



Dr. Joseph Genetin-Pilawa  
George Mason University  
Department of History and Art History  
Robinson Hall B, Room 359  
Fairfax, VA 22030

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Dear Dr. Genetin-Pilawa,

I am writing to apply for the position of Assistant Professor of Public History at George Mason University. I am a public historian and a scholar of twentieth-century American political, labor, and urban history. In 2018 I began a postdoctoral fellowship at The Pennsylvania State University's Humanities Institute after completing my Ph.D. at Princeton. My professional experience and graduate training at Princeton and UMass Amherst's nationally recognized public history program gives me the research, pedagogical, outreach, and administrative skills to design and teach courses, foster community partnerships, and enhance the vitality of GMU's rich public history offerings.

At PSU's Humanities Institute I explore central concerns of my research—public policy, political mobilization, and racial and economic justice—through digital storytelling, interdisciplinary teaching, and community engagement. As a postdoctoral fellow, I have developed and implemented the curricular and outreach components of our Public Humanities Initiative (PHI). Last fall, I helped draft a successful Mellon Foundation grant proposal to expand the PHI's programming. In Spring 2019 I taught a pilot, half-semester course, "Taking Humanities Public: Work and Workers in Our World." This fall I am co-teaching "Introduction to Public Humanities," a digital media course I created to anchor the PHI's undergraduate fellowship program. The course introduces students to the ideas and skills undergirding public humanities practice. With my co-teacher—a professional filmmaker—I supervise student collaborations with community partners on semester-long group projects incorporating documentary film, podcasting, and web design. A colleague and I are currently working with PSU's Career Enrichment Network to establish an internship program for our undergraduate fellows. I also support HumIn Focus, a documentary film series the PHI produces with our local PBS affiliate. Last year I served as a production assistant for *Making Home: Migration, Mobility, and Hospitality*, which airs locally in November. Working with the production team, I developed the episode's topical and thematic focus, recruited PSU faculty participants, conducted background interviews, assisted with on-camera interviews, and—in post-production—advised on editing while locating supplemental audio-visual materials. I also coordinate outreach for HumIn Focus and am scheduling public screenings of *Making Home* in communities ranging from rural Tyrone, PA to the city of Altoona. In addition, I am partnering with Institute staff to write an NEH grant proposal to enhance HumIn Focus's public accessibility through an interactive website.

My position at Penn State builds on my previous public history experience. Working at the intersection of politics and public history, I study the past to make a tangible impact on the present and future. This approach informed my work co-editing and writing the introduction for a forthcoming themed issue of *Labor* exploring how worker-driven public history can galvanize organizing struggles and resistance campaigns. The articles reinforced my conviction that impactful public scholarship requires connections between educational and history institutions and the communities around them. As a fellow at Chicago's National Public Housing Museum I joined planning discussions about the initial interpretative program and conducted neighborhood outreach alongside current public housing residents. At Princeton I co-founded a community oral history project with staff from the local historical society and public library. I also co-founded UNOW & Then, an oral and digital history project about a day nursery founded by the local National Organization for Women chapter in 1970. I am currently using ESRI's Story Maps platform to develop UNOW & Then's digital exhibits. My other public history ventures deepened my professional networks and experience with digital platforms. Since 2015 I have been an editor for the National Council on Public History blog, *History@Work*, collaborating with practitioners to shape debates central to the field. I also partner with the Chicago Elections Project, which digitizes and maps local election data using GIS technology on a publicly accessible website.

My current book project, *Windy City Spoils: Machine Politics and Liberalism in Richard J. Daley's Chicago*, examines the history of Chicago Mayor Richard J. Daley's Democratic organization, the most durable post-World War II urban political machine and a bulwark of the national party. Scholars have long viewed Daley as archaic, corrupt, and repressive. My book demonstrates that he was also a forward-looking policymaker and expert administrator at the forefront of postwar U.S. liberalism. Under Daley's leadership, the machine thrived by deftly mediating conflicts

over the distribution of economic resources and political power—the Windy City’s spoils. Through skillful brokering, Daley fashioned a new machine coalition blurring racial, class, and party lines. The Democratic machine thus reconciled two varieties of New Deal liberalism: a social democratic strain rooted in working-class interests and propelled by unions and mass movements, and a managerial strain rooted in middle- and upper-class interests and propelled by corporations and technocrats. For a time, these disparate blocs all used the Democratic machine to advance their political aims. Yet distributional demands changed during the 1960s as black and brown residents, dissident Democrats, and resurgent Republicans challenged the machine’s right to allocate spoils. Local party leaders responded with defiance and violence. The machine system and Democratic control of Chicago survived Daley’s death in 1976. *Windy City Spoils* concludes with the triumph of a managerial liberalism that distributed resources and power to white professionals, affluent neighborhoods, and corporations at the expense of poor residents and communities of color. By tracing coalitional and ideological tensions at a central node of New Deal liberalism, my book challenges scholarly narratives about the “rise of the right.” In a machine city like Chicago, the resilience of liberalism and its evolution along technocratic lines are the more enduring themes of postwar U.S. political history.

I am prepared to teach public history and U.S. history courses while supervising internships and forging community partnerships in the Washington, DC area. I would love to develop an introduction to public history course, as well as methods courses in oral history and “Public History at the Grassroots.” I am also prepared to teach the department’s Development of Modern America undergraduate survey, in addition to advanced courses in “Politics, Protest, and Public Policy in the U.S.” and “American Work and Workers.” My classes would employ digital storytelling tools, complementing the department’s specialization in that methodology. I would also utilize campus resources like the pathbreaking Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media, Fenwick Library’s Special Collections Research Center, and the Center for Leadership and Community Engagement. Furthermore, my courses would expose students the region’s wealth of museums and historic sites. In creating immersive learning opportunities for GMU students, I would draw on my experience organizing field trips to Roosevelt, New Jersey; New York City; Washington, DC; and Shanghai, China. I have taught at four institutions ranging from public land grant universities to the Ivy League, exposing me to students with a range of backgrounds and preparation. As the graduate of a public university catering to first-generation- and older, non-traditional students, I am committed to fostering an inclusive learning environment accessible and welcoming to the full range of abilities and perspectives.

As a faculty member, my scholarship will advance in two directions. First, I plan to find multiple audiences for my Chicago research, developing a digital or museum exhibit to accompany the publication of *Windy City Spoils*, which I am currently revising. Second, I will begin two projects that bookend *Windy City Spoils* chronologically and complement its exploration of American liberalism, labor, and cities. The first book will offer a concise history of Harry Truman’s “Fair Deal” agenda of the late 1940s. Moving between the White House, Capitol Hill, corporate suites, union halls, and working-class neighborhoods, I will examine how legislative battles over health care, housing, labor, and civil rights attenuated postwar liberalism nationally while encouraging state-level innovations. The second project is a social, labor, and spatial history of neoliberalism in post-1970s’ Berkshire County, Massachusetts. The book will demonstrate how the Cold War’s end, factory flight, and central-city “renaissance” prompted the county to pivot from a unionized industrial economy to one based on cultural production, tourism, and real estate. The resulting deindustrialization and gentrification linked big cities to hinterlands, as investors and transplants from Boston and New York reshaped the Berkshires’ social and physical landscape. Drawing on archives, oral history, and ethnographic observation, I will document increased worker precarity and race and class inequality since the 1980s through the experiences of old and new residents. Alongside the monograph, I will partner with community groups, theaters, and local colleges to interpret the story through exhibits, walking tours, and digital mapping.

I would be delighted to join the George Mason University faculty and collaborate with colleagues in the department of history and partners throughout the Washington area. I enclose my Curriculum Vitae and other application materials. Professors Kevin Kruse, Alison Isenberg, and Max Page have submitted letters of reference on my behalf. Should you require any further information please contact me at raanderson@psu.edu or (773) 962-1102. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Richard Anderson