

# What can I do with a degree in... **HISTORY**

## What is **HISTORY?**

As a history major, you will learn the skills of analysis, interpretation, written communication, and critical thinking. Students of history learn to develop sound judgments by reading widely and weighing evidence carefully then use that information to construct persuasive arguments – skills highly valued in today’s marketplace. But our aim is to prepare you not only for your future career, but also to provide you the foundation for a lifetime of learning.

The study of history provides knowledge vital to the creation of an educated citizenry. Without an understanding of the past, the present is incomprehensible. Studying the events of the past and the lives of our recent and remote ancestors allows you to see all that has shaped us and today’s world.

“Understanding history provides context and tools that help people navigate the contemporary world. History is as much about today and tomorrow as it is about yesterday.”

**Lonnie Bunch**

Founding Director, Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture. (Quoted in *Careers for History Majors*, edited by Julia Brookins and Sarah Fenton and published by the American Historical Association, 2018)

## What are the **DEGREE OPTIONS?**

Students may choose to pursue either the **Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in History** or the **Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in History**. The B.A. requires students to complete six hours of foreign language (231-232 or 240). The B.S. requires students to complete Math 170 (Statistics).



Students who wish to teach history at the high school level may choose the dual degree program: the **B.A. or B.S. in History and the B.S.Ed. in Social Sciences Education**.

Students may choose to pursue a **Certificate in Public History**.

## What are the **CONCENTRATIONS?**

The history department does **not encourage specialization at the undergraduate level**. All students take courses in **U.S., European, and ALAMEA (Africa, Latin America, Middle East, Asia) history** to meet both lower- and upper-level requirements. Students with specific historical interests may explore those in research projects and/or the capstone course.

## What is the **ADMISSION PROCESS?**

Students declare a major in History with the Advising Center, located in Killian Annex. Please make an appointment with your advisor via GradesFirst, located in your MyWCU.

## What **JOBS ARE AVAILABLE?**

Our graduates pursue a variety of careers including educators, documentary editors, curators, cultural resource managers, archivists, heritage managers, historic preservationists, docents, records managers, legal assistants and paralegals, archaeologists, and more. NOTE: Some professions may require an advanced degree. Please schedule an appointment with your advisor or a career counselor for more information.

## Who employs **HISTORY** graduates?

According to data collected by the American Historical Association, history majors pursue a variety of professions, and the majority rise to high positions in the careers they choose. Our graduates work in many industrial sectors including non-profits, government agencies, school systems, publishing companies, higher education institutions, business and law firms, museums, historic sites, state and national historic preservation offices, and the National Park Service.

# MAJOR MAP

**How to use this map:** Review the four categories and suggestions of activities and when you should consider engaging in them. Remember, these are just suggestions! There is a fillable space for you to add in any other ideas you have to set yourself up for success in life after college.

## 1st YEAR

## 2nd YEAR

### EXCEL IN ACADEMICS

The courses you take your first year will depend on when you declare your major. However, many students focus on liberal studies requirements and introductory History classes. Check out the [8-semester plan for your major](#) and make an appointment with your advisor.

Courses your second year will likely continue with your liberal studies, with a special focus on required History courses. Check out the [8-semester plan for your major](#) and make an appointment with your advisor.

### GET HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE

Check out [WCU's DegreePlus program](#) and choose which events in any of the four categories you want to attend. Categories include: Professionalism, Teamwork, Leadership, or Cultural Responsiveness.

See what on-campus employment opportunities are available by logging in to JobCat via your MyWCU.

Get involved with the History Club, the History student organization.

If you are thinking about attending graduate school, start engaging in hands-on experiences required in graduate school admissions like on-campus employment or early internships.

Engage deeper with [DegreePlus](#); choose an additional competency to complete.

### BE PART OF THE COMMUNITY

Connect with the [Center for Service Learning](#) and ask about the [Lily Award](#), a program aimed to encourage students to be connected with their community.

Develop deeper relationships with the organizations for which you volunteer. Ask for special projects or responsibilities that you can highlight on a resume.

Consider [study abroad options relating to History](#). Talk with a study abroad advisor about targeted experience for your concentration.

### PREPARE FOR LIFE AFTER COLLEGE

Further explore your career options or career interests using the [Center for Career and Professional Development's](#) online resources, [Focus 2](#), and [Onet Online](#).

Connect with a career counselor early on to explore opportunities and experiences you can do while in college to further develop your professional resume.

Check out [CCPD's list of career-building activities](#) and participate in an activity this year, such as attending Career Fair Plus.

Start a spreadsheet of graduate schools you wish to apply to in a few years with their admission requirements so that you are aware of the expectations.

## Looking for a minor? Consider these options:

Anthropology  
Business Administration & Law  
Communication  
English

Hospitality & Tourism Mgmt  
International Studies  
Management  
Marketing  
Parks & Recreation Mgmt

Philosophy  
Political Science  
Psychology  
Sociology

### 3rd YEAR

Third-year courses focus heavily on History classes within your concentration as well as on your chosen minor. Check out the [8-semester plan for your major](#) and make an appointment with your advisor.

Consider internship experiences that will give you practical and hands-on experience to put on a resume.

Consider networking with professionals in your field at national or regional professional conferences such as the [Organization of American Historians](#), [American Historical Association](#), or the [Southern Historical Association](#).

Continue to build relationships and volunteer with area organizations in your field.

Connect with alumni in your field through [LinkedIn](#)

Visit the CCPD to hone your professional resume and cover letter. Apply for internships. Utilize the [Writing and Learning Commons](#) for MCAT, GRE, and other professional exam preparation sessions. Take the MCAT, GRE, etc. Use [Big Interview](#) to learn more about professional interviews.

Schedule a visit to tour professional schools of your choice, if applicable.

### 4th YEAR

Courses in your final year will focus on finishing History requirements, as well as requirements for your minor and other elective requirements. Check out the [8-semester plan for your major](#) and make an appointment with your advisor, complete your degree audit, and [apply for graduation!](#)

Investigate requirements for full-time jobs. Assess what skills or experiences you're lacking and invest time in seeking additional opportunities such as certification programs, classes, or professional development workshops during your last year to fill that gap. Connect with your faculty advisor or career counselor.

Join professional organizations in your field such as the [Organization of American Historians](#), [American Historical Association](#), or the [Southern Historical Association](#).

If eligible, join Phi Alpha Theta History Honor Society.

Network with employers and non-profits at the annual Career Fair Plus event, held each October and February.

Apply to graduate schools, if applicable.

Look for and apply for jobs between 4 and 6 months before graduation.

Polish your resume, cover letter, and interview skills by using the [CCPD](#).

Internships are still the number-one educational experience employers look for in a recent college graduate resume. (Chronicle of Higher Education's study on 59,000 employers)

**DID YOU KNOW?**

# MORE INFORMATION

## INTERNSHIP Information

All History students complete a senior capstone project, an opportunity to demonstrate the skills they have mastered during their time at WCU. Students may choose to complete an internship in applied or public history as their capstone experience for course credit (HIST 483). For example, history majors have completed internships at the Appalachian Women's Museum, Mountain Heritage Center, *The Sylva Herald*, Thomas Wolfe Historic Site and Memorial, and the Hunter Library

## SKILLS LEARNED in the classroom

The core competencies will center on developing skills, knowledge, and attitudes such as:

- interdisciplinary thinking and training
- critical thinking
- problem solving
- written and oral communication
- curiosity and creativity
- technical and research skills
- information handling and organization
- teamwork

## KNOWLEDGE Base

Students in this program will be able to:

- Use solid writing and effective speaking skills
- Research and investigate questions to historical questions
- Analyze information critically
- View problems in a larger context, while still paying attention to detail
- Consider cultural knowledge and sensitivity in their work

## Professional RESOURCES

- American Association of Museums: [www.aam-us.org](http://www.aam-us.org)
- American Association for State and Local History: [www.aaslh.org](http://www.aaslh.org)
- Beyond Academe: [www.beyondacademe.com](http://www.beyondacademe.com)
- American Historical Association: [www.historians.org](http://www.historians.org)
- North Carolina Museums Council: [www.ncmuseums.org](http://www.ncmuseums.org)
- North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources: [www.ncdcr.gov](http://www.ncdcr.gov)
- National Park Service: [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov)

## QUESTIONS?

For questions, please call the History program at 828-227-7243 or visit [history.wcu.edu](http://history.wcu.edu).

