

The History Advisors' Manual on Professional Careers

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INTRODUCTION

History students – along with other graduates in the humanities - are repeatedly assured of their superior writing and communication skills, their research strengths, and their interpersonal competencies – all of which are in high demand with employers in the private as well as the public sector.

Yet, the assurance that history graduates can find work “anywhere” offers students no guidance at all and does nothing to inspire their imagination and creativity in charting their own course into a professional future.

As a result, M.A. students in history lack confidence in their employability beyond the classroom – even as a rich variety of identifiable career prospects is particularly important for first-generation and other non-privileged history students of diverse backgrounds. In other words, a path to professional futures is an important way of ensuring a diverse enrollment and equity.

The resources assembled here are designed to help advisors and faculty guide students in their search for jobs and careers that value historical knowledge, as well as employment fields that specifically value the methodologies of historians, be that in research, data aggregation and presentation, causation, etc.

Note: Students will have access to their own resource collection, guidance on the job search, and a list of employment examples from alumni through the CSUF Department of History website.

The first part of this manual consists of a curated set of readings that include anecdotal and statistical information on historians designed to turn faculty into expert advisors on the job search and application process.

The second part of the manual consists of a set of advisement modules on particular career paths for future advisement events, as well as a list of guest speakers for on-campus or virtual presentations.

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Trends and Developments in the Historians' Job Market

Organized from latest to oldest publication

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directories/perspectives-on-history/january-2017/why-study-history-survey-of-history-bas-provides-some-real-answers

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CSUF History, Learning on the Job Series
Introduction Module: Things to Consider

Learning Goal: At the beginning of a graduate program, it is important to set your goals and manage your expectations. Through this module, students will learn that their graduate experience is what they make of it, and there are some important things to consider throughout their graduate experience.

Key Question: What are some of the things to keep in mind when starting your graduate experience? What can you do to mitigate “imposter syndrome,” and what can you do to ensure that you do not burn out early on?

Related Reading: “Letter to a Prospective History Graduate Student” by Christina Copeland in *Perspectives on History*

Congratulations! Right about now, you are basking in the afterglow of acceptance(s) to graduate school. Maybe you've been invited for a campus visit or two. Now that you've made this commitment to become a graduate student take a long moment to think carefully about what is being offered to you and what is being asked of you. What do you want from your M.A. or PhD in history? What can you do—from day one—to make the degree what you want it to be?

Consider what is important to you in the here and now. What are your priorities when it comes to your health and well-being and social/family life? How do you want to allocate your scarce intellectual and emotional resources? What are the opportunity costs of subordinating other areas of your life to academic demands?

When you start your program, it's entirely possible—probable even—that you will feel overwhelmed. Moreover, it will appear that the rest of your cohort has it all together. Sadly, it's all too easy for this imposter syndrome to cloud years of your degree. You might feel like a fraud that somehow gained entry to graduate school, one misstep away from being thrown out of your program, while everyone else is a stellar historian in the making.

Upon starting my own PhD, I very quickly fell into the pattern of regarding everything study-related as a “code red” situation. By year three, I was burned out because no matter what the seminar, paper, or TA section, I believed that everything was absolutely vital to my continuing at grad school. The net result of this was exhaustion and not a whole lot else. It took me several years to realize this, but there is always more to do. You can read more about the New Deal, or read more closely. That paper on the lives of medieval saints could be better written. You can hone that lesson plan on the Columbian Exchange just a little bit further, or give that undergraduate even more detailed feedback.

I can only speak to my own battle to finally allow myself weekends off, but I realized that nothing bad actually happened when I spent less time working. Once I slayed that particular dragon, I was a whole lot happier and, as it happens, a much better scholar. If you can set boundaries for yourself from the get-go, you can hopefully avoid my crash and burn scenario

described above. There is a world of difference between periods of working hard, and having a default setting of “constant student.”

And, I would add, it is much harder to keep the stakes of graduate study in perspective if you don't (even occasionally) get outside of the bubble of academia. Be it catching up with family members and old friends or a hobby (as someone with few discernable sporting or crafting skills, I use the term hobby very loosely here), make time for an activity entirely unrelated to your scholarly output that will make you happy and keep you in touch with the world outside campus.

Without that foot firmly planted outside of the academy, what are, in reality, fairly low-stakes events can assume titanic importance and meaning. Every harsh bit of criticism on a historiography paper, a meeting with your advisor that doesn't go entirely smoothly, all of it can start to undermine not only your self-confidence but strip away your ability to enjoy the study of history—the very reason you're there in the first place.

As you give yourself room to breathe in the present, keep one eye on the future. Connect your career possibilities to the tasks you actually find rewarding in graduate school. I found out pretty early on that I found teaching extremely stressful. This made my decision to forgo the professoriate very, very easy. But it was only through a fairly random opportunity in my fifth year, when I had the chance to contribute to a project on public history with Southern California nonprofit broadcaster KCET, that I realized I loved communicating history to broader audiences. If you're stuck for ideas as to how you might translate your talents and interests outside the academy, the AHA has a good resource on “[Where Historians Work](#)” for the many career options that historians have. (And watch out for an upcoming post on [ImaginePhD](#), a tool designed to help humanities and social sciences PhDs explore careers and plan for the future.)

I can't help but wonder what other opportunities I missed in the first four years. If these sorts of nontraditional tasks are not built into your program, seize any chance to make them happen yourself. And don't wait until you're nearing the end of your degree to start. Equally, it's worth sooner rather than later to look at the AHA's “[five skills](#)” vital to the successful pursuit of both academic and nonacademic careers.

For those entering PhD programs, I'm going to take a wild guess and say that most of you are doing this to pursue an academic career, despite the [declining number of academic jobs in history departments](#). If you are dead set on chasing a tenure-track job, go in with a realistic idea of what your post-degree future likely holds and keep your options open. You might get lucky and land that tenure-track job. But if not, reject the message that your success is dependent on that one outcome. In fact, make it a goal to define success on your own terms throughout your graduate career. It may be finding that missing piece of the puzzle in the archives, getting that shy student to finally engage with the class, or presenting a compelling historical narrative at your first conference.

You have choices and you have the power to shape what the next few years of your life are going to look like. There is an awful lot of what I have come to think of as “misery lit” out there on graduate life and the dim prospects for aspiring academics, particularly within the humanities. Sure, it can be cathartic to seek this out during your low points. And it's vital to have a realistic idea of the challenges inherent in graduate study. Ultimately though, this is the path that you

have chosen. There is no guarantee that your immersion in the discipline of history will extend beyond graduate school. For some of you it will. But for the rest, this is your first, last, and only time as a scholar. Take a step back before fall 2018. What kind of graduate experience do you want?

FACULTY ONLY

Key Points of Comprehension

This lesson module is designed to facilitate a discussion between new graduate students to get them thinking about what they want to accomplish during their time in the program. The discussion should hit on the following points.

Time Management: Students should discuss ways in which they can manage their time to create a good work-life balance to avoid burn out early on. As the author says, not every situation related to their academics is a “code-red” situation. Make a point to emphasize that it is okay for students to engage in their hobbies and stay connected to the world outside of the campus.

Career Possibilities: Students should always consider and connect the aspects they enjoy during their experience of possible careers. Be sure to discuss the fact that history careers exist outside of academia and the skills students gain from a history degree can be applied in a variety of different fields when entering the workforce.

Seizing Chances: Students should be aware of the wider world outside academia to seize chances available to them when they arise. Caution students not to become surrounded by the bubble of academia.

Define Success: Every student should be asked to share what success in the program means to them, and subsequently consider how they are going to work towards their own goals. Everyone will have a unique experience, and it is up to the individual student to define the terms of their success to avoid comparison with their peers and mitigate potential cases of imposter syndrome.

CSUF History, Learning on the Job Series
Module #1: Searching for Jobs Beyond Academia

Overview: As history majors, we often are prone to a mindset reinforcing a belief that our career options are mostly limited to academia. However, as this lesson will demonstrate, there is life beyond academia for those who hold history degrees. Being aware of the differences in the hiring processes of academic vs. non-academic careers and adapting to them can be critical in giving you a competitive edge on the job market.

Learning Goal: Students should come to understand the differences between the academic and non-academic hiring process as well as how to better position themselves to find a job outside of academia.

Key Question: What are some of the differences between the academic and non-academic hiring process? What are some things to consider while you conduct a job search and what actions can you take to lessen the stress of searching for a job?

Related Reading: “What It’s Like to Search for Jobs Outside Academe” by Erin Bartram in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*

When Ph.D.s talk about the transition to a nonfaculty career, we tend to focus on where to look for work and what to expect on the job. All the dicey steps in between — like how, exactly, to find and apply for work outside of academe — tend to be glossed over. I suspect that’s because hunting for nonacademic jobs seems, at first glance, to be simpler than the yearly slog that is the tenure-track job market. After all, in "the real world," there’s no tying yourself into knots to prove you can cover every specific area listed in the job ad without stepping on the toes of anyone else in the department, and no "hiring season" outside of which finding full-time employment opportunities is slim.

But in the months since I decided to end my search for a tenure-track job in history, I’ve discovered that the hiring process outside of academe, while different, is not necessarily simpler. In fact, figuring out the hiring culture in different employment sectors has been deeply frustrating.

After my essay on leaving academe went viral, I got conflicting career advice. Many colleagues and internet strangers urged me to consider jobs that seemed close to faculty work — specifically, teaching history at a secondary school. Others advised me to think broadly about what I might like to do. I chose the latter option but quickly discovered that my imagination was rather limited. I also realized that people unfamiliar with doctoral work didn’t have many suggestions for me.

My brainstorming bore fruit only when I met with friends who both: (a) worked outside of academe and (b) understood academic culture and skills. They were not bound by preconceptions of what a Ph.D. in my field could do or should want to do, and were able to imagine me in jobs I didn’t know existed.

It's important to have such conversations before you dive into a job search. But it's equally important to keep having them while you search for jobs because the searching itself can be overwhelming even with specific goals in mind.

As Ph.D.s, we're used to a fairly narrow job market. You may have to sift through tenure-track positions in a few places, but it's manageable, especially given that jobs are advertised by subfield and are limited anyway. In a non-academic search, however, even with a good idea of the kind of work you want, you'll rarely be able to search for openings on job sites with that level of specificity. Simple things that we took for granted with academic-job postings — like the date that an application closes — can be hard to find in nonacademic postings. It can be maddening to look or apply for jobs when you can't tell whether the employer is reviewing applications in real time or is no longer accepting them.

Still, there are ways to get more efficient with your job searches. On the academic job market, you learned to read the subtext of job-ad language, and the same skill is useful here. When you find ads for the kinds of work you want, make a note of how they were categorized and the language they used, so that you can refine your future searches. Use that same language to rephrase the skills you bring to the job in ways that are clearer to people reading your application.

More befuddling can be the issue of job experience. In academe, no matter how excellent your track record, you still start on the tenure track at assistant professor. But if you're leaving academe because you couldn't get a good teaching job, the emphasis on tenure-track employment can also make you feel as if your career never really started.

It's important to remember that you do, indeed, have work experience. The marketable skills you developed in academe are valuable whether or not you did them as a tenure-track employee. If you've been doing research, writing, and teaching for a decade, you're not inherently an entry-level employee in a field that draws on those skills.

Yes, it's challenging to make the case that you have the skills and experience to take on a midlevel position in a new career. But don't shy away from that simply because the culture of our warped academic job market didn't recognize or value your skills.

Taking time to learn the language and rhythms of non-academic job postings is an important first step, and from there you can do a few things to make the job-search process less overwhelming:

- With a better idea of the kinds of employment you're considering, you may be able to find more-specialized job boards, like those listing nonprofit work in your region or those affiliated with relevant professional organizations.
- In some fields, especially those adjacent to academe, job postings are shared on social media, so it can help to follow organizations and even individuals in the sectors you're considering.
- It is tempting to sign up for daily alerts from job sites based on specific search terms. Doing so can quickly overwhelm your email — unless your search terms are very precise or there aren't a lot of jobs posted. It's OK to opt out of those alerts.
- It takes a lot of time out of your life to apply for jobs, and it's easy to get overwhelmed to the point of paralysis. I found it helpful to schedule "job-search time" into my week, to

ensure not only that I regularly and systematically searched job boards and wrote applications, but also that I had a designated time to stop and put it aside for the next day, before I burned out completely.

Perhaps the most difficult thing for me has been confronting what networking actually means in the non-academic job market.

After months of searching for jobs in a wide variety of fields across a good swath of the country — with very little to show for it — a friend urged me to post on social media that I was job hunting. I felt uncomfortable but gave it a shot, figuring it wouldn't do much anyway.

I received an immediate crush of suggestions, publicly and privately — for jobs that hadn't been posted widely, hadn't been posted publicly, or hadn't been posted at all. Some were for jobs that I'd seen but discounted only to be told some inside information that made me realize I was a better candidate than I'd thought. Those suggestions were helpful but also a bit discouraging.

So much of nonacademic hiring is done "off the books" that it can make the rules and systems of academic hiring seem quaint by comparison, despite academe's many inequities. In talking with other scholars who have found nonacademic work, I sense that the back-channel hiring is far more prevalent in small organizations than in large ones. In [an earlier essay](#), I urged professors not to assume that "networking" was something all of their Ph.D.s could do, but I didn't understand how important that warning was.

As a scholar, I may not have had a real chance at getting many of the tenure-track jobs I saw listed, but at least the positions were posted and I had the chance to apply. Both academic and non-academic systems promote from within — when you go up for tenure, after all, your department doesn't bring in other candidates to compete with you for the promotion — so I had no expectation that every nonacademic job would be open and available to every outside candidate. What I was unprepared for was the extent to which even finding out about "open" midlevel positions, let alone successfully applying for them, would depend on the personal and professional network I had cobbled together and my willingness to draw on it. I can't offer any advice on how to get around that "who you know" dynamic, which still makes me uncomfortable, no matter how many times nonacademic friends have told me "this is just how it works."

Even if you can't do the kind of networking that will turn up unadvertised job postings, you can still use your network of friends and colleagues to help you acclimate to nonacademic hiring. Talk with your friends about their career paths. Ask how they found out about jobs they've had. If they regularly oversee hiring, ask how it works and what they look for. If they're willing, have them keep an eye out for positions that you might miss or overlook, especially ones for which you might wrongly assume you're underqualified.

Academe didn't prepare me well for the nonacademic job market, but I can't blame it for that. Nor should people reading this — in or out of academe — roll their eyes at how difficult it can be for Ph.D.s to make the transition into an unfamiliar hiring world. After all, scholars who went directly from their B.A. to graduate school may never have held a full-time nonacademic job

before. I had several full-time nonacademic jobs before I went to graduate school, but even so, the last time I applied for one of those jobs was 12 years ago, and it was nothing like applying to the midlevel positions that advisers and others have encouraged me to apply for now.

Nonacademic hiring is different from academic hiring, and there's no shame in recognizing that you find it challenging and even infuriating. Taking time to learn how it works, especially with the help of friends you trust, can make your transition both easier and more productive.

FACULTY ONLY

Key Points of Comprehension

Differences in Hiring Process: Students should understand that the hiring process outside of academia presents its own set of unique challenges which need to be considered.

Continued Dialogue With Peers: Students should understand that continued conversations with peers outside academia before, during, and after the job search process is vital to increasing their overall understanding of the challenges within the job market.

Intricacies Involving Language: Students should learn that it is possible to make note of the language used in the fields they want to enter in order to refine their future job searches and rephrase their skills to be more attractive to potential employers.

Understanding Your Skills: Students should understand that the skills they learned while studying history, such as research, are both marketable and applicable in other fields. In other words, your resume may be stronger than you realize.

Schedule Time: Students should be aware of how to schedule time for the purposes of a job search in order to better balance their time and not overwhelm themselves.

Expand Your Search Beyond Traditional Routes: Since a lot of nonacademic hiring is done off the books, it is important that students understand that they can search for jobs using other methods. They can post on social media, ask their friends, and build their networks throughout the process.

Patience: Because the nonacademic hiring process is different, it is important that students remain patient and learn the process, seek advice from friends, and make the transition at a pace with which they are comfortable.

CSUF History, Learning on the Job Series
Module #2: Business Analyst

Learning Goal: Students will understand how their historical training can be applied in a business setting and give them an edge over their peers.

Key Question: What are the ways in which this writer applied her history degree on the job and how might you apply these skills in your future career?

Related Reading: “History at the Office: How a Business Analyst Uses Her Business Degree” by Stephanie Fulbright in *Perspectives on History*

I earned my undergraduate degrees in history and business, and while my primary interest was in history, by graduation I had burned out on academia. Looking for a change of pace, I took a job at a healthcare IT organization. As I gained more work experience, I noticed I drew on the skills I learned as a history major more frequently than the skills from my business major. I began to see how well thinking like a historian applied to my roles as a project manager and a business analyst.

The terms project manager and business analyst can be used to describe a number of different jobs.

In my organization, project managers are responsible for determining the steps necessary to complete a project, which is a defined set of work with a beginning and end date. Project managers work with the project team to craft a plan for getting the project done and then help ensure the work gets completed. They do not, however, directly manage any of the team members. Business analysts get involved at the start of projects and help the people requesting them articulate what they are trying to achieve and how they will know they successfully met their goals. For example, I am currently working on a project to determine if a new perinatal alerting system (for monitoring babies' heart rates during birth) improves clinical outcomes for moms and their babies. To see if the system is in fact impacting outcomes, we need to figure out what data points are available and how to measure them in way that gives us an answer to our questions.

Project managers and historians share some similar ways of thinking. First, both try to construct a logical flow of steps or events. Historians usually know something about the ending (present day, for example) and maybe something about the beginning. Historical research is often centered on figuring out what happened in the middle and how people got from there (past) to here (present). Similarly, project managers know what the end should be and need to figure out all of the steps to get from here (current state) to there (future state). To do that, project managers have to organize lots of information from lots of different sources. Each part of the project team has ideas about what needs to be done, and the project manager needs to synthesize those ideas into a coherent plan for the team to follow. For me, writing historical research papers taught me how to bring together different, and sometimes contradictory, sources into something other people could understand and follow. My training as a historian taught me how to comprehend big complex pictures and to communicate that understanding to others.

I currently work as a business analyst, and like in my project management role, I have found I am thinking like a historian. For instance, I often find myself in meetings where multiple stakeholders are using the same words but it is clear they mean different things. Part of my job is to notice those discrepancies and help clarify what is being said. This awareness of nuances in language is something historians learn to identify, as they balance the tension between continuity and changes from the past. In a sense, historians are translators; they help people understand the past on its own terms. As a business analyst I do a similar type of translating. Additionally, as a business analyst I have the opportunity to think broadly about solutions and their impacts. As historians, we also learn to think about a wide range of factors that can influence and/or extend from historical events. My historical imagination helps me envision the effects of solutions or technologies.

Both project management and business analysis require persistent research and strong writing and communication skills. Historical training gave me both. My history degree taught me how to dig for information, especially when it is hard to find. It taught me to write for multiple audiences and convey complex ideas logically and clearly. Perhaps most importantly, my history degree taught me how to ask deep, probing questions. It taught me to get below the surface of things by being curious. The ability to formulate good questions has been the most helpful skill in advancing in my career.

Historical thinking can be applied to any number of industries and roles. From my experience, I think it translates particularly well to project management and business analysis. Although I do have a business degree as well, it is actually my history degree that I find continually relevant to my work. Proficiency in understanding complexity, communicating effectively, doing thorough research, thinking broadly, and asking good questions has opened the doors to a successful career. History degrees are immensely practical and they can teach you things that will set you apart from your peers if you do decide to go into the business world.

FACULTY ONLY

Key Points of Comprehension

Historical Thinking: Historians have a strength in regards to thinking logically, more easily constructing a flow of events which can help with creating a plan of action within the business world. Historians know how to research, and bring together sometimes contradictory sources in order to form an argument.

Simplifying Nuances: Historians are able to comprehend complex ideas, and effectively communicate their understanding to peers in an effective manner.

Understanding Nuance: The understanding of nuance within language and agendas aids historians in being translators as well as mediators in the business world during events such as negotiations.

Thinking Broadly: Historical thinking allows individuals in business to think broadly about the outcomes of a potential product or venture, to get a sense of the consequences and potential benefit.

Asking Questions: Historical thinking allows individuals to propose deeper questions which more directly and comprehensively address the issues. This serves as a major strength in the business world where complex issues arise frequently.

Practicality: In short, history degrees provide students with many practical skills which can set them apart from the peers and can be applied in a variety of different fields.

CSUF Learning on the Job Series
Module #3 Corporate Finance/ The Publishing Industry

Learning Goal: Students will learn how the strengths of a history degree gave Clifford Manko an edge within the world of corporate finance.

Key Question: How has Clifford Manko's history aided his career in corporate finance and publishing?

Related Reading: *A Career in Corporate Finance: How My History Degree Helped Me Get There* by Clifford Manko in *Perspectives on History*

When I interviewed for a job in corporate finance at Houghton Mifflin in 1992, the publishing firm's CEO was far more interested in my history degree than my CPA. He grilled me about what I'd studied and how the history courses I'd taken had been taught. To this day, I believe that my passion for what I'd studied in college was the tipping point in getting what I consider to be the most important job in my life. I've remained in the publishing industry ever since. And my history degree helped me get there.

My history degree has inspired lifelong learning and influenced my 32-year career in corporate finance, much of which has been in the field of publishing. Learning about the past, reflecting how it influences the present and the future, and navigating through the challenges of using original source material has remained an intellectual passion of mine years after graduating. In my experience, much of what we do professionally on a day-to-day basis is learned not in college, but through work experience and enterprise. For instance, the personal computer, powerful desktop software, and the internet have radically changed my profession and the publishing industry. None of these technologies existed when I began my career. My history degree, however, imparted skills that made it easier for me to tackle whatever challenges arose in the professional and technical world. The major's emphasis on documenting and vetting sources of data, organizing one's thoughts and ideas into coherent narratives backed by evidence, and communicating complex ideas in a clear, concise fashion, for example, are skills that I use to this day.

I graduated with a BA in history in 1980 from Cornell University and into a severe economic recession. I had considered an academic career during college, but by my senior year I was itching to try living in New York City and to explore the business world. My first position—which I landed through a bit of networking—was in operations at a brokerage firm in NYC. This was before the internet, and I dealt with mainframe systems and lots of paper. After two years, I scaled up to working in the trust department of a small bank, also in an operational role, where over time I assumed some financial reporting tasks. I had not taken any business courses in college, but I had taken economics, calculus, and statistics, which helped me learn the data and accounting skills I needed to progress at work.

After four years of working, I settled on finance as my career. I obtained an MBA and then entered the public accounting profession as a CPA. Three years into my career at a large accounting firm, I transferred to Boston, lured by the city's rich history and culture. One of the

firm's clients was Houghton Mifflin, the distinguished 150 year-old Boston publisher of educational materials and great literary works. When an opportunity in the corporate finance area of Houghton Mifflin opened up, I pursued it. I am now CFO of Beacon Press, a small and very prestigious 160-year-old publisher of adult nonfiction, with a deep list of historians and scholars as authors, including Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, Marcus Rediker, Jeanne Theoharis, Howard Zinn, and Robin DG Kelley. My publishing background at Houghton Mifflin, as well as my familiarity and deep respect for the firm's history and great authors, helped me secure my current position at Beacon Press.

The publishing industry and the content industry in general is a great place for history majors to pursue careers. Both at Houghton Mifflin and Beacon Press, the editorial, production, sales, and marketing departments are full of liberal arts majors. In recent years, there has been an explosion of data and content, mainly packaged for online use, although print still has a life. A history degree provides a great background for anyone interested in the content industry, including at firms that create reference databases for professionals in business, science, and the government. (These firms have armies of people analyzing and organizing vast quantities of data, essentially using the same skills as historians.) If you haven't already, consider content industries in your career planning. Also, positions that involve writing and dealing with scholars are another natural segue for history majors. At Beacon Press, our editors and production team work closely with scholars and authors. The passion our team has for the topics our authors write about is a key reason authors sign on with a small publisher like Beacon Press.

I truly believe the study of history provides great preparation for life, both intellectual and professional. Much of what one will learn professionally in life comes from actual work experience, but a history degree bestows skills that have a much longer shelf life. Organizing and analyzing data and writing are more important than ever in the digital era. As I've learned, following one's passion usually leads to the right outcomes in life.

Clifford Manko joined Beacon Press in 2016 as CFO. Prior to Beacon, Cliff was senior vice president of finance at Houghton Mifflin Harcourt and vice president of finance at Cengage Learning. He began his finance career at Ernst & Young, where he was a CPA and audit manager. Cliff is a graduate of Cornell University and NYU Business School.

FACULTY ONLY

Key Points of Comprehension

Applicable Skills: Students should understand that a history education's emphasis on documenting and vetting sources and data, and subsequently constructing a coherent narrative backed by evidence, and communicating complex ideas in a clear and concise manner are skills applicable in a wide range of fields.

The Publishing Industry: The publishing industry is a great place for history graduates to look for careers because the industry utilizes many of the skills which are history major's natural strengths such as research and writing.

Enduring Value: A history degree is great preparation for the rest of your life no matter what you choose to pursue. Both intellectually and professionally, a history degree provides students with skills and knowledge which are not only highly relevant in the digital era but also hold a longer shelf life which can benefit students in the future.

CSUF Learning on the Job Series
Module #4: Assistant Professorship

Learning Goal: Students will learn the various factors they must consider if they become an assistant professor during their academic careers.

Key Question: What are the key factors that Jared Hardesty highlights and cautions all newly hired assistant professors to consider during their first years on the job?

Related Reading: *Becoming An Assistant Professor: Things I Wish I'd Known as a Grad Student* by Jared Hardesty in *Perspectives on History*

As I gear up for another AHA annual meeting, I have been reflecting a lot about my own transition from graduate student to assistant professor. Mostly it's because this will be my second year staffing the "Ask an Assistant Professor" booth at the annual meeting's Career Fair. For those who can't make it to the booth, and are mystified by life on the other side, here are some things about becoming an assistant professor that I wish I'd known as a graduate student. Knowing these then would certainly have made my move into a new stage of my career a lot easier and more enjoyable.

It is okay to be lost. Short of the exceedingly rare job candidate hired by her or his own graduate school, getting any job means transitioning to a new university with its own culture and ways of doing things. If my experience is any indicator, this transition is going to be harder than you think. Part of the reason in my case was hubris. You're a bigshot professor now and should just know how these things work, right? Wrong. It is going to take time to adjust and it is going to be intimidating. You will be in meetings with colleagues with 30 or more years of experience at your institution who will sling confusing acronyms at a dizzying pace. There will be paperwork for everything you want to do and an unclear chain of command to resolve issues with students, scheduling, funding, compensation, and pretty much anything else you need or want.

In short, you're going to be totally lost and a lot of things are going to go wrong. And you know what? That's okay. Nobody expects you to know everything and it is okay to ask for help. Get to know your senior colleagues and ask them for guidance. Many departments assign junior faculty mentors and if yours does not, seek one out—it can make all the difference. Department administrators are also a godsend when it comes to dealing with the everyday complications of being an academic. They often have connections in the university and can help pull strings. You just have to remember that adjusting and learning how a new institution works takes time.

Balancing your job responsibilities can be hard. At the end of the day, a professor's job responsibilities fall into three broad categories: teaching, research, and service. The weight given to each will depend on the university, but for assistant professors where I am, it is roughly 40 percent teaching, 40 percent research, and 20 percent service. This is somewhere in the middle compared to research- or teaching-intensive institutions. While this metric is great and I am glad the faculty union gave me the numbers to work with, the truth is a bit murkier. As a new assistant professor, and probably for the first three or more years of your career, you will find yourself

teaching at least one new course a year. Just as an example, at Western Washington University, we are on the quarter system, and this year—and I'm now questioning my sanity—I will be teaching three new courses. All of these courses are time intensive and require me to write lectures, read, and prepare assignments. They will also end up taking more than 40 percent of my time. But what about that article I want to write? And what about reading all those documents I'd photographed in summer 2015?

The question, then, is how to create your own curriculum while also being able to publish and contribute to your department and university. One way is to put in long hours attempting to fulfill all your job responsibilities. There are, however, ways to better help balance your work load. First, do not overextend yourself teaching. Being in the classroom as a professor is exhilarating, but it is also time consuming and overwhelming. And, since you're excited and want to impress your new colleagues, you may want to do everything and teach every class you've ever wanted to teach. My general advice here is to start small: offer only one or two new courses your first couple of years. Become comfortable teaching the courses you have to teach while developing another that you have wanted to teach.

As for research, my biggest recommendation is to start thinking about publishing, especially its conventions, as early as possible in your graduate careers. Journal articles, for example, have a fairly standard form they follow. Learn that form and model your own work on it. Start looking at presses to see who publishes in your field. Contact the editors to see if they would be interested in your work. And once you are in an academic position, dedicate a portion of your week, even if just a few hours, to writing and reading for your own research. That way, when breaks come and you have a chance to write, you do not have to start from scratch. Instead, you are always producing and positioning yourself to capitalize on longer writing periods. And service? Well...

Learn the art of saying “no.” Two simple letters, one easy syllable, yet so, so hard. I have senior colleagues who have spent their entire careers perfecting the art of saying no. I struggle with it (I say as I am writing a blog post for the AHA in my office two days before Christmas). And you'll struggle with it too. The university that hires you is going to be very excited to have a new professor around. You are going to receive invitations to serve on committees, organize roundtables and discussions, and work with student groups. Likewise, since you're now a hotshot professor, requests to review books, serve on panels and roundtables, and peer-review manuscripts are going to come pouring in. It will feel great to be wanted, but it can also quickly become unmanageable. While you will be required to perform some service activities, it is key to pick and choose the ones you find most fulfilling. For example, I really enjoy working with students outside the classroom and took a two-year appointment as my department's Phi Alpha Theta advisor. Once you have a base of service activities you enjoy and find rewarding, it is much easier to pick and choose and, most importantly, say NO!

I shamefully, but honestly, admit that most of what I've written about here are mistakes that I have personally made and learned from. I'm sure many readers have heard some of this advice before, but I hope I've offered something new here about transitioning into an academic job. I look forward to hearing any input others may have. Find me at the “Ask an Assistant Professor” booth at the Career Fair today between 3–4 p.m., or on Twitter at @drhardesty.

*Jared Ross Hardesty is assistant professor of history at Western Washington University in Bellingham, WA, and received his PhD from Boston College in 2014. He is a scholar of colonial and revolutionary America, the Atlantic world, and the history of slavery. Hardesty is the author *Unfreedom: Slavery and Dependence in Eighteenth-Century Boston* (NYU Press, 2016). His articles and book reviews have appeared in *Slavery & Abolition*, *Early American Studies*, *Journal of Early American History*, *New England Quarterly*, *Itinerario*, and *Common-place*. Beyond his publications, Hardesty's work has been recognized with grants and fellowships, including from the New England Regional Fellowship Consortium. He is currently working on a comprehensive history of slavery and emancipation in New England.*

FACULTY ONLY

Key Points of Comprehension

Feeling Lost: It's ok for new professors to feel lost. Like any other job, there is a learning curve and it will take time to learn the ropes and settle in. Just remember that asking for help is ok and that some things will go wrong in the beginning. It's all part of the learning process.

Balancing Responsibilities: The article notes that professors will have to balance three different responsibilities during the course of their careers: teaching, research, and service. The amount of time dedicated to each responsibility will vary depending on the institution but the author gives a rough estimate of 40% teaching, 40% research, and 20% service. Do not overload yourself, and be sure to create curriculum, which allows you to address effectively additional responsibilities such as publishing. The author suggests that new professors only offer one or two classes a semester during the first few years of their career. Lastly, start thinking about publishing early on in your graduate career, with journal articles being a great start.

Saying No: Don't be afraid to say no to service opportunities which you feel will overwhelm you or don't interest you. Find a base of service you find fulfilling and stick to it. This way, new professors can avoid taking on service responsibilities, which have the potential to overwhelm and overload them.

CSUF Learning on the Job Series
Module #5: In the Archives

Learning Goal: Students will learn about the opportunities which visiting physical archives can provide them in relation to their careers as historians.

Key Question: What are the potential benefits of doing physical archival research as opposed to utilizing an online archive?

Suggested Reading: Farge, Arlette. *The Allure of the Archives*

Related Reading: *Making Historians in the Archive* by Christina Copeland in *Perspectives on History*

The blue books are all graded. If you're in the coursework zone, your own assignments are in. The sun is out; green is returning to the land. Now, for most of us history grads, it's time to spend a large portion of our summer in windowless rooms around the globe. Archive season is here!

I have to admit that research is my favorite part of being a historian. After numerous conversations in the TA office, I'm aware however that archival work isn't everyone's cup of tea. Some grads love teaching, but find wading through the archives occasionally anxiety-inducing.

Yet working in archives is one of the tasks that makes studying history unique; maybe acting just on a hunch, we follow the thread of evidence through spidery handwritten letters, photographs, or the myriad of other bits of parchment, paper, or film footage.

The very factors that make the research such a compelling activity—the knowledge that you never know what the next turn of the page might bring—are the same factors that can throw a wrench into our plans. Sometimes, our research plans don't go the way we intended at all. But we emerge from the experience with stories “from the trenches” that we then swap later at conferences, happy hours, or in seminars, and that cement our ideas of what it means to be a historian.

I thought I had my plans all sewn up one for one research paper a few years ago. I was set to head to the Biola University archives to examine collections relevant to my interest in Southern California fundamentalism. Then an email from a librarian cracked my plans wide open: the archives had a mold problem and would be shut for the foreseeable future. As I scrambled desperately for a solution, I visited the Los Angeles Archives Bazaar, a yearly gathering of Southern California archival institutions on the USC campus. There, I got chatting to representatives from the Occidental College library, who suggested I come and visit their holdings. Not only did I write my research paper on time for that class, but a small slice of that research made it into my dissertation five years later. A research experience that started out as a potential disaster turned into an opportunity—but only thanks to that chance encounter at the Archive Bazaar.

How many of us have similar tales to tell? Or felt the crunch as our time in a particular collection ticks down? Sometimes we just don't find what we need or hope for in an archival collection. While this can be disheartening, as historians we know that this just means that we have to go back to the drawing board and ask a new set of research questions. We know that plans change, projects morph, and all we can do is the best work we can with the records that are available to us.

Going to the archive or library also gives us the opportunity to meet with a whole new group of people outside our regular academic circle. For the most part, research trips are lonely experiences. We conduct our archival visits by eking out a tight budget, trying to wring the maximum amount of research time by staying in less than glamorous accommodations, and skimping on nonessentials. Many of us spend weeks in a strange city, with a solo dinner and a Netflix subscription as the evening highlight. But the social interactions we have at the archives provide a valuable chance to build our professional networks.

Larger archives are the watering holes of the history world. Some offer meet & greet opportunities—the Huntington Library where I did much of my writing hosted weekly afternoon tea breaks. In other places, sometimes all we need to do is to ask fellow researchers about the documents they're looking at. I've also found that, especially in smaller and more specialized repositories, archival staff love to talk about sources and are keen to hear about where we might take our projects. Some of the people who were most enthusiastic about my PhD research were the staff at the Biola University library, the archive where I spent the bulk of my time (once the mold problem was fixed, that is). The fact that archivists are passionate about their collections—and know them better than anyone else—means that they can help point us in the direction of potentially useful sources. Often an archive will offer funding to researchers. The time spent building up a network of library contacts might prove invaluable to getting these fellowships. It's not just records we access at an archive. These are spaces in which we find future conference panelists, encounter other grads and faculty members working in our fields, or meet archivists who help us out of a research roadblock. The archival landscape is shifting, however, perhaps with significant consequences for this part of our lives as historians. More archives are moving their collections online, accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Digital archives make our lives easier; there's no traveling involved, no risk of running out of time on a research trip. But what's the trade-off? What we gain in research convenience, might we potentially lose in community?

FACULTY ONLY

Key Points of Comprehension

Unique Aspects: Working in the archive is one of the unique aspects of being a historian. It often forces us to act on a hunch and follow a thread of evidence through a variety of materials in order to construct a concise and coherent narrative.

Asking New Questions: If something does not work out, we go back to the drawing board, asking new questions to better fit the material that is available to us. In many ways, archival research demonstrates the adaptability of historians as members of the professional workforce.

Networking Opportunities: Archives are spaces that allow historians to build their network in a variety of ways. There is opportunity to meet historians of other disciplines, passionate archivists who can be valuable to our own projects, knowledgeable panelists, and other like-minded colleagues. As archives move online in the digital age, students must remember the community to which physical archives grant them access.

AVAILABLE ALUMNI GUEST SPEAKERS

(CONTACT AVAILABLE VIA LINKEDIN)

NEARBY

1. Christopher E. Ortega-Professor of Anthropology, Religious Studies, & History (religion, gender, and sexuality)
2. Nicole Arnold-Student Success and Instruction Librarian at UC Irvine
3. Joey Hwang-Program Specialist at U.S. Forest Service
4. Raymond Ortiz-Fundraising Strategist and Nonprofit Management
5. Natalie Navar Garcia-Archivist at The Lawrence de Graaf Center for Oral and Public History (COPH)
6. Nicole Carroll-Assistant Archivist at The Walt Disney Archives
7. Christine Shook-Historian & Assistant Vice President at Wells Fargo Family & Business History Center
8. Matthew Franklin-Digitization Specialist at California State University, Fullerton
9. Dana Detterich-Social Science Teacher and Dept. Chair
10. Christopher Turner-Sr. Technical Recruiter at Riot Games
11. Eric Ortega- Education and Tour Manager at Drake's Brewing Company
12. Stephanie Ruvalcaba-Administrative Support Coordinator at CSUF Instructional Design & Technology
13. Chelsea Thompson-Architectural Contracts Coordinator at Retail Design Collaborative
14. Ben Cartwright-Department Manager, Product Management and Business Development
15. Damian McCoy-Director of Applications at Del Taco Restaurants Inc.
16. Kristin McGowan-Maritime Coordinator at Ocean Institute
17. Mark Malebranche-Stage Manager, Retail Operations at Disney Parks & Resorts AND adjunct professor
18. Albert D. Ybarra-Distance Learning Coordinator at Los Angeles Mission College
19. Lindsay Huysentruyt-Historian and Archivist at S. Martinelli & Co.
20. Mariea Daniell Whittington-Assistant Library Director, Electronic Resources Librarian & Head of Electronic Services at Fuller Theological Seminary

...AND FROM A DISTANCE VIA ZOOM

1. Nicholas Ankney-Trust & Safety Policy Enforcement Specialist at YouTube
2. María D. Quintero -Outreach & Program Manager at John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum
3. Angelina Lerma -Attorney Advisor at Social Security Administration
4. Stefani Johnson-Production Coordinator| Rising Associate Producer| History & Animation Enthusiast
5. Julian Galindo-Associate Training Developer at Applied Medical