



Joel Harris

When did you graduate from Western? Which History program did you take?

I graduated from Western in 2009 with an Honors B.A. in History and again in 2010 with an M.A. in History.

At Western I was most interested in crime and society in nineteenth century Britain. My research focused on popular perceptions of criminality, street crime, and reactionary urban reformation movements.

How did your History degree prepare you for your current position (assuming that it in fact did so)?

Studying history definitely prepared me for my current position in a number of ways. Including, but not limited to: improving my writing, researching and presenting skills; helping me become more resourceful, creative, and critical; and providing valuable experience planning projects, leading seminar discussions, and solving problems.

Rarely do I encounter something at Ceridian that I can't solve or complete by leveraging what I learned at Western. I haven't, however, found a way to directly apply my knowledge of nineteenth century street crime at work yet. Maybe that's what I'll focus on in 2016.

Do you have any other thoughts or comments about the study of history and its possible place or places in a larger career or life path?

Studying history is an excellent idea. I'd suggest thinking about what interests you the most and researching the history of it. You'll learn about what you like and walk away from Western with a skill set that sets you up for success.

The Department of History at Western has a world-class faculty with a real dedication to helping its students succeed.

What advice would you offer to current or prospective History students, based on your own experiences?

I suggest the following to all students:

First, visit your professors and teaching assistants during office hours. It's the best way to brainstorm essay topics, receive feedback on your work, and learn more about anything you've found particularly interesting in a course or academia in general.

Second, build and maintain friendships and connections with the people around you. This makes your time at Western more enjoyable and will help build your career down the road. You'll find more professional opportunities through your personal network than any job board. History graduates do a lot of interesting things in a lot of interesting industries. Staying in touch with your peers and professors will help your career. It did for me.

How have you been engaged since you graduated? What is your current position?

After graduating from Western I moved back to Toronto where I worked in a few different industries before finding my niche in software and technology. I have worked for the past two and a half years at Ceridian, a global human capital management company that creates the award winning Dayforce HCM application. Dayforce is a cloud-based solution that helps organizations manage their payroll, benefits, workforce, and human resources.

At Ceridian I am a Senior eLearning Consultant, which means that I'm responsible for the end-to-end development and deployment of online training modules that teach our client's employees, managers, and administrators how to use Dayforce. This training drives user adoption, return on investment, and overall user satisfaction. I also deliver live training sessions, build client-exclusive eLearning, provide consulting services, deliver production demonstrations, and improve internal business processes.