

MATERIAL CULTURE STUDIES, CERTIFICATE

ADVISING AND CAREERS

ADVISING

All students should contact the certificate's faculty director (Professor Ann Smart Martin, 205 Conrad A. Elvehjem Building; asmartin@wisc.edu (asmartin@wisc.edu) 608-263-5684) at or near the beginning of work on the certificate. Students should work with the director to outline their course of study and discuss their interests. After a plan is in place, students are encouraged to stay in regular contact with the undergraduate program advisor (Teddy Kaul, 222 Conrad A. Elvehjem Building; ejkaul@wisc.edu; 608-263-2373) as they continue through the program. Each term the program's director or advisor will contact all certificate students, asking those nearing completion of their certificate coursework to send a notification that includes an estimate of when they will be completing the certificate requirements. For more information about the certificate and contact information for the advisor, see the program website (<http://materialculture.wisc.edu>).

CAREERS: WHAT CAN MATERIAL CULTURE DO FOR YOU? LIFE-PRACTICE AND CAREERS

Interdisciplinary practice is central to material culture analysis. Significant engagement with material culture can have a noteworthy positive effect on students from a wide range of majors in their preparation for future careers. Understanding principles of design, analyzing the cultural meaning of physical objects, and gaining knowledge of varied systems of making, distributing, and using artifacts and consumer goods throughout history are all broadly applicable learning outcomes. The curricula of the 21st century often place extra value on science and technology, to the detriment of the study of the arts and humanities. The Material Culture Program helps integrate these and other disparate spheres into a university education. One undergraduate student summed it thus:

I ended up being able to use what I learned in material culture for my research in human computer interaction and design. I think having a background in material culture strengthened my skills as a user experience designer (which is what I will be doing at Intel after graduation).

Erica Lewis, 2016
Undergraduate certificate student
Engineering/Materials Design

Other material culture certificate holders have gone on to careers in museums, galleries, historic sites, historic preservation, digital media, design practice, universities, and business. Another former student comments:

Having worked in museums large and small, in education, exhibition design and development, collections, and interpretation—I draw on my background in Material Culture on a daily basis. As a historian, the practice of reading and contextualizing objects as primary sources

is essential. But even more than an academic approach, the empathy one develops when learning to understand the world through the stuff of daily life is invaluable to the interdisciplinary collaboration of today's workplace.

Anna Altschwager, 2004
Assistant Director, Guest Experience
Old World Wisconsin