

# Handbook

Master's Program in Public Humanities

2020-2021



John Nicholas Brown  
**Center for Public Humanities  
and Cultural Heritage**

# **Handbook for Graduate Students**

## **M.A. Program in Public Humanities**

### **Brown University**

### **2020-2021**

*This handbook provides information about policies and practices for students in the Public Humanities M.A. program. Ph.D. candidates seeking an M.A. in Public Humanities should refer to the American Studies Graduate Student Handbook, or seek guidance from the American Studies Director of Graduate Study. The handbook can also be viewed on the Public Humanities website.*

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## REQUIREMENTS FOR THE M.A.

John Nicholas Brown Center for Public Humanities and Cultural Heritage administers the M.A. program in Public Humanities and the Department of American Studies grants the degree. The degree can be completed either as a terminal master's program or as part of the American Studies Ph.D. The curriculum provides students with a thorough understanding of the theory, methods, and history of Public Humanities. Courses explore subjects related to arts and humanities and enable students to develop the knowledge and skills to facilitate public engagement and partnerships, prepare and manage cultural programs, work with museum artifacts, create exhibits and web sites, and preserve cultural heritage.

### Course Work

Completion of the M.A. program requires twelve courses and completion of a summer practicum. Full-time MA students typically complete the degree in two years. With permission, students may accelerate degree completion to three semesters. (See page 4 for a chart outlining suggested enrollment patterns). Part-time students may take 1 – 2 courses per semester. Academic advising is conducted by two senior faculty members, Marisa Brown and Steve Lubar, and the Director, Dietrich Neumann. Advisors are available to answer questions and assist students in selecting courses and understanding program requirements.

### Required Courses

All students must take AMST 2650 *Introduction to Public Humanities* and AMST 2540 *Methods in Public Humanities*. Students are strongly encouraged to complete these classes in their first year. Students also must take at least one upper-level seminar in American Studies (generally at the 2000 level); eight elective courses approved by their advisor; and complete a summer practicum and a second practicum during a spring or fall semester (usually in their second year).

### Practicum Courses

Students must complete two practicums that integrate research and theory with hands-on practice. One practicum must be completed during the summer following the first year of classes. The summer practicum is required but uncredited, and students will not be charged tuition for this requirement. The second practicum (AMST 2680) can be scheduled during any semester, but generally not during the first semester.

Ph.D. candidates who are also receiving an M.A. in Public Humanities are required to complete only the summer practicum. Part-time M.A. students must complete two practicums, although the duration may be spread over a longer period than described above.

Students will receive an *incomplete* grade and no credit until all obligations for the practicum are completed and an on-site supervisor submits an evaluation to the Center's practicum coordinator. See the practicum guide section for more information about practicum requirements.

You can find more information about practicums, including practicum funding, in **Practicum Guide** on pages 11-14.

## Elective Courses

Elective courses can be selected from 1000 to 2000 level courses offered at Brown and from graduate courses at RISD. Graduate level courses at Harvard's Graduate School of Arts and Sciences can also count for credit. The disciplinary field or departments for electives are not limited. Students should aim for a balance of practice, theory, and content among seminars and lecture classes.

All students are strongly encouraged to take at least one class related to nonprofit management and one project-based course. Many departments offer classes focused on nonprofit management or organizational strategies. Most courses sponsored by the Center for Public Humanities combine subject-matter expertise with the opportunity to apply ideas and skills to a project. Other courses at the university, in the Department of American Studies, Anthropology, History, History of Art and Architecture, Archaeology, and others, are also project-based or could be modified to focus on projects. Consult the list of relevant courses provided by the advisors at the start of each semester to find nonprofit management or project courses.

## Projects in Public Humanities, AMST 2660

This elective course allows students to earn credit for projects that they initiate, design, and execute independently or as part of a group. Projects should result in a graduate level initiative—an exhibition, program evaluation, website, public program, tour, etc.—that will significantly enhance a student's education. Any regular faculty member can serve as the faculty advisor and instructor of record. If students do not have a faculty advisor, the DGS can serve as the advisor and instructor of record for AMST 2660. Appropriate adjunct faculty and professionals can serve as project co-advisors. Students who enroll in AMST 2660 should commit a minimum of 125 hours over a semester (approximately 10 hours/week). Students can work on a project individually, as part of a team, or in a leadership role on a larger group project.

To enroll in AMST 2660, students should have successfully completed AMST 2650 *Introduction to Public Humanities* and must receive prior approval by submitting a proposal outlining the project and describing the intended outcomes/products and assignments. This proposal should list all participants, including any community or university partners, collaborators, and sponsors; it should also include a tentative weekly schedule and work plan. If the project involves multiple students, the proposal should describe how work will be shared or divided within the group. Project proposals should be submitted to the DGS by the end of the second full week of classes each semester.

Once approved, students must register for AMST 2660 with an S/NC grading option. Projects undertaken in this class cannot simultaneously count toward a practicum or the requirements of another credit class. *Project in Public Humanities* is limited to public humanities students and can be taken no more than two times (but not during a single semester).

Limited funding is available from the Center for Project Courses. Permission to register for the class does not guarantee financial support from the Center for the proposed project. Projects requiring funding must include

a budget specifying any funds requested from the Center and outlining how additional money will be raised. The Center’s contribution towards a project will be between \$100 and \$300. Requests for funding (project proposal and budget) should be emailed to Dietrich Neumann and Sabina Griffin by the end of the second full week of classes each semester.

Evaluation

Students are evaluated at the end of their first summer of Graduate School and at the end of fall semester of the second year. Part-time students are evaluated at the beginning of each fall semester in which they are enrolled. These written evaluations will be drawn from faculty feedback on the student’s performance, practicum supervisor evaluations, and/or perspectives from program staff or fellows with whom the student has worked. The student will be notified at the time of said evaluation as to whether he or she is considered by the program to be in good standing. Good standing will typically be indicated by passing grades in all courses at the moment of evaluation, as well as satisfactory completion of any practicums to date. Students with warning or satisfactory standing are evaluated at the end of each semester.

ENROLLMENT

Course Load and Sequencing

The course schedule and sequence of classes taken by public humanities students can vary. Below are suggested registration patterns:

|            | Four Semester Track                      | Three Semester Track                     |
|------------|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Semester 1 | AMST 2650 <i>Intro</i> + 2 electives     | AMST 2650 <i>Intro</i> + 3 electives     |
| Semester 2 | AMST 2540 <i>Methods</i> + 2 electives   | AMST 2540 <i>Methods</i> + 3 electives   |
| Summer     | Summer practicum                         | Summer practicum                         |
| Semester 3 | 3 electives                              | AMST 2680 Second practicum + 3 electives |
| Semester 4 | AMST 2680 Second practicum + 2 electives |                                          |

Regardless of the registration pattern assumed, the university issues final tuition bills based on actual course enrollment. Course enrollment must be reconciled by the registrar’s office to ensure that students are billed correctly. Scholarship support from the Center for Public Humanities will be adjusted to match the course enrollment and tuition bill. To ensure that bills are correct, students must communicate their actual course enrollment to Sabina Griffin following each registration and shopping period, or immediately following any subsequent changes mid-semester. Questions about tuition billing should be directed to Sabina.

According to the Graduate School, full--time status entails enrollment in two or more classes each semester. Students should consult the [Master's Funding](#) page of the Graduate School website for information about the impact of a reduced course load on scholarships and outstanding educational loans.

## Grades

Grades lower than a B are considered unsatisfactory and do not count for credit toward the M.A. degree. Students graded Incomplete will have to set up a new date with the instructor to submit all required coursework. After one year, the grade automatically converts to an F unless a dean approves the issuance of a late grade. In general, students should take courses for a grade. Students may register "Satisfactory/No Credit" for courses which do not have a graded option, or in extremely compelling circumstances, with the permission of the Director of Graduate Studies, but classes for which they receive an NC do not count toward the M.A. degree.

## Credit for Classes at Other Institutions

Students should expect to take most of their classes at Brown University. However, the Graduate School allows students to transfer one graduate--level course taken at another school for credit towards an M.A. degree. The form to request transfer of graduate credits can be picked up at the Office of the Registrar. The form requires advisor approval. With the exception of Brown students in the Fifth Year Master's program (See page 7), undergraduate courses are not accepted for graduate credit.

As the result of a cross-registration agreement, Brown University students may enroll in courses offered at Rhode Island School of Design. Students who wish to enroll in a RISD class must seek permission from the instructor and follow the directions of the Office of the Registrar regarding [RISD cross-registration](#). Due to COVID19-related scheduling changes and Brown's change to the 3 semester pattern for 2020-2021 academic year, Brown students can take RISD courses only in the Fall 2020 semester.

Brown also allows students to cross--register for classes at the Harvard University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. To enroll in a Harvard class, students must secure permission from the instructor. Students can register for Harvard courses via UFunds, which utilizes an on-line process for electronic approval from their advisor, the Brown graduate school, and the Harvard faculty member before submitting the form to the Harvard registrar. For further information about credit for classes taken at other institutions, students should consult with their advisor and the Graduate School. Due to COVID-19- related scheduling changes, students who are planning to graduate in Spring 2021 cannot take a course at Harvard during Spring 2021 semester. The Registrar's office will not receive the final grade for a Harvard course before the Commencement, and you will not receive the course credit in time to graduate.

Students should take no more than four courses for credit toward their degree at universities other than Brown (RISD, Harvard, etc.). Students may petition the Director of Graduate Studies to take outside courses beyond the initial four.

## STUDENT STATUS AND TYPES

### Ph.D. Students

Students enrolled in the Ph.D. program in the American Studies department may elect to receive an M.A. in Public Humanities en route to the doctorate. This entails completion of AMST 2540 *Methods in Public Humanities*, AMST 2650 *Introduction to Public Humanities*, a summer practicum, and an examination field in some aspect of public humanities. For further information, students should refer to the American Studies department graduate handbook or contact the Director of Graduate Studies in American Studies.

### 5<sup>th</sup> - year Master's Students

Current Brown University undergraduates may be considered for admission to the public humanities M.A. program under a slightly expedited program. Students who apply and are admitted to the M.A. program during their senior year can count two classes completed as an undergraduate toward their graduate degree. All other program requirements for the M.A. degree, including class requirements and practicums, must be fulfilled as specified above. Although the University terms this a "5th--year M.A.," most students will need at least three semesters to complete all program requirements. For more information, see information about the [5th-year Master's Degree](#) on the Graduate School website.

### Part-Time Students

In exceptional cases, a student may opt for part--time status in the M.A. program, taking two or fewer courses a semester. Students who seek acceptance as a part--time student, or who need to shift to part--time status because of personal or professional demands, should consult with the DGS about this possibility and implications for completing the degree. M.A. degrees must be completed within no more than five years.

### Graduate Certificate Students

Ph.D. students who are currently enrolled at Brown and are interested in public engagement and the work of non-profit cultural organizations have an opportunity to receive a graduate certificate in public humanities. American Studies Ph.D. students are not eligible for the certificate program. The certificate program requires completion of four courses: AMST2540 *Methods in Public Humanities*, AMST 2650 *Introduction to Public Humanities*, one practicum (uncredited summer practicum or AMST 2680 *Semester Practicum in Public Humanities*), and one elective. All courses must be completed with a grade B or above. Academic advising for the graduate certificate program in public humanities is conducted by Professor Steve Lubar.

### Leaves of Absence

In accordance with the policy of Brown University's graduate school, students may request a leave of absence (typically for one semester) through application to the Graduate School. Because the Graduate School requires that M.A. degrees be completed within five years, a leave may affect students' progress toward completion. The DGS must approve all requests for leaves submitted by public humanities students. For further information about leave requests and deadlines, see information regarding [leaves of absence](#) on the Graduate School website.

## Grievance Procedures

Grievances should be brought to the Director of Graduate Study and/or the Center Director, and they may be brought individually or by groups which share a grievance. Depending on the circumstances, a student may opt to take grievances to the University ombudsperson, to the Title IX Office, or to a dean in the Graduate School.

## FELLOWSHIPS AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Public humanities M.A. students are eligible for partial tuition scholarships provided by the Center for Public Humanities. In recent years, most admitted students who request program aid at the time of application have been awarded a tuition scholarship equal to up to 40% of tuition. Students in good standing can expect to receive similar support for their second year. Students will be notified of their scholarship upon acceptance to the program. Students who require additional support are encouraged to visit the [Office of Financial Aid](#), which can provide information on student loans and leads on sources of funding beyond Brown University.

In addition to tuition scholarships, the Center for Public Humanities provides other forms of support for student activities.

### Practicum Funding

*Summer Practicums:* The Center for Public Humanities, through the generosity of a donor, has been able to award up to \$3,000 in summer funding to partially defray M.A. students' summer living expenses. To apply, complete the Summer Practicum Funding Request and Budget Form **no later than April 1**. Summer funding awards are paid via stipend at the end of June.

*Academic Year Practicums:* If free public transportation is not available to a practicum site, students can request up to \$350 in commuting cost reimbursement. To seek funding, submit a memo describing your practicum and an anticipated travel budget to Sabina Griffin within two weeks of beginning your practicum. If your request is approved, you must save receipts and submit them monthly for reimbursement. No reimbursement is possible without valid documentation of your travel expenses.

### Professional Development Funds

Public humanities M.A. students are awarded up to \$500 for professional development to be used for participation expenses in up to two conferences or workshops during your enrollment in the program. Students who present at a conference are encouraged to apply for Graduate School Travel funds first (see **External Support for Travel** section below), and use the Center's funds to supplement external funding. All receipts must be submitted to Sabina Griffin within 30 days of purchase. Students must be enrolled at Brown to qualify for funding. Therefore, students who complete the program in December, must use professional development funds and submit all receipts by December 15. Students who complete the program in May, must use their professional development funds and submit all receipts before the Commencement.

Brown University has strict regulations about reimbursements, and we must comply with all the rules. Please be patient about the difficulties and meet all our requests for information. All funds operate as reimbursements – first you spend money, then Brown returns it. Receipts showing payment are required for

all reimbursements. To request use of professional development funds students must complete [Professional Development Reimbursement Request Form](#) and submit receipts showing payment of all approved reimbursable expenses to Sabina Griffin within 30 days after the payment date or end of travel to allow time for processing. Examples of eligible travel expenses: air/train/ground transportation, per mile reimbursement for personal car use, lodging, and conference registration fee. Students should use a per-diem calculation if they need reimbursement for daily living expenses during conference travel. Receipts under \$20 are not eligible for reimbursements. Receipts older than 60 days cannot be reimbursed.

Ph.D. students are not eligible for professional development funding, as they have funding through their departments.

**Please note, that due to COVID-19 restrictions on Brown-sponsored travel, we cannot reimburse for in-person travel expenses at this time. Reimbursement for travel will resume as soon as Brown-sponsored travel becomes possible. You can get reimbursed for virtual conferences expenses. Reimbursement rules outlined above apply to virtual conferences reimbursements**

### External Support for Travel

Students who are making presentations at conferences and students who are travelling abroad for public humanities projects or practicums may be eligible for support from the Graduate School and Graduate Student Council. For eligibility and application information, see the [Conference Travel](#) page and [International Travel Fund](#) page at the Graduate School website; and [Conference and External Travel Funding](#) page on the Graduate Student Council website.

### Funding for Public Humanities Classes and Independent Projects

When possible, the Center for Public Humanities will provide partial funding for extracurricular or course projects. Funding is only available for approved projects. Funding to support project-based activities that occur within a course must relate to class requirements and involve extraordinary expenses. Only M.A. students may seek these funds. The Center's contribution towards a project will not exceed \$100.

To request funds, students should submit a written request to Dietrich Neumann (with a copy to Sabina) for approval. The request must include a note from the faculty member teaching the class, a detailed budget listing reasonable costs associated with the activity specifying any funds requested from the Center, and outlining how additional money will be raised. Expenses may include materials, equipment, design, graphic services production, publicity, commuting travel to project sites outside of Providence, and other expenses directly related to the project. Non-reimbursable expenses include food for meetings, class parties, salaries, or expenses incurred on class field trips that appear on the course syllabus. Approved budgets for Graphics Service orders, publicity, and catering will be paid by the Center directly. Please consult with Sabina Griffin to make arrangements for direct payment.

## Curatorial Fellowships

A small number of Public Humanities M.A. students are awarded Curatorial Fellowships to bring their expertise in exhibit design, digital scholarship, and public programs to Brown departments, centers, galleries, and libraries. Fellows receive a yearly \$15,000 stipend and work 12-15 hours a week during their two years in the M.A. program. The fellowship stipend is paid in nine equal installments, at the end of each month, September – May. Curatorial fellowship opportunities change each year, depending on the funding department's needs and available funds. All students who request financial aid will automatically be considered for an available fellowship opportunity. Fellowships are awarded based on a student's experience and expertise specified in the admission application. Additional paperwork is not required.

## Public History of Slavery Fellowship

One fully-supported two-year fellowship is available each year for a student pursuing an M.A. in Public Humanities who is dedicated to working in museums and other cultural institutions on issues related to the history and legacy of slavery. The fellowships are intended to help prepare future professionals to help museums and cultural institutions address controversial issues, teaching the public and initiating broad conversations about slavery, race and racism, and retrospective justice. The fellowships cover tuition, fees, and include a stipend. Students applying for this fellowship should indicate interest in their application, and explain in their personal statement how their academic and professional preparation and career goals make them appropriate candidates for this fellowship.

## Native American and Indigenous Studies Initiative Fellowship

One fully-supported two-year fellowship is available each year for a student pursuing an M.A. in Public Humanities who is dedicated to increasing the understanding and maintenance of the cultural traditions and political experiences of Indigenous Peoples. The fellowships cover tuition, fees, and include a stipend. Students applying for this fellowship should indicate interest in their application, and explain in their personal statement how their academic and professional preparation and career goals make them appropriate candidates for this fellowship.

## City Year's University Partnership

The Public Humanities M.A. program participates in City Year's University Partnership. City Year Corps members and alumni and current/former staff who are accepted to the Public Humanities M.A. program are eligible for financial assistance, including an application fee waiver. For more information regarding the City Year partnership, and benefits to accepted Public Humanities M.A. students, visit the [City Year Alumni portal](#).

# JOHN NICHOLAS BROWN CENTER FOR PUBLIC HUMANITIES AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

## Extracurricular Learning Opportunities

In addition to program requirements, students are strongly encouraged to participate in extracurricular and informal learning opportunities. Every year, the Center for Public Humanities organizes dozens of events like workshops, lectures, conferences, field trips, and presentations by scholars and professionals working in the field of public humanities. These events supplement the curriculum by providing intensive hands-on training or in-depth coverage of topics touched on in classes or essential to finding jobs and working in the field. Interaction with visiting speakers also helps students build professional networks and learn about innovative work in the field. Students are expected to take full advantage of these opportunities and are invited to recommend speakers and suggest topics for programs or special projects to the Center Director.

## The Nightingale--Brown House

The Nightingale--Brown House, a National Historic Landmark, serves as the headquarters of the Center for Public Humanities. The house and its historical collections including furniture and fine and decorative arts are available for research, study, and interpretive programs. The building also contains a seminar room, a public humanities library, and spaces for formal and informal gatherings by students and members of the Brown and Providence communities. Areas on the third floor are designated for graduate student use including offices equipped with computers, meeting spaces, and a kitchen. During the fall and spring semester, the building remains open for evening work hours, proctored by designated students. Students should be conscientious in their use of the building, respecting its multiple purposes as staff offices, classrooms, study and social spaces, and repository of historical collections.

For more information about the Nightingale--Brown House and its museum collections, students should contact Ron Potvin. To reserve space for meetings or programs, contact Sabina Griffin.

**Due to COVID-19 and Brown's efforts to reduce in-person work on campus, access to the building during the Fall 2020 semester will be limited. Return to Campus restrictions will be communicated to students directly via email. Building access for the Spring 2021 semester will be re-evaluated and determined based on the University guidelines later in the fall. All up to date information will be communicated to students in a timely manner by email.**

## Gallery Spaces

The Nightingale-Brown House contains formal and informal gallery spaces for exhibits and programs. The Center sponsors an active program of exhibitions developed by public humanities students, faculty, and staff; by other Brown students; and occasionally by artists and organizations from the greater Providence community. For more information about the Center galleries, students should contact Ron Potvin, and complete [Gallery Space Request Form](#), if interested in using the space.

## Public Humanities Library

The Public Humanities library, which is independent of the holdings of the Brown library system, contains over 2,500 volumes and is accessible to MA students, fellows, and faculty. The library also contains course reserves for students enrolled in classes sponsored by the Center for Public Humanities. A searchable catalogue of the Public Humanities Library is available at [Library Thing](#). Students in the MA program may sign out texts for short term loans.

## PRACTICUM GUIDE

This guide describes the curriculum requirements for practicums undertaken by public humanities students, discusses the process for setting up and evaluating a placement, and outlines the obligations of students and of onsite practicum supervisors.

Due to Covid-19 and restrictions upon in-person work at most cultural institutions, the Public Humanities Program urges students to consider remote practicums or practicums that combine in-person and remote work. Also, the minimum hours required for completion of the practicum may be adjusted based upon the nature of the work and the circumstances of the practicum due to Covid-19. Students should contact Ron Potvin for advising and for more information.

### Overview

Practicums are significant professional training experiences, chosen to complement coursework, prior work experiences, and career interests. Practicums allow students to apply theory and practice in a real world setting and encourage fresh insights into their interests and aptitudes. Practicums fill gaps in students' understanding of public humanities professions, providing practical experience and helping them build a resume and portfolio that demonstrates their skills and experiences. Practicums expand Students' professional networks as they work alongside and under the supervision of experienced professionals. Practicums constitute a partnership between students, the center, and a public humanities organization and result in outcomes that are useful to the sponsoring organization and beneficial to students. The general parameters should be determined in advance, with students' learning objectives and institutions' goals clearly agreed upon before the practicum begins.

### Requirements

Students must satisfactorily complete two practicums, typically undertaken at two different organizations, to fulfill M.A. requirements. For summer practicums, students should expect to work full-time over the span of 8 – 10 weeks, totaling 300 – 375 hours. Students must commit approximately 125 – 150 hours to their second practicum, which may be completed over the span of one or two semesters. At least one experienced professional should supervise and mentor the practicum student, providing consistent instruction and attention. Since the summer practicum is uncredited, registration is not required. For the second practicum, students will register for AMST 2680 and should select the S/NC (Satisfactory/No Credit) option. A satisfactory rating depends upon the quality of work performed at the sponsoring institution and other aspects of the

practicum such as blogging, written reports, and (for academic-year practicums) participation in a practicum seminar. For more information, see “Requirements for the M.A.” on page 2.

## Looking for a Placement

The process of identifying a practicum should begin several months before its anticipated start. Practicums during the academic year typically are fulfilled at organizations within Rhode Island or Massachusetts. During the summer, it is more common to select a practicum that requires residence outside New England. Applications for summer placements, particularly at large institutions, are often due as early as December.

Some public humanities organizations provide structured and competitive programs and offer a stipend or salary or cover some expenses. In these cases, the sponsoring organization often will determine the internship project(s) in advance and typically have a formal application process with preset deadlines. Other students prefer to tailor opportunities that specifically fit their interests

Part-time students should think creatively and strategically about how to balance their goals for the practicum with their other obligations. If currently employed at a public humanities institution, part-time students can use this opportunity to take on a clearly-defined project that falls outside typical responsibilities and involves new skills, subjects, or collaborations. Other part-time students design practicums that provided a chance to become familiar with a new organization.

In most cases, students should complete their two practicum requirements at two different organizations. Students should complete their summer practicum at a single organization, although there may be exceptions based upon a student’s interests, practical considerations, and the need to work the necessary amount of hours. All students should consult with Center staff, faculty, and advisors about their goals, particularly Ron Potvin who oversees the practicum program.

Students are responsible for contacting potential sponsors, negotiating the general parameters of a project, and seeking input from faculty advisors. Before the practicum begins, the goals and expectations should be defined by the student and the practicum supervisor at the host organization in the Practicum Agreement. This agreement articulates mutually acceptable expectations and specifies any programs, materials, or reports you will be responsible for completing. The agreement should include a beginning and ending date, a weekly work schedule, and any compensation, and must be completed before the practicum begins.

Sources of information for practicum opportunities include classmates and public humanities alumni, center staff, faculty advisors, and other humanities professionals at Brown University and elsewhere; [National Council on Public History](#); [Society of American Archivists](#); [Smithsonian Office of Research Training and Services](#); [American Alliance of Museums](#); [National Trust for Historic Preservation](#); [New England Museum Association](#); and the [National Park Service](#). Brown’s [Career LAB](#) supports student internships by serving as a clearinghouse for listings and maintaining databases and online networks that connect Brown students and alumni. The center also maintains a list of [current practicum opportunities](#).

## Doing the Practicum

Students should look upon practicums as professional work experiences and comply with expectations established by supervisors including appropriate dress, work hours, and prioritization of tasks. Assume a proactive, rather than a passive, approach to an internship experience, and work to establish a clear dialogue with the supervisor and mutually supportive relationships with other interns and members of the staff. Seek out a broad range of experiences during a practicum, expanding involvement into as many areas of the organization as possible. Through these efforts, students will find that practicums can play an important part in developing skills and building a network of professional contacts. Plan to keep in touch with people from the practicum organization after the assignment is complete.

As with any work experience, students may find that their experiences differ from expectations. Issues such as funding and organizational and personnel changes can alter assigned projects and affect the ability to complete assignments. Practicum supervisors will value flexibility and willingness to handle changing circumstances or follow new directions. Good communication with the organization's staff is important to ensure understanding of the nature of institutional priorities and enable students to perform to the best of their capabilities. The Center staff also can be consulted for advice in handling unexpected situations that occur during a practicum.

Students should take advantage of practicums to produce materials to show to prospective employers. These may include letters of recommendation, press coverage of events or programs, exhibit labels or photographs of exhibits, or other work that students produced. Take the time to document work and accumulate examples of products to add to a professional portfolio.

Successful completion of the summer practicum includes posting to a [Practicum Blog](#). Completion of the second practicum (AMST2680) requires participation in a practicum seminar.

## Reflections

Engagement in thoughtful reflective practice is a critical component of a successful practicum experience. Through reflection, students connect their practicum work to theoretical and practical learning in the classroom. This reflection should entail honest assessments of competencies, weaknesses, and interests, and attempt to understand a practicum project as it relates to the obligations, challenges, and opportunities of public humanities institutions. Even negative experiences can provide opportunities to reflect upon the organizational, professional, financial, or personal factors that affected outcomes and can help to shape professional goals. Students should consider reflection an integral part of a practicum assignment, not an additional activity, and make it a part of their regular work schedule.

Reflection is built into the practicum experience in three ways:

1. During summer practicum placements, students will submit regular postings to a practicum blog. In these postings, students will reflect on critical problems and issues in the field and on their own and classmates' work.

This blog is an opportunity to reflect upon the work that you are doing during the summer and to share insights about that work. The people who have been invited to use this blog represent a community that should offer each other support and advice. When posting and making comments, remember important public humanities skills. Consider your audience. Who are the people that you are addressing? What are their concerns and sensibilities? Consider the types of responses your post might elicit. Is your post constructive? Is it likely to lead to constructive dialog? Consider the world and the culture around you. Does your post acknowledge and include other communities and points of view?

2. During the academic year practicums, students will participate in a seminar (AMST2680) to discuss experiences and relevant theoretical, practical, and professional issues. By participating in these discussions and learning from each other's experiences, students can expand their understanding of the challenges and opportunities that public humanities professionals face.

3. All practicums will conclude with a capstone project or presentation that will be shared with center staff, faculty, or students. Past projects have included presentations, digital portfolios, job search materials, or written case studies.

Throughout the practicum the Center will maintain communication with students' on-site supervisors, asking for mid-point and final evaluations. Supervisors are encouraged to share their assessments with students. When possible, center staff will arrange site visits during the practicum.

### **Expectations of Workplace Respect during Practicums**

Most practicums provide exciting and stimulating work as well as the chance to meet interesting practitioners. But, sometimes things don't go as planned. If you ever experience disrespect on the job, we want to know and we will help change your situation, with no consequences for you or your course of study. On the job disrespect might be sexual harassment, including physical, verbal, visual harassment, or sabotage of your work. Work discrimination might also include race, color, religion, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, disability, or national origin. If you are feeling uncomfortable in your workplace, for any reason, reach out right away to Ron Potvin or Dietrich Neumann, who will provide feedback and advice, work with you to improve conditions, or help you find a new placement.

### **Practicum Stipends**

Because many public humanities institutions do not provide paid compensation to interns, the center offers some financial support to help M.A. students defray living expenses during their summer practicums. For more information, see "Practicum Funding" on page 7.

To apply, complete the Summer Practicum Funding Request and Budget Form no later than April 1. Students will be notified about funding decisions by April 15. Any costs or expenses in excess of the funding provided by the Center for Public Humanities are the responsibility of the student. Ph.D. students are not eligible for practicum stipends because they receive summer funding from the Graduate School. Funds will be distributed at the end of June.

For academic year practicums outside of Providence, students may be reimbursed for commuting costs up to \$350 if free public transportation is not available. To apply for this funding, submit a memo describing the

reason for your request and a travel budget to Sabina Griffin within two weeks of beginning your practicum. Your budget should reflect the most cost-effective form of transportation or justify why another option is necessary. Students will be notified of academic year travel funding within one week of request. If your request is approved, you must save receipts and submit them monthly for reimbursement. This funding cannot be used to supplement the summer practicum funds.

### Information for Sponsoring Organizations

Students may find it useful to share the Information for Sponsoring Institutions provided below. Completed practicum agreement forms should be submitted to the Center's practicum coordinator before the practicum begins.

- The mission of the Center for Public Humanities is to conduct education, research, and public engagement initiatives to connect individuals and communities to art, history, and culture.
- A practicum should represent a substantial educational experience for public humanities students, who bring graduate level knowledge. They hope to apply their theoretical and practical studies in an organizational setting and develop important professional skills.
- At least one experienced professional should supervise and mentor the practicum student, providing consistent instruction and attention. Most students have worked in professional settings before, but they will benefit from clear expectations, thorough orientation to policies and practices, and the chance to learn broadly about the mission and structure of the organization.
- A written work plan, developed by and mutually agreeable to supervisors and students, should be finalized prior to the start of the practicum. Supervisors are encouraged to consult with Center staff for information and assistance at any point during the creation or completion of a practicum.
- In addition to providing regular feedback directly to the student, supervisors will be asked for formal written evaluations during and at the end of the practicum. These evaluations provide important feedback for students and the public humanities program. Evaluations are used as the basis for formally assessing the student's work for academic credit or for completion of the summer practicum requirement.
- Any concerns, questions, or comments about the practicum are welcome. Contact the Center's practicum coordinator, Ron Potvin.

## KEY CONTACTS, WEBSITES AND FORMS

### Contacts

**Dietrich Neumann**, Director, Professor of History of Art and Architecture

[Dietrich\\_Neumann@brown.edu](mailto:Dietrich_Neumann@brown.edu)

401.863.6115

Advising, Lectures and programs, Full-time and Part-time M.A. student enrollment

**Marisa Brown**, Assistant Director for Programs, Lecturer in Public Humanities

[Marisa\\_Brown@brown.edu](mailto:Marisa_Brown@brown.edu)

401.863.6277

Advising, Lecture and programs, conferences

**Sabina Griffin**, Center Manager

[Sabina\\_Griffin@Brown.edu](mailto:Sabina_Griffin@Brown.edu)

401. 863.1177

Conference Funds, Meeting reservations, Practicum Funding, Reimbursements, Student Payroll, Tuition billing

**Steve Lubar**, Professor of American Studies

[lubar@brown.edu](mailto:lubar@brown.edu)

401.863.6110

Advising, Ph.D student . student enrollment, Graduate Certificate program.

**Ronald Potvin**, Assistant Director & Curator

[Ronald\\_Potvin@brown.edu](mailto:Ronald_Potvin@brown.edu)

401.863.5312

Collections, Galleries, Maintenance, Nightingale-Brown House, Practicums

### Websites

#### 5th-year Master's Degree

<http://www.brown.edu/academics/gradschool/academics-research/5th-year-masters-degree>

#### Conference Travel

<http://www.brown.edu/academics/gradschool/conference-travel>

#### Financial Aid

<http://www.brown.edu/about/administration/financial-aid/>

## **Graduate School**

<http://www.brown.edu/academics/gradschool/>

### **Leaves of Absence**

<http://www.brown.edu/academics/gradschool/academics/student-status-issues/leaves-absence>

### **Master's funding**

<http://www.brown.edu/academics/gradschool/financing-support/masters-funding>

### **Registrar**

<http://www.brown.edu/about/administration/registrar/>

### **RISD cross-registration**

<http://www.brown.edu/about/administration/registrar/course-enrollment/registration#risd>

### **Transfer credit approval forms**

<https://www.brown.edu/about/administration/registrar/degree-guidelines-0/transfer-credit-approval-forms>

## **Forms**

### **Professional Development Funding Request Form**

[http://bit.ly/PD\\_request\\_form](http://bit.ly/PD_request_form)

### **Gallery Request Form**

[http://bit.ly/Gallery\\_Request\\_Form](http://bit.ly/Gallery_Request_Form)