History

Department Website: http://history.uchicago.edu/page/undergraduate

Program of Study

Studying history enables students to learn the importance of both time and space to human experience. It will enable you to engage a fundamental paradox: The past really is a "foreign country" and yet the present is a product of that past. You will learn how people have not always been as they are in the here and now, and also to make sense of the present in terms of the past and of the past in terms of the present. Fields of study may be defined by geography (e.g., China, the Caribbean, the United States, Europe), time period (e.g., ancient, medieval, modern), or by thematic approaches (e.g., legal, cultural, environmental, gender). The fourth-year BA thesis will afford you the opportunity to pursue an original research project on a topic of your choosing. Students have worked on topics in subfields as varied as the history of revolution, slavery, diplomacy, the Enlightenment, religion, colonialism, race, war, and work. Involving the analysis of evidence, the formulation of arguments, and extensive writing, studying history is excellent preparation for a wide range of endeavors from law, government, and public policy to the arts and business.

Students interested in a history major ideally should consult the undergraduate program coordinator before the end of their second year; it is, however, generally possible to join the major as a third-year student. You will be assigned to a faculty advisor who will act as your individual program advisor. Students who wish to study abroad should see the undergraduate program coordinator during their second year.

Students construct their course of study in consultation with their faculty advisor, the undergraduate program coordinator, preceptors, and other appropriate faculty members.

Program Requirements

There are no special prerequisites for a history major. However, students are strongly encouraged to fulfill College civilization and language requirements with courses most relevant to their main field of interest. A typical course of study in the Department of History would commence with surveys or courses that introduce a problem or approach and move on to more advanced and specialized courses. History colloquia (HIST 29600s) are offered on a variety of topics each year and enable advanced undergraduates to write an extended research project based on primary sources.

Courses

Students must take twelve courses in history. Students must submit a petition to receive History credit for courses that do not have a History course number assigned. Students who wish to submit a petition should consult with the undergraduate program coordinator in advance about the process and required documentation.
Students are required to take six courses in, or directly related to, their chosen main field. Two additional courses are reserved for HIST 29801 BA Thesis Seminar I and HIST 29802 BA Thesis Seminar II. The four secondary courses are chosen to complement the main field, extend the range of the student’s historical awareness, and explore varying approaches to historical analysis and interpretations. Students are urged to take courses that introduce significant civilizational or chronological breadth. As part of their course work, students are required to take a history colloquium (HIST 29600s) by the end of their third year. The colloquium counts toward the twelve courses needed to complete the major and requires students to do independent research and writing as preparation for the BA thesis.

Students construct the main field and choose their other courses in close consultation with the undergraduate program coordinator, subject to final approval by the chair of the Collegiate Affairs Committee.

Students are typically expected to take at least four history courses, including three in their main field, by the end of their third year.

Courses in the Main Field

The Department of History offers a number of standard major fields, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Africa
- Ancient
- Britain
- Byzantium
- Caribbean
- East Asia
- Europe (Medieval, Early Modern, and Modern)
- International and Transnational
- Jewish
- Latin America
- Middle East
- Russia
- Science
- Sexuality and Gender
- South Asia
- United States

Students should work with the undergraduate program coordinator to ensure appropriate focus and breadth in both the major field and the elective courses. In choosing courses, there are two important goals: broad knowledge of the main field and more detailed knowledge of one or several of its major aspects.

Junior Colloquium

Students who are majoring in history must take a history colloquium (HIST 29600s) by the end of their third year of study. The colloquia are offered on a variety
of topics each year and enable advanced College students to pursue research projects. These courses expose students to the methods and practice of historical research and writing prior to enrollment in the BA Thesis Seminar. Students will be required to compose an original research paper that is at least fifteen pages in length. For students who are planning to begin graduate study the year following graduation, the Junior Colloquium requirement provides them with the opportunity to produce a writing sample based on primary sources that they can use for their applications.

Students who will not be on campus their third year should consult with the undergraduate program coordinator about filling this requirement.

BA Thesis Seminar

The BA thesis is a three-quarter research project in which students develop a significant and original interpretation of a historical issue of their choosing. Theses are the culmination of the history program and range from forty to sixty pages in length, but there is neither a minimum nor a maximum requirement. The BA Thesis Seminars assist students in formulating approaches and developing their research and writing skills, while providing a forum for group discussion and critiques. In addition to working closely with their faculty director, who is the first reader of their thesis, students are also required to participate in the BA Thesis Seminars. Although students will benefit from the guidance of their preceptor and the company of their peers for three quarters beginning in the spring of their third year and running through the winter of their fourth, they only formally register for two quarters, during the Spring Quarter of their third year (HIST 29801 BA Thesis Seminar I) and Winter Quarter of their fourth year (HIST 29802 BA Thesis Seminar II). The BA Thesis Seminar will meet weekly in the spring of the third year, but only every other week during autumn and winter terms of the fourth year. The preceptor serves as the seminar instructor and the second reader of the thesis.

The final deadline for submission of the BA thesis is second week of Spring Quarter, when two copies of the BA thesis must be submitted to the undergraduate program coordinator in the Social Science Research Building, room 225. Students who wish to complete their papers in a quarter other than Spring Quarter must petition the department through the undergraduate program coordinator. Students graduating in a quarter other than Spring Quarter must turn in their theses by Friday of seventh week of their final quarter. When circumstances justify it, the department establishes individual deadlines and procedures.

With approval from the undergraduate program chairs in two departments, history students may be able to write a BA thesis that meets requirements for a dual major. Students must consult with both chairs before the end of Spring Quarter of their third year. A consent form, to be signed by both chairs, is available from the College adviser. It must be completed and returned to the College adviser by the end of Autumn Quarter of the student’s year of graduation.

Students are eligible to apply for research funding for summer research from the Department of History and the PRISM (Planning Resources and Involvement for Students in the Majors) program. Students are also encouraged to take advantage of funding that is available for language study abroad through the Foreign Language
Acquisition Grant (FLAG) program. For details on available funding, students should consult the undergraduate program coordinator.

Reading and Research Courses

Students interested in pursuing a program of study that cannot be met by means of regular courses have the option of devising a reading and research course that is taken individually and supervised by a member of the History faculty. Such a course requires the approval of the undergraduate program coordinator and the prior consent of the instructor with whom the student would like to study. Note: Enrollment in HIST 29700 Readings in History is open only to students who are doing independent study that is not related to the BA thesis or BA research. As a general rule, only one reading and research course can be counted towards the history major.

SUMMARY OF REQUIREMENTS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Units</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Six courses in main field</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIST 29801-29802 BA Thesis Seminar I-II</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Four electives</td>
<td>400</td>
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<tr>
<td>One Junior Colloquium (HIST 29600s): May be in main field or an elective</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Units</td>
<td>1200</td>
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HONORS

Students who have done exceptionally well in their course work and have written an outstanding BA thesis are recommended for honors. Candidates must have an overall GPA of 3.0 or higher, and a GPA of 3.7 or higher in the major. BA theses judged to be of particular distinction are submitted by the readers to the department for honors. If the department concurs, the student is awarded honors. Students who fail to meet the final deadline for submission of the BA thesis are not eligible for honors consideration.

GRADING

Courses counting towards the history major are normally taken for quality grades. The History Colloquium (HIST 29600s), HIST 29801 BA Thesis Seminar I, and HIST 29802 BA Thesis Seminar II must be taken for quality grades. In exceptional circumstances, students who are majoring in history may petition to allow a history course taken for a pass/fail grade to count towards the requirements of the major. Students wishing to do so should consult with the undergraduate program coordinator. A pass grade is to be given only for work of C– quality or higher. Students should also consult with their College adviser about the place of pass/fail grading options in their larger program of study.

MINOR IN HISTORY

Students specializing in all disciplines are welcome to minor in history. Majors in such fields as international studies, political science, public policy, economics, and philosophy will find that a history minor can complement their major by providing a historical understanding of social, cultural, political, and economic
issues, while those majoring in such disciplines as mathematics and the sciences can use the minor to explore a different area of interest and develop their humanistic understanding of the world. Students may choose to take courses in a variety of fields, time periods, and thematic topics, with the aim of developing a broad understanding of historical change across time and space, or they may choose to focus specifically on a more narrowly defined field of interest.

Students wishing to pursue the minor should contact the undergraduate program coordinator and complete the minor declaration form no later than the end of the third year.

The Department of History welcomes the minors to participate in all departmental events organized for the majors.

Requirements

The minor in history requires a total of six courses chosen in consultation with the undergraduate program coordinator. Courses in the minor (1) may not be double counted with the student's major(s) or with other minors; (2) may not be counted toward general education requirements; and (3) may not be petitioned in from other departments. Courses in the minor must be taken for quality grades, and more than half of the requirements for the minor must be met by registering for courses bearing University of Chicago course numbers.

In addition to the course-work requirement, students wishing to pursue the minor must submit a two- to three-page essay that describes the rationale for the minor in relation to their choice of major and/or future career plans and explains the intellectual trajectory that has or will guide their choice of courses.

Course Numbering

History courses numbered 10000 to 29900 are intended primarily for College students. Some 20000-level courses have 30000-level equivalents if they are also open to graduate students. To register for courses that are cross listed as both undergraduate and graduate (20000/30000), undergraduates must use the undergraduate number (20000). History courses numbered 40000 to 49900 are intended primarily for graduate students, but are open to advanced College students with the consent of the instructor. Undergraduates registered for 40000-level courses will be held to the graduate-level requirements. Courses rarely open to College students are not listed in this catalog.