

History, BA

Learning Outcomes

Historical knowledge gives insight into the depth and range of human experience and perspective on the increasingly interconnected world in which we live. Students of history learn how to locate, verify, and interpret many kinds of evidence in order to understand the causes and effects of changes over time. History courses strengthen skills in analyzing and explaining the major ideas and complex problems of the past and the present. The history major provides students with the tools and perspective for active citizenship in a democratic, pluralistic society, as well as for success in graduate studies and a wide range of careers.

The undergraduate program is organized around the intertwined skills of research and communication—whether digital, written, or oral. Students learn about significant events, places, and people of the past, but just as importantly, they learn how to engage in factual research about the past, how to understand the context of human actions, and how to identify the factors that brought about the world of the past and the world we know today.

- Students of history acquire a broad knowledge of history and historical change across multiple regions of the globe and a range of historical periods.
- Students gain an awareness of their own place in today's world and of the connections between past and present. This prepares the way for better understanding between individuals and across cultural boundaries.
- Students learn to value the role of evidence in their understanding of the world, and how to assess and verify different types of data, whether written, visual, oral, statistical, or cultural.
- Students learn how to distinguish between primary and secondary sources, and how each kind of source is used. They develop an understanding of the possible impact of authorial bias, social background, or ideology. Students learn to employ differing methods of analysis, and they explore diverse ways of thinking about the past and human society.
- Students develop skills in research, critical thinking, reading, and writing. History writing assignments sharpen students' skills in original research and analysis, while reading assignments develop their abilities to synthesize information and grapple with varying points of view.