

UNDERGRADUATE HANDBOOK

FOR STUDENTS IN HISTORY



history.uiowa.edu



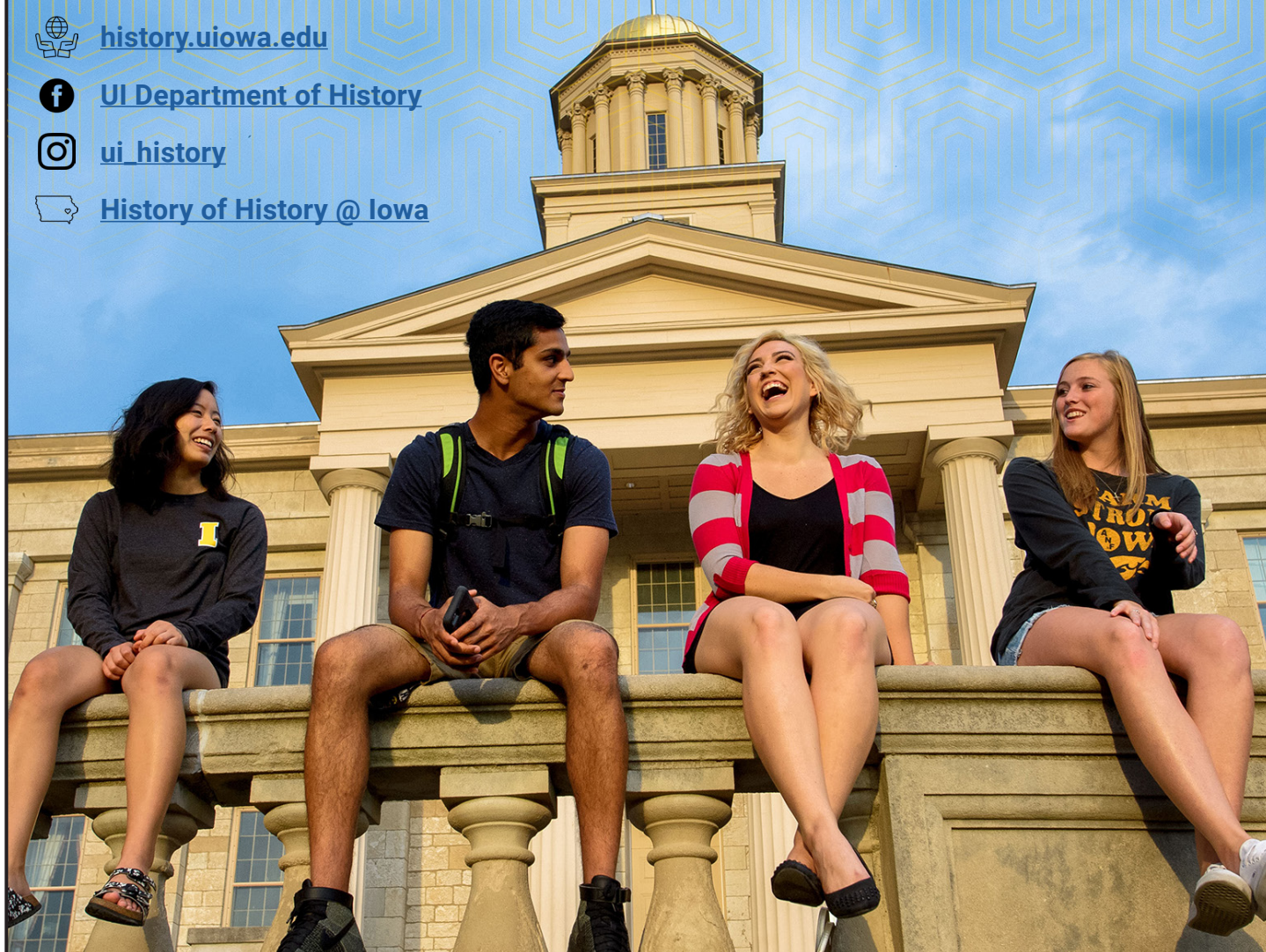
[UI Department of History](#)



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[History of History @ Iowa](#)



IOWA

Department of History

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For a listing of current History Department faculty and staff, including advising,
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LEARN MORE

history.uiowa.edu

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Built in 1902, Schaeffer Hall, seen here to the left of the Old Capitol, is home to the Department of History.



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE HISTORY DEPARTMENT:



Welcome to the study of history at the University of Iowa! Our faculty look forward to helping you explore the origins of today's world—its economic, social, and political structures, its varied cultures, and its clashing ideas. Where and how did the challenges, conflicts, and opportunities we face today originate? How did people, in other historical moments, try to make sense of their world and resolve the challenges confronting them? Exploring these and other questions can help prepare you for citizenship in a complex, interdependent, and rapidly changing global society.

Students of history acquire knowledge of the past, but more importantly they learn critical thinking, analytical, and writing skills that are valuable in a wide range of careers. In our classes, you will learn to conduct research, analyze evidence, and construct arguments ([see here for a fuller description of History BA learning objectives](#)). Iowa history students have won prestigious fellowships and academic honors, gained admission to competitive graduate and professional schools, and obtained internships at places like the Smithsonian Institution, the Library of Congress, and the National Archives. Our alumni pursue successful careers in law, business, politics and government, journalism, archives & museums, and education, among other fields.

You will work with some terrific professors! Not only have many of them won teaching awards, but UI's history faculty are nationally and internationally recognized experts in their fields. Their teaching and research agendas span the globe and the ages, from the classical era to the present. Whatever region and time period they study, historians share common concerns and questions about equality, citizenship, democracy, and justice, and about the ways in which power is wielded, contested, and resisted. They explore broad themes such as migration and diaspora; energy and environment; science, medicine and technology; slavery and abolition; empire and decolonization; genocide and human rights; authoritarianism and democracy; law and punishment; politics and public policy; race and ethnicity; gender and sexuality; religion and culture; and many others. In examining such topics, our faculty collaborate closely with other University of Iowa programs and departments, including African American Studies; Gender, Women's, and Sexuality Studies (GWSS); Latina/o/x Studies; Native American and Indigenous Studies (NAIS); and Global Health Studies.

Like our faculty, history majors have wide-ranging interests. Many double-major with another department (for example, Political Science, Journalism and Mass Communications, a world language), and many complete a certificate (for example, in Ethics and Public Policy, Sustainability, Human Rights, Elementary or Secondary Education, Museum Studies, Global Health Studies, NAIS, Medieval Studies). Some choose to complete the Honor's Thesis in History; others edit our undergraduate journal, the *Iowa Historical Review*. Some become active in our undergraduate club, the Hawkeye History Corps.

Prospective and new majors may want to begin by meeting with the history academic advisor, Colleen Kelley (colleen-kelley@uiowa.edu; 1120G UCC). You can also visit history faculty during drop-in hours, which are posted outside the Department of History office, 280 Schaeffer Hall (319-335-2299) and on [individual faculty web pages](#). Stop by 280 to meet our friendly office staff and to browse through recent faculty and alumni publications. For announcements of upcoming events and opportunities, please follow us on Facebook: [UI Department of History](#), or on Instagram, [ui_history](#).

We look forward to getting to know you!

Colin Gordon
Professor and Chair, Department of History

WHAT WILL I LEARN?



"By studying people and places far removed from our current lives, **we become aware of other ways to be human.** The strangeness of the past enables us to step back and look at our society and ourselves from a new perspective—indeed, we might start to look a bit strange to ourselves! Making sense of other societies also encourages empathy for different cultures around the world. We thus study history to simultaneously situate ourselves in the present and to distance ourselves from it." [Johann N. Neem, "Connecting Past to Present"](#)

"Anybody who studies history learns two things:

They learn to do research and they learn to write What history will give you is the ability to pivot into the different ideas, the different fields, the different careers as they arise." ["Heather Cox Richardson Wants You to Study History" in The New York Times](#)

WHY STUDY HISTORY?

Every year, we ask our graduates to share what they found **most rewarding** about majoring in history. Here are some of the things they have told us:

Learning about **civilizations and cultures** I had known nothing about

Greatly improving my **reading and writing skills**

Gaining appreciation for **different points of view**

In-depth **research opportunities**

Small classroom discussions

Using my own creativity

Diversity of classes

Developing **critical thinking skills**

New alumni said history professors are:



Passionate

Encouraging

Inspiring

Fascinating

Wonderful

Fantastic

Amazing



WHAT CAN I DO WITH A HISTORY DEGREE?

HISTORIANS ARE:

JUST ABOUT ANYTHING!



Educators

Teachers at primary, secondary, and post-secondary schools; educators at historic sites and museums



Communicators

Writers and editors, journalists, artists, multi-media producers



Advocates

Lawyers, paralegals, litigation support, legislative staff, community organizers, social workers



Researchers

Museums, historical organizations, cultural resources management, historic preservation, public policy institutes



Information Managers

Archivists, records managers, librarians, data analysts



Public Servants

Elected officials, diplomatic corps, non-governmental organizations, human rights workers, health professionals, policy makers



What will you choose?

Our graduates are diverse and follow a wide range of career trajectories! When you take HIST:2151, Introduction to the History Major, you'll discuss potential careers for history majors. Your history academic advisor and professors are great resources. The coaches and advisors at Iowa's [Pomerantz Career Center](#) are eager to assist you explore and prepare for a future career. Did you know:

- History majors' mid-career salaries are on par with those of business majors.
- Employers in tech, business, law, communications, health care, and public policy want people with humanities backgrounds.
- Double majoring makes you even more versatile. You might combine a History BA with a certificate or a second major such as Political Science, Journalism and Mass Communication, International Studies, Anthropology, and more. Your advisor can help you draft a plan.

ADVISING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA AND IN HISTORY

Advising for first-year students

First-year students and those with fewer than 30 semester hours earned are advised at the Academic Advising Center. The AAC's team of advisors specializes in transitioning students to academic and student life at Iowa. Working with an assigned caseload, the advisors help each student plan for a successful academic start at Iowa.



Advising after your first 30 semester hours

Colleen Kelley serves as the academic advisor for history students who have earned at least 30 semester hours.

How to contact your advisor

For quick questions, email Colleen at: colleen-kelley@uiowa.edu. For adding and dropping courses and other immediate issues, virtual appointment and drop-in hours can be found on [Colleen Kelley's page](#). Appointments are scheduled on-line through [MyUI](#), or via email request.



We recommend scheduling an individual appointment if you would like to review your degree audit, map out a plan to graduation, or have other questions for which you would like to have an extended conversation. To schedule a virtual appointment with Colleen, please use the online scheduler (link available through [MyUI](#)).

The departmental advisor is available to assist students with the following:

- Advisor signatures on add/drop and other university forms
- Questions about course registration
- Questions or problems with your degree audit
- Academic probation
- Review of study abroad courses for major credit
- Discussions regarding adding second majors, minors, and certificate programs
- Answering questions and providing information about navigating campus resources



When you reach junior standing, you are encouraged to work with a faculty mentor. While you will continue to see your departmental advisor for routine advising functions, your faculty mentor is available to:

- Provide disciplinary guidance for research projects
- Serve as a mentor for honors theses and projects
- Discuss your graduate and professional school aspirations



REQUIREMENTS FOR THE UNDERGRADUATE HISTORY MAJOR (BA)

Total Semester Hours: 36. See [General Catalog](#) for a full list of History courses.

INTRODUCTORY COURSE:

HIST:2151 Intro to the History Major (must be taken at UI)

AREA COURSEWORK:

American History

Two courses; at least one numbered 3000+:

 Courses: 1200-1299, 2200-2299, 3200-3299, 4200-4299

Non-Western History

Two courses; at least one numbered 3000+:

 Courses: 1500-1999, 2500-2899, 3500-3899, 4500-4999

European History

Two courses; at least one numbered 3000+:

 Courses: 1400-1499, 2400-2499, 3400-3499, 4400-4499

Pre-1700 History

One course; may be counted toward geographical area:

 See [History General Catalog](#) for list of pre-1700 History courses

ELECTIVE COURSES:

Elective HIST coursework, to reach 36 s.h.:

PORTFOLIO:

HIST:3193 Undergraduate History Portfolio
 • 0 s.h., S/U course, taken in final semester

• Students upload three graded History papers (one from HIST:2151) **OR** paper from HIST:2151 plus History honors thesis

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:

- 2.00 GPA or better in all major coursework and all UI courses toward major
- 18 s.h. towards major must be taken at UI
- May count maximum of 18 s.h. in American History courses toward major
- Must complete 24 s.h. in courses numbered 2000+
- May count maximum of 3 s.h. in courses numbered 1002-1099 toward the major

HONORS IN THE MAJOR:

- 3.33 GPA or better in major coursework
- Complete honors thesis
- HIST:3995 History Honors Research Seminar
- HIST:3996 History Honors Thesis

To be used as a planning tool only. To confirm specific graduation requirements, consult your degree audit.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MINOR IN HISTORY

The undergraduate minor in history requires the following:

- Minimum of 15 s.h. in history courses, including 12 s.h. earned in courses numbered 2000 or above.
- At least 12 s.h. must be earned in courses taken at the University of Iowa.
- Students must maintain a grade-point average (GPA) of at least 2.00 in all courses for the minor.
- Course work in the minor may not be taken pass/nonpass.

HONORS IN HISTORY



Honors in the History Major gives students the opportunity to conduct independent research on a topic of their choosing and to write an original piece of scholarship based on that research. The product is a thesis, a 25-35 page paper on the study of a historical problem. Think of the thesis as part of becoming an historian. You will put to use all the tools that you have learned in your history classes, devise your own research questions, and explore them through primary source research and analytical writing. For more information, visit the [Honors in History Major](#) page of our website.

Left: 2024 Honors students Zack Paulsen and Joy Curry met at the National Archives in Kew, England, during their research trips.

Grants for domestic and foreign research travel are provided through funding from generous donors to the Department of History.

Right: Anna Behrens, BA history '24 celebrates a successful thesis defense with committee members. From left to right: Landon Storrs, Amber Powell, Anna Behrens, Jo Butterfield.



“ ”

Completing a history thesis was one of the best things I've done at Iowa! In addition to exploring a topic that was interesting and meaningful to me, I was able to travel while strengthening my research, writing, and analytical skills. Both classes in the thesis process helped me to find my topic and guided my progress, making it an exciting and manageable experience. I would encourage all history students to consider pursuing honors in the major!

Anna Behrens, BA history '24

BA WITH TEACHER LICENSURE

History majors interested in earning licensure to teach in elementary and/or secondary schools must complete the College of Education's [Teacher Education Program \(TEP\)](#) in addition to the requirements for the major and all requirements for graduation. Students must apply to the TEP, and admission is selective. To learn more, students can speak to their advisor or contact the College of Education, [Office of Student Services](#) for details.

FIND OUT MORE



Visit the [Undergraduate Programs](#) tab on the History website for:

- Major and Minor requirements
- Course listings
- Advising
- History Writing Center
- Career information



Visit the [Resources for Undergraduates](#) tab for:

- Contact info for key personnel
- Details about Honors in the Major
- Experiential learning links
- List of local archives
- History scholarship and award information
- History News for Undergraduates email newsletter archive
- Hawkeye History Corps
- Iowa Historical Review
- BA with Teaching Licensure info



GET INVOLVED

**HAWKEYE
HISTORY**
Corps

The Hawkeye History Corps is a student club for any undergraduate interested in history. Their programming includes both social and educational events. Get together for a game night, or hear from an inspirational speaker.



Scan the QR code or [follow this link](#) to find out more.

IHR

The *Iowa Historical Review* is the premier undergraduate history journal at the University of Iowa. Founded in 2006, it is dedicated to providing an intellectual forum for undergraduate historians in the Midwest.



Scan the QR code or [follow this link](#) to find out more.

EXPLORE OUR HISTORY

➔ THE HISTORY OF HISTORY @ IOWA

Deepen your personal connection to history by exploring the history of where you study it. Browse our [HH@I](#) website, which is dedicated to documenting and displaying the evolution of the history program at the University of Iowa going back to 1855. This digital exhibit is a work in progress, updated with ongoing research and analysis. UI undergraduate history majors spearheaded the initial collection and organization of materials, which include documents, publications, letters, newsletters, course materials, testimonials, memorials, photos, and oral histories.

The [“Share Your Stories”](#) part of the website is another place to keep us informed about your life beyond U Iowa.

KEEP US INFORMED

✉ HISTORYDEPT@UIOWA.EDU



If you're applying for graduate school or professional school, or applying for jobs after graduation, it is useful for us to know that. And you never know what knowledge or opportunities we may be able to pass on to you. The Department of History sends out a weekly newsletter during the academic year to highlight students, alumni, faculty, and local events. If you would like to be added to our mailing list, please let us know [here](#)!



