

## GOALS OF THE HISTORY MAJOR

(March 23, 2011, emended February 27, 2013)

1. The goal of the history major is to offer students the knowledge and skills they need to gain a critical perspective on the past. Students will learn to define important historical questions, analyze relevant evidence with rigor and creativity, and present convincing arguments and conclusions based on original research in a manner that contributes to academic and public discussions. In History, as in other humanistic disciplines, students will practice resourceful inquiry and careful reading. They will advance their writing and public speaking skills to engage historical and contemporary issues.

2. To insure that students gain exposure to some of the great diversity of topics, methodologies, and philosophical concerns that inform the study of history, the department requires a combination of courses that offers breadth, depth, and variety of exposition. Through those courses, students should develop:

1. Broad acquaintance with several geographic areas of the world and with both the pre-modern and modern eras.
2. Familiarity with the range of sources and modes through which historical information can be found and expressed. Sources may include textual, oral, physical, and visual materials. The data within them may be qualitative or quantitative, and they may be available in printed, digital, or other formats. Modes of expression may include textbooks, monographs, scholarly articles, essays, literary works, or digital presentations.
3. In-depth understanding of a topic of their choice through original or creative research.
4. The ability to identify the skills developed in the history major and to articulate the applicability of those skills to a variety of endeavors and career paths beyond the professional practice of history.

If desired, students may also choose to pursue a Global Track within the History major that emphasizes the study of cross-cultural and transnational historical connections.

### **Skills Developed in the Major**

#### *1.) Define Important Historical Questions*

- i. Pose a historical question and explain its academic and public implications.
- ii. Using appropriate research procedures and aids, find the secondary resources in history and other disciplines available to answer a historical question.
- iii. Evaluate the evidentiary and theoretical bases of pertinent historical conversations in order to highlight opportunities for further investigation.

## 2.) *Collect and Analyze Evidence*

- i. Identify the range and limitations of primary sources available to engage the historical problem under investigation.
- ii. Examine the context in which sources were created, search for chronological and other relationships among them, and assess the sources in light of that knowledge.
- iii. Employ and, if necessary, modify appropriate theoretical frameworks to examine sources and develop arguments.

## 3.) *Present Original Conclusions*

- i. Present original and coherent findings through clearly written, persuasive arguments and narratives.
- ii. Orally convey persuasive arguments, whether in formal presentations or informal discussions.
- iii. Use appropriate presentation formats and platforms to share information with academic and public audiences.

## 4.) *Contribute to Ongoing Discussions*

- i. Extend insights from research to analysis of other historical problems.
- ii. Demonstrate the relevance of a historical perspective to contemporary issues.
- iii. Recognize, challenge, and avoid false analogies, overgeneralizations, anachronisms, and other logical fallacies.