

Department of History

THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY maintains a long and distinguished tradition of superb undergraduate teaching and mentoring. Our program offers students a rigorous, dynamic, and – above all – engrossing training in the art and science of historical research. With guidance from our faculty, students deepen their knowledge and understanding of the historical past and systemically develop their skills in research, critical reflection, formal writing, and oral communication.

Our Undergraduate Program

The department offers courses of study leading to the **B.A.** or **B.S.** degree and holds a faculty of nine full-time professors, all with doctoral degrees in history. The program currently boasts 175 undergraduate history majors, and there are 15 MA students working in graduate studies. In addition, we offer a PhD in historical archaeology in coordination with the Department of Sociology and Anthropology.

The Department of History covers five major regional, chronological, and thematic areas:

- **United States** (colonial times to the present)
- **Europe** (Antiquity to the current E.U.)
- **Latin America** (modern)
- **Asia** (modern)
- **History of Science, Health & Environment**

Within this framework, professors offer students a great variety of courses at the lower and upper-division level, ranging from “traditional” history lecture courses to more intimate research seminars and special topics courses.

The department has specific learning objectives for our undergraduates. Students learn:

- how to formulate historical questions
- the variety and location of source materials
- how to evaluate source material
- the variety of approaches in studying history
- how to improve writing and organizing skills
- why we need history to be engaged citizens

Our majors report great satisfaction with what they learn about researching, writing, and organizational skills – almost 20 percent higher than the university norm – and find that they have mastered essential critical skills for professional life beyond college!

Scholarship Opportunities for Students

The department is proud to offer a wide diversity of scholarship opportunities for our majors. We award these scholarships upon the basis of academic performance and/or need. Each year, the department identifies potential candidates and reviews their academic records. In the past year, the department acknowledged over 30 students for their excellent work and awarded scholarships totaling over \$70,000.00.

Our awards/endowments include:

- William Greever Scholarship
- Helen Melgard Hilfiker Scholarship
- Jeffrey Mesenbrink Memorial Scholarship
- Siegfried B. Rolland Scholarship
- Nettie Mae Stillinger Scholarship
- Fred Winkler Memorial Scholarship
- History Department annual scholarships

The history department is deeply grateful to all our former faculty and alumni who have established these scholarships to help our deserving students: past, present, and future.

Undergraduate Career Opportunities

A degree in history offers excellent preparation for students to pursue careers in international business, international relations, communications and media, government and military service, education, library science, law, tourism and recreation, museum studies and curatorships, and working with public documents and services.

Our history majors have gone on to receive prestigious Rhodes scholarships for study at Oxford, have become interns at the United Nations and the Smithsonian, and have gone to graduate school at distinguished institutions such as UCLA and UC Berkeley.

Phi Alpha Theta – History Honor Association

The Pi-Theta Chapter of Phi Alpha Theta was first established in 1970, and it maintains an active and lively membership. Students participate in the academic life and the society and in yearly conferences. We’ve been awarded the “Best Chapter” award twice.

The History Faculty

The history professors all engage in dynamic research programs and have national and international profiles in their respective fields. They translate this experience into stimulating and cutting-edge courses for history majors. Between all of them, they speak over sixteen different languages – ranging from Russian to Chinese – and have traveled four continents in their research. Over the past decade or so, the department's professors have received prestigious grants and awards from the Fulbright IIE program, the National Endowment of the Humanities, the Andrew Mellon foundation, amongst others. In addition, they have won some of the University's highest teaching honors – including the Provost's Teaching Excellence Award, the Alumni Award for Excellence, the Naval ROTC Faculty Excellence award, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Award for Distinguished Service, and the Phi Kappa Phi/Alumni Association Award for Distinguished Faculty.

Katherine G. Aiken (Washington State, 1980) is full professor and current University Provost. She has worked on late nineteenth and early twentieth-century America, with emphasis on labor and women's history. Her books include: *Idaho's Bunker Hill: The Rise and Fall of a Great Mining Company, 1885–1981* (2005) and *Harnessing the Power of Motherhood: The National Florence Crittenton Mission, 1883–1925* (1998).

Somaditya Banerjee (British Columbia, 2013) is an assistant professor. He works on the history of modern science and Southeast Asia. At present, he is revising a book on colonialism and the physics community in modern India.

Ian D. Chambers (UC Riverside, 2006) is an assistant professor. He works on colonial and revolutionary America and American Indian studies. He is finishing a book on ideas about space amongst English settlers and Native Americans in early American society and culture, entitled *Space, the Final Frontier? The Role of Spatial Understanding in Colonization* (forthcoming).

Dale T. Graden (Connecticut, 1991) is a full professor who works on modern Latin America and the Atlantic world. His research has focused upon comparative slave emancipation, above all in Brazil, and he is also working on politics and art in Venezuela. He is the author of *From Slavery to Freedom in Brazil: Bahia, 1835-1900* (2006); *Disease, Resistance, and Lies: The Demise of the Transatlantic Slave Trade to Brazil and Cuba* (2014).

Rebecca Jager (New Mexico, 2002) is an assistant professor. She works on modern America, with special emphasis on race and gender in the Western US. At present, she is working on a book on women's history and sports. She is the author of *Indian Women as Cultural Intermediaries: Negotiating the Collision of Cultures on Multi-ethnic Frontiers* (forthcoming).

Ellen E. Kittell (Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, 1983) is an associate professor. She works on pre-modern Europe, from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance, and she also teaches on early modern women and African empires. Her current research focuses on women in medieval Flanders. She is the author of *From Ad Hoc to Routine: A Case Study in Medieval Bureaucracy* (1991).

Louis A. Perraud (Indiana, 1980) is an emeritus professor of Classics and a renowned scholar of Desiderius Erasmus. He teaches the department's courses on ancient Greek and Roman civilization.

Sean M. Quinlan (Indiana, 2000) is an associate professor of history and department chair. He works on European cultural and intellectual history in the 18th and 19th centuries, with emphasis on science and medicine in France and Italy. He is the author of *The Great Nation in Decline: Sex, Modernity, and Health Crises in Revolutionary France, ca. 1750–1850* (2007).

Adam M. Sowards (Arizona State, 2001) is an associate professor and an historian of the environment and western America. At present, he is working on the intersection between science and environment in the North American context. He has written two books: *The Environmental Justice: William O. Douglas and American Conservation* (2009) and *United States West Coast: An Environmental History* (2007).

Richard Spence (UC Santa Barbara, 1981) is full professor and a scholar of modern Russia and Eastern Europe. He has published and lectured widely on revolutionary groups, espionage, and military history. His books include: *Boris Savinkov: Renegade on the Left* (1991); *Trust No One: The Secret World of Sidney Reilly* (2002); and *Secret Agent 666: Aleister Crowley, British Intelligence and the Occult* (2008).

Pingchao Zhu (Miami University, 1998) is an associate professor and co-director of the Confucius Institute. She works on East Asia and US diplomatic relations, especially during the Korean War. Her current research focuses upon intellectual culture and communities in 20th-century China. She is the author of *Americans and Chinese at the Korean War Cease-Fire Negotiations, 1950–1953* (2001).

Contact Us!

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