

# **UCLA**

## **UCLA Historical Journal**

### **Title**

HOW TO PREPARE A COURSE PROPOSAL AND HOW TO TURN A DISSERTATION INTO A BOOK; BIBLIOGRAPHIC GUIDES; DIRECTORIES; ACADEMIC NEWSLETTERS; ASSOCIATIONS; GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS; TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION

### **Permalink**

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/1x41c76m>

### **Journal**

UCLA Historical Journal, 2(0)

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### **Publication Date**

1981

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# Special Features

"Special Features" aims to provide a cumulative and updated directory of existing academic resources and professional services as well as general information of interest to graduate history students. Organizations and/or individuals wishing to submit material for publication in Volume 3 are encouraged to do so. The deadline for all submissions is April 15 of each year.

This installment of "Special Features" includes an essay by Marilyn Turner on how to prepare a college-level course proposal and how to turn a dissertation into a book, and briefer notes by Roger Long on bibliographic guides, directories, academic newsletters, professional associations, grants and fellowships, travel and accommodations, getting published, and jobs and career opportunities.

HOW TO PREPARE A COURSE PROPOSAL AND HOW TO TURN A DISSERTATION INTO A BOOK: There are two critical decisions everyone must face before selecting a career. First, you should decide what vocation will be the most personally rewarding. Second, you should be aware of supply and demand in that profession. Regarding the first factor, there is little question that graduate historians expect career satisfaction. But the second item--today's job market for historians--is not promising. Given the declining classroom enrollments and the subsequent drop in the demand for history professionals, departments nationwide are encouraging graduate students to reevaluate their goals and to use their research and writing skills in business and elsewhere. Nevertheless, the majority of graduate students do not want an MBA or a law degree--they want to be academic historians.

Is this refusal to accept reality foolish? Perhaps. But Professor Elizabeth Perry at the University of California, Los Angeles, offers practical tips for graduates who wish to pursue a career in academia even in the face of a tight job market. Her advice centers on two topics: how to prepare a course proposal and how to turn a dissertation into a book. Both can help in obtaining employment or securing advancement.

Perry counsels that to prepare a course proposal, begin by collecting ideas *now*. Start files of general categories such as "women," "medicine," or "the American West," or any other topic, and include any and all random, creative thoughts and select bibliographies. According to Perry, the key to a solid course proposal is source material, and this can be found in a variety of places. Advertisements for book sellers, scholarly journals, and favorite undergraduate and graduate courses are only a few locations. There is no fixed method to gather material, so you should expect to change and remain open to all kinds of ideas. Do not be too discriminating. Refining can be done later. As your individual files become full, place these on the back burner for a while and begin new ones. Time will eventually reveal superficiality and will help in weeding out the foolish or the irrelevant material when later additions are made.

An important point to keep in mind while establishing such files is that most history departments are concerned with enrollment figures since these help determine departmental funding. De-

partments need to attract non-majors, and, as a result, historians must "sell" history to a broad range of people. Perry suggests that interdisciplinary approaches, such as those which combine law or psychology with history, are among the ways you can broaden history's appeal and boost enrollments.

The second phase in preparing a proposal is organization. By sorting through files, you can eliminate potential topics until a particularly intriguing and well-documented one remains. With the topic chosen, Perry advises that you should review the major points of the ideas and sources in the file and determine what main concepts students should learn from the course. Furthermore, the development of these concepts must have a logical progression. Organizing demands discipline--the course must make sense and, as far as possible, fit the limits of your intended students' backgrounds.

After arranging your ideas in a logical manner, the course can be formalized in typewritten form. The proposal should include a title, a brief description, prerequisites and restrictions (if any), and a week-by-week syllabus. It also should outline assigned work (such as papers, etc.), goals, staffing requirements, and a budget. Legitimize the course with a three-to-four page bibliography and an explanation of the course's academic merit. End with an example of a projected mid-term exam. While writing the proposal, remember that active verbs are direct and convey confidence and vitality. Your wording could determine the reception of your work, placing it at the front of a department's files rather than at the back.

When the final draft is ready to submit, there are a number of institutional variables which come into play when deciding where to send your proposal. Junior colleges, for example, may be receptive to innovative programs such as teaching history through extensive use of the media. On the other hand, history departments at larger universities, while they may also be open to fresh ideas, frequently are more traditional than their junior partners. Perry states that you should take the time to investigate the school where you plan to submit your proposal and find out what types of courses are offered currently. In addition, it is useful to learn the various specializations of the faculty members at a school and avoid "trespassing" on their turf. Try to appear as an enthused addition, not an overbearing upstart.

University extensions can be promising spots for new course proposals. Extension services often look for courses to attract students from outside traditional student fields. Although extensions pay about one-third as much as mainstream colleges, they can be invaluable in adding to teaching experience. You must, however, watch for deadlines. Unlike mainstream history departments, university extensions have rigid cut-off dates for accepting course proposals and these are usually early in the academic year.

After teaching your course for the first time, you will find that interaction with students may cause you to want to change your approach, to clarify or expand. Do not resist this urge. When a course is new and not a time-tested success, you should expect to add readings, alter emphases, and make other appropriate changes. Above all, be flexible.

In addition to advice on course proposals, Perry offers some worthwhile thoughts on the eventual appearance of your dissertation as a book. This may not necessarily happen, and you instead may publish scholarly papers or articles which are, of course, valuable. But Perry advises that planning to turn your dissertation

into a book can be psychologically therapeutic, and professionally rewarding. Moreover, such planning can improve the style and development of your thesis.

There are a number of distinctions between dissertations and books which are important to recognize when converting from the former to the latter. A dissertation is often overly-long. Since publishers rarely market a book exceeding 350 pages, Perry recommends that you cut "fat." Gear your writing as much as possible toward the "educated reader," and not to your committee chair or peers. It *is* possible to maintain academic excellence while appealing to a wider audience, and you should strive to do both. Form, however, is another matter. It may be difficult to alter the form due to your faculty's preference for the traditional or the unusual, but attention to differences in form are nonetheless instructive and may help you avoid common problems. For example, dissertations tend to wallow in their scholarliness whereas most educated readers are not nearly so concerned about references to other scholars. A dissertation wants to sound knowledgeable, but a book is more intent on being clear. A dissertation seeks to make *the* definitive statement. A book, on the other hand, frequently raises questions it does not assume to answer.

As a result of the above distinctions, dissertations usually are not saleable. This can be overcome, however, with some effort. Perry suggests that after you finish your dissertation, ask a friend to read it. When they subsequently offer criticisms, take them in good spirit. You may not ultimately take all their advice but objectivity is worth a great deal. Bear in mind that when you are converting your dissertation, it is no longer a finished product; it is a working copy and criticism will help refine it into a book.

You may have to reorder the chapters, clarify and/or "beef-up" areas, but again, be flexible. Pare the length no matter how much it hurts. In addition to major restructuring, also perfect maps, illustrations, and tables. (Incidentally, a professional cartographer is always a good investment.) Furthermore, drop as much academic jargon as possible without sacrificing the work. You should aim for the broadest appeal.

After reshaping as much as you can, write a two-page abstract--a book proposal describing how your book is unique. Perry advises that this should be in a relaxed fashion to convey your particular style and to pique a publisher's curiosity. Send this abstract with your manuscript to the publisher and enclose a return envelope with postage. It is a customary courtesy to send your manuscript to only one publisher at a time. You will not need an agent if you send your thesis to an academic press. University presses compete for good dissertations, so you can count on a prompt and thorough review of yours. An agent will be necessary, however, when submitting to a non-academic press because these rarely accept dissertations.

When a publisher receives your manuscript, at least one and sometimes two editors are assigned to read it. The manuscript will then go to an outside "expert" in the field, after which an editorial conclave will determine if your work is acceptable. If your material is not what that publisher is interested in, they will send you the outside reader's comments along with suggestions for another press, often including the name of a specific person to contact. On the other hand, if your manuscript is accepted, you are far from finished. There will be trivia to dicker over, contracts to negotiate, and galley proofs to read. The press itself gets the copywrite in your name for a set number of years so do not

expect instant wealth from the venture. But you will be in print, and that, Perry adds, will help your career. For further information on converting your doctoral dissertation into a published work, Perry recommends: Eleanor Harman and Ian Montagnes, eds., *The Thesis and the Book* (1976).

Teaching and publishing, the mainstays of the history profession, may appear distant to the struggling graduate student. You nonetheless can begin to help your career by ordering ideas for a course proposal and working toward the eventual publication of your dissertation.

**BIBLIOGRAPHIC GUIDES:** Listing all extant bibliographic guides is beyond the scope of this section, but the following publications will assist in making a basic search and keeping up-to-date with new books and articles.

Any bibliographic search should begin with *Historical Abstracts* and/or *America: History and Life*, both produced by ABC-Clio Press. For a free "List of Publications" surveyed by ABC-Clio for their guides, contact them at Riviera Campus, 2040 A.P.S., P.O. Box 4397, Santa Barbara, California 93103.

For new books, *The Times Literary Supplement* is the best single source available. See also the history section of "New Scholarly Books" in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. The subject volumes for *Books in Print* are also indispensable.

Other valuable sources are the *Bibliographical Guide to North American History*, G.K. Hall and Company, Boston, Massachusetts; *Historical Periodicals*, ABC-Clio; *Ulrich's International Periodical Directory*, Bowker, New York; and *Irregular Serials and Annuals*, also by Bowker. Forthcoming from ABC-Clio is *Historical Periodicals Directory*, Volume 1: *U.S.A. and Canada*.

*Recently Published Articles* is issued by the American Historical Association, 400 A Street S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003, while Gale Research Company produces *Book Review Index, 1981 Periodical Issues, Book Review Index - Annual Clothbound Cumulations, and Book Review Index 1969-1979: A Master Cumulation*. The *Index to Book Reviews in Historical Periodicals 1972-1975* is compiled by John W. Brewster and Joseph A. McLead, with annual author/title indexes also issued. Only English language periodicals are indexed although foreign publications are included if reviewed in English. *Current Contents/Arts and Humanities* issued weekly by ISI, enables you "to read the titles of items listed on the contents pages of nearly 1,100 journals."

To obtain a free copy of one or more of the 121 bibliographies of doctoral dissertations and masters theses write to University Microfilms International, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106 or call toll free 800-268-6090 (Michigan, Alaska, Hawaii, and Canada excepted). You can buy copies at \$9.00 for microform and \$18.00 for xerographic. These prices are for academics (libraries, departments, faculty, staff, and students) in the United States and Canada only.

Finally, the Association for the Bibliography of History in conjunction with Lauinger Library and the Department of History at Georgetown University has organized the National Registry for the Bibliography of History which will "collect, record and disseminate information about bibliographic projects in all fields of history." For information contact Thomas T. Helds, Department of History, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C. 20057



DIRECTORIES: At present there are over five thousand directories of all kinds listed in the *Directory of Directories*. It is arranged in fifteen broad subject categories and published by Gale Research Company. Some directories of particular use to history students include the following:

Gale Research Company produces two very useful directories of libraries, the *Directory of Special Libraries and Information Centers*, Volume 1, *Special Libraries and Information Centers in the United States and Canada*, Volume 2, *Geographic and Personnel Indexes*, and Volume 3, *New Special Libraries*. The second directory is the *Subject Directory of Special Libraries and Information Centers*, the fourth volume of which covers social sciences and humanities libraries.

A *Directory of Asian and African Libraries in North America* is currently being compiled by the Asian and African Section of the American Library Association. For further information, contact Janet Krompart, Secretary, Asian and African Section, ACRL, AAS, Library, Oakland University, Rochester, Minnesota 48063.

The standard guide to "who's where" in the academic world is the *National Faculty Guide, 1981*, a two-volume work published by Gale.

The American Historical Association's *Directory of Historical Consultants* lists "thirty firms and seventy-three individual consultants," giving a good idea of the kinds of opportunities open to historians to practice history outside of academia.

For the Third World, the *International Directory of Third World Scholars and Specialists* is the most up-to-date work (1981).

ACADEMIC NEWSLETTERS: The University of Maryland is compiling a comprehensive list of newsletters in Asian Studies. For further information, contact Frank Joseph Shulman, East Asia Collection, McKeddie Library, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland 20742.

ASSOCIATIONS: Joining a professional association which issues a newsletter (and most do) is the best way to keep abreast of developments in the history profession, and with various deadlines for items such as paper proposals, scholarships, and travel arrangements. The three-volume *Encyclopedia of Associations* is a basic guide in the field. Volume 1 is subtitled "National Organizations of the U.S."; volume 2, "Geographic and Executive Index," lists all the executives mentioned in volume 1. Volume 3 supplements the first volume by giving information on "New Associations and Projects."

Among those associations listed in the *Encyclopedia* is the American Historical Association whose *Newsletter* is useful to learn of other organizations' activities and deadlines. More information on the AHA can be obtained by writing to them at 400 A Street S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003.

GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS: A basic listing is found in *Foundation Grants to Individuals* available for \$15.00 from the Foundation Center, 888 Seventh Avenue, New York, New York 10019 or by dialing toll-free 800-424-9336. Also valuable is *The Instant Foundation Telephone Index*, which costs \$7.50 and can be received by writing to Research Grant Guides, P.O. Box 357, Oceanside, New York 11572. Other useful guides include *Grantsmanship* (\$6.00, Sage Publications, 275 South Beverly Drive, Beverly Hills, California 90212), and *Your Own Financial Factory* (\$4.95, Octameron Associates, P.O.

Box 3437, Alexandria, Virginia 22302). See also the American Historical Association's *Grants and Fellowships of Interest to Historians*.

To do the searching for you, there is The Scholarship Bank located at 10100 Santa Monica #750, Los Angeles, California 90067. They will sell you fifty computer-searched sources for \$45.00 or twenty for \$35.00. When writing to them, enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

For additional sources consult *A Guide to Scholarships, Fellowships and Grants: A Selected Bibliography*, available free from the Institute of International Education, 809 United Nations Plaza, New York, New York 10017.

TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION: For traveling by air to attend conferences or other activities of an educational nature, the National Center for Educational Travel, Inc. offers a group flight program. Write to George Marucci, Travel Systems Inc., 1990 M Street N.W., Suite 480, Washington, D.C. 20036.

GETTING PUBLISHED: The American Historical Association in cooperation with the Association of American University Presses has a program aimed at securing publication for first works by historians. Contact the AHA at 400 A Street S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003 for further information.

Deserving special mention is the recently-published *Historical Journals: A Handbook for Writers and Reviewers*, by Dale R. Steiner (hardcover, \$28.50; paper, \$13.85). Published by ABC-CLIO Press, this useful reference work provides detailed information on a multitude of scholarly historical periodicals particularly aimed at getting book reviews and articles published. This information includes journals' focuses, addresses, length and style requirements for manuscripts, how many copies are required, the proportions of manuscripts usually accepted, frequencies of issue, average journal page lengths, and circulation figures. In addition, the *Handbook* offers general advice on submitting articles, as well as how to become a book reviewer. This is by far the single most useful source on getting published in journals.

JOB AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES: *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, published weekly, and the quarterly *Employment Information Bulletin*, an AHA publication, are the premier sources for information concerning openings in teaching and other areas of education.

*Careers in Business for Historians*, edited by Lawrence Bruser, is available for \$3.00 from the Public History Research Office, Department of History, University of California, Santa Barbara, California 93106.

Other career-related information can be obtained from organizations listed in the booklet "So You've Chosen To Be a History Professional," available from the American Association for State and Local History, 1400 8th Avenue South, Nashville, Tennessee 37203.