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 2019-2020 school year, the department taught approximately 4,740 students, most of whom were non-majors, in more than 160 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 majors and 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. It also offers—in cooperation with other units—minors in diversity, labor studies, classics and ancient history, Hellenic studies, Jewish studies, Asian studies, history of science, and medical history and ethics. 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

Faculty Research ranges widely. Recent faculty publications have focused on U.S. history, global health histories, law in medieval Europe, the history of science and technology, and comparative colonialism. Faculty, graduate and undergraduate students are also involved in a wide variety of digital history initiatives, touching on diverse thematic, geographic and temporal areas.

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 “Our Young Lady Boarder: Recollections of an Archeologist’s Wife during the Golden Age of Egyptology,” “Plan Colombia and the Campesino: The Instrumentalization of Racial and Social Hierarchies to Promote a Neoliberal Extractive Economy in 21st Century Colombia,” “Holocaust Memory in the Age of Film and Social Media,” and “The Fallen Science: The Tradition and Skepticism of Ancient Astrology.”

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; French & Italian Studies; 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.

FACULTY (Autumn 2020)

21 Professors
15 Associate Professors
1 Assistant Professor
1 Associate Teaching Professor
23 Professors Emeritus
16 Adjunct Faculty

MAJOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT AWARDS (2019-2020)

1 College of Arts & Sciences Dean’s Medalist
1 College of Arts & Sciences Gonfalonier
1 Husky 100 recipient
2 Arts & Sciences Humanities Scholars
48 History Department scholarships & prizes

MAJOR GRADUATE STUDENT AWARDS (2019-2020)

2 UW China Studies Fellowships
1 UW Southeast Asia Center Fellowship
1 UW GO-MAP Research Assistantship
1 UW GO-MAP Native American Fellowship
2 FLAS Fellowships
1 UW Simpson Center Society of Scholars Fellowship
1 UW Presidential Dissertation Fellowship
1 Koç University Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations Fellowship
1 Queen Sikrit Fellowship
1 Fulbright Fellowship
2 Fulbright-Hayes Fellowships