Introduction
Students of history, through investigation of the past, gain skills and perspectives that foster a better understanding of the world and their place in it. The study of history contributes to the goals of a liberal arts education by enabling students to gain a deep appreciation of the diversity of human experience over time. Through the study of history, students learn how to interpret their own experience and to shape their own values by engaging in dialogues with the past. The study of history also nurtures the ability to view the world from multiple perspectives, including interdisciplinary ones. Finally, history provides the foundation for informed participation in both the local and the global community by teaching how to apply critical thinking skills to solving problems. The study of history offers excellent training for a variety of occupations, from teaching to law, government, business, and the arts.

The Department of History encourages active engagement in historical inquiry, whether at the introductory survey level, in seminars, or in community-based learning. Active engagement requires students to learn how to master basic knowledge, ask historical questions, access and evaluate information, and communicate what they have learned in both written and oral forms. Helping students master the use of a variety of sources and tools to unlock the past is a goal of all history courses.

The combined expertise of faculty in the Department of History encompasses a diversity of fields ranging from Oregon and the Pacific Northwest to world history. The department offers lower-division surveys in Western civilization and U.S. history, but the gateway course for the major is Hst 300 Historical Imagination, which provides an introduction to the discipline—both the theory and practice—of history. Advising is critical, since majors are encouraged to develop their own thematic, chronological, or geographical focus through their choice of upper-division elective courses. Upper-division offerings include a wide range of subject areas, from the ancient Near East to American family history. Seminars (Hst 407) on specialized topics—such as medieval Spain or Japanese nationalism—provide the opportunity for majors to write a substantial research paper and to participate in intensive reading and discussion of topics. Hst 495 Comparative World History—a thematic course—is required for the major to ensure that students develop the ability to frame what they know in a world historical context and to apply comparative analysis to important historical topics.

In line with the University’s mission as an urban, public institution, the Department of History supports partnerships with the Oregon Historical Society and the Center for Columbia River History and offers training in public history. All faculty consider both teaching and research, along with community service, to be part of their responsibilities as members of the Department of History. The creation of knowledge, as well as its dissemination through teaching and publication, is a vital part of the department’s mission.

Undergraduate Program Learning Outcomes

01. Students will demonstrate understanding of terms and concepts of historical study (e.g., feudalism, periodization) through successful completion of lower division (or 300-level upper division) electives.
02. Students will demonstrate familiarity with, and identify the importance of, major figures, events, periods in their areas if focus within the major (geographical, chronological, thematic) through successful completion of upper division (either 300- or 400-level) electives within this focus area.
03. Students will show familiarity with the discipline of history and changing interpretations over time by completing HST 300 (Historical Imagination).
04. Students will demonstrate breadth of historical knowledge by completing at least two courses each from the categories of Western (U.S. and European) and non-Western courses (African, Asia, Latin America).

05. Students will demonstrate the ability to analyze specific historical topics (e.g., nationalism) in a comparative and global framework through completing HST 495 (Comparative World History).

06. Students will demonstrate ability to distinguish between fact and opinion by evaluating the use of evidence to support historical interpretations in essay exams (upper division electives).

07. Students will identify historical argument in secondary sources and demonstrate their grasp of the argument’s place in historical literature in essay exams or papers (upper division electives; 407 seminars).

08. Students will demonstrate the ability to read primary historical sources for information and interpretation by writing analytical essays based on these sources or by using them as the basis for a research paper (upper division electives; 407 seminars).

09. Students will demonstrate familiarity with techniques of historical research through the use of traditional library sources as well as online databases by writing bibliographic essays or annotated bibliographies (upper division electives, 407 seminar).

10. Students will demonstrate command of techniques of source interpretation by writing analytical essays on primary sources or giving oral presentations (upper division electives; 407 seminars).

11. Students will show that they can do original research through using primary sources, along with secondary interpretive materials, in the preparation of a research paper that includes proper citations and references (normally completed in at least one of two required 407 seminars).

12. Students will show that they have mastered the ability to think historically by analyzing primary and secondary sources in the context of the times in which they were produced.

13. Students will be able to apply a historical perspective to contemporary issues as members of an engaged and informed citizenry.

14. The completion of a history major will provide students with the knowledge to understand that historical context of global events and the analytical skills to connect those events to issues in their local communities.