

HISTORY MAJOR

MAJOR DESCRIPTION

History is one of Wesleyan University's most intellectually diverse majors, offering the possibility to investigate nearly every region and time period of the global past. The study of history is excellent preparation for careers in many fields, including law, journalism, the entertainment industry, business and finance, education, politics and public policy, social activism, and the arts.

ADMISSION TO THE MAJOR

Go to your portfolio and declare the history major.

Any history faculty member may serve as an advisor by agreement with the student. If you are not certain which faculty member would be an appropriate advisor for your intended course of study, you should meet with the department chair, William Johnston.

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

Nine History Courses Total

N.B. -**higher level** History courses may be substituted for **lower level** ones

Courses taught on campus by History Department faculty but not cross-listed as HIST courses can count toward the major.

Courses to Satisfy the Major

- **One 150-199 "Intro to History"** course, normally taken as a first-year or sophomore at Wesleyan, can count toward the nine history courses in the major.
- **Five History courses 200 level or higher**
- **HIST300 "Issues in Contemporary Historiography"** (usually taken first semester junior year).
- **Two History courses 301 level or higher**
 - One 200 or 300 level History course must devote at least 50% of its attention and content to the period before 1800.
 - One semester of essay or thesis coursework can count toward completion of the History major (HIST403, HIST404, HIST409, or HIST410)
- **Pre-Industrial Era**
 - One 200 or 300-level course required from a pre-approved list.

Capstone Project

Every History Major is required to complete a substantial research project at Wesleyan under departmental faculty supervision. This can take the form of:

1. a senior thesis (HIST409-HIST410)
2. a senior essay (HIST403 or HIST404)
3. an approved research paper for a 300 level seminar indicated by enrollment in .25 credit tutorial (HIST401 or HIST402)

STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

Majoring in history develops valuable skills transferable beyond the classroom. Learning goals broadly include: critical thinking, flexible interpretation of diverse source material, and persuasive writing, as well as analytical and research skills for tackling complex questions that will prepare majors for the changing professional world.

Departmental learning goals are met incrementally as students combine diverse courses and course types:

Category 1: 100-level history courses (numbered 150–189) are in lecture and discussion format and provide introduction to history, including key foundational elements of historical work. Students learn to:

1. Develop historical analysis through critical reading of primary and secondary sources
2. Develop historical writing in terms of argument and style
3. Navigate historical research resources, including libraries, internet sources, archives

Category 2: 200-level history courses are in a lecture and discussion format and continue learning goals from category 1 while developing expertise in specific places, times, and themes. Students learn to:

1. Understand change over time in the context of specific regions, periods, and themes
2. Synthesize and analyze historical material in written work and oral presentations
3. Apply historical research methods and resources

Category 3: 300-level history courses are in a seminar format and focus on specific areas of knowledge to develop subject expertise and research acuity. Students learn to:

1. refine their expository skills in writing and oral presentations
2. identify research questions and master historiography by critically assessing previous historical work
3. develop and execute original, independent research projects

Assessment occurs within each individual course and assignment but also through the History major's relationship with their advisor who monitors the student's overall progress.

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT

There is no foreign language requirement for history majors, but the department strongly advises all history majors to learn at least one foreign language.

TRANSFER CREDIT

History majors wishing to count transfer credit toward the History Major must consult with their history advisor in advance, and upon their return to Wesleyan provide their advisor with syllabi and other materials, such as exams and papers, from the course(s) that they wish to apply toward the history major. Once approved by the advisor, the course may count for major credit.

CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE

The capstone is required for all History majors. It provides students with the opportunity to apply their skills in historical research toward a topic about which they are passionate.

The Capstone Project can be one of the following:

1. a senior thesis (HIST409-HIST410),
2. a senior essay written in a tutorial (HIST403 or HIST404), or
3. an approved research paper in a 300-level seminar indicated by enrollment in a .25 credit tutorial (HIST401 or HIST402).