Margaret O’Mara

Professor
Howard and Frances Keller Endowed Professor

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Office Hours:
By appointment

Fields of Interest
20th Century  Capitalism  Labor  North American West  Political History  Science and Technology  United States  Urban History

Biography

M.A./Ph.D., History, University of Pennsylvania, 2002
B.A., History and English, Northwestern University, 1992

Curriculum Vitae (164.13 KB)

I teach and write about the political, economic, and metropolitan history of the modern United States. I became a professional historian after spending the early years of my career working in national politics and policymaking, an experience that showed me the critical role of historical knowledge in understanding the present and informing the future. My research, teaching, and work with people and organizations beyond academia is inspired and shaped by my desire to make history relevant, exciting, and central to the way we understand our world. At the UW, I offer undergraduate and graduate courses on modern America, political history, urban history, and economic history.

My research focuses on the high-tech industry, American politics, and the connections between the two. My most recent book is a history of the technology industry from the 1940s to the present, titled The Code: Silicon Valley and the Remaking of America (Penguin Press, 2019). I also am the author of Cities of Knowledge (Princeton, 2005), which explored how Silicon Valley came to be and what the Cold War had to do with it, and Pivotal Tuesdays (University of Pennsylvania, 2015), about four game-changing U.S. Presidential elections of the 20th century (1912, 1932, 1968, 1992) and their broader social and cultural context. I also write frequently for public audiences and am a contributing opinion writer at The New York Times.

I collaborate with faculty, students, and staff across the UW and the Seattle region as co-chair of the Washington Chapter of the
Scholars Strategy Network, and as a member of the Standing Committee of the Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies, a co-founder and faculty affiliate of Urban@UW, and the faculty affiliate of the West Coast Poverty Center. My professional affiliations beyond the UW have included leadership roles in the Social Science History Association and the Urban History Association, speaking to a wide range of groups as an OAH Distinguished Lecturer, and serving as a fellow of the National Forum on the Future of Liberal Education.

More biographical information and links to selected publications, syllabi, and speaking appearances can be found on my personal website, margaretomara.com.

Featured Media

GeekWire Summit: Margaret O'Mara, Professor of History, University of Washington