

## Montcalm Community College Faculty Bio: Andrea Puskas, M.A.

**Andrea Puskas, M.A.**, who grew up in Pierson and graduated from Tri-County High School in 2007, began her connection with MCC as a dual-enrolled student. Upon earning her associate degree from MCC, Puskas transferred to Central Michigan University (CMU) where she obtained a bachelor's degree in cultural anthropology with a minor in museum studies and history, as well as a master's degree in cultural resource management with a focus on museum studies, and she cross-trained in archeology public history.

During her time at CMU, Puskas worked at the university's museum, specializing in collections management. This entailed carrying, handling, and researching artifacts and museum collections. She also interned at the campus's Clarke Historical Library and the Strawberry Banke Museum in Portsmouth, NH. It was there where Puskas had the task of processing the extensive historical wallpaper collection of 500 pieces from the 1700s to about the 1950s, which she describes as a fascinating experience.

It was her plan to move to New England to find a job at a history museum, but she decided to stay in the area to be closer to family. Realizing there was not much in the area in relation to working with museums, Puskas started working for MCC and fell in love with teaching.

Primarily focusing on courses related to the American Political System and U.S. History, Puskas also serves as part of the college's Co-Curricular Committee and is assisting with bringing back a stronger presence of history to the campus.

Puskas is also serving as an advisor in starting a history and culture club to introduce students to all the different jobs that exist in these fields. She said she hears from many students about their love for history, but many believe that teaching would be their only option.

Just as determined as she is to bring history and culture to the campus for the students, her teaching philosophy in the classroom is just as hands-on. "My classrooms are places of active learning. I want my students to be just as responsible as creating the knowledge in the class as I am," says Puskas. "I feel the more engaging the lesson is, the better my students are going to be able to connect to it."