June 15, 2020

Re: Fall 2020 graduate instruction (PhD, MA, APH)

The History Department is planning the Fall 2020 semester around two priorities:

1. The need to ensure the safety of our students, faculty, and staff;
2. The commitment to offering an outstanding education to our students.

Experience this spring taught us that, although not ideal, small, discussion-oriented graduate seminars function well remotely. In addition, offering courses remotely enables students to advance their studies even if they are unable to be in New York. And this approach also facilitates social distancing, relieving our classrooms and staff space of considerable foot traffic.

For these reasons, PhD and MA seminars will meet remotely this fall. Archives & Public History (APH) courses will mostly meet remotely, with a few possible exceptions - contact Ellen Noonan for details as they become available.

Advising and community
Remote instruction does not mean that students in New York will not have opportunities to meet, individually and/or in small groups, with their professors and classmates. And all students, whether taking courses in-person or remotely, can expect individual meetings with members of the faculty. We know that these interactions and relationships, as much as the course content, distinguish graduate training at NYU, and we are committed to sustaining that personal dimension no matter what form a course might take.

Workshops and professional development
This move to remote instruction means that faculty and students will need to be creative and proactive in running additional sessions for professional development, field seminars, writing workshops, and informal gatherings. Last spring, for example, the DGS and Graduate Program Administrator held informal meetings weekly with PhD students; in early summer, the MA and APH programs collaborated to run 3 sessions over 6 weeks in a professional development series, “Cocktails & Careers.” We plan to offer further such programming this fall, and welcome suggestions or initiatives from students to guide - or, indeed, lead - us in these efforts.

Additional notes
1. Entering MA students have the option of deferring their enrollment one semester, to Spring 2021. If you plan to exercise this option, you must alert Chelsea Rhodes immediately.
2. At this time, subject to city and state directives, we are planning to resume in-person instruction from Spring 2021.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with comments, questions, or suggestions. We wish you a restorative summer, and look forward to seeing you all this fall.