Major Possibilities: History

Quick Facts

- 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 women’s 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 related to your area of interest will be beneficial to you in your career.
- Internships (including research experiences) help shape professional identities, develop 21st century career-readiness skills, and make meaning of the academic experience.

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. Students take courses in world history, historiography, a course with a pre- or early modern component, and a Senior Seminar (Capstone). One upper-level course must be taken from four of the six geographical areas: Africa, East Asia, Europe, Latin America, the United States of America, and transregional; two additional courses of your choice must be taken for a total of nine courses (36 credit hours). History may be paired with Feminist Studies for a 15-course major or may serve as a disciplinary major paired with an area concentration as part of an International Studies major. See the education department for information on teacher certification.

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.

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.
LAW

Students of history can 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.

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.

Sample Job Titles

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<th>Anthropologist</th>
<th>Correspondent</th>
<th>Historian</th>
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<tr>
<td>Archaeologist</td>
<td>Criminologist</td>
<td>Information Specialist</td>
<td>Preservation Advocate</td>
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<td>Archivist</td>
<td>Curator</td>
<td>Intelligence Analyst</td>
<td>Professor</td>
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<td>Art Gallery Director</td>
<td>Demographer</td>
<td>International Relations Specialist</td>
<td>Public Administrator</td>
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<td>Biographer</td>
<td>Exhibit Designer</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>Public Relations Officer</td>
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<td>Community Relations Director</td>
<td>FBI/CIA Agent</td>
<td>Judge</td>
<td>Technical Writer</td>
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<td>Foreign Service Officer</td>
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<td>Travel Agent</td>
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<td>Urban Planner</td>
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<td>Consumer Advocate</td>
<td>Genealogist</td>
<td>Market Research Analyst</td>
<td>News Reporter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contract Historian</td>
<td>Geographer</td>
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Sample Internship Employers of SU Students

Art Institute of Chicago – Chicago, IL
Boston National Historic Park – Boston, MA
Congressman Pete Sessions – Washington, DC
Federal Bureau of Investigation – Washington, DC
Fort Caspar Museum/Historic Site – Caspar, WY
Georgetown Palace Theater – Georgetown, TX
Georgetown Cultural Citizen Memorial Assn. – Georgetown, TX
Institute for Diversity and Civil Life – Austin, TX
Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy – Washington, DC
Laredo Morning Times – Laredo, TX
Long Center for the Performing Arts – Austin, TX

Sample Full-Time Employers of SU Grads

Background Investigator (Omniplex World Services)
Business Analyst (Hewitt Associates)
Client Services Director (Solari Law Group)
English Teaching Assistant (Fulbright Program)
Gallery Assistant (Texas State Preservation Board)
Gallery Educator (Austin Children’s Museum)
Freelance Writer (Self-Employed)
Information Coordinator (Houston Museum of Natural Science)
Junior Fellow (Library of Congress)

Law Clerk (Dunaway Law Firm, PC)
Legal Assistant (Law Offices of Richard Pena)
Membership and Guest Services (Houston Museum of Fine Arts)
Office Assistant (Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee)
Office Clerk (United States Census Bureau)
Paralegal (Ihfe and Associates, PC)
Refugee Resettlement Specialist (Caritas of Austin)
Teacher (Various Public/Private Schools, Teach for America, etc.)
Technical Writer (National Instruments)
Professional Associations

American Alliance of Museums
American Association for State and Local History
American Cultural Resources Association
American Historical Association
Association of Science-Technology Centers (Science Museums)
International Students of History Association
Organization of American Historians
Phi Alpha Theta — American honor society for historians
Society for American Archaeology