

History, History – Teacher Education and History – Pre-Law

Department of History, College of Arts and Sciences



Career Opportunities

Western Illinois University's history graduates have entered a variety of careers. Many have found jobs in law, management, research and sales with private companies. An almost equal number have pursued careers in education, primarily as secondary school teachers. Other graduates have pursued careers in archival or library work, government and the military. A substantial number have elected to continue their education in either graduate or professional schools; the study of history is excellent preparation for law school and for graduate programs in museum studies, historic preservation, liberal arts disciplines and business.

As one of the WIU Department of History's distinguished alumni observed recently, "An education in history at Western Illinois University thoroughly prepared me to compete in the business world." Another commented that, "The world changes so quickly that it is virtually impossible to teach someone a skill that will still be in demand even five years after graduation, let alone twenty. A degree in history, however, gives one the skills necessary to be successful in any endeavor."

Program Objective

The successful and varied careers of Western's history graduates stem from the nature of their chosen discipline. The fundamental goal of the study of history is to provide students with an understanding of cultures and traditions that have shaped the present and to develop their ability to solve problems by asking relevant questions, drawing meaningful conclusions from disparate evidence and presenting those conclusions clearly and cogently in oral and written forms.

Department Scholarships

The history department offers six scholarships for undergraduate majors with annual stipends between \$1,000 and \$5,000 each. In addition, the department awards annual paper writing prizes and provides financial support for student research and professional travel.

Majors

The department offers undergraduate majors in history, history – teacher education and history – pre-law, all leading to the Bachelor of Arts degree. At least 36 semester hours (SH) in history is required for each of the three history degrees. History – teacher education majors graduate with state licensure to teach history and/or other social studies subjects at the high school level. History – pre-law majors graduate with the skills and background necessary to do well on the LSAT exam and in law school.

Student-Faculty Interaction

The members of the WIU Department of History faculty are award-winning teachers and scholars, with advanced degrees from some of the finest universities in the world. Although many of Western's outstanding history faculty have gained national and international reputations as scholars through their publications and conference presentations, all history faculty regularly teach classes at all levels, including freshman surveys, sophomore seminars, specialized upper-division courses and senior seminars. As a result, all WIU history courses are taught by full members of the history faculty dedicated to contributing to the success of our students. Graduate student assistants, selected from among the most outstanding graduate students pursuing the M.A. in history at WIU, provide additional individualized tutoring for those students needing it through the department's academic assistance center.

The history department stresses excellent teaching, outstanding advising and close student-faculty interaction. Student evaluations of faculty reflect the emphasis on teaching. The department's academic advisor works closely with students in planning their course of study. Small classes and individualized study courses are available to all history majors. Students and alumni have consistently praised the quality of instruction and advising they received from the history faculty at Western because of this attention.

One recent history graduate wrote that, "The strongest aspect of my experience at Western was the ability to work individually with my history professors."

At Western, student-faculty interaction extends beyond the classroom. Students can join the Associated Students of History (ASH), which regularly holds professional development seminars, takes field trips and plans many social events for both students and faculty. If they qualify, students can also join Western's chapter of Phi Alpha Theta, the international history honor society.



Research, Presentation, Publication and Study-Abroad Opportunities

All history majors are eligible for research funding to cover the costs of conducting or presenting their historical research. Each year, the history department provides opportunities for its students to give presentations on campus at WIU's Undergraduate Research Day and off campus at various academic conferences. In addition, WIU's online history journal, "Western Illinois Historical Review," publishes articles each year representing the most outstanding research produced by WIU history majors. History department faculty regularly lead short-term study-abroad programs for interested students, and students also have opportunities to spend a semester studying abroad.

Honors College Admission Requirements

The history department is proudly and actively engaged with WIU's Centennial Honors College. History faculty regularly teach Honors courses and supervise Honors research projects; history students have served as prestigious Centennial Honors College Scholars; and the department's Gordon W. Kirk Honors History Scholarship is reserved for history Honors students. To be eligible for the Centennial Honors College, entering freshmen must have an ACT composite score of at least 28 OR have a 26 or 27 composite ACT and be in the top 15 percent of their graduating class OR have an ACT composite score of at least 24 and be in the top 10 percent of their high school graduating class. Comparable SAT score is acceptable. Transfer and current WIU students who wish to join the Honors College (including the Quad Cities Honors Program) must have a 3.4 grade point average on a 4.0 scale based on 12 or more semester hours. Honors credit is given for honors coursework completed at other accredited institutions. Honors history students who complete a thesis are also eligible to compete for the department's Honors Thesis Award. To find out more, visit wiu.edu/Honors.

Transfer Students

Many students enter WIU's history program after attending a community college. An advisor should have a suggested program of study to prepare you for studying history at Western. To make transferring from a community college as easy as possible, contact Western early.

Minors

The history department offers three minors, each of which effectively complements and enriches many major programs. The modern global history minor is appropriate for many majors, including international relations, comparative politics, international business, international agriculture, international studies, law enforcement and justice administration, military science, Spanish and French, among many others. The contemporary United States studies minor is an excellent way to learn more about this country's past and present. The general history minor offers the flexibility to suit any major. Each of the department's three minors requires 18 SH of history courses.

University Libraries

University Libraries consists of the Leslie F. Malpass Library, which is the main branch, and four other branches: the Physical Sciences Library, the Music Library, the Curriculum Library and the Quad Cities Library. We offer students access to a variety of resources in print and online. Research assistance is available in person at the reference desk and via instant messaging. Check out our website for hours, events and services available: wiu.edu/libraries. Of particular interest to history's pre-law majors, Malpass Library also provides access to thousands of online databases, including LexisNexis and the Congressional Serial Set. The library also provides a wealth of printed legal references. For history's teacher education majors, WIU's Curriculum Library contains approximately 45,000 volumes, including curriculum guides, K-12 textbook series, teaching aids and books for children and young adults.

Campus Visits

The Admissions Reception Center (Sherman Hall 115) is open most weekdays from 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. when the University is in session. Group information sessions are available on Mondays and Fridays at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m., and individual appointments can be made on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Campus tours are conducted at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m., Monday through Friday. Appointments with advisors, faculty or a financial aid advisor may be arranged separately during the week. The Admissions Reception Center is open from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. most Saturdays when the University is in session. A group information session is available at 10 a.m., and a campus tour is conducted at 11 a.m. Schedule a visit or tour online at wiu.edu/admissions by selecting "Visit Campus." You may also schedule a visit, tour or individual appointment by calling toll free (877) PICKWIU (742-5948) or (309) 298-3157, or by emailing admissions@wiu.edu.

wiu.edu/history

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