The Transferable PhD:
Converting Academic Skills to Broader Career Paths

Saturday, March 28th, 8:30am - 2:00pm
Carr 103, Duke East Campus
Durham, NC

A half-day conference featuring humanities and social sciences Ph.Ds, discussing how their training and skills transferred to a variety of careers, from consulting, to teaching, to starting their own business.

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Duke History Department
Forum for Scholars and Publics
The Duke Graduate School
The Duke Innovation and Entrepreneurship Initiative

Conference Schedule

8:30am  Light Breakfast and Coffee
9:00am  Panel 1: Building Your Brand: Humanities PhDs as Entrepreneurs
         Margy Thomas Horton, ScholarShape
9:45am  Break
10:00am Panel 2: Rethinking Audience
         Trudi Abel, Rubenstein Library, Duke University
         Jacqueline M. Olich, RTI International
10:45am Break
11:00am Panel 3: Teaching as a Strength
         Chair: Richard Schramm, National Humanities Center
         David R. Long, Durham Tech
         Zach Lechner, North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics
         Martha Regalis, North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics
12:15pm Lunch
12:30pm Keynote
         Benjamin Filene, Director of Public History, UNC Greensboro

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About HPDC
The History Professional Development Committee (HPDC) consists of Duke Ph.D. students, largely but not exclusively in history, who strive to enhance professional development opportunities for those humanities and social science graduate students seeking career opportunities beyond the standard tenure-track academic route. We believe that the applications of our rigorous training are too great—and the tenure-track job options too few—for Ph.D. students to restrict themselves to only the academic tenure path. HPDC organizes workshops and panels, facilitates data collection, and serves as a liaison between students and the Duke Graduate School on issues of career development.
Participant Biographies

Trudi Abel
Trudi Abel is a historian and research services archivist at Duke University. She received her doctorate in U.S. history from Rutgers University and a graduate degree in Library Science from UNC in 2013. Abel taught American cultural history at Williams College before moving to North Carolina. In 1999, Abel created one of the first digital humanities projects on Duke’s campus. She worked with undergraduate and graduate students to create the Digital Durham Project (digitaldurham.duke.edu), an electronic repository of primary documents for Durham in the post-Civil War years. The site includes letters, photographs, maps and census data. She has used this site in several different undergraduate history seminars at Duke. In the fall of 2015, Abel will create, with Victoria Szabo, the NC Jukebox project, a new digital humanities initiative funded by Bass Connections and the Franklin Humanities Institute. Abel is also working in a position at Rubenstein Library as a Research Services Archivist where she serves as liaison to faculty and director of the Archives Alive initiative.

Benjamin Filene (Keynote speaker)
Benjamin Filene is Associate Professor and Director of Public History at the University of North Carolina Greensboro. He is author of Romancing the Folk: Public Memory and American Roots Music (named a notable book of the year by the New York Times Book Review) and co-editor of Letting Go? Sharing Historical Authority in a User-Generated World. Since 2006 he has worked with his students to complete a series of community-based, collaborative projects relating to North Carolina history, and he consults on exhibition projects across the country.

Prior to UNCG, Filene was Senior Exhibit Developer at the Minnesota Historical Society. He served as lead developer on Open House: If These Walls Could Talk (winner of a WOW Award for innovation from the American Association for State and Local History) and Sounds Good to Me: Music in Minnesota. Filene received his Ph.D. in American Studies from Yale University.

Margy Thomas Horton
Margy Thomas Horton earned her Ph.D. in English from Baylor (2012), where she published on American literature and was a Presidential Doctoral Scholar. Upon moving to the Research Triangle, she quickly discovered a need she was uniquely suited to fill: scholars all around her were slogging away at long, solitary research projects, and they needed some structure and inspiration! She founded her business, ScholarShape, in order to offer customized writing consultation and editing services to graduate students, post-docs and faculty. Initially serving only local clients, she now works remotely with researchers as distant as London and Australia. Her services are designed to help clients streamline their writing processes, understand relevant genre conventions, and produce polished manuscripts that articulate the meaning of their research. In addition to her work with individual clients, Margy also serves as NC State’s Dissertation Institute Consultant, manages a website of free writing resources, and writes for the popular blog The Professor Is In.

Jacqueline M. Olich
Jacqueline M. Olich, joined RTI International in 2014 as director of university collaborations. Previously, she was Director of Graduate Studies in Russian and Eastern European Studies at UNC-Chapel Hill and Associate Director of UNC’s Center for Slavic, Eurasian and Eastern European Studies. As Associate Director, Dr. Olich oversaw programs for a Duke-UNC Title VI U.S. Department of Education National Resource Center and administered more than $1.5 million in student fellowships. Prior to working for UNC, she was director of Diba Industries, Durham, NC, and Danbury, CT. She has published in the Journal of Multimedia History, the Encyclopedia of Russian History, and the Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth. Dr. Olich has served as a reviewer for UNC Press, Environmental History, the Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth, and Canadian Slavonic Papers/Revue canadienne des slavistes. She is a Fellow at the UNC Center for Slavic, Eurasian and Eastern European Studies.

Zachary Lechner
Zachary J. Lechner is an instructor of humanities at the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics in Durham, where he teaches American Studies and Latin American Studies. He received a MA in history from Purdue University in 2005 and a PhD in history from Temple University in 2012. He is a historian of modern US culture and popular culture. A revised version of his dissertation titled The South of the Mind: American Imaginings of White Southernness, 1960–1980, is under contract with the University of Georgia Press. His publications include “We Have Certainly Saved Ourselves’: Popular Views of Masculinity during the Korean War, 1950-1953,” in the December 2014 issue of Comparative American Studies and “Commemorating Jimmy Carter and Southern Rural Life in Plains, Georgia” in Born in the U.S.A.: Birth, Commemoration, and American Public Memory, ed. Seth C. Bruggeman (University of Massachusetts Press, 2012).

David Long
David Long earned his B.A. and Ph.D. from the UNC – Chapel Hill where he also served as Senior Fellow for the Weiss Urban Livability Program, a Global Research Institute Fellow, and an assistant to the Vice Provost for Graduate Studies and Research. In addition to research concerning the impact of World War II on American cities, his published work has focused on urban development and water politics in the San Francisco Bay Area. His writings have received awards from the Georgia Historical Quarterly and Duquesne University Press. Currently, Long teaches history at Durham Technical Community College in North Carolina. He is also the Chair of Social Sciences/Humanities and the Associate in General Studies Program Director within the institution’s University Transfer Department.

Martha Regalis
For the past 28 years, Dr. Regalis has developed interdisciplinary programs and courses at the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics (NCSSM), and at the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy (IMSA). She currently teaches at NCSSM, where she also directs the Summer Bridge program, which she helped design. Dr. Regalis earned a B.A. in English at Clemson, and an M.A. and Ph.D. in English at LSU. Her dissertation, “Murderous Historian: Henry Adams, Modernity, and the Problem of Subjectivity,” spanned the boundaries of literature, life-writing, historiography, and theory. She later studied history and philosophy at Northern Illinois University, and has won a number of summer fellowships from the NEH. She has also co-written two million-dollar “Teaching American History” grants from the U.S. Department of Education. She has presented her work at MLA, SCMLA, and the Council for Hispanic Studies, and has published in Restoration, and The Southern Review, and elsewhere.

Richard Schramm
Richard Schramm is the vice-president for education programs at the National Humanities Center. He holds a Ph.D. in English from the University of North Carolina, where he concentrated on the literature of the South. While he has spent some of his career in the classroom, most of it has been devoted to designing and running humanities education programs for the general public and for teachers, first at UNC and, since 1984, at the Humanities Center. Over the years he has seen that work evolve from face-to-face programs to web-based initiatives, and he now oversees an array of websites and an annual series of professional development webinars for high school teachers of American history and literature.