History, BA

Historical knowledge offers insight into the depth and range of human experience and perspectives 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 historical cause, effect, and change over time. History courses strengthen skills in analyzing and explaining the 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. 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.

Learning Outcomes

Students of history:

- acquire a broad knowledge of history and historical change across multiple regions of the globe and a range of historical periods;
- gain an awareness of their own place in today's world and of the connections between past and present;
- 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;
- learn how to distinguish between primary and secondary sources, and how each kind of source is used;
- develop an understanding of the possible impact of authorial bias, social background, or ideology;
- learn to employ differing methods of analysis and explore diverse ways of thinking about the past and human society; and
- 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.