DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

History is a core discipline in any liberal arts education. The study of history enables us to see how the present world came into being; at the same time, it asks us to understand diverse people in different times and places. The interests of faculty and students in History range temporally from ancient times to present, and geographically from Asia and Europe to the Americas, Africa, and the Middle East.

Highlights

- History faculty have won 13 UW Distinguished Teaching Awards—more than any other unit on campus.
- In the 2017 US News & World Report rankings of graduate programs, the Department of History's graduate program was chosen as 23rd among programs nationwide.
- During the 2017-2018 school year, the department taught approximately 4,600 students, most of whom were non-majors, in more than 150 classes.

Education

The Department of History offers a major in history and an interdisciplinary major in history and philosophy of science, as well as thematic minors in general history; history of race, gender, and power; history of empire and colonialism; history of religion and society; and history of war and society. History also offers a track for both College and departmental honors.

History majors are required to take at least two small, research-oriented courses: a methodology course during the junior year and a capstone seminar during the senior year. Additionally, undergraduates may pursue research opportunities through independent studies or internships, or in a two-quarter honors seminar; some receive funding for research projects from the department.

The department has embraced global and comparative history. Undergraduate course topics range from “The AIDS Epidemic: A Global History” to “Drugs in Latin America” to “The Mongols” to “Global Environmental History.” Graduate students may take fields in nine major divisions of study, including comparative colonialisms, comparative gender, comparative environmental history, and comparative ethnicity and nationalism. Recent PhDs have attained tenure-track appointments at many top colleges in the U.S. and Canada.

The Department of History sponsors the Center for the Study of the Pacific Northwest and co-sponsors the Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies with the Department of Political Science. Both centers support graduate students and undertake public programs.
Faculty Research ranges widely. Recent publications have focused on migrations in modern Europe; colonialism in the Western Pacific; the roles of race, ethnicity, class and migration in US history; law in medieval Wales; and the history of science and technology.

The Center for the Study of the Pacific Northwest supports graduate student research, sponsors symposia and visiting speakers, co-publishes books with the UW Press, publishes Pacific Northwest Quarterly, and hosts public programs.

Recent undergraduate research seminars have included “Eating History: Food and Foodways from Antiquity to the 21st Century,” “War Stories: Recording, Remembering and Reimagining WWII,” “Watergate and the American Presidency,” and “Witnesses to the Mongol Empire.”

Interdisciplinary scholarship in History is encouraged by strong ties to other units, including the Jackson School of International Studies; American Indian Studies; Anthropology; American Ethnic Studies; Gender, Women and Sexuality Studies; Philosophy; Classics; Near Eastern Languages and Civilization; and the Simpson Center for the Humanities.

Outreach

History faculty speak frequently in the community, and each year faculty present the History Lecture Series. Faculty routinely visit secondary schools and serve annually as judges for History Day contests.

The department has a very successful program for Access students—students 60 years of age or older who audit UW courses for a nominal fee. In addition to welcoming them into classes, the department sends out periodic informational mailings, hosts an annual reception for Access students and faculty, and sponsors a quarterly reading group.

The department reaches out to teachers and students in secondary schools and colleges in a variety of ways, including the Seattle Civil Rights & Labor History Project (www.civilrights.washington.edu), the Center for the Study of the Pacific Northwest (www.cspn.washington.edu), BlackPast.org (www.blackpast.org), and the Sephardic Treasures project.