

Major Possibilities: History



Summary

- Historians research, analyze, and interpret the past. They usually specialize in a country or region, a particular period, or a particular field, such as social, intellectual, cultural, political, or diplomatic history.
- Usually, advanced study, such as a Master's degree or even a Ph.D., is required for higher level positions.
- Numerous local museums and other organizations offer internships and research opportunities. Archaeological field schools instruct future anthropologists, archaeologists, and historians in how to interpret historical sites.
- Learning a second language in one of your areas of interest will be beneficial to you in your career.

History major synopsis

The History program at Southwestern University provides students with a global perspective and a solid grounding in the methods and fields of history, while also encouraging interdisciplinary connections. To receive a degree in History, students must take two World History courses, Historiography, and a course with a pre- or early modern component. In addition, one upper-level course must be taken from three of the five geographical areas covered by the department, which are Africa, East Asia, Europe, Latin America, and the United States of America.

Sample occupational areas

Education

A degree in History can lead to a job as an educator in secondary or post-secondary education. All teachers of grades K-6 also need to complete a general studies curriculum. For high school teachers, a broader range of history courses is required because of the sole emphasis on a specific area of history, such as American History, World History, Western Civilizations, etc. History majors can also continue their education to become a professor. Jobs are available for educators in museums and historical sites. Educators are needed at such sites to interpret the past to visitors with a wide range of education and experience. Those who teach at museums and historic sites may need more than traditional history courses to qualify for their positions.

Research

Research in museums includes authentication, verification, and description of items; more basic research that focuses on the meaning, significance and context of artifacts; and research (usually team-based) that is aimed at assembling an exhibition or educational program based on the museum's collections. A BA may suffice for these jobs in small museums. Other options are cultural resources management (CRM) and historic preservation, which enable historians to research the pasts of these historic places. Independent research is also possible, especially if one is a professor at a research university. Historians publish their research in many forms. They can use monographs, academic articles, documentary films, brochures, exhibits, reports on historic buildings for federal agencies, or documents to help businesses or government agencies understand their past when making decisions to display their research.

Business

Within a particular company, those with a background in history may find careers in the areas of external relations, marketing, information resource management, legal affairs, finance and control, administration, human resources, and operations. In almost every type of business, archivists and records managers are employed to oversee current and archival records, using them to provide information and archival services. In the area of human resources, historians with knowledge of foreign languages and foreign cultures, working in an international company, can help employees and customers communicate effectively.

Another option is to be a contract historian. In order to become a consultant, an entrepreneurial attitude and determination are mandatory. Museums, nonprofit organizations, federal agencies, businesses, and individuals all may hire consultants who contract for particular projects. Contract historians can own or work for history businesses--firms that specialize in providing history services for a variety of clients, from providing litigation support to preparing text for a museum exhibit, researching a historic site for a cultural resources management project, or declassifying documents for a government agency.

Law

Students of history may also go on to law school or become a paralegal. A background in history would be useful for the research required for working in law. Historians can work in litigation support by being witnesses in court. They can also be important staff members for government officials who are responsible for making laws. Ability to conduct primary source research is invaluable when seeking to determine the original intent of a law or regulation under scrutiny.

Library

Librarians use the latest information technology to perform research, classify materials, and help students and library patrons seek information. A master's degree in library science is the main qualification for most librarian positions, although school librarians often need experience as teachers to meet State licensing requirements. Librarians can act as both educators and researchers. Librarians are classified according to the type of library in which they work: a public library; school library media center; college, university, or other academic library; or special library.

Sample job titles

Arts, Media, Entertainment

Biographer
Correspondent
Foreign News
Free Lance Writer
Journalist
Newspaper Reporter
Researcher
Technical Writer

Consumer Advocate
Contract Historian
Demographer
Genealogist
Insurance Agent/Broker
International Relations Specialist
Market Research Analyst
Public Administrator
Public Relations Specialist
Technical Writer
Travel Agent
Urban Administrator

Government

Congressional Aide
Criminologist
FBI/CIA Agent
Government Official
Intelligence Analyst
Judge
Lawyer
Paralegal

Archivist
Art Gallery Director
Conservator
Curator
Exhibit Designer
Historian
Librarian
Museum Technician
Peace Corps/VISTA
Professor
Program Coordinator
Site Tour Guide
Teacher

Industry and Commerce

Bank Officer
Community Relations Director

Service and Education

Anthropologist
Archaeologist

Sample internship employers of SU students

American University - Washington, DC
Art Institute of Chicago
Boston National Historic Park
Congressman Pete Sessions - Washington, DC
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Fort Caspar Museum/Historic Site - Caspar, WY
Magazine Publishers of America

Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza - Dallas, TX
State Farm Insurance Company - Austin, TX
Texas Guaranteed Student Loan Corporation
The Museum of Modern Art
The Museum of Texas University - Lubbock, TX
Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site

Sample full-time employers of SU Grads

Admissions Counselor & Coordinator of Athletic Recruiting
Background Investigator
Broker's Assistant
Business Analyst (Hewitt Associates)
Cancer Information Specialist
Gallery Educator (Austin Children's Museum)
Geography Teacher
Investor

K-12 Teacher
Legal Assistant (Law Offices of Richard Pena)
Medical Case Manager
Oil Lag Librarian
Operations Manager
Regional Planner
U.S. History Teacher

Professional associations

American Association for State and Local History: www.aaslh.org
American Association of Museums: www.aam-us.org/aviso/index.cfm
American Cultural Resources Association: acra-crm.org
American Historical Association: www.historians.org
Association of Science-Technology Centers: www.astc.org
International Students of History Association: www.isha-international.org
Organization of American Historians: www.oah.org
Phi Alpha Theta-National Honors Fraternity for History Majors: www.phialphatheta.org
Society for American Archaeology: www.saa.org

Additional Web resources

American Museum of Natural History: www.amnh.org
American Quarterly: www.americanquarterly.org
History International: www.historyinternational.com
The History Channel: www.history.com
History & Careers: www.uca.edu/newweb/careerservices/media/documents/history.pdf
Smithsonian Institution: www.sih.si.edu/jobs.cfm

Career Services' print resources

America's Best Graduate Schools
Book of U.S. Government Jobs
Careers for History Buffs
Careers for Scholars & Deep Thinkers
Careers in Education
Careers in International Affairs
Federal Jobs: The Ultimate Guide
Game Plan for Getting Into Law School
Government Job Finder
Graduate Programs in Humanities

Great Jobs Abroad
Great Jobs for History Majors
How to Prepare for the GRE
Inside the Law Schools
Inside the U.S. Embassy
Opportunities in Overseas Careers
Pre-Law Companion
Top Careers for History Graduates
Vault Guide to Capitol Hill Careers
Work Worldwide

