

ASU history graduate discovers career trajectory with public research opportunity

By Julia Taylor, ASU News
May 1, 2025

Editor's note: This story is part of a series of profiles of notable [spring 2025 graduates](#).

Lily Crigler knew she wanted to study history when she enrolled at ASU, but wasn't initially sure how this would translate into a career.

In spring 2023, she participated in an [Undergraduate Research Experience](#) through the [School of Historical, Philosophical and Religious Studies](#), which she says ignited her passion for public history and desire to pursue a career in this field.

Crigler's work included curating items and transcribing oral histories for [A Journal of the Plague Year](#), a digital repository created by the [Public History program](#) to document the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I genuinely felt connected to many of these stories and learned so much from them," Crigler said of the experience.

Originally from Cincinnati, Ohio, Crigler has received the [Friends of History scholarship](#), been named on the Dean's List for seven semesters and is a member of [Phi Beta Kappa](#).

She is graduating this spring with a bachelor's degree in history, minors in classics and criminology and criminal justice, and a certificate in international studies. In the fall, she will continue her studies at [George Washington University](#), pursuing a master's degree in museums, history and culture.

Note: Responses have been lightly edited for length/clarity.

Question: Why did you choose ASU?

Related stories

[ASU team leads effort to archive effect of COVID-19 on everyday lives](#)

[ASU faculty reflect on how 'Journal of the Plague Year: A COVID-19 Archive' has developed over the last year](#)

Answer: Choosing to go to ASU was somewhat of a spontaneous choice that thankfully turned out in my favor. I first decided to apply when taking the ACT in my junior year of high school after Googling, "What college is closest to Phoenix?" as I had recently visited the Grand Canyon and Phoenix.

I ended up being accepted into ASU and started to have an inkling that I wanted to go there. However, this was a tough and stressful decision as I would have to move all the way from Cincinnati, Ohio, to Tempe, Arizona. Ultimately, I went with my gut and committed to ASU and knew I made the right decision.

Q: Has any ASU support played a role in your journey?

A: Events at ASU, such as Humanities Week, have played a role in improving my academic journey, as attending these events — both in person and online — have allowed me to learn beyond my studies in History. Because a variety of professors and guest speakers participate in these events, I was able to receive new and different perspectives and information on topics that I was previously unaware/unknowledgeable of. These are just good examples of ASU providing extra learning opportunities for students, and I think they are vital in promoting studies in the humanities.

Q: What's something you learned at ASU (in the classroom or otherwise) that surprised you or changed your perspective?

A: In the classroom I have learned to be more attentive and interactive with my classmates. This has changed my perspective and expanded my worldview as many of my classmates come from different backgrounds and have different majors, allowing me to hear different takes and views on various topics.

Q: Which professor taught you one of the most important lessons you've learned at ASU? What was the lesson?

A: Professor [Paul Arena](#) has taught me many important lessons in the variety of classics courses that I took with him. One lesson that stands out to me the most is to look at things from a different perspective. In the fall semester, my class had to read the "Argonautica" in which the female character, Medea, was portrayed differently than other texts. We spent time analyzing her decisions in the text, and this really required us to try to empathize with her to understand her character and decisions. This ability to view things and people from a different perspective has been an important lesson not only in the classroom but also outside the classroom as it has now changed the way I view things in life.

Q: What is the best piece of advice you'd give to other students?

A: Utilize the many opportunities and resources that ASU offers, whether it is a club, research experience, or health and wellness services. These three resources in particular have helped me during my time in college as joining clubs during my freshman year introduced me to many people, the undergraduate research experience helped me academically in gaining more hands-on experience with my studies and making connections with staff and peers, and the health and wellness services have helped me to manage any mental health and stress-related problems that have come up in my life. ASU offers a multitude of resources, and I encourage other students to make use of them.

Q: If someone gave you \$40 million to solve one problem on our planet, what would you tackle?

A: I would use this money to help fund cancer research, specifically for multiple myeloma, as I have had multiple family members who have been affected by cancer. This money would be beneficial in boosting the process of finding a cure for multiple myeloma and other forms of cancer that do not already have cures.

Q: Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about your time as a student at ASU?

A: I would like to thank my family and friends who have supported me during my time as a student at ASU. I would not have been able to complete my degree without their help and encouragement.

This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).

Main image



Lily Crigler. Courtesy photo.