

Humanities Careers in Science History, Policy and Communication (H-SCHIP)



According to anthropologist and science museum professional Adrian van Allen (Quai Branly Museum, Paris:) “People in museums are either academically trained or practically trained. If you can come in with both you are a perfect candidate.” A thorough knowledge of exhibit design, public pedagogy, and digital humanities is essential for academically trained researchers who choose to pursue public-facing careers. These skills require cultivation, consultation with experts, and a great deal of practical experience. This issue is especially apparent in science-oriented public history careers which call upon practitioners to utilize both humanities and scientific skills and knowledge. Curators interpreting the history of science, educators working in museums with both natural and historic collections, archivists dealing with chemically diverse objects, and public historians using specialized technologies to communicate complex ideas and reach diverse audiences all benefit from training that is unlikely to be offered within single academic department or program. Archivists and museum curators in the United States most commonly have degrees in humanities fields, including History (13%), Art History (11%), English Language and Literature (6%) and Anthropology (5%). Typically, individuals entering the museum field have either academic training in public history theory or practical training in quotidian museum tasks. Through the development of digital programming, interpretive installations, and public pedagogy, H-SCHIP will bridge this gap between theory and praxis and allow students to enter the job market as competitive candidates.

A year-long cross-disciplinary professionalization program geared toward public humanities careers in science museums, national and state park services, and preservation, H-SCHIP workshops will focus on developing the skills necessary to create successful public humanities programming. Each workshop will provide hands-on professionalization training and culminate in collaboratively developed programming and exhibits. Students will work with each other and with professionals in the field to gain the hands-on skill necessary to developing and executing a coherent, critical public historical project. Science is broadly construed here to include technology, environment, agriculture, and medicine.

Coordinators

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