



QUEEN'S  
UNIVERSITY  
BELFAST

MA  
PUBLIC HISTORY

LEARNING  
FROM THE  
PAST

SHAPING  
A BETTER  
WORLD  
SINCE 1845

# MA PUBLIC HISTORY

The Public History strand of the MA in History at Queen's offers a unique opportunity to study public representations of and engagement with the past in a region where the past continues to resonate.

Belfast offers an exciting opportunity to engage with key issues surrounding contested histories, national narratives, memory, commemoration and community

history in a very real and meaningful way, and to gain first-hand understanding of the relationship between public history, heritage and tourism at a local and national level.

Students will carry out placements in one of a wide range of museums, archives, heritage sites or visitor experiences across the country.

## PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

### History and its Audiences

Taught through a combination of seminars, practitioner workshops, and field trips, this offers an in-depth examination of key concepts of public history and their methodological application. The module will cover a range of issues regarding the ways in which the past is presented to, and consumed by, public audiences. Students will engage theoretically with core historiographical themes including collective memory, oral history, materiality and visual cultures. These sessions will be accompanied by case studies that will enable students to develop their understanding in relation to practical examples. The module will thus provide students with a strong grounding in both theories and concepts of public history while at the same time allow for an understanding of these issues in relation to 'real life' scenarios that will prepare them for the remainder of their studies.

### Becoming a Historian

This module will examine the purpose of historical research and writing, the main genres of historical writing, techniques of bibliographical research, footnoting, the handling of quantitative and non-quantitative evidence, and practical writing skills.

### Case Studies in History

Through two 6-week mini-modules, students will investigate two Public History topics in depth. The first of these looks at the public representation of the history of Fascist

Europe. The second explores contested public history and commemoration in Ireland and the US and is taught through a residential field trip to Derry and in collaboration with a public history grad class in the University of Springfield, Illinois

### Placement (double weighted - 40 credits).

Students take a 30-day placement with one of our partner cultural institutions or heritage organisations. Internships have been carried out with Armagh Public Library, BBC NI, Belfast City Council, Castle Leslie, Doubleband Media, Belfast Grand Opera House, Hillsborough Castle (Historic Royal Palaces), Linen Hall Library, Mount Stewart (National Trust), Museum of Free Derry, Presbyterian Historical Society, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, Titanic Foundation, Ulster American Folk Park, Ulster Museum, Ulster Rugby Museum and Education Centre

### Optional Module

Choose from one of the following:

- Individually-negotiated topic
- Belfast: Place, Identity and Memory in a Contested City
- Optional modules from across faculty

### Dissertation

A dissertation (not exceeding 20,000 words) on a topic to be agreed in advance with the subject adviser

# SPECIAL FEATURES

- Guaranteed work placement and practitioner workshops give students an opportunity to work alongside heritage and public history professionals on a range of practical projects.
- History at Queen's is ranked in the top 150 History Schools worldwide (according to the QS World University Rankings 2017) and our international reputation is enhanced by the work of our prominent leading academics. In the Research Excellence Framework (REF 2014) we are ranked in the top 20 in the UK for research. In the 2016-2017 National Student Survey, History scored 90% satisfaction for teaching.
- The School has a lively postgraduate community and hosts regular graduate-led seminars, colloquia and conferences. Students will engage closely with research activities and events run by the Centre for Public History at Queen's.
- Many of our graduates have gone on to PhD programmes both here at Queen's as well as at some of the best universities in the world. Others go into a wide variety of employment including careers in museums, archives or libraries; journalism or media related work; teaching; private and public administration; economic development and the voluntary sector.



“When I was registering for courses to take for my MA there was one that really stood out to me: the Public History Internship. I had no idea what all it entailed, but it sounded interesting and getting practical experience is always helpful in the job hunt. At the first meeting with the module convener, Dr Olwen Purdue, I got even more excited by the options we could choose from for our internships. If you have any interest at all in working with public history or historical heritage sites I would highly recommend doing a Public History internship. I loved my time at Hillsborough Castle - the staff there are very kind and welcoming, and they give you actual projects to work on that are relevant to the Castle.

I felt like I had accomplished something important, contributed to my team, gained valuable experience, and grew confident in my own abilities.”

**Faith Linehan (Texas)**  
MA Public History

# COURSE CONVENOR BACKGROUND



Dr Purdue's research interests have focused on the social history of nineteenth and twentieth-century Ireland, in particular landed estates and country houses of Ulster, and urban poverty and welfare. She is author of *The Big House in the North of Ireland 1878-1960: land, power and social elites* and editor of *Belfast: the emerging city*. She has a strong interest in the practice and experience of Public History and is currently engaged in a project on community and heritage in inner-city Belfast. She is International Editor of the *Public Historian* journal and a panel member of the board of directors of the Irish Museums Association.

**Dr Olwen Purdue**

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## CONTACT US

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PHILOSOPHY  
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