



History

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

Newnan 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

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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