

# History

The History Department equips students to examine their own lives and the development, goals, and values of their society. Designed to convey a basic understanding of both Western and non-Western history from the pre-modern world to the present, the curriculum emphasizes economic and social forces as well as political and cultural factors. Throughout the curriculum, students are asked to grapple with the complexity of historical causality, to analyze and discuss primary and secondary sources, and to construct sophisticated historical arguments.

## **A note on 300- and 400-level History electives**

Elective courses in the History Department may be offered at either the 300- or 400-level, depending on the year. 400-level courses cover a similar range of content to their 300-level counterparts, but in these courses, students read additional scholarly articles, write a year-long research paper, consider how historians seek to understand history through the methodological approaches they use, examine how historians study and interpret history (i.e., historiography), and give a formal research presentation. 400-level courses meet five days/week, while 300-level courses meet four days/week. In general, electives rotate between levels on a yearly basis, but this is not guaranteed, as some electives may cycle in and out, and others might stay at a certain level for a couple of years due to other factors. To gain admission to a 400-level History elective, students must have attained grades that average an A- or higher in the previous two years of History classes and receive departmental approval.

## **Requirements:**

<b>Grade 9:</b>	<b>Modern World History (HIST 211)</b>
<b>Grade 10:</b>	<b>United States History (HIST 220)</b>
<b>Grade 11 or 12:</b>	<b>One history elective</b>

**Elective Courses Offered in 2026-27**

300-level

- Classical World Civilizations (HIST 310)
- East Asian History (HIST 314)
- History of the Silk Roads (HIST 315)
- United States Legal History (HIST 317)
- Voices of Protest (HIST 319)
- Global Environmental History (HIST 320)
- African American History (HIST 324)
- Global World Wars (HIST 330)
- The Mediterranean World: Medieval to Early Modern (HIST 331)

400-level

- Religion in History (HIST 413)
- Contemporary U.S. History, 1945 to the present (HIST 423)
- African History (HIST 426)
- History of Medicine (HIST 429)
- Middle East History (HIST 432)

**Courses Not Offered in 2026-27**

- Comparative Race and Ethnicity (HIST 312)
- Latin American History (HIST 316)
- The Global Cold War (HIST 321)
- Vast Early American History (HIST 322)
- History of the Islamic World (HIST 327)
- LGBT American History (HIST 328)

**Required Courses:**

**HIST 211 - Modern World History**

*Full credit, meets 4 days/week*

*Prerequisites: None*

This course focuses on the history of the making of the modern world since 1650. Students will trace the historical developments that reorganized peoples, reshaped cultures, and generated new economies through interactions among major regions of the world. Bigger questions addressed include: How did states pursue security and stability for their people? To what extent did people feel a sense of belonging to these states? How did the rise of industrialization shift the global economy, disrupt societies, affect the balance of power, and change conceptions of the natural world? A focus of the course will be to investigate events in world history from non-Western perspectives and to analyze how historians have interpreted the global past in different ways. Students will learn how to weigh evidence and balance these multiple perspectives to develop historical arguments and interpretations. A key component of the course will be establishing a strong foundation for analytical writing, with students learning how to structure a paper through several stages of a well-defined writing process.

**HIST 220 - United States History**

*Full credit, meets 4 days/week*

*Prerequisite: Modern World History (HIST 211)*

This course surveys the United States' past from the colonial period through the modern era. The curriculum examines the nation's physical, demographic, and bureaucratic growth alongside the development of its political, social, economic, and cultural institutions and traditions. Students consider the changing roles that gender, race, and class have played throughout American history. Students will strengthen their conceptual skills, analytical abilities, and mastery of historical content. Students will complete research and writing assessments during the year.

**300-level Elective Courses:**

**HIST 310 - Classical World Civilizations**

*Full credit, meets 4 days/week*

*Prerequisites: Atlantic World History (HIST 210) or Modern World History (HIST 211), and US History (HIST 220)*

This course studies five interrelated classical Mediterranean societies: Jewish, Greek, Roman, Christian, and Islamic. As Mediterranean societies, they all suffered, enjoyed, and developed formative relationships with the Roman Republic and Empire. To study the classical world is to study the rich, exquisite gamut of human experience, from the horrors of slavery to the glories of salvation. We'll

encounter kings, slaves, prophets, politicians, philosophers, historians, farmers, and soldiers, all grappling with what it means to survive in an often unforgiving premodern world. The course covers roughly the years 1000 BCE to 1000 CE and features a variety of in-depth readings of exciting primary sources, including Homer, Thucydides, Plato, Livy, Plutarch, the Bible, the Life of Muhammad, and much more. Students should come away from the course with a solid sense of the rise and fall of Rome, the contributions of ancient Greek society, Jewish ethical monotheism in the Mediterranean world, and the radicalizing, transformative origins of its monotheistic, Abrahamic successors—Christianity and Islam—on that world. Additionally, students should come away with a clear sense of how these societies form the social, cultural, and political “DNA” of the modern world.

### **HIST 314 - East Asian History**

*Full credit, meets 4 days/week*

*Prerequisites: Atlantic World History (HIST 210) or Modern World History (HIST 211), and US History (HIST 220)*

The rise of East Asia’s geopolitical power will very likely be among the most important structural changes of the twenty-first century. To understand this monumental shift, we need to know when it started, how it happened, and why this development was neither inevitable nor unprecedented. After all, East Asia has been a geopolitical center before. Part of our task in this course will be to understand how the three regions of East Asia—China, Korea, and Japan—are interconnected cultures with shared social, economic, religious, and political traditions. At the same time, we’ll investigate how each region stood apart from the others, with unique characteristics that flourished within its borders. We’ll also track continuity and change in East Asia, both before and after contact with Europe and the United States, to establish a more informed historical understanding of current events. In our study of the twentieth century, we’ll discuss the wrenching—and often traumatic—impact of World War II, which realigned the status quo and ushered in a period of rapid and startling shifts: the emergence of a communist China and North Korea, a demilitarized Japan, and a democratic South Korea.

### **HIST 315 - History of the Silk Roads**

*Full credit, meets 4 days/week*

*Prerequisites: Atlantic World History (HIST 210) or Modern World History (HIST 211), and US History (HIST 220)*

The Silk Roads, a series of overland trade routes stretching from East Asia to Southern Europe, with tributary routes reaching as far south as Eastern Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, and the Indian subcontinent, were some of the most important routes for the circulation of goods, culture, religion, and ideas in human history. In this history elective, students will use the Silk Roads as a lens to examine the histories of individual cultures and their connections to broader historical networks. In the first part of the year, we’ll focus on the Silk Roads in the Classical

period, approximately 200 BCE - 600 CE, including not only the Roman Empire and the Han Dynasty but also other major territorial states of the time, such as the Parthians and Sogdians. In the second part of the year, we'll look at the age of the Mongols, approximately 1200-1400 CE. In the spring, we will also pick up the story of the Silk Road territories in the modern day. The primary focus of this final part of the course will be further modern development along the old Silk Road routes. Throughout the year, students will read both primary and secondary sources and will engage in a number of independent research projects. Assessments will consist of in-class essays, research papers, and class presentations, along with shorter writing assignments designed to build key historical interpretation skills.

### **HIST 317 - United States Legal History**

*Full credit, meets 4 days/week*

*Prerequisites: Atlantic World History (HIST 210) or Modern World History (HIST 211), and US History (HIST 220)*

This course examines the relationship between law and society in the United States. The focus of our study will be the question of how law both shapes and is shaped by the political, economic, and cultural context in which it is formed. The course will explore such topics as the creation and enforcement of law, access to and interaction with the legal system, and the changing nature of punishment throughout American history. Through the study of critical court decisions, we will also examine how historical cultural and political forces have contributed to contemporary ideas about civil and constitutional rights. Students will engage with current events through the lens of legal history with the goal of deepening analysis and understanding. Students will also have the opportunity to pursue independent research projects in the field of US legal history.

### **HIST 319 - Voices of Protest**

*Full credit, meets 4 days/week*

*Prerequisites: Atlantic World History (HIST 210) or Modern World History (HIST 211), and US History (HIST 220)*

The history of the United States has been shaped as much by ordinary people and their activism as by elected officials and the government. From the nation's founding, Americans began organizing to try to change the politics, culture, or social life of the United States. These social movements varied greatly in terms of their participants and goals. A few of these movements achieved success quickly, while others took decades. Some movements never accomplished their ultimate goal. While diverse in their objectives, one thing these movements had in common was the fiercely held belief that ordinary Americans, if they banded together, could change the course of the nation's destiny. This class will start with the American Revolution and move forward in time to the present day. Along the way, we'll study movements as diverse as temperance, women's rights, abolition, organized labor, consumer protection, Christian conservatism, anti-tax crusaders,

environmentalism, AIDS, and the “rights” movements of the late twentieth century: civil, LGBT, Latino, American Indian, feminism, Asian American, among others. We’ll study theories of how movements form and the challenges they face. We’ll consider strategies that failed and succeeded. We’ll consider the role of leadership, as well as how movements sometimes connected and learned from one another as they embraced participatory democracy. Current events will help us connect past and present. This course will be run seminar-style. Students will have the opportunity to work collaboratively, make class presentations, conduct historical research, and participate actively in class discussion.

### **HIST 320 - Global Environmental History**

*Full credit, meets 4 days/week*

*Prerequisites: Atlantic World History (HIST 210) or Modern World History (HIST 211), and US History (HIST 220)*

Global Environmental History surveys the history of the human relationship with non-human nature, beginning with fire-wielding hunter-gatherers and ending with present-day concerns about global climate change. The course will raise major questions about the human role in changing the environment on a global scale and the environment’s role in shaping human societies and cultures. The course is structured around several major turning points in human interaction with non-human nature, including: the transition to agro-ecology (around 10,000 BCE); the early globalization brought by the Mongol rulers on the Silk Roads (beginning in the thirteenth century); the reconnection and exchange between Afro-Eurasia and the Americas (1492 CE and thereafter); the industrial revolution and the fossil fuel economy (~1750 CE and thereafter); and the dawn of the nuclear era (1945 CE and thereafter). Focusing on such topics as agro-ecology, trans-ecological exchange, the role of disease, energy sources and use, urbanization, the environmental impacts of empire, the commodification of nature, nuclear weapons and energy, climate change, and sustainability, the course emphasizes new global perspectives on environmental history in an effort to investigate the environmental past and help us plan for our shared future. In addition to exploring these themes through current events, analytical papers, and a project that asks students to research and present solutions to climate change, the course will also support students as they conduct research into an environmental history topic of their own choosing.

### **HIST 324 - African American History**

*Full credit, meets 4 days/week*

*Prerequisites: Atlantic World History (HIST 210) or Modern World History (HIST 211), and US History (HIST 220)*

This course will survey the history of African American experiences from the arrival of Africans in the Americas to the present. Through a chronological study, students will investigate how African Americans, individually and collectively, gave shape to political dynamics, cultural expressions, economic trends, social movements,

and geo-spatial developments in America. They will interrogate the ways in which race, class, gender, sexuality, and region constructed diverse Black identities and experiences, challenging the notion of a singular Black American experience. The course will also explore the varied ways Black Americans have mobilized in pursuit of self-determination, examining the tensions and interconnections among various freedom struggles and strategies, and will consider how campaigns for Black liberation continue to be forged in our present moment. Through a close examination of primary and secondary sources and active discussion in a seminar-style format, students will learn to think critically about conceptions of race and processes of racialization as historically contingent, contextually specific formations, but with very real consequences that produced, and continue to shape, the world they inhabit today. Students will also have the opportunity to pursue independent research projects in the field of African American history.

**HIST 330 - Global World Wars**

*Full credit, meets 4 days/week*

Prerequisites: Atlantic World History (HIST 210) or Modern World History (HIST 211), and US History (HIST 220)

Two world wars of unprecedented scope and destruction dominated the first half of the twentieth century and even today continue to cast a long shadow. In many ways, we are still living in the aftermath of World War I (1914–1918) and World War II (1937–1945). This course will provide an opportunity to consider these dramatic events from a global perspective, to see how historians have introduced new approaches to the study of war, and to grapple with complexity instead of tallying winners and losers. Because this course is a social history of warfare, we'll move through it thematically rather than strictly chronologically. We'll investigate how military and civilian leadership both succeeded and failed, how workers powered wartime economies, and how harnessing new technologies and methods of gathering intelligence shaped the battlefield. We'll examine the experience of soldiers from varied backgrounds and the deliberate targeting of civilians who may have collaborated, resisted, survived, and afterwards tried to prevent wars like this from happening again. We'll also look at larger institutional structures: the persistence and fall of empires, the establishment of the League of Nations and the United Nations, and the development of international law. Lastly, we'll explore the culture of war in the press, propaganda, movie production, and memorialization. Students will participate daily in seminar-style discussions and will have multiple opportunities to pursue independent research on topics that most interest them.

**HIST 331: The Mediterranean World: Medieval to Early Modern**

*Full credit, meets 4 days/week*

*Prerequisites: Atlantic World History (HIST 210) or Modern World History (HIST 211), and US History (HIST 220)*

Historians often describe the Mediterranean as a “history of crossroads” because of its unique geographical position, which has facilitated the interaction and exchange among various civilizations over centuries. This course will offer a comprehensive history of the medieval and early modern Mediterranean from the collapse of the Roman Empire to the Ottoman siege of Vienna in 1683. The fall of Rome created a power vacuum that set the stage for the rise of new empires, including the Byzantine Empire in the eastern Mediterranean and, later, the Islamic Caliphates. The post-Roman period saw the expansion of Christianity in Europe, while Islam emerged as a major religious and political force in the Middle East and North Africa. Through this period, the Mediterranean served as a vibrant hub of trade, diplomacy, warfare, and intellectual exchange between Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East. Students will engage with a range of historical events, themes, and primary sources, exploring key topics such as the Crusades, the Black Death, the Renaissance, the rise and expansion of the Ottoman Empire, and the shaping of Mediterranean identities. The course will also examine the complex networks of trade, religion, and political power that connected diverse societies, including Christian, Muslim, and Jewish communities.

**400-level Elective Courses:**

**HIST 413 - Religion in History**

*Full credit, meets 5 days/week*

*Prerequisites: Atlantic World History (HIST 210) or Modern World History (HIST 211), and US History (HIST 220). To gain admission to a 400-level History elective, a student must have attained grades that average an A- or higher in the previous two years of History classes and receive departmental approval.*

Religion in History will examine major topics in the history of religion and will consider a variety of religious traditions, including, but not limited to: so-called “Primal Religions” and Native American belief systems, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Students will be asked to think critically and historically about the various human phenomena that we call “religious.” The goal is to better understand religious traditions and their development and growth throughout history. Students will consider the historical development of the faiths we discuss, how each religion spread, transformed, and interacted across different regions and eras. Students will discuss different religions and religious practices critically and analytically, with as much objectivity as possible, while attempting to develop and maintain sensitivity to subtle and sometimes inexpressible levels of human meaning. Our readings will be a mix

of primary sources (often religious scriptures) and secondary sources. We will also incorporate art, films and videos, music, presentations, field trips, and guest speakers as ways to better understand the religions we study.

**HIST 423 - Contemporary U.S. History, 1945 to the present**

*Full credit, meets 5 days/week*

*Prerequisites: Atlantic World History (HIST 210) or Modern World History (HIST 211), and US History (HIST 220). To gain admission to a 400-level History elective, a student must have attained grades that average an A- or higher in the previous two years of History classes and receive departmental approval.*

This course will examine the major influences on American life from the end of World War II to the present. Drawing on scholarly writings, essays, fiction, music, films, and websites, students will learn about the major factors that have shaped the United States as it is today, economically, socially, politically, and culturally. We will look at the intersection of politics, culture, and society in recent American history. Topics covered will include Cold War politics and culture, the rise and fall of New Deal liberalism, and social movements on the Right and the Left. The course will push well into the twenty-first century. Students are expected to complete the course with a sense of how these events shaped the nation and the world in which they live now.

**HIST 426 - African History**

*Full credit, meets 5 days/week*

*Prerequisites: Atlantic World History (HIST 210) or Modern World History (HIST 211), and US History (HIST 220). To gain admission to a 400-level History elective, a student must have attained grades that average an A- or higher in the previous two years of History classes and receive departmental approval.*

Despite being the oldest continent and home to the greatest diversity of life on the planet, Africa remains a largely misunderstood region of the world. Western media continues to bombard us with negative or misleading stereotypes and tropes about Africa, such as reducing the complexity of a continent to a single, homogeneous “country.” This course offers a broad introduction to the peoples and events that have shaped the continent’s past. Students will learn the ways in which Africans have contributed to, and been caught up in, global historical processes, undermining the prevalent Western notion that Africa was isolated from the rest of the world. This course will also rely on diverse African voices to tell their stories and histories. This course will also not shy away from the series of very real crises that have plagued the continent over the past centuries; however, it addresses these problems in a constructive manner that helps students contextualize the roots of Africa’s issues. They will come to view them as global problems, and not simply as African problems. Finally, this course will center African solutions to the challenges that Africans have faced over time.

**HIST 429 - History of Medicine**

*Full credit, meets 5 days/week*

*Prerequisites: Atlantic World History (HIST 210) or Modern World History (HIST 211), and US History (HIST 220). To gain admission to a 400-level History elective, a student must have attained grades that average an A- or higher in the previous two years of History classes and receive departmental approval.*

This course is a global history of medical knowledge and practices from ancient times to the modern day. The class asks, through comparative and chronological approaches, how individuals and societies have understood health and disease, and how individuals have practiced medicine and had medicine practiced on them. Students will consider the perspectives and histories of patients, practitioners, and society together in the same frame in order to consider how medical ideas and practices have acted as a form of power, used both for great achievements and for grave abuses.

**HIST 432 - Middle East History**

*Full credit, meets 5 days/week*

*Prerequisites: Atlantic World History (HIST 210) or Modern World History (HIST 211), and US History (HIST 220). To gain admission to a 400-level History elective, a student must have attained grades that average an A- or higher in the previous two years of History classes and receive departmental approval.*

This course examines the emergence of the modern Middle East from the eighteenth century to the present. The focus will be on the modern era, but the course will also give sustained attention in the first semester to the premodern history of the region, which is essential background for understanding the transformations that have defined the modern Middle East. An overarching theme of the course will be the interactions and struggles between the forces of modernity and tradition. Moving from the premodern to the modern (and interrogating the meanings of modernity and tradition along the way), students will explore the ways that the forces of modernity and tradition have together shaped politics, societies, and cultures across the region. The first semester is devoted to religions and empires in antiquity, the rise of Islam and Islamic civilization, the Ottoman and Safavid Empires of the early modern period, Middle Eastern encounters with Europe, and processes of reform and modernization in the nineteenth century. The second semester covers various forms of nationalism, the demise of empire, the creation of the Middle East state system after WWI, independence and revolutionary politics, the Arab-Israeli and Israeli-Palestinian conflicts, issues of religion and state, and dominant trends in the politics of the Middle East of the last half century.

**Courses Not Offered in 2026-2027:**

**HIST 312 - Comparative Race and Ethnicity**

**[Course not offered 2026-27]**

*Full credit, meets 4 days/week*

*Prerequisites: Atlantic World History (HIST 210) or Modern World History (HIST 211), and US History (HIST 220)*

This course examines race and ethnic relations in the United States and in other contemporary multiethnic/multiracial societies in the Americas (Brazil, Canada, the Caribbean), Asia, and Africa. It will also emphasize how to analyze current events with a deeper historical grounding. Our approach to the topic begins with the examination of some basic concepts, such as ethnicity and race, racism and ethnocentrism, racial and ethnic stratification, prejudice and discrimination, and the theoretical models of race relations, i.e., assimilation and pluralism. From these introductory sessions, the course will move to specific group studies. We will consider patterns of race and ethnic relations in heterogeneous societies while adopting a comparative perspective. Our global approach will emphasize the prevalence of intergroup conflict in the modern world.

**HIST 316 - Latin American History**

**[Course not offered 2026-27]**

*Full credit, meets 4 days/week*

*Prerequisites: Atlantic World History (HIST 210) or Modern World History (HIST 211), and US History (HIST 220)*

Latin America is a term that describes most of the Western Hemisphere and encompasses vast cultural, racial, and national diversity. What unifies this region? What makes each country within it unique? These are the questions we will answer as we explore the region's past and present. This class is structured as a survey course covering historical material from the late 1400s to the present day. Over the course of two semesters, students will learn about the rise and fall of multiracial colonial empires, the emergence of modern nation-states, the rise of popular revolutionary movements, and Latin America's pivotal role in the global Cold War. Moreover, through in-class discussion and research assignments, students will develop the knowledge and skills necessary to understand the historical roots of dilemmas in Latin America today.

**HIST 321 - The Global Cold War**

**[Course not offered 2026-27]**

*Full credit, meets 4 days/week*

*Prerequisites: Atlantic World History (HIST 210) or Modern World History (HIST 211), and US History (HIST 220)*

While the Cold War is often depicted as a struggle between the US and USSR mainly over control of Europe, this course takes into consideration more recent scholarship which argues that the most important centers of conflict and the

struggle of ideas occurred in the rest of the world, particularly in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, just as countries were gaining their independence in the wake of World War II. We will study factors such as decolonization, race, political alliances, diplomacy, the nuclear arms race, espionage, cultural programs, activism by ordinary people, and popular culture, including film, music, and literature. Lastly, the course will weigh political theories that were tested throughout the Cold War, especially capitalism, democracy, non-alignment with the superpowers, socialism, and communism. Current events will help us connect past and present. This course will be run seminar-style. Students will have the opportunity to work collaboratively, make class presentations, conduct historical research, and participate actively in class discussion.

### **HIST 322 - Vast Early American History**

**[Course not offered 2026-27]**

*Full credit, meets 4 days/week*

*Prerequisites: Atlantic World History (HIST 210) or Modern World History (HIST 211), and US History (HIST 220)*

Vast Early America reimagines the creation of what would become the United States by taking a continental approach to the study of the past. This course moves beyond the Anglocentric view of American history that prioritizes the English experience and goes from east to west. Colonial America was settled from North to South in the French Empire and from South to North in the Spanish Empire. Russia settled Alaska and pushed into northern California. All those regions eventually became part of the United States. Vast Early America also includes the Caribbean in its scope. The racial, gender, and class power dynamics that we are conscious of today took root in the first centuries of settlement. Vast Early America incorporates Native American history as part of the narrative. Vast Early America offers a new and provocative way of understanding our national story.

### **HIST 327 - History of the Islamic World**

**[Course not offered 2026-27]**

*Full credit, meets 4 days/week*

*Prerequisites: Atlantic World History (HIST 210) or Modern World History (HIST 211), and US History (HIST 220)*

Outside of violent images of revolution and fundamentalists that we see in the media, many of us know very little about the peoples and cultures of the Islamic world. This course seeks to explore the history of the Middle East and Islamic World so that we may better understand the complexities of one of the world's most important regions. The culture and religion of Islam have acted as a unifying force across large sections of Africa, Asia, and Europe, creating, in effect, a single world-system that included West Africa, the Middle East, and India, as well as parts of Europe and China. The shared religion of Islam, which often prioritized literacy and education, laid the foundation for a level of cultural exchange and technological

development unprecedented in world history. This class will examine the Islamic world system in three distinct periods in its history: the rise of Islam and the development of Islamic Empires; the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when empires such as the Ottomans faced external political and intellectual challenges from a rising Europe as well as from internal reform movements; and finally, the rise of nation-states after World War I. The spread of Islam brought new ideas in art and architecture, revived and expanded on Greek philosophy, and introduced an unprecedented level of religious tolerance to the medieval world. The latter two sections will also lead us to examine topics that students have been exposed to before- the Enlightenment, absolutism and constitutionalism, gender relations, colonialism, nationalism, and socialism but we will study them in a new context.

**HIST 328 - LGBT American History**

***[Course not offered 2026-27]***

*Full credit, meets 4 days/week*

*Prerequisites: Atlantic World History (HIST 210) or Modern World History (HIST 211), and US History (HIST 220)*

This course will survey United States history through the lens of “queerness,” broadly defined as going against a prescribed “norm,” from pre-colonial times to the present. After spending some time defining LGBT history, the course will then move chronologically and thematically through United States history with a focus on defining norms of gender and sexuality, moments of gender ambiguity or “transing” gender (to borrow a phrase from historian Jen Manion), and the history of same-sex relationships, as well as how those relationships have been understood and recognized by society. While this course is geographically centered in the United States, the course will also pay close attention to moments when LGBT history crosses national borders, in terms of either immigration policies, US imperialism, or global cultural influences, to name just a few examples.

