career Options for PhDs in the Humanities and Social Sciences](#) (OP) - high-quality resources assembled by Columbia Career Education Center, including links to job listing sites sorted by category
- [Public Humanities Institute](#) - blogs, local event listings
- [Rackham Public Engagement Fellowships](#) (OP) - Internship program description includes list of regional organizations that sponsor placements for humanities PhDs.
- [State of the Humanities](#) - An extensive, annotated bibliography of articles and blog posts on broad humanities education-related issues from roughly 2013-16, helpfully organized by category.
- [Versatile PhD](#) - job listings, narratives, cover letters, resumes