



ORAL HISTORY
MASTER OF ARTS
COLUMBIA



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Columbia University
in the City of New York

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“We need to
reinvigorate a more
embedded process of
storytelling — using
oral history to deepen
our understanding of
who we are today,
to understand where
we are going to go
tomorrow.”

Mary Marshall Clark
OHMA Co-Founder and Co-Director



ABOUT ORAL HISTORY MASTER OF ARTS

Through the collection, archiving, and analysis of individual, community, and institutional histories, we preserve the critical first-person narratives that capture the spirit of our society for generations to come.

During a year in OHMA, through coursework and internships, students learn the skills of digital audio/video production and editing; archival preservation and public exhibition; oral history project design and interviewing; and both historical and social science analysis. Working with an OHMA faculty member and often an outside advisor, each student is guided through the process of creating a cumulative project in the form of a thesis or capstone.

Our innovative curriculum combines rigorous professional and academic education. Academics learn to communicate with the public and produce knowledge of broad relevance; other professionals benefit from research experience and a grounding in the methods of our field. Our graduates work in the documentary arts, museums, historical societies, advocacy organizations, media, the arts, education, human rights, and development. As independent contractors, they manage oral history projects, teach interview workshops, and offer project consultations to leading institutions and community organizations. They earn doctorates in fields like anthropology, sociology, history, journalism, and American studies or professional degrees in law, education, or social work.







OHMA Leadership: Co-Directors Mary Marshall Clark (also Director of Columbia Center for Oral History Research) and Dr. Amy Starecheski. Clark co-founded OHMA with Dr. Peter Bearman (also Director of INCITE and Jonathan Cole Professor of Social Sciences).

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to train the next generation of oral historians to deploy our deep traditions of ethical, creative and rigorous oral history practice to meet the challenges of today's and tomorrow's changing worlds.

OHMA ADMISSIONS

We invite applications from scholarly and creative prospective students who want to cross the disciplines, seek deep engagement in people's lives and communities, and are ready to contribute to developing the field of oral history with us.

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|  Transcripts of all previous postsecondary education |  Writing sample (10-15 pages) |
|  A personal statement |  Three letters of recommendation |
|  CV/Resume |  TOEFL scores (if applicable) |

For application deadlines visit oralhistory.columbia.edu

OUR HOME INSTITUTIONS

Jointly run by the Columbia Center for Oral History Research, one of the preeminent oral history centers in the world, and the Interdisciplinary Center for Innovative Theory and Empirics (INCITE), a lively hub for transdisciplinary research in the humanities and social sciences, OHMA connects students with both the intellectual resources of a major research university, and the intimate society of a small cohort of talented students. Columbia's oral history program, founded in 1948, is widely acknowledged as the original home of academic oral history in the United States.

SAMPLE COURSE OFFERINGS



Oral History Method, Theory and Interpretation

This interdisciplinary seminar is an in-depth introduction to the history and practice of oral history as a trans-disciplinary field of study originating in the mid-twentieth century, bridging the social sciences and the humanities and enriching studies of memory, history, literature, psychology, sociology and the arts.



Oral History: Fieldwork, Production and Archiving

In this seminar, students learn techniques of digital recording, archiving, preservation and editing; conduct interviews in a diverse network of New York City communities; and learn about professional standards for conducting ethical research.



Social Science and Other Approaches to Analyzing Life History and Narrative Information

This seminar trains students how to conceptualize and analyze oral histories using formal social science techniques that reveal structural processes that underlie these histories.



Video Production Intensive



Oral History Workshop

This year-long series of public seminars features scholars, artists, and organizers using oral history in innovative ways.



From Oral History to Literary Narrative

This seminar provides an introduction to the art and craft of fashioning a work of literary nonfiction from oral histories.



Indigenous Oral Histories in Context

Through weekly readings, seminar discussions, experiential learning and independent research, in this course students are immersed in the discourse, debates, methods, theoretical approaches, philosophical concerns, and applications of Indigenous oral histories, both as sources and as research methodologies, from Indigenous perspectives.

