

# History



History represents a fascinating, flexible major that permits study of the variety and richness of the human experience. Learning about past cultures teaches you how to work with people from different backgrounds.

Historical study provides the basis for effective, responsible and articulate membership in society and for success in a wide variety of careers. The skills learned while studying history—how to find and analyze information, how to synthesize and communicate that information, how to write and speak persuasively, how to use evidence to support assertions—are essential for succeeding in many professions.

The study of history opens many possible professional doors, rather than preparing you to do one thing. Our graduates have gone on to graduate, law and other professional schools; museum and archival work; research positions; teaching and government, military and private sector employment.

## Areas of Study

You'll pursue broad subjects of personal interest, while gaining a broad and comparative perspective on human history. We cover major historical periods and regions and offer thematic courses such as women, gender, cultural, social, intellectual, religious, urban issues, diplomatic; and public history. Many of our courses have a global or comparative thematic focus.

## History Club

History Club can enhance your studies and give you opportunities to meet fellow majors and minors in a welcoming atmosphere. The club brings in guest speakers to answer questions about the major, discuss careers, present internship opportunities, etc. It hosts social and academic events for its members such as trivia/movie nights and field trips to local museums and historical sites. The club also publishes an undergraduate journal, *The Northerner Historical Review*, which provides a publication venue for our majors and others.

## Internships

Employer surveys reveal liberal arts majors with internship credit fare very well in the job market. Internships allow you to test possible career fields, network with professionals and develop specific skills. You may receive credit toward your major for internships in the field of history or you may earn upper division elective credit for other internships. We encourage you to consider whichever option best suits your long term goals.

*“Getting a degree in history taught me how to take pieces of information from many different voices, perspectives and sources and turn it into something meaningful. I learned how to create solid arguments and communicate effectively in all forms. The skill set I developed as a history major has served me very well as a nonprofit professional.”*

—Sandra Yandle, '08

# B.A. or B.S. in History

A history major can normally be completed in four years of full-time study. You can earn either a B.A. or B.S. degree. The B.A. requires two years (or equivalent) of foreign language study. The B.S. requires one of five sequences of advanced math, lab science or computer science in addition to the math core competency and math/science general education requirements. For complete degree information, please check the NIU undergraduate catalog at [catalog.niu.edu](http://catalog.niu.edu).

## Contact Information

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## Educator Licensure

Majors seeking licensure to teach history and social sciences at the secondary level complete the same major requirements, but they must also meet state-mandated standards for teaching social studies. These include a specific general education curriculum, social science coursework, pre-student teaching clinical experiences, 18 semester hours of professional education coursework and a full semester of student teaching. Admission to our licensure program is competitive and you will be held to higher standards than are otherwise required for graduation, including a minimum 3.0 GPA in all history courses. You are strongly encouraged to meet with the departmental advisor as early as possible, since licensure can add additional semesters to your course of study.

## Learning Beyond the Classroom

Every major completes an original research paper as a capstone project. You will have opportunities to work with our professors on their research or pursue your own research agenda through programs such as Research Rookies and the Undergraduate Special Opportunities

in Research and Artistry programs. All majors have the opportunity to present their original research, developed in class or through an engaged learning project, at the annual Undergraduate Research and Artistry Day.

We encourage you to take advantage of study abroad programs, which provide you with an opportunity to study first-hand the historical development and traditions of other peoples and their cultures.

## Is History a Good Fit for You?

### What courses could I take to test my interest in history?

Several courses in history are offered for general education credit. Any of these will provide a good test of the suitability of history as a major, or will partially fulfill general education requirements.

### What special skills are required of a major in history?

Students should have strong reading and writing skills. Competency in either a foreign language or quantitative skills must be developed, depending on the degree option chosen.

### What are good minors or second majors to go with history?

Our majors often choose other social science, humanities, or interdisciplinary minors, concentrations, or certificates. Fields as diverse as journalism, foreign language, gerontology, classical studies and business can be excellent choices, depending on your career goals. Students who pursue a second major also choose from a wide range of disciplines.

NIU offers a variety of interdisciplinary minors—Environmental Studies, Southeast Asian Studies, Latino/Latin American Studies, Medieval Studies, Nonprofit and NGO Studies and Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies—that complement the major and provide additional knowledge and skills.

## What can I do with this degree?

History majors make successful careers in a variety of professions.

Public history (museum work, historic preservation, archiving)

Journalism, publishing, editing

Law

Education

Library Sciences

Not-for-profit institutions and NGOs

Government (foreign service, intelligence, public administration, etc.)

Business careers in a global economy

Any career for which written and oral communication skills, research experience or the analysis and synthesis of information are crucial.

