

# History

Department of History, College of Arts and Sciences



## Career Opportunities

Since history includes the study of all elements of the human past and their impact on the present, it is not surprising that graduates of the Western Illinois University History Department have attained career success in a variety of fields. Many have found jobs in management, research and sales with private companies. An almost equal number have pursued careers in education, primarily as secondary school teachers. A substantial number have elected to continue their education in either graduate or law schools. The study of history is excellent preparation for law school, graduate programs in liberal arts and business and other professional programs. Other graduates have pursued careers in archives, museums, government and the military.

As one of the history department's distinguished alumni observed recently, "An education in history at Western Illinois University prepared me thoroughly to compete in the business world." Another commented, "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 history education, 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.

## Major

A minimum of 39 semester hours (SH) is required. Of these, 18 SH must be earned at the upper-division level at a four-year college or university. By taking appropriate education courses, students can earn certification to teach history and/or other social studies subjects at the high school level.

## Student-Faculty Interaction

WIU history faculty members are award-winning teachers and scholars with advanced degrees from 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 surveys, specialized upper-division seminars and graduate courses. As a result, all of the University's history offerings are taught by full members of the history faculty dedicated to contributing to the success of our students. Teaching support associates, selected from among the most outstanding graduate students pursuing the Master of Arts in History, provide individualized tutoring for undergraduates needing help through the department's academic achievement center.

The history department stresses excellent teaching, outstanding advising and close student-faculty interaction. The department's academic advisor works closely with students in planning their course of study. Small classes and individualized courses are available to all students. Students and alumni consistently praise 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 relate directly to my 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 students and faculty. If they qualify, students can also join Western's chapter of Phi Alpha Theta, the international history honor society. Western's history students regularly present their research at regional Phi Alpha Theta conferences, and our local chapter sponsors an online journal of students' original historical research papers, the “Western Illinois Historical Review.” History department faculty regularly lead short-term study-abroad programs for interested students, and students also have opportunities to spend a semester studying abroad.

History students at Western have many opportunities to participate in individual undergraduate research projects with History faculty members. Our students contribute each year to the University's Undergraduate Research Day and are eligible to compete for Undergraduate Research Grants from the College of Arts and Sciences each semester.



### 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 meet two of the following three criteria: Have an 1160 SAT (24 ACT), have a 3.4/4.0 GPA or higher, or be in the top 15 percent of their graduating class. 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 preparing a thesis are also eligible to compete for funding to support thesis research and travel, as well as the department's Honors Thesis Award.

### Transfer Students

Many students enter our history program after attending a community college. Many community colleges in Illinois and eastern Iowa have transfer agreements with Western. Prospective transfer students should contact the department as soon as possible to ensure a smooth transition to WIU.

### Minors

The minor in history effectively complements and enriches academic programs across the University, including law enforcement and justice administration, military science, international relations, comparative politics, international business, international agriculture, international studies, music and foreign languages and literatures, among many others. The history minor requires 18 SH of history courses and offers the flexibility to suit any major. The minor allows for the study of special topics of interest and can be completed entirely online.

### 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. Students are offered 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](http://wiu.edu/libraries).

### 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](http://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](mailto:admissions@wiu.edu).

[wiu.edu/history](http://wiu.edu/history)

#### Department of History

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