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Reveal the Past in Genealogy and Family History

Researching your ancestors can uncover fascinating stories not just about your past, but also changes in the world and the societies that shape it. See how deep your family's roots go with this UW Certificate Program.

Your Past in Perspective

This unique certificate program gives you skills and tools to unearth new information about your ancestors, and also helps you relate that information to the political, economic and social changes that shaped the community and time in which your ancestors lived. Your centerpiece project will focus on either an individual family member or group of your ancestors and their times, work, challenges and opportunities. You'll gain a better understanding of the lives of your ancestors and the family members who followed them.

At the end of the program, you will have preserved a vital part of your family's individual and collective past, and will know how to use a range of research tools. Individuals, teachers, librarians and others interested in family history are welcome to participate in this certificate program.

Learn from the Experts

Approved by the University of Washington History Department, this certificate program is taught by experienced specialists in genealogy and history. Guest speakers who address everything from archives and records to the preservation of family collections also enrich your experience. A convenient evening schedule is offered so you can balance your daily commitments with your historical detective work.

During the Genealogy and Family History Certificate Program, you'll learn how to utilize these and other sources in your search for family data:

- U.S. Census
- U.S. immigration, migration and historical evidence
- Cemetery, mortuary and obituary records
- Land, military, religious, naturalization and probate records
- Photographs
- Internet databases and genealogical software

Genealogy and Family History Certificate Courses

The following courses are required to complete the Genealogy and Family History certificate.

Genealogy and Family History

This introductory course places genealogical research techniques within a family history context. Topics cover major sources of records, photography conservation and interpretation, software tools, and oral history and interviewing techniques. You will critique a family history case study and prepare an analysis of family history using terms discussed in lectures and readings, and may take optional field trips to local archives and libraries outside of class time.

Research Sources and Strategies

Learn techniques to locate and interpret specific types of historical records. Lectures and discussions prepare you to develop a family history research strategy for your own projects. Topics include research in land, military, religious, naturalization and probate records, and an examination of social history concepts such as immigration, ethnicity, social structure and demographic changes.

Research Seminar in Genealogy and Family History

This seminar will help you develop and complete your own research project in family history. Includes presentations by participants on research findings, which have genealogical and historical implications. A completed family history project is due at the end of the seminar.

About UW Extension

Learning through UW Extension gives working professionals the quality education that will take your career to the next level, whether you long for a promotion or a shift to a completely new field. All UW Extension programs are designed by UW faculty, industry experts and community leaders. To ensure you receive first-rate instruction, every UW Extension program must be approved by the corresponding University of Washington academic department. UW advisory boards are continually reviewing programs and updating the curriculum to meet the evolving demands of specific fields.


The University of Washington is one of the oldest state-supported institutions of higher education on the West Coast, and one of the preeminent research universities in the world. With nationally ranked academic excellence, facilities, and a diverse student and faculty population, the UW is a leading-edge university with global influence.

About UW Certificate Programs

You already work hard at your existing job, and going back to school is a serious commitment. That's why UW certificate programs are designed around you, with flexible schedules and a choice of part-time, full-time or even online study, depending on the program. A UW certificate gives you the knowledge and credibility to open doors for the rest of your professional life, whether you're moving up the career ladder or switching careers altogether.

Learn more about the program

For complete details, visit the Web site:

 WWW.EXTENSION.WASHINGTON.EDU

Attend an information meeting.

Interested in a certificate? You can ask questions and meet instructors and former students at these free meetings. For meeting dates, times and locations, please go to our Web site.

Questions? Ask away

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