

# HISTORY, B.A. (LIBERAL ARTS)

**Begin Campus:** Any Penn State Campus

**End Campus:** University Park, World Campus

## Program Description

This major provides a broad introduction to the history of the great civilizations of the world and specific areas of historical inquiry. Centered in one of the basic, traditional disciplines, the History major offers invaluable preparation for students interested in a career in government, international relations, law, or librarianship, as well as essential training for those interested in a professional career as an academic or public historian, archivist, or secondary school teacher. Along with the perspective on the present that a study of the past engenders, the program develops skills in research, analysis, and synthesis that have proved useful in commerce and industry. The History major permits easy combination with minors, area studies, or even a concurrent major, providing flexibility in one's career choice.

## What is History?

History is an interdisciplinary field that offers a unique analytical perspective on the world. To understand history, we not only need to understand politics and war, but also the significance of cultural, religious, social, and intellectual developments. The study of history provides a breadth of knowledge and an understanding of diverse perspectives. This diversity includes the opportunity to incorporate anthropology, the scientific study of humanity, into their coursework. A history major will not only enable a student to have a better comprehension of the development of today's complex world, but will also help a student develop a range of skills that are applicable in a wide variety of careers, including education, law, museum studies, and business.

## You Might Like This Program If...

- You want to learn to assess the credibility of sources; in today's media-rich environment, you will put this skill to work every day.
- You want to gain a deeper understanding of complex causalities; as a history student you will practice thinking about the significance of multiple, often interlinking factors and the way they contribute to complex events.
- You're interested in pursuing a career in law, business, or education.

## Entrance to Major

In order to be eligible for entrance to this major, a student must:

1. attain at least a C (2.00) cumulative grade-point average for all courses taken at the University; and
2. have at least third-semester classification (<https://www.registrar.psu.edu/enrollment/semester-classification.cfm>).

READ SENATE POLICY 37-30: ENTRANCE TO AND CHANGES IN MAJOR PROGRAMS OF STUDY (<https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/37-00-entrance-to-a-college-or-major/>)

## World Campus

### Direct Admission to the Major

Incoming first-year students who meet the program admission requirements are admitted directly into the major. Admission restrictions may apply for change-of-major and/or change-of-campus students.

For more information about the admission process for this major, please send a request to the college, campus, or program contact (listed in the Contact tab).

## Degree Requirements

**For the Bachelor of Arts degree in History, a minimum of 123 credits is required:**

Requirement	Credits
General Education	45
Electives	18
Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements	24
Requirements for the Major	36

**3 of the 24 credits for Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements are included in the Requirements for the Major, General Education, or Electives and 0-12 credits are included in Electives if world language proficiency is demonstrated by examination.**

Per Senate Policy 83-80.5, the college dean or campus chancellor and program faculty may require up to 24 credits of coursework in the major to be taken at the location or in the college or program where the degree is earned. For more information, check the Suggested Academic Plan for your intended program.

## Requirements for the Major

A grade of C or better is required for all courses in the major. To graduate, a student enrolled in the major must earn at least a C grade in each course designated by the major as a C-required course, as specified by Senate Policy 82-44 (<https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/>).

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Prescribed Courses</b>		
<i>Prescribed Courses: Require a grade of C or better</i>		
HIST 302W	Undergraduate Seminar	3
<b>Additional Courses</b>		
<i>Additional Courses: Require a grade of C or better</i>		
Select one sequence of the following:		6
HIST 1 & HIST 2	Western Civilization I and Western Civilization II	
HIST 10 & HIST 11	World History to 1500 and World History since 1500	
HIST 20 & HIST 21	American Civilization to 1877 and American Civilization Since 1877	

### Supporting Courses and Related Areas

*Supporting Courses and Related Areas: Require a grade of C or better*

Select 12 credits, in consultation with an adviser, at the 100-200-level, 12 one course from each of the following field categories: Europe, United States, Global, Pre-Modern<sup>1</sup>

Select 3 credits at the 100-400-level 3

Select 12 credits at the 400-level, at least one course which must be in Global History 12

<sup>1</sup> Courses that appear in two History categories (such as HIST 174) cannot be double-counted to be applied to two field categories. However, the student may choose to which category to apply the course.

## General Education

Connecting career and curiosity, the General Education curriculum provides the opportunity for students to acquire transferable skills necessary to be successful in the future and to thrive while living in interconnected contexts. General Education aids students in developing intellectual curiosity, a strengthened ability to think, and a deeper sense of aesthetic appreciation. These are requirements for all baccalaureate students and are often partially incorporated into the requirements of a program. For additional information, see the General Education Requirements (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/baccalaureate-degree-general-education-program/>) section of the Bulletin and consult your academic adviser.

The keystone symbol appears next to the title of any course that is designated as a General Education course. Program requirements may also satisfy General Education requirements and vary for each program.

### Foundations (grade of C or better is required and Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)

- **Quantification (GQ):** 6 credits
- **Writing and Speaking (GWS):** 9 credits

### Breadth in the Knowledge Domains (Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)

- **Arts (GA):** 3 credits
- **Health and Wellness (GHW):** 3 credits
- **Humanities (GH):** 3 credits
- **Social and Behavioral Sciences (GS):** 3 credits
- **Natural Sciences (GN):** 3 credits

### Integrative Studies

- **Inter-Domain Courses (Inter-Domain):** 6 credits

### Exploration

- **GN**, may be completed with Inter-Domain courses: 3 credits
- **GA, GH, GN, GS, Inter-Domain courses.** This may include 3 credits of World Language course work beyond the 12th credit level or the requirements for the student's degree program, whichever is higher: 6 credits

## University Degree Requirements

### First Year Engagement

All students enrolled in a college or the Division of Undergraduate Studies at University Park, and the World Campus are required to take 1 to 3 credits of the First-Year Seminar, as specified by their college First-Year Engagement Plan.

Other Penn State colleges and campuses may require the First-Year Seminar; colleges and campuses that do not require a First-Year Seminar provide students with a first-year engagement experience.

First-year baccalaureate students entering Penn State should consult their academic adviser for these requirements.

## Cultures Requirement

6 credits are required and may satisfy other requirements

- United States Cultures: 3 credits
- International Cultures: 3 credits

## Writing Across the Curriculum

3 credits required from the college of graduation and likely prescribed as part of major requirements.

## Total Minimum Credits

A minimum of 120 degree credits must be earned for a baccalaureate degree. The requirements for some programs may exceed 120 credits. Students should consult with their college or department adviser for information on specific credit requirements.

## Quality of Work

Candidates must complete the degree requirements for their major and earn at least a 2.00 grade-point average for all courses completed within their degree program.

## Limitations on Source and Time for Credit Acquisition

The college dean or campus chancellor and program faculty may require up to 24 credits of course work in the major to be taken at the location or in the college or program where the degree is earned. Credit used toward degree programs may need to be earned from a particular source or within time constraints (see Senate Policy 83-80 (<https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/>)). For more information, check the Suggested Academic Plan for your intended program.

## B.A. Degree Requirements

**World Language** (0-12 credits): Student must attain 12th credit level of proficiency in one world language in addition to English. This proficiency must be demonstrated by either examination or course work. See the Placement Policy for Penn State World Language Courses (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/advising-planning-degree-program/course-placements/placement-policy-world-language-courses/>).

**B.A. Fields** (9 credits): Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Arts, World Languages, Natural Sciences, Quantification (may not be taken in the area of the student's primary major; world language credits in this category must be in a second world language in addition to English or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the first language). Credits must be selected from the list of approved courses.

**World Cultures** (0-3 credits): Select 3 credits from approved list. Students may count courses in this category in order to meet other major, minor, elective, or General Education requirements, except for the University Cultural Diversity (US/IL) requirement.

## Integrated B.A. in History and M.A. in History

*Undergraduate degree available at the following campuses: Abington, University Park, World Campus*

*Graduate degree available at the following campuses: University Park*

Requirements for the Integrated B.A. in History and M.A. in History can be found in the Graduate Bulletin (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/programs/majors/history/#integratedundergradgradprogramtext>).

## Program Learning Objectives

- **Critical Understanding of the Past:** Apply a critical lens to the study of the past, understanding that history is not simply an account of what happened but the result of a process of interpretation and contextualization.
- **Historical Causality:** Analyze the complex causality of past events, articulating the how and why of past events to move beyond monocausal explanations.
- **Chronological Thinking:** Demonstrate chronological thinking, making sense of the past through periodization and tracking patterns of change and continuity over time.
- **Evaluation of Historical Sources:** Evaluate and interpret both primary and secondary source materials, judging credibility, reconstructing historical context, and making inferences about genre, audience, perspective, and purpose.
- **Create Historical Arguments:** Create historical arguments on the basis of evidence, in ways consistent with standards of academic integrity.

## Academic Advising

The objectives of the university's academic advising program are to help advisees identify and achieve their academic goals, to promote their intellectual discovery, and to encourage students to take advantage of both in-and out-of class educational opportunities in order that they become self-directed learners and decision makers.

Both advisers and advisees share responsibility for making the advising relationship succeed. By encouraging their advisees to become engaged in their education, to meet their educational goals, and to develop the habit of learning, advisers assume a significant educational role. The advisee's unit of enrollment will provide each advisee with a primary academic adviser, the information needed to plan the chosen program of study, and referrals to other specialized resources.

READ SENATE POLICY 32-00: ADVISING POLICY (<https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/32-00-advising-policy/>)

### University Park

#### Liberal Arts Academic Advising

814-865-2545

Use the Liberal Arts Meet the Academic Advisers web page (<https://la.psu.edu/student-services/academic-advising/meet-the-academic-advisers/>) to see the contact information for the specific adviser(s) of this program

### World Campus

#### Undergraduate Academic Advising

100 Innovation Blvd

Suite 225

University Park, PA 16803

814-863-3283

[advising@worldcampus.psu.edu](mailto:advising@worldcampus.psu.edu)

### Abington

#### David Ruth

Program Chair, History

1600 Woodland Road

Abington, PA 19001

215-881-7640

[dxr35@psu.edu](mailto:dxr35@psu.edu)

## Suggested Academic Plan

The suggested academic plan(s) listed on this page are the plan(s) that are in effect during the 2025-26 academic year. To access previous years' suggested academic plans, please visit the archive (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/archive/>) to view the appropriate Undergraduate Bulletin edition.

### History, B.A. at University Park Campus

The course series listed below provides **only one** of the many possible ways to move through this curriculum. The University may make changes in policies, procedures, educational offerings, and requirements at any time. This plan should be used in conjunction with your degree audit (accessible in LionPATH as either an **Academic Requirements** or **What If** report). Please consult with a Penn State academic adviser on a regular basis to develop and refine an academic plan that is appropriate for you.

#### First Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
LA 83	1.5 Hist Survey Course II *	3
HIST Survey Course I *	3 General Education Course	3
General Education Course (GWS) †	3 General Education Course	3
World Language Level 1	3 General Education Course (GQ) †	3
General Education Course	3 World Language Level 2	3
General Education Course (GQ) †	3	
<b>16.5</b>		<b>15</b>

#### Second Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
100- or 200-Level HIST Course *	3 LA 283	1.5
General Education Course (GWS) †	3 100- or 200-Level HIST Course *	3
General Education Course	3 100- or 200-Level HIST Course *	3
General Education Course	3 General Education Course	3
World Language Level 3	4 General Education Course	3
<b>B.A. Knowledge Domains</b>		<b>3</b>
<b>16</b>		<b>16.5</b>

#### Third Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
HIST 302W	3 100- or 200-Level HIST Course *	3
100- or 200-Level HIST Course *	3 General Education Course (GWS) †	3
General Education Course	3 400-Level HIST Course *	3
B.A. Knowledge Domains	3 General Education Course	3
Elective	3 Elective	3
<b>15</b>		<b>15</b>

#### Fourth Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
400-Level HIST Course *	3 400-Level HIST Course *	3

400-Level HIST Course*	3 General Education Course (GHW)	1.5
World Cultures	3 Elective	3
B.A. Knowledge Domains	3 Elective	3
Elective	3 Elective	3
General Education Course (GHW)	1.5	
<b>16.5</b>		<b>13.5</b>

**Total Credits 124**

\* Course requires a grade of C or better for the major

‡ Course requires a grade of C or better for General Education

# Course is an Entrance to Major requirement

† Course satisfies General Education and degree requirement

**University Requirements and General Education Notes:**

US and IL are abbreviations used to designate courses that satisfy Cultural Diversity Requirements (United States and International Cultures).

W, M, X, and Y are the suffixes at the end of a course number used to designate courses that satisfy University Writing Across the Curriculum requirement.

General Education includes Foundations (GWS and GQ), Knowledge Domains (GHW, GN, GA, GH, GS) and Integrative Studies (Inter-domain) requirements. N or Q (Honors) is the suffix at the end of a course number used to help identify an Inter-domain course, but the inter-domain attribute is used to fill audit requirements. Foundations courses (GWS and GQ) require a grade of 'C' or better.

All incoming Schreyer Honors College first-year students at University Park will take ENGL 137H/CAS 137H in the fall semester and ENGL 138T/CAS 138T in the spring semester. These courses carry the GWS designation and satisfy a portion of that General Education requirement. If the student's program prescribes GWS these courses will replace both ENGL 15/ENGL 30H and CAS 100A/CAS 100B/CAS 100C. Each course is 3 credits.

**Bachelor of Arts Requirements:**

Bachelor of Arts students must take 9 credits in Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) Fields (Humanities; Social and Behavioral Sciences; Arts; World Languages [2nd language or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the 1st]; Natural Sciences; Quantification). The B.A. Fields courses may not be taken in the area of the student's primary major. See your adviser and the Degree Requirements section (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/>) of this Bulletin.

Bachelor of Arts students must take 3 credits in World Cultures. See your adviser and the full list of courses approved as World Cultures courses (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/course-lists/ba-world-cultures/>).

**Advising Notes:**

- 24 credits within the major must be completed at University Park (policy 83-80). Talk with your academic adviser for additional details.

## History, B.A. at Commonwealth Campuses

The course series listed below provides **only one** of the many possible ways to move through this curriculum. The University may make changes in policies, procedures, educational offerings, and requirements at any time. This plan should be used in conjunction with your degree audit (accessible in LionPATH as either an **Academic Requirements** or **What If** report). Please consult with a Penn State academic adviser on a regular basis to develop and refine an academic plan that is appropriate for you.

### First Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
HIST Survey Course I*	3 Hist Survey Course II*	3
General Education Course (GWS)†	3 General Education Course	3
World Language Level 1	3 General Education Course	3
General Education Course	3 General Education Course (GQ)‡	3
General Education Course (GQ)‡	3 World Language Level 2	3
	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>

### Second Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
100- or 200-Level HIST Course*	3 100- or 200-Level HIST Course*	3
General Education Course (GWS)‡	3 100- or 200-Level HIST Course*	3
General Education Course	3 General Education Course	3
General Education Course	3 General Education Course	3
World Language Level 3	4 B.A. Knowledge Domains	3
	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>

### Third Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
HIST 302W	3 100- or 200-Level HIST Course*	3
LA 283	1.5 General Education Course (GWS)‡	3
100- or 200-Level HIST Course*	3 400-Level HIST Course*	3
General Education Course	3 General Education Course	3
B.A. Knowledge Domains	3 Elective	3
Elective	3	
	<b>16.5</b>	<b>15</b>

### Fourth Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
400-Level HIST Course*	3 400-Level HIST Course*	3
400-Level HIST Course*	3 General Education Course (GHW)	1.5
World Cultures	3 Elective	3
B.A. Knowledge Domains	3 Elective	3
Elective	3 Elective	3
General Education Course (GHW)	1.5	
	<b>16.5</b>	<b>13.5</b>

**Total Credits 122.5**

\* Course requires a grade of C or better for the major

‡ Course requires a grade of C or better for General Education

# Course is an Entrance to Major requirement

† Course satisfies General Education and degree requirement

### University Requirements and General Education Notes:

US and IL are abbreviations used to designate courses that satisfy Cultural Diversity Requirements (United States and International Cultures).

W, M, X, and Y are the suffixes at the end of a course number used to designate courses that satisfy University Writing Across the Curriculum requirement.

General Education includes Foundations (GWS and GQ), Knowledge Domains (GHW, GN, GA, GH, GS) and Integrative Studies (Inter-domain) requirements. N or Q (Honors) is the suffix at the end of a course number used to help identify an Inter-domain course, but the inter-domain attribute is used to fill audit requirements. Foundations courses (GWS and GQ) require a grade of 'C' or better.

### Bachelor of Arts Requirements:

Bachelor of Arts students must take 9 credits in Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) Fields (Humanities; Social and Behavioral Sciences; Arts; World Languages [2nd language or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the 1st]; Natural Sciences; Quantification). The B.A. Fields courses may not be taken in the area of the student's primary major. See your adviser and the Degree Requirements section (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/>) of this Bulletin.

Bachelor of Arts students must take 3 credits in World Cultures. See your adviser and the full list of courses approved as World Cultures courses (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/course-lists/ba-world-cultures/>).

### Advising Notes:

- 24 credits within the major must be completed at University Park (policy 83-80). Talk with your academic adviser for additional details.

## Career Paths

Penn State History majors have enjoyed success in a wide variety of fields. They are found in careers that relate to the major, such as historic preservation, museum work, and education; a healthy representation of our majors go on to law school and graduate school. However, it is not unusual to find former history majors in areas that might not immediately come to mind. Penn State history majors can be found in architecture, software development, web development, banking, federal government work, and the Peace Corps, to name just a few. They tend to do well because their basic skills are sound.

### Careers

- Law
- Secondary Teaching
- Historic Preservation
- Governmental Organizations
- United Nations Organizations

- Non-Governmental Organizations
- Industry Leaders

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT POTENTIAL CAREER OPTIONS FOR GRADUATES OF THE HISTORY PROGRAM (<https://la.psu.edu/current-students/career-enrichment-network/>)

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRADUATE STUDIES (<https://history.la.psu.edu/graduate/>)

## Professional Resources

- Phi Alpha Theta National History Honor Society (<https://www.phialphatheta.org>)

## Contact

### University Park

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY  
108 Weaver Building  
University Park, PA 16802  
814-865-1367  
[sam5519@psu.edu](mailto:sam5519@psu.edu)

<https://history.la.psu.edu>

### World Campus

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY  
108 Weaver Building  
University Park, PA 16802  
814-865-1367  
[sam5519@psu.edu](mailto:sam5519@psu.edu)

<https://www.worldcampus.psu.edu/degrees-and-certificates/penn-state-online-history-bachelor-of-arts-degree> (<https://www.worldcampus.psu.edu/degrees-and-certificates/penn-state-online-history-bachelor-of-arts-degree/>)

### Abington

DIVISION OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES  
1600 Woodland Road  
Abington, PA 19001  
215-881-7640  
[dxr35@psu.edu](mailto:dxr35@psu.edu)

<https://www.abington.psu.edu/academics/majors-at-abington/history>  
(<https://www.abington.psu.edu/academics/majors-at-abington/history/>)