

MLS/MA History Degree

Approved by Graduate Curriculum Committee and Passed in Academic Senate May 2014

Proposal for Joint MLS/MA History degree

AIII.19. Library Science and History

Graduate program in Library Science and History (MLS/MA)

Rationale

Several joint degree programs combining the Masters of Library Science with the Master of Arts in History exist in the U.S. Some of the more prominent examples are at the Universities of Indiana, Rhode Island, and Maryland, and at Wayne State University and Pratt. The combination of disciplines makes sense for several reasons related to both intellectual pursuits and professional development. Historical research is enhanced by the hands-on skills one learns in the information sciences, and careers in records management and archival studies are enhanced with advanced expertise in historical fields. Holders of the joint degree have proven to be competitive for advanced, doctoral fellowships, whether in History or in Library Science. On the job market, they are ideally suited for positions at academic libraries, museums, oral history initiatives, and public or private archives.

And yet, no such combined MLS/MA degree program exists in the New York City metropolitan area to our knowledge (the Pratt program is for art history and art libraries), and if one does, we doubt that it can compete with Queens College in terms of quality and tuition. The faculty of the Graduate School of Library Sciences (GSLIS) is at the forefront of emerging technologies and their role in numerous fields, from records management to data imaging. The faculty of the History Department has a strong record of research and publication. Both departments have been training students at the graduate level for decades, only separately.

We are proposing a 54-credit joint degree program. It will make use of existing faculty and staff and will not require any additional resources beyond establishing a new curriculum. The efficiencies that can be realized for students are obvious: to earn each degree separately would take 72 credits, rather than the proposed 54. If approved, our credit load would be in keeping with national norms: at the schools listed above – Indiana, Rhode Island, Maryland, Wayne State, and Pratt – the credit requirements are 51, 60, 54, 57, and 60, respectively. The program will meet student demand that has heretofore been untapped, and should help enhance our college's graduate enrollments, as well as facilitate the accreditations of both GSLIS and History.

Description (written with Bulletin readership in mind)

The MLS/MA is offered jointly by the Graduate School of Library and Information Sciences (GSLIS) and the History Department. It is coordinated by the Graduate Advisor for GSLIS and the Director of Graduate Studies in History.

The program offers students the opportunity to develop skills in the methodologies of both library science, including archival and special collections management, and historical research. Graduates of the program will hold two degrees, and will be well suited for professional careers in academic libraries, museums, oral history initiatives, document conservation, and public or private archives, and for admission into Ph.D. programs in either History or Library Science.

The 54--credit program can be completed in three years of full--time study. The first several semesters should focus on the coursework requirements for both GSLIS and History. Students should consult advisors in either department in selecting courses that are relevant for their research and career goals. As part of their elective coursework, they are strongly encouraged to consider internships at local archives, museums, academic libraries, or other relevant institutions, for which either GSLIS or History credit will be awarded. Students may also consider the GSLIS certificate program in Archives Management in conjunction with the joint degree.

Toward the end of the program, students will undertake a six--credit final thesis or project, constituted by LBSCI 709 and HIST 792, to be taken concurrently, under the advisement of faculty members from both GSLIS and History.

Requirements

Students will complete the following components, totaling 54 credits: GSLIS, required (12 credits):

- LBSCI 700: The Technology of Information
- LBSCI 701: Fundamentals of Library and Information Science
- LBSCI 702: Information Sources and Service: General
- LBSCI 703: Introduction to Technical Services

GSLIS, electives (12 credits):

- any other four LBSCI graduate courses

History, required (3 credits):

- Hist 791: Introduction to Historical Research

History, electives (21 credits):

- any other seven HIST graduate courses, chosen in consultation with the DGS

Thesis/project (6 credits):

- LBSCI 709: Research in Library and Information Studies
- HIST 792: Research and Writing (taught by advisor)