

**UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH  
HISTORY DEPARTMENT  
FALL 2017**

**HIST\*3480 - WORKPLACE LEARNING: “Better Farming”**

Instructor: Dr. Catharine Wilson

Workplace Supervisor: Dr. Gal, Managing Editor of “Better Farming”

Interested students should contact Dr. Wilson, [cawilson@uoguelph.ca](mailto:cawilson@uoguelph.ca)

**Course Format: Independent work with scheduled meetings.**

**Experiential Learning Opportunity: History Column for “Better Farming” Magazine**

“Better Farming” was launched in 1999 and is Ontario’s biggest and best magazine for commercial farmers. It continues the editorial excellence of its predecessor, “Farm & Country” magazine, and aims to give readers articles that say more with fewer words so that they can keep well informed. It has a circulation of 39,000. “Better Farming” is distributed to commercial farmers in Ontario; most of its readers are members of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, the largest voluntary farm organization in Canada.

Your experiential learning opportunity will involve researching and writing up articles of 250 words each which will be published in the History Column. Subscribers are very interested in such a column and your ability to select and develop engaging topics will expand everyone’s interest and knowledge in rural history. Topics of interest include rural life, past farming practices and trends, and histories of long-standing rural and agricultural companies.

In connecting this work experience to your academic discipline you will write a series of short critical reflections and a research paper analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of historical agricultural newspapers. The historical newspapers will form the basis of your evidence for the magazine column. Many of these are available online or in the Archives and Special Collections, University of Guelph.

**Methods of Evaluation and Weights:**

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| • Proposal of 20 article topics and overview of best practices for such columns | 10% |
| • 12 x 250 word articles for the magazine “Better Farming”                      | 50% |
| • Weekly Critical Reflections that are submitted in two instalments             | 15% |
| • Document Analysis of Historical farm newspapers, 1,500 words                  | 25% |

**Learning Outcomes:**

Knowledge of research practices  
Knowledge of journalistic writing practices  
Ability to communicate compelling history for use in a media platform  
Knowledge of Ontario's agricultural history  
Appreciation for public engagement  
Ability to critically reflect upon your own work  
Ability to critically assess the strengths and weaknesses of historical newspapers

## **No Textbook Required**

### **Project Timeline**

Week 1: Pre-arranged meeting with Professor Wilson and the Editor of "Better Farming" to discuss the project. Guidelines will be established for selecting topics, researching them in the old newspapers, and writing them up in an engaging manner.

Weeks 1-3: Environmental scan of other similar columns to determine the best practices/approaches. Familiarise yourself with the current and past issues of the magazine so you know its style and audience by visiting their website "Better Farming". Identify and become familiar with the old agricultural newspapers/magazines. Select 20 potential topics for consideration that might be of interest to the audience and are doable from a research perspective.

Week 3: Proposal due

Weeks 4-12: Research content and images and draft articles, and work on final paper

Week 6: First collection of weekly Reflections is due covering weeks 1-5

Week 12: Second collection of weekly Reflections is due covering weeks 6-10

Week 13: Document Analysis is due

Articles will be submitted at various points over the semester and meetings will be held with Dr. Wilson and Dr. Gal.

\*Please note: This is a preliminary web course description only. The department reserves the right to change without notice any information in this description. The final, binding course outline will be distributed in the first class of the semester.