

November 3, 2008

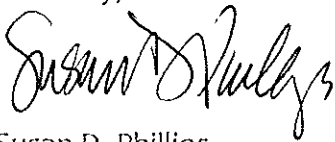
Dr. Risa Palm  
Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs  
State University of New York  
System Administration  
State University Plaza  
Albany, New York 12246

Dear Dr. Palm:

On behalf of the faculty at the University at Albany, I am pleased to transmit the attached proposal for consideration and program registration action. As indicated, the University at Albany seeks to amend the curriculum of our existing Master of Arts program in History and have the program re-registered accordingly.

This proposal has been fully considered and approved through our campus governance system. We are appreciative of efforts by staff in your Office of Program Review for the consideration of this proposal. Should there be any technical questions or the need for additional materials, please have inquiries directed to Jonathan Bartow, Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies (jbartow@uamail.albany.edu) at our campus. As always, we thank you for your on-going support.

Sincerely,



Susan D. Phillips  
Interim Provost and Vice President  
for Academic Affairs

Enclosure

- c. Dean Marjorie Pryse, Graduate Studies
- Dean Edelgard Wulfurt, College of Arts & Sciences
- Prof. Richard Hamm, Chair, Department of History
- Assistant Dean Jon Bartow, Graduate Studies

## **Updated Program Registration Request: Application for Revision of Existing MA Program in History, University at Albany, SUNY**

In accordance with State Education Department requirement for re-registration of a graduate program in which significant changes are made, we hereby submit to you the following proposal for the modification of our existing curriculum – a modification that adds a “History and Media” track to our existing program, and that clarifies the thematic and geographic options available in our existing program by dividing them into two clearly delineated tracks. These changes have already been approved on a departmental and campus level (the University at Albany Graduate Academic Council approved them at the conclusion of the 2007-08 academic year).

- 1) Registered title and program code number of existing program (from the SED *Inventory of Registered Programs*):

**History  
Master of Arts  
SED Program Code 03060**

- 2) Description of the proposed change and rationale for the change.

The University at Albany History Department has, since the mid-1990s, been one of the pioneering national history departments engaged in wedding historical scholarship and teaching with digital technologies. Our initiatives have been grounded in a belief that the work of historians should not be restricted to the narrow margins of academic discourse. We wanted to make historical thinking and historical reasoning a larger part of American life by bringing history to the airwaves, to television, and to the Internet. Our achievements have been recognized by numerous national and international professional organizations (such as the Oral History Association), by the National Endowment for the Humanities, by the Library of Congress, by the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, and in journal articles and book chapters that refer to projects initiated here. Department projects have integrated substantive scholarship with various media forms and have catalyzed research and pedagogy in areas of scholarship hitherto underrepresented in our profession – areas focused on the aural and visual dimensions of our past. Our projects have included: the first multimedia peer-reviewed online journal in our field, *The Journal for MultiMedia History*; broadcast, Internet, and CD/DVD aural history projects – including a weekly hour-long radio show broadcast regionally on the WWW (*Talking History*); community and regional history projects, digital media preservation and conversion projects, and on-line virtual museums and WWW installations; various community outreach and public programs, including community workshops, public presentations, and multimedia

historical performances; and the development of innovative model courses in history and media – including oral/video history, digital history, and documentary film/video and radio production courses .

With more than a dozen years of experience in digital history -- and in analog and digital media recording, preservation, production, and dissemination – we decided it was time to transform our expertise into programmatic form by means of a concentration in History and Media being established within our Master of Arts program in History. Building on existing courses, we felt that such a program would be highly appealing to many potential MA students. It would provide them with an opportunity to combine substantive academic study of various regional and thematic historical areas with technical media production skills. The program's goal is to promote research, writing, and production by students in areas of scholarship sensitive to the aural and visual dimensions of our past. Recognizing that we did not want to dilute the academic training of MA students by the introduction of more technically-focused courses at the expense of the former, we felt that a 36 credit concentration – rather than the traditional 30-credit one – was necessary. As an aside, apparently, the Syracuse University History Department, which introduced a similar but far more narrowly focused “Film and History” MA Program last year came to a similar realization, requiring a load of 39 credits for the completion of *its* program (Syracuse University's program focuses entirely on film; ours allows student to concentrate in film, radio/audio, digital/hypermedia history, and photography).

In preparation for our new concentration, we have been converting many of our “topics” courses – History 530 courses -- into regular 500 and 600-level courses (for example: Readings and Practicum in Oral/Video History; 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Documentary Media; Research Seminar and Practicum in History and Media; Readings in the History of Photography and Visual Media; Readings and Practicum in Aural History and Audio Documentary Production; Readings in the History and Theory of Historical Nonfiction Filmmaking; Readings and Practicum in Digital History). We believe our proposed concentration in History and Media is pedagogically rigorous, exciting, and innovative. We anticipate many students will be drawn to what we believe is an outstanding program with few national competitors. Already, we have had inquiries from close to a dozen students interested in our proposed program.

Since we were amending our program to allow for a 36 credit track in History and Media, we thought it would also be a good opportunity for us to clarify to students the choices they have in our existing program. We have therefore seized the opportunity to clearly spell out the options that formerly existed: for students to select *either* a geographically-based MA concentration *or* a thematically-based one. Therefore, the net result of our revisions has produced three concentrations within our MA program, explained below in more detail under “Track A” and “Track B” – both 30 credits, and “Track C,” our new 36-credit MA in History and Media.

- 3) Curriculum outline of the current program and of the proposed revised curriculum, with changes in program:

**Current Program – June 2008**

**Program Leading to the Master of Arts Degree in History**

**Program of Study (30 credits, minimum)**

1. **History (21 credits, minimum):**
  - a. **Courses, as advised, including at least one research seminar in the appropriate major field and one reading seminar;**
  - b. **With departmental approval a thesis in history for 4-6 credits may be presented in place of or in addition to the research seminar;**
2. **Supporting courses (0-9 credits): Courses in the social sciences and other fields as advised;**
3. **Satisfactory completion of a major field examination in one concentration chosen from Group A or one concentration chosen from Group B:**

*Group A*

**United States History  
Modern European History  
Latin America History  
African History  
Asian History**

*Group B*

**Local and Regional History  
International History  
Social and/or Economic History  
Public Policy  
Gender and Society  
Culture and Society  
Work and Society**

**Major Field Examination**

**With departmental approval a student may prepare for examination a field of concentration not listed under Groups A or B. The major field examination is waived for those students who write a master's thesis in history (His 699).**

**Foreign Language Requirement**

**A reading knowledge of one foreign language appropriate to the student's major field is required for M.A. candidates writing Master's theses on non-U.S. topics.**

**This requirement can be fulfilled by an examination in the Department, by an examination administered by a language department with approval of the History Department, or by satisfactory completion of a graduate level language course that has been approved by the History Department. A student may not take the language examination more than twice for the M.A. degree.**

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**Revised Program – (planned for September, 2009)**

**Program Leading to the Master of Arts Degree in History**

**Program Leading to the Master of Arts Degree in History (30 - 36 credits)**

**Program of Study**

**Track A - Geographic Focus, 30 credits**

**Major Fields: United States History  
Modern European History  
Latin America History  
African History  
Asian History**

- 1. Course work in History: 21 credits minimum**
  - a. Courses, as advised, including at least one research seminar in the appropriate major field and one reading seminar**
  - b. With departmental approval a thesis in history for 4-6 credits may be presented in place of or in addition to the research seminar**
- 2. Supporting Course work: 0 - 9 credits - Courses in the social sciences and other fields as advised;**
- 3. Major Field Exam: Satisfactory completion of an examination in one Geographic Focus major field, or an alternate concentration field with departmental approval; students completing a master's thesis are exempt from the major field exam requirement**
- 4. Foreign Language Requirement - A reading knowledge of one foreign language appropriate to the student's major field is required for M.A. candidates writing Master's theses on non-U.S. topics. This requirement can be fulfilled by an examination in the Department, by an examination administered by a language department with approval of the History Department, or by satisfactory completion of a graduate level language course that has been approved by the History Department. A student may not take the language examination more than twice for the MA degree.**

**Track B - Thematic Focus, 30 credits**

**Major Fields: Cultural History**

**Gender History**

**International, Global, and Comparative History Public Policy  
History**

**Social and Economic History Work and Society**

1. **Course work in History: 21 credits minimum**
  - a. **Courses, as advised, including at least one research seminar in the appropriate major field and one reading seminar**
  - b. **With departmental approval a thesis in history for 4-6 credits may be presented in place of or in addition to the research seminar**
2. **Supporting Course work: 0 - 9 credits - Courses in the social sciences and other fields as advised**
3. **Major Field Exam: Satisfactory completion of an examination in one Thematic Focus major field, or an alternate concentration field with departmental approval; students completing a master's thesis are exempt from the major field exam requirement**
4. **Foreign Language Requirement - A reading knowledge of one foreign language appropriate to the student's major field is required for M.A. candidates writing Master's theses on non-U.S. topics. This requirement can be fulfilled by an examination in the Department, by an examination administered by a language department with approval of the History Department, or by satisfactory completion of a graduate level language course that has been approved by the History Department. A student may not take the language examination more than twice for the MA degree.**

**Track C - History & Media Focus, 36 credits**

1. **Course work in History: 28 credits minimum**
  - a. **Courses, as advised, including His 607 and two courses from among His 602, 604, 605, and 606; also including at least one research seminar and one reading seminar with a thematic focus**
  - b. **HIS 699 Master's Thesis or HIS 698 History and Media Masters Project**
2. **Supporting Course work: 0 - 8 credits - Courses in the social sciences and other fields as advised**

**3. Foreign Language Requirement - A reading knowledge of one foreign language appropriate to the student's major field is required for M.A. candidates writing Master's theses on non-U.S. topics. This requirement can be fulfilled by an examination in the Department, by an examination administered by a language department with approval of the History Department, or by satisfactory completion of a graduate level language course that has been approved by the History Department. A student may not take the language examination more than twice for the MA degree.**

- 4) Course outlines for new courses, if any. Indicate prerequisites, the frequency with which the course is offered, and the name, faculty rank, and status of the instructor(s). If none, please so state.

**All of the following courses will be offered at least once every three semesters; most every year. There are no prerequisites for any of the courses.**

**Instructors will vary but will include: Prof. Gerald Zahavi (Professor), Ray Sapirstein (Assistant Professor), Amy Murrell Taylor (Associate Professor), and Sheila Curran Bernard (Assistant Professor).**

#### **History 602**

##### **Readings in Visual Media and Culture**

**This course examines the history of American and European photography and related visual media, placing major photographic genres and practitioners within the intellectual and cultural context of their era, as well as incorporating analyses of vernacular practices in the medium. As such, the course will provide a chronological overview of the history of photography and uncover the major themes through which popular and critical audiences have understood the medium since the introduction of photography, circa 1826. By looking at photographs, reading photographic and aesthetic theory, and drawing parallels from other disciplines and media, this course will prioritize photographs as documents in cultural history, providing a basis in critical literature on photography, and will function as an introduction to research in the history of photography and visual media.**

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#### **History 604**

##### **Readings and Practicum in Aural History and Audio Documentary Production**

**This course examines the developing field of aural history and the use of audio composition technique to communicate sound-rich historical content to a broad audience via radio and the Internet. It includes readings on historical aural environments and techniques for aural reconstructions of past times and places, introduction to audio archives and archival research in both textual and media archives, coverage of 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century historical radio documentary work, analysis of audio documentary forms and non-fiction storytelling techniques, scriptwriting, and technical instruction in the art of production and editing. The**

course will be structured to take students from fundamentals to sophisticated audio documentary production techniques.

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### **History 605**

#### **Readings in the History and Theory of Documentary Filmmaking**

This course will introduce students to the history and theory of documentary cinema, with a detailed focus on *historical* documentary filmmaking. We will review and analyze – through extensive readings and viewings – the evolution of the documentary film *genre* in general, and the varieties of approaches adopted by non-fiction filmmakers engaged in producing films focusing on historical themes and topics. We will systematically unravel the various elements that contribute to the creation of informative, moving, and powerful documentary films, examining the various modes or styles that have evolved in the course of the *genre's* development and the various techniques documentarians have utilized to effectively communicate historical ideas in cinematic form.

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### **History 606**

#### **Readings and Practicum in Digital History and Hypermedia**

This course introduces students to the practice of history in the digital age. The emergence of the World Wide Web has opened up new avenues for researching, analyzing, and presenting the past—but has also raised new questions about producing quality historical scholarship in this open environment. This course will work on two fronts, looking first at the current state of the field of “digital history,” from issues of narrative and hypertext theory to some of the best (and worst) practices of current historical websites. At the same time, as a central component of the course, students will work in collaboration to build their own well-researched and historically sound web projects. Previous experience with building websites is welcomed but not required.

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### **History 607**

#### **Research Seminar and Practicum in History and Media**

This course is for students interested in developing in-depth historical research and production skills in a variety of media. It will be offered with various concentrations – depending on the content emphasis chosen by the instructor (e.g. “Research Seminar and Practicum in History and Media: Visual Media”; “Research Seminar and Practicum in History and Media: Historical Documentary Filmmaking”). The course will be identical in approach to the Department’s thematic area research courses, except that the research emphasis will be expanded beyond manuscript archives to cover visual and audio archives in depth, and the final project will be a



*media* project (e.g. – documentary film, virtual museum Web site, radio documentary).

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### **History 698**

#### **History and Media Masters Project**

**This course provides MA students concentrating in History and Media an opportunity to plan, conduct research, and produce a substantial media project reflecting their area of expertise and interest. Faculty have individual class numbers for His 698; PERMISSION OF SUPERVISING INSTRUCTOR REQUIRED.**

- 5) For new faculty teaching new courses, provide brief résumé(s). If no new faculty are required, please state.

**No new faculty lines are required for the changes we propose. We should add, however, that in the past 2 years, we have hired two faculty members who are directly supporting our new concentration and course offerings (Professors Ray Sapirstein and Sheila Curran Bernard).**

- 6) Description of any additional costs. If none, please explain.

**NO ADDITIONAL COSTS ARE ANTICIPATED. The University at Albany has already provided us with: 1) studio spaces (both audio and video), 2) a multimedia lab, 3) software 4) field recording equipment (audio and video recorders) 5) lighting kits, microphones, and additional audio-visual material to support the coursework and projects of enrolled students. Many of the courses created for the new track in History and Media have been offered in the past on an irregular basis; we now intend to add them to the core curriculum of the Department.**

- 7) Effective date of the change in the program. If the current program needs to remain registered until students have graduated (or have been otherwise accommodated), please indicate the anticipated effective date by which matriculants will have cleared the old version of the program.

**We wish to make the effective date of the changes September 2009. A number of students have already expressed great interest in enrolling in the new concentration in Media and History. Students enrolled in the current program will not be affected substantively by the creation of Track A and Track B, as they constitute a clarification of the existing program and not a revision of it. The only substantive change is the addition of “Track C,” as explained above.**

**For additional information on any aspect of this proposal, please contact Professor John Monfasani and Gerald Zahavi in the Department of History.**