FROM STUDY TO SKILLS

Put simply, history is the study of the past: everything that humans have ever done, in every imaginable area of life. In a history class you can learn about politics, art, war, peace, family life, diplomacy, economics, childrearing, technology, science, farming, music, and much more. If it happened, historians study it. But the discipline is more than just a grab-bag of trivia. Historical research reminds us that the way we live our lives today is not set in stone, and that our world is one we constantly create and re-create for ourselves. Perhaps even more important, we are reminded that the way we tell our historical stories—what we remember, what we forget, what we emphasize, what we gloss over—is always in flux and always open for debate. Ultimately, a belief in human agency—our power to make and transform our world—is at the heart of the discipline. Related to this is the conviction that complexity matters, that life is too complicated to be reduced to grand abstractions or generalizations that treat people as objects rather than subjects.

Related fields include Anthropology, American Culture, Women's Studies, International Studies, Political Science, Economics, Public Policy, Ancient History, Archaeology, History of Art, Languages and Literatures, and Museum Studies.

SKILLS AND ABILITIES

Research/Analytical Skills
- Asking significant questions
- Compiling and evaluating information
- Organizing and analyzing ideas and information
- Examining evidence
- Comparing and contrasting ideas and information
- Interviewing
- Interpreting the past and the present

Project Development Skills
- Generating and developing ideas
- Planning and managing complex projects
- Organizing material/information
- Seeing relationships between factors
- Making decisions

Social/Cultural Skills
- Analyzing impact of problems on society
- Understanding how societies cope with change
- Explaining the present by referring to the past
- Understanding the limitations of our own perspective
- Developing a world view

Communication Skills
- Presenting complex ideas clearly
- Describing and evaluating issues/problems, events
- Summarizing data and ideas
- Interpreting issues for public consumption
- Compiling reports

BUILDING YOUR SKILLS OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

Employers seek out individuals who can demonstrate excellent verbal and written communication skills, teamwork and interpersonal skills, initiative, and a strong work ethic. Student organizations and campus employment offer valuable opportunities to add to the skills you are developing in your classes. Other options include study abroad, off-campus employment or volunteering in the community. Finally, a summer internship may be the best way of all to test out a career field and develop marketable skills.
FROM SKILLS TO CAREER

Equipped with the recognition that the past, present, and future are irreducibly complex and never predestined, historians excel in a wide variety of professions. People with history degrees go on to become lawyers, politicians, social workers, physicians, diplomats, teachers, businessmen, and much, much more. The list below is a sample of careers undertaken by recent History graduates.

Research/Analytical Skills
- Policy analyst
- Lawyer & Paralegal
- Legislative aide/analyst
- Intelligence officer
- Marketing research analyst
- Financial analyst
- Insurance adjuster
- Investment banker
- Corporate historian
- Management consultant
- Business analyst
- Research/technical adviser (film/TV/radio)
- Genealogist

Project Development Skills
- Urban Planner
- City Manager
- Foundation/nonprofit administrator
- Information specialist/manager
- Website/network manager
- Entrepreneur
- Archivist
- Museum curator/specialist
- Librarian

Social/Cultural Skills
- Foreign service officer
- Customs investigator
- Human resource manager
- Costume designer
- Historical preservation consultant/interpreter
- Biographer

Communication Skills
- Politician
- Salesperson/advertising associate
- Corporate trainer
- Writer/technical/web writer
- Journalist (print, broadcast, internet)
- Editor (all media)
- Public relations representative
- K-12 teacher
- College teacher

= Further Study Required

For more career information, see O*Net at online.onetcenter.org

CONCENTRATION REQUIREMENTS

The Department of History offers a flexible concentration program and a focused minor. The ninety faculty members offer a diverse range of courses each year, from small seminars to large lectures. History is easy to integrate into an interdisciplinary plan of study and many courses are designed from this perspective.

History is currently in the process of thoroughly updating its curriculum. To learn more about concentration requirements and the department, please explore the website, meet with an advisor, visit faculty office hours, stop by the main office in 1029 Tisch Hall, or elect an interesting history class to find out why history students are so enthusiastic about their department.

Department of History
1029 Tisch Hall
734-764-6305
lsa.umich.edu/history
lsa.umich.edu/history/undergraduate/concentration

Newman Advising Center
1255 Angell Hall
734-764-0332
lsa.umich.edu/advising

NEXT STEPS/RESOURCES

To read about recent history graduates, and the paths they took to their careers, see:
lsa.umich.edu/history/undergraduate/careersandinternships

This is a good website to learn about careers for history majors: historians.org/pubs/free/careers

To begin connecting to professionals in fields that interest you, create your own LinkedIn account:
careercenter.umich.edu/article/getting-started-linkedin

To identify internships or job opportunities, visit Career Center Connector: careercenter.umich.edu/article/c3

On-campus jobs (work-study and non work-study jobs) are listed at:
studentemployment.umich.edu/JobX_Home.aspx

Maize Pages list hundreds of organizations for students to get involved in:
maizepages.umich.edu

Connect to Community lists volunteer opportunities in local organizations: connect2community.umich.edu

The Career Center
3200 Student Activities Building
734-764-7460
careercenter.umich.edu
facebook.com/careercenter.umich
twitter.com/careercenter
linkedin.com/company/the-career-center-at-the-university-of-michigan

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