

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT NEW PALTZ

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
Undergraduate Advising Handbook



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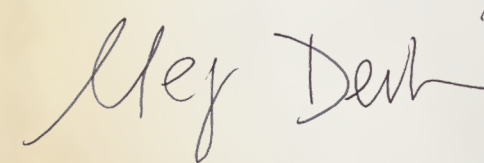
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Dear Students,

To ensure smooth progress towards your degree, this handbook is intended to create a central location for answers to your advising questions. This should not replace the personal discussions you have with your faculty adviser. If you have any questions about your degree and history department policies, reach out to them. As an electronic document, the handbook is designed for you to easily navigate and find the specific content you are looking for – use the table of contents or search as needed. Questions or suggestions for improving the content of the handbook would be welcome; please contact the department chair, Meg Devlin, at devlinm@newpaltz.edu

All the best,



Professor. Meg Devlin
Associate Professor and Department Chair
Department of History
SUNY New Paltz

I. Why Study History?

As a history major or minor at New Paltz, you will learn about the work of being a historian. History, as taught here, is not simply about memorizing names and dates. It is a way of thinking, a lifelong practice, and a rigorous discipline. Through our courses, you will be taught the complementary skills of critical thinking, strong analytical reading practices, extensive training in writing and oral argument, and comfort with engaging complexly with the moral and ethical questions raised in past situations. Below are the detailed practices historians engage in, along with the general skills you will be able to take from your degree in history. This overview is adapted from the American Historical Association's 2016 work to define the core competencies and learning objectives for the discipline. See historians.org for more on the benefits of the study of history and for practical information on careers in history.

Through a degree in history, students will:

Build historical knowledge.

Develop a body of historical knowledge with chronological and geographic breadth – as well as depth of detail – in order to discern context. Learn how to gather and contextualize information in order to convey both the particularity of past lives and the scale of human experience. Recognize how humans in the past shaped their unique historical moments and were shaped by those moments.

Skills for work and life: Foundational knowledge and the curiosity for life-long learning.

Develop historical methods.

Through your study of history at New Paltz, you will come to recognize history as an interpretive account of the human past – one that historians create in the present from surviving evidence. You'll learn to collect, sift, organize, question, synthesize, and interpret complex material. Through your work you will make use of sources from the past as well as the interpretations of scholars on that past. You will ethically acknowledge and cite sources. As you familiarize yourself with a historical topic, you will learn to identify, summarize, appraise, and synthesize other scholars' historical arguments.

Skills for work and life: Research skills and the ability to manage multiple and diverse sources of information and critically understand the importance of material you work with

Recognize the provisional nature of knowledge and experience, the disciplinary preference for complexity, and the comfort with ambiguity that history requires.

Historians welcome contradictory perspectives and data, which enable us to provide more accurate accounts and construct stronger arguments. Your course work will engage

you in the experience of past events from multiple perspectives. You will be able to reconstruct multiple causes of complex events and phenomena using conflicting sources.

Skills for work and life: Critical thinking and the appreciation for the complexities of any argument and any perspective

Apply a range of skills to decode the historical record because of its incomplete, complex, and contradictory nature.

In the study of history, you'll be asked to analyze a variety of historical, primary sources to consider not just their content and importance, but also their credibility, perspective, and importance. You will evaluate historical arguments, explaining how they were constructed and might be improved. You will also learn to be flexible and responsive to the historical record. Historians revise their analyses and narratives when new evidence requires it.

Skills for work and life: Ability to question, critique, and develop supported and well-reasoned arguments and to change your mind if needed

Create historical arguments and narratives.

In your study of history, you will learn to generate substantive, open-ended questions about the past and develop research strategies to answer them. You will also learn to craft well-supported historical narratives, arguments, and reports of research findings in a variety of media for a variety of audiences.

Skills for work and life: People trained in history are strong communicators, both orally and in writing. They are able to identify issues of importance and develop organized plans for understanding those issues.

Use historical perspective as central to active citizenship.

History classes and historical thinking always reflect on the relevance of the past in our own time. Learn to develop empathy toward people in the context of their distinctive historical moments.

You will be asked to apply historical knowledge and historical thinking to contemporary issues. Because of the importance of learning from the past, you will come to develop positions that reflect deliberation, cooperation, and diverse perspectives.

Skills for work and life: Being deliberative, developing empathy for past populations and people from diverse perspectives today, and the ability to understand the central significance of any matter are essential traits of trained historians.

II. Our Faculty and Student Community

Our department is strong because of the people in it. With faculty who are excellent teachers and scholars and with students with strong academic backgrounds and deep engagement and interest in history, we offer dynamic classes and rigorous learning. The faculty are teachers first, with unique teaching styles and a love of mentoring their students outside the classroom. They also work in specialized research fields, producing scholarship recognized through prominent publications, awards, and grants.

Full-Time Faculty



Christopher Albi teaches a variety of courses on Latin American history, including colonial and national period surveys, the history of Mexico, environmental history of Latin America, and the history of US-Latin American relations. His first book, *Gamboa's World*, explored law and legal culture in eighteenth-century Mexico. He is currently researching the history of gambling in colonial Spanish America.



Lee Bernstein joined the New Paltz faculty in 2004 and is currently Professor of History teaching broadly in the area of twentieth century U.S. history. He has served as Interim Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies in the Division of Academic Affairs and chair of the Department of History. From 2004-2007 and again from 2010-2013 he served as Project Director for the Teaching American History Summer Institute, a U.S. Department of Education funded collaboration between the Department of History and Ulster County BOCES that provided intensive workshops on U.S. History to K-12 teachers from Ulster, Dutchess, and Orange Counties. Prof. Bernstein is the author of many articles, reference materials, and two books on crime and prisons in U.S. history and culture, *America is the Prison: Arts and Politics in Prison in the 1970s* (University of North Carolina Press) and *The Greatest Menace: Organized Crime in Cold War America* (University of Massachusetts Press). He holds a Ph.D. in American Studies from the University of Minnesota, an M.A. from Boston College, and a B.A. from Hobart & William Smith Colleges. Prior to joining the faculty at New Paltz, Bernstein held appointments at Vassar, the University of Colorado Boulder, and San Jose State.



Andrew Evans is a historian of 20th-century Germany. He is the author of *Anthropology at War: World War I and the Science of Race in Germany* (University of Chicago Press, 2010) and a co-author of *Discovering the Western Past: A Look at the Evidence*, vol. II (2014). He is a former recipient of the Liberal Arts and Sciences Teacher of the Year Award. He teaches courses on modern Germany, 20th-century Europe, World War II, and modern European history.



Andrea Gatzke is a historian of the Hellenistic and Roman worlds. She has particular interest in the social and cultural identity of the Greek East under Roman rule. She also conducts research on the Hellenistic kingdoms of Anatolia (particularly the Pontic kingdom), the reception of Alexander the Great's legacy in the late Hellenistic and Roman periods, and the role of women in the Hellenistic kingdoms. She teaches our courses on Ancient Rome, Greece, and the Near East and Egypt.



Kristine Harris, Deputy Chair and Graduate Advisor for our department, is a historian of modern China. Her research and teaching interests include film and mass media, visual culture, urban life, the Cultural Revolution, gender studies, nationalism, and China's global interactions. Professor Harris has also served twice as Visiting Associate Professor of Cinema and Media Studies at the University of Chicago. She is also a core member of the interdisciplinary Asian Studies Program and serves on the Board of Advisors for the Digital Arts and Humanities Lab (DASH Lab). Her scholarship has appeared in *The Oxford Handbook of Chinese Cinemas* (Oxford University Press); *A New Literary History of Modern China* (Harvard University Press); *Les Sons de l'exotisme au cinéma: Bruits, voix, musiques* (Mimesis); *History in Images* (University of California Press); *The New Woman International: Representations in Photography and Film from the 1870s through the 1960s* (University of Michigan Press); and *The Journal of Chinese Film Studies*, among others. She is currently researching the life and work of S. Rosen-Hoa (1882-1970) and the Chinese film adaptations of her novel *Love and Duty*.



Heather Morrison teaches classes on Early Modern European history. She earned a BA from Indiana University, an MA from the University of Toronto, and a Ph.D. from Louisiana State University. Her research focuses on the work and social lives of intellectuals who lived in Vienna in the 1780s. She has published on freemasonry, race, print and authorship, and the connections between science and empire. She is currently working on a book about a botanical expedition that left Vienna in the 1780s, whose members traveled through the Americas and Africa to collect (and usually accidentally kill) plants and animals for the imperial gardens and menagerie.



Meg Devlin is Chair of the History Department and Associate Professor of History. She earned her B.A. at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Ph.D. at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She teaches and publishes in the areas of U.S. women's history, Native American history, and feminist pedagogy. Her recent scholarship has appeared in *Women's History Review*; *Journal of Family History*; *Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture, & Social Justice*; *The Native South: New Histories and Enduring Legacies* (University of Nebraska Press); *Teaching History: A Journal of Methods*; and *Suffrage and Its Limits: The New York Story* (SUNY Press).



Lou Roper teaches courses on the history of Early America, Britain from 1480-1715, and the Indians of New York State. He has published a number of books and articles on English colonization including, most recently, *Advancing Empire: English Interests and Overseas Expansion, 1613-1688* (Cambridge) and *The Torrid Zone: Caribbean Colonization and Cultural Interaction in the Long Seventeenth Century* (South Carolina). He is also the co-editor of a new book coming out after the new year, *Agents of European overseas empires: Private colonisers, 1450-1800* from Manchester University Press.



Reynolds Scott-Childress is a cultural historian whose work focuses on race and popular media forms. He edited the book *Race and the Production of Modern American Nationalism* and has published articles on Paul Laurence Dunbar and the use of a historic site in Maryland for Middle Class Leisure. His courses cover local history, the Gilded Age, and the U.S. South.



Akira Shimada's scholarly training is broadly in South Asian Archaeology, Art and History. Shimada has pursued several research projects on the history of early Buddhism and Buddhist art in South Asia with special focus on Andhra region. He published a monograph study on Amaravati stupa (*Early Buddhist Architecture in Context: The Great Stūpa at Amarāvati* (ca. 300 BCE-300 CE), Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013) and co-edited two volumes (*Buddhist Stūpas in South Asia: Recent Archaeological, Art-Historical and Historical Perspectives*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2009; *Amaravati: The Art of an Early Buddhist Monument in Context*, London: the British Museum, 2017) and more than ten articles and book chapters in English and Japanese. His teaching covers Indian history from the ancient world to Gandhi.



Hamilton M. Stapell is a historian of twentieth-century Europe. His research and writing focus on the political and cultural history of Spain since its transition to democracy in 1975. Professor Stapell has published articles on national and regional identity in the 'New Europe' and on Spanish culture in a book entitled *Remaking Madrid: Culture, Politics, and Identity after Franco*. His current project is about Americanization in Spain after WWII. Professor Stapell sits on the Evolutionary Studies (EvoS) Board and is an associate editor at the *Journal of Evolution and Health*. He has been the recipient of the Provost Award for Teaching Excellence and the Liberal Arts & Sciences Teacher of the Year Award at SUNY New Paltz. Dr. Stapell previously taught at the United States Military Academy, West Point, and for the Revelle Humanities Writing Program at the University of California, San Diego.



Michael Vargas teaches courses on the social construction of medieval European and Mediterranean societies, on the way medieval history gets used and misused in the present, and on how historians think about and act upon the world. His courses include: Medieval Europe in Context, Jihad and Crusades, The Medieval Spains, Deep History, and Historians Craft. He is the author of two books, *Taming a Brood of Vipers: Conflict and Change in Fourteenth-Century Dominican Convents* (Brill, 2011) and *Constructing Catalan Identity: Memory, Imagination, and the Medieval* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018). The topics of his published papers range from administrative change after the Black Death to the theft of medieval heritage objects to theories of medievalizing. He currently studies how nineteenth-century writers of children's books reimagined the Middle Ages as they shaped for young readers notions of national duty, moral order, and heroic adventure.

Part-Time Faculty



P. Matthew DeLaMater is a regional specialist and teaches American history courses including New York Environmental History, Jacksonian America, American Civil War, and Hudson Valley Culture. Having done his doctoral work at SUNY Albany, DeLaMater is presently finishing his study of Thomas Cole and the art of the Early American republic entitled *Nature is a Sovereign Remedy*. His most recent article, *James Fenimore Cooper's The Pioneers, The Birth of American Tourism, and the Creation of a Romantic Republic* appeared in *The James Fenimore Cooper Society Journal* in August 2023.



Susan Lewis, who retired in 2018 from her tenured professorship, will offer occasional courses, specializes in U.S. women's history, New York State history, and the "long" nineteenth-century (1776-1920), with a particular emphasis on the Progressive Era (1890-1920). Her current areas of research include: nineteenth-century businesswomen across the United States, the New York State suffrage victory of 1917, and the impact of World War I on girls' series books.



Ryan McMillen received his Ph.D. in American Studies from the University of Texas in 2004, and has taught more than fifteen different history courses at the university level. His interests center on American religious history, the history of technology, and the social history of warfare. He is currently working on a project detailing the role of a Greenwich Village boarding-house in helping cultivate abolitionist and women's rights activism in 1850s and 1860s New York.



Sebastian Rider-Bezerra received his Ph.D. in Medieval Studies from Yale University in 2020. He has been an adjunct lecturer at SUNY New Paltz since 2021 and has taught a range of courses including: Ancient World, Roman Empire, Jews in the Middle Ages, Medieval Europe, The Black Death, and Medieval Society.



William Strongin is an ordained rabbi. He has earned a Masters in World Religions from Harvard University, and has a Masters of Hebrew Literature and a D.Div from the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College. He has written articles and book reviews in magazines, newspapers and scholarly journals on such subjects as ancient and medieval Jewish history, Biblical and Talmudic studies, comparative theology, science and religion, and Holocaust studies. He has given over one hundred public lectures on similar topics in colleges, synagogues, churches, interfaith councils and other organizations. Rabbi Bill has been a member of the History and Jewish Studies faculties of SUNY New Paltz since 1988, and the director of the Program in Jewish Studies from 2007-2022. He has also been the spiritual leader of the Jewish Congregation of New Paltz since 1984.

Administrative Staff



Jessica Krause is the Administrative Assistant for the Department of History and the Department of Philosophy. She graduated Magna Cum Laude from SUNY New Paltz in 2009 with a B.S. in Visual Arts Education and a minor in History. In 2013, she returned to campus, this time as an employee. Over the past decade, she has worked in several different offices around campus: the Office of Student Teaching, the Office of Records & Registration, and the Department of Communication Disorders/SLHC. She finally joined the Department of History and the Department of Philosophy during the spring of 2020.

Student Community

Our students number in the hundreds and are divided between the liberal arts and education programs. Many are active beyond the classroom. Our student-led History Club provides you with a way to enjoy history beyond your coursework. It is open to all students interested in history, regardless of major or year. Joining is a great way to meet other students in our community. The club also does both fun and practical events for history students. Weekly gatherings often involve historically-oriented games or discussions on a theme. More formal past activities have included career advice panels, alumni visits, and graduate school preparation. They are now looking to expand into museum trips for club members. Finally, the history club works with the department to plan events and celebrations for all history students. You can find out about the planned events or officially join by emailing the club at nphistoryclub@gmail.com.

III. Declaring a Major or Minor

Once you decide to sign up for a history degree, come by the history department to sign up for a quick session with our deputy chair, who is in charge of advising incoming students. They will go over the degree requirements, consider what you might have already fulfilled through previous coursework, assign you a permanent advisor from the history faculty, and enroll you in the major. To make sure your initial meeting goes as smoothly as possible, you can look up the deputy chair's office hours, sign up for an appointment via Starfish, or email in advance if you'd like to reserve a time that works best for you. Bring a copy of your Progress Report from my.newpaltz.edu and a list of any questions you might have.

IV. The Plans of Study

Our degrees are designed to give you a great deal of choice in designing your major. The plans of study for all the majors and minors require categories of courses (like upper-level or lower level, European or World or US). Liberal Arts History majors are also required to take the foundational course, *Historians Craft*, and the capstone Senior Seminar. Beyond that, your history courses should be ones that reflect your general interests; the degree requirements allow you some flexibility to focus more on eras and places of particular interest to you. For details on the four separate degree programs and their requirements, see below. Please remember that you are ultimately responsible for your college degree requirements. Make sure you understand your requirements, remain in steady contact with your advisor, and ensure you are meeting the expectations as laid out in the undergraduate catalogue. The descriptions below are meant to help you in that task.

a. History Liberal Arts Degree

Plans of Study:

[B.A. in History](#)

[B.S. in Adolescent Ed Social Studies](#)

[B.S. in Childhood Education History](#)

The undergraduate history major begins with a foundation in the practice of history, takes you through broad surveys of major world regions and historical periods and then progresses through more focused, intensive upper-level thematic courses that allow you to develop a field of interest. Finally, your degree culminates in the Senior Seminar, by which point you'll be trained to engage in your own independent research and develop historical arguments through a capstone project in this discussion-based course. The history major [plan of study](#).

Once you declare the history major, enroll in the **'Historian's Craft'** course. This course on methods in the field of history will set you up well for meeting expectations and understanding practices in the upper-level coursework. It is a prerequisite for the Senior Seminar, but would also ideally be taken before you enroll in other upper-level history courses.

The bulk of your remaining coursework is divided between **different geographic regions**. These requirements ensure you have a broad overview and some specialized knowledge of the history of the U.S. and select other world regions. For the US History requirement, you will need one upper division course (300-400 level). For the World History requirement, you must select three courses, each focused on a different geographic region (Asia, Middle East, Europe, Africa, Latin America). Two courses may be upper or lower division (100-400 level); the third must be upper division (300-400 level). You also need five history electives. Two courses may be lower division (100-200 level), but at least three must be upper division (300-400 level). For this requirement, you can take courses in any of the geographic regions or eras of interest to

you. Through this plan of study, you get both general understanding of important themes, times, and places in history and in-depth exposure to the work of historians in specialized fields. The upper-level courses will also require intensive reading and writing assignments that train you in general critical thinking and writing abilities while engaging you with historical methods. This will prepare you for the final major requirement.

In your senior year, you will take the **Senior Seminar**. This small, discussion-based seminar will focus on one theme. Within that theme's parameters, you will develop your own original contribution to history. The semester will start out with historiographical readings in the field and preliminary writing assignments in preparation for your research project. Then, you will develop in-depth research into the primary sources from that time and place, discover what other historians have written and argued about your topic, and analyze independently these sources. Ultimately, the goal is to produce an original work of history, with a significant argument and extensive primary source and secondary research. You will have thoroughly supported your analysis and clearly presented your materials in writing through multiple stages of drafting and revision. You will also share your work in the seminar setting and be prepared to share it on a wider stage, such as conferences or in publications, if you so choose. Every year, the department will issue an annual collection of the best history seminar papers from our students.

The history major requires a minimum of **35 to 39 Credits**, with the higher range of credits resulting from taking more of the lower-level, four-credit courses, and the lower range from taking more of the upper-level, three-credit courses. Regardless of the number of credits, the number of courses required is always eleven. These major requirements amount to just under one third of your total undergraduate requirements. General Education amounts to another third. You may wish to keep taking more history classes to fulfill your general and upper-level credit requirements. You could also sign up for an interdisciplinary minor that could further your specialization in one time or place (Ancient, Asian, Black, Jewish, Latin American, Medieval & Early Modern, Religious, and Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies are all common minors for history students). You could minor in an applied field, like accounting or computer science. Or, explore another area of interest through a minor or double major. The liberal arts degree is designed to allow you the freedom to craft your own education.

b. Elementary Education – History Concentration

The Elementary Education degree with a concentration of Social Studies is designed for people intending to teach grades K through 6. Many of the requirements for this degree are housed in the education program. The academic concentration in history covers 30-34 credits of content in history, [the plan of study](#). We believe that history courses at the college level prepare future teachers well for the critical thinking, research, and knowledge base required for that career path. In the history concentration, you will be required to take two US history courses (one a 200-level survey of US history, and one an upper-level specialized course on some aspect of US history). You also are asked to take a course on New York history, to cover the substantial content that is taught to fourth grade students. Four courses are required from non-US history. Two need to be lower-level surveys (any of our 200-level

courses apply except HIS 221 and 222) and two upper-level. These four courses should range across European, Asian, Latin American, and African history – avoid focusing on just one area of the world to ensure better preparation for future teaching needs. Finally, you have three required electives to take any course of interest to you at the 300- or 400-level. These can expand your knowledge and teaching abilities in any area of world history. Beyond geographic diversity in your course content, we also ask for chronological range: at least one of your courses should be focused on the period prior to 1500 CE.

c. Secondary Education – Social Studies

The Secondary Education major in social studies trains future teachers both in how and what to teach. Many of the requirements for this degree are in the Education program. The history content requirements make up 45 credits from history and a combination of other programs, including economics, political science, and geography. As you can see in the [plan of study](#), the requirements in history are spread across three geographic regions. In United States History, students take one of the 200-level US history surveys and two other courses, at least one of which must be an upper-division course (300- or 400- level). The European History and non-West (Africa, Asia, Middle East, and Latin America) requirements similarly require three courses each, of which one must be 200-level and one must be upper-level. Three more courses fulfill the Geography and Economics requirement. Take either Human Geography (GEO 201) or Economic Geography (GEO 213). Then either two economics electives or one economics and one geography course will fulfill the other two. Finally, this concentration requires one Political Science course chosen from the following: POL216 American Government and Politics; POL227 International Politics; or POL220 Introduction to Comparative Politics.

d. History Minor

The Liberal Arts Minor in History requires six courses, with at least half at the upper division (300- or 400- level). No more than two can be transferred from another institution and no more than two can be taken in another department. A minor in History linked to another field of study can add an attractive additional background on your record.

V. General Education

In your major, you specialize in one discipline. But a university education also seeks to expose you to a range of ways of thinking and understanding the world. The General Education program is designed to give you a broad exposure to different disciplinary methods and areas of study while still providing you with choice in what you learn. You will be taking as many credits in General Education as you do in History, so knowing why is useful! The university website on [General Education](#) provides details on all of the requirements and course options and placement. You can read below about the GE courses that overlap with your history degree.

A course can count as both GE and a history requirement. All of our 200-level history surveys are categorized as General Education courses.

Beyond history courses within GE, some other GE requirements might be particularly useful to you as a history major. The foreign language component of General Education aligns especially well with the history major. If you are interested in going on to graduate school in history or even just to make yourself more desirable on the job market, you may want to go even further with your language training. Similarly, taking a statistics course for your math requirement could help prepare you for graduate school or careers that analyze historical data.

VI. Courses and Course Frequency

The department offers a broad array of courses, which are frequently updated. The types of courses you need to progress towards graduation will be offered and available to you every semester, but the specific course topics are offered on rotation.

Historian's Craft (HIS 300): This four-credit course is offered every semester. Each section has twenty seats available. The assignments and learning outcomes of the class are consistent across sections, but the readings and specific writing prompts vary by professor. Typically, an Americanist would focus the readings on debates within U.S. history, while a faculty member specializing in Asian history would tailor the readings towards the big historical debates in their field. The course is writing intensive, which means you will learn through writing. Multiple and varied writing forms, peer review of writing, and revising written work will all be incorporated in your work for the semester.

Introductory Surveys: We offer most of the 200-level introductory surveys every semester, or as with Latin American history, one half of the two-course sequence semesterly. The vast majority of our introductory surveys are taught by our full-time professors. The purpose of these surveys is to provide you with a broad overview of the history of one region over a long period of time. Through that overview, you will understand that region's place in broader world history and see the factors resulting in change over time. You will also be introduced to sources from the past and how to use them for interpreting past societies.

Seminar in History (HIS 492): We offer at least two sections of this Senior Seminar every semester. The topic depends on the professor teaching the seminar, but you can expect the topics to cover different geographic regions or eras. Students take the seminar their last year of college, for the expectations in the class build on what you are expected to have learned in your other upper-level history coursework.

300 and 400 level courses: These are the courses that fulfill your upper-level history requirements in the different geographic areas required in the major. Significant numbers of these courses are offered every semester. They rotate through the teaching areas of each professor, so a given course may only be offered every two or three years. If there is one you really want to take, sign up when it is available! Faculty develop new courses in this category in response to contemporary issues that demand historical reflection, their recent research, and student interest.

A full list of [specific course offerings](#) is available on the department website.

VII. Internships in History

New Paltz is right in the midst of a region rich in historical sites and public history collections. Interning at one of these regional sites or with an organization needing historical research or analysis is a valuable learning experience. Working as an intern enables you to apply your knowledge and gain practical skills. We typically have three types of internships available for our students. Students interested in learning about how museums and historic sites run, develop tour materials and exhibits, and educate the public, have worked at regional historic sites and museums like Historic Huguenot Street, the Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, the Hudson River Maritime Museum, Locust Grove Estate, the Eleanor Roosevelt Center at Val-Kill, and more. Students interested in a research-based internship, undertaking a public history project for a local organization, have worked with the New Paltz Town Historian, the Reher Center for Immigrant Culture and History, the Gomez Mill House, and the New Paltz Rural Cemetery. For direct experience of working with historic archives and cataloging and digitizing primary sources, our internship students have worked at the Leisler Center for Early New York History, the New York State Archives, the Vassar Medical Center Archives, and more. Students can arrange their own internship or look for opportunities through the internship coordinator in the history department. Often, a student can find a historic site or museum near their homes for summer credits as well.

To ensure you get the most of the internship experience, students with an internship are also required to sign up for a one-credit seminar that will address the debates, issues, and role of public history. In "History, Memory, and Historical Practice: Internship Seminar" students share their internship work with others on campus and in the community and engage in discussions of how the past is presented to the public. The course helps you conceptualize and then explain to future employers and others the value you bring to any work project. It also takes discussions beyond the personal to consider broader issues of history and citizenship. You can see some of the work internship students have done in the blog, linked to on the history department website or reachable through: hawksites.newpaltz.edu/historyinternships

The new public history seminar and the accompanying internship are meant to occupy an in-between space – bridging your academic learning to the sorts of skills and habits of thought that will aid you in finding a job, working in your career, and living life as an informed, reflective citizen. Through the class, you'll look at what you learn in your classes and, from that more distanced perspective, you'll learn to explain what you can do and why as a result of having majored in history at New Paltz. Your internships will help you in applying that knowledge and skill set in practical and helpful ways.

To [gain an internship](#) in the department, you must:

- Request access to the internship seminar (HIS 491, "History, Memory, and Historical Practice: Internship Seminar") from the professor in charge of it in the semester before you intend to take it. You will be registering for that as you register for your other classes.
- Before the start of the semester, you will work to determine your internship site and

responsibilities. It is ultimately your responsibility to find and choose an internship. However, the internship coordinator will be able to help lead you to opportunities. For some of the more competitive internships, there will be a selection process in the months leading up to the start of the semester. Once you have notified the internship coordinator of your interest in doing an internship, they will keep you informed of the application processes and keep track of your progress in nailing down your internship.

- The internship itself earns you college credit. For every 45 hours of internship work, you can earn one credit. There are minimum GPA requirements and paperwork requirements, so be sure to talk over the possibilities with the internship coordinator in advance of the semester you'll be seeking the credits.
- Finally, once the semester starts, you'll need to perform the responsibilities of your internship as agreed to and attend the five seminar meetings for History, Memory, and Commemoration over the course of the semester.
- The internship can then count towards your major if it has amounted to at least three credits. It will usually apply as an upper-level US history class or an upper-level elective. To have your internship count towards the major, you must have taken and passed the internship seminar as well.
- Please note: when interning for credit at a site over the summer, you would take the internship seminar in the following fall semester. The internship seminar will not be offered in the summer. All other internships must be taken at the same time as the internship seminar.

VIII. Policies on Classes and What Will Apply to the Major

a. Transferring Classes and Open SUNY

Transfer students: If you are arriving at New Paltz as a transfer student, you will have significant numbers of courses to transfer in. The Admissions or Academic Advising office should take care of the courses that will count for your General Education requirements when you first enroll. For history courses you have taken and want transferred in, this happens in two ways. For many students coming from local community colleges, your courses might automatically transfer into your progress report as fulfilling requirements. We have transfer equivalency agreements worked out with many colleges to help make that happen smoothly. If a history course does not appear to apply to a history requirement and you feel it should, you can go to your advisor and have them look into it. If you transfer from an institution where New Paltz does not have prearranged transfer equivalencies, meet with your advisor to transfer appropriate coursework into the major. To help your advisor process and transfer in your courses to the history major, try to be prepared before your meeting. If you still have a syllabus for the class or there is a course description online, this will help your advisor review the course and figure out which New Paltz course might be its closest equivalent.

Transfer limits and restrictions (There is a limit on how many courses you can transfer in to the major)

- A minimum of half of your major requirements need to be filled at New Paltz.
- Community college courses count only as lower-level courses.
- 'World History II' or 'World Civilization II' or 'Modern World' classes count as a World GE requirement, but we have no equivalent course taught at SUNY New Paltz in the History department and do not transfer it in as fulfilling a major requirement
- The department does not accept courses taught in other disciplines that have 'history' in the name.
- We do not count three-week courses (such as a winter session course) as equivalent to one of our courses.
- One final thing for transfer students to keep in mind is that the progress report software is not perfect and may contain flaws you will need to have corrected. For example, sometimes it will only count a history course in the GE and not in both GE and the major. Other times, it will list a history course that should count in the major as something 'not applying to requirements.' Do not trust the progress report more than your advisor and your own knowledge of the major plan of study! If any of these problems arise, contact your advisor and ask that a workflow be done to fix it.

Taking courses at other schools while enrolled at New Paltz: Because of 'Open SUNY', students may be able to take a course through another SUNY institution at some point during their college career. You may wish to take a summer course closer to home or sign up for an online course while student teaching. To be able to do so, you must have your advisor pre-approve the course if you want it to count towards the history major. This is important. Remember that winter session classes do not count towards the major. Some other online courses during half semesters or the summer are also similarly thin on content and assignments, so they too would not be approved for transfer. SUNY Empire State, for example, has some high quality online classes, but others that would not be equivalent to New Paltz course standards. To get pre-approval, do what you can to get the syllabus ahead of time or have the course description available. Make sure you give your advisor plenty of time to review the course in advance in case that course will not be approved, and you need to find an alternative. Also keep in mind that you must have the last 15 credits of coursework in residence at New Paltz and not at a transfer institution.

b. Summer Courses, Online courses, and Winter sessions

Taking 15 credit hours a semester will typically ensure you can graduate in four years without having to do any coursework between the semesters. If you want to speed up your time to graduation or you have dropped below a 15-credit load in a regular semester, you may want to consider coursework during intersessions.

The department does not offer online courses during the spring or fall semesters; these are

available only in the summer. In the summer, we often offer online survey courses (the 200-level introductory courses). You can expect to be able to take a US history survey or Modern Europe or an Ancient World survey during the summer. At times, we might try to offer an upper-level course, though this is infrequent since in the past not enough students registered to allow the course to stay open. You may find plenty of options in the summer session for fulfilling GE or general credits to go towards graduation (and financial aid credit requirements).

The history department does not offer winter session courses, nor do we accept winter session courses into the major to fill a requirement. This is because of the short duration of the session, which would leave insufficient time out of class to do the equivalent amount of work our regular semester or summer session courses expect. A winter session course may, however, apply to your general education requirements or towards the overall college or liberal arts credits required for graduation.

c. History Courses in Other Departments

Only courses taught by historians or with significant content matching the practices of the field of history can count in the major. Even if 'history' is in the title, that does not mean it will count towards a history degree. Art History, Music History, Theater History are all different fields with different practices in their specialization – their courses do not count in the history degree and our courses do not count in theirs. There are a few courses that do apply to the history major, however. Some Black Studies and Women's Studies courses count as history, for though they are offered in an interdisciplinary department, they represent the practices of the discipline of history. Other courses in those departments do not count, for they reflect the approaches of other disciplines. Be sure to double check the accepted course lists before you register and discuss your plans with your advisor to make sure your courses will count appropriately in the major. In addition to Black Studies and WGSS courses, there is one course offered through the Anthropology Department that counts in history because it is a Historical Archaeology course that reflects a method and content that can be used by historians in their work. The plan of study may limit the number of these courses that you can apply in the major. Be sure you are familiar with the specific requirements of your degree program. All courses from other departments that could apply to requirements in the major are listed here.

Courses taught outside the department accepted as History credits:

Black Studies Courses:

- BLK 201 - Black History I
- BLK 301 - Pre-Colonial Africa to 1800
- BLK 302 - Contemporary Africa
- BLK 311 - Blacks in Caribbean
- BLK 325 - History of Slavery in the Americas

- BLK 330 - Race and Racism in US history
- BLK 331 - American Civil Rights Movement
- BLK 347 - History of South Africa

Anthropology Courses:

- ANT 315 - Historical Archaeology

Please note: occasionally a course will be cross-listed that is not included in this list. Keep an eye on the schedule of classes for those offerings.

d. Study Abroad

Here in the History department, we often tell our students to go away... to experience other countries and see up close the differences that come with being surrounded by another country's history and culture. Luckily, SUNY New Paltz has an amazing study abroad program and they have done a great job of working to make sure it is as affordable as possible for our students. Our majors can enjoy semesters or summers in places like London, Prague, Japan, Australia, Greece, and Scotland, while getting college credit for history courses. The Center for International Programs provides overviews of the possibilities on their [website](#) and periodic Study Abroad fairs. Watch for announcements in your classes or over email.

e. Credit Loads, Progress Towards Degree, and Financial Aid

The university policies on maximum credit loads covered in the undergraduate catalog apply – 12 credits is full-time, 15 credits is standard, and you may not register for more than 19 credits (exemptions need chair and dean approval). History courses tend to require significant amounts of out-of-class work on reading and writing assignments. Be sure you balance your schedule with your work and family requirements in any given semester so you will have the time to perform to the best of your abilities. We recommend taking courses for your GE requirements or courses in other interest areas to balance between upper- and lower- level courses to ensure a reasonable workload. Taking too few classes can also be a problem, however. Though 12 credits is considered full time, that course load will not graduate you in four years without summer and winter session courses. You also need to make sure you stay on track to get to the minimum 45 upper division credits needed by graduation. Multiple financial aid programs require that you are efficiently progressing through your coursework required for the degree, and thus may require 15 credits per semester enrollment. These programs have different requirements, so if you have TAP, Excelsior scholarships, or other conditional financial support, be sure you are aware of the requirements as you plan your course schedules to ensure you continue receiving that aid. The number of credits you sign up for, withdrawing from a course, or earning a low grade could impact your financial aid.

f. The Add-Drop Period and Withdrawing from Classes

Every semester, the Academic Calendar informs you of important add and drop dates. The undergraduate catalog is an important resource for understanding campus policies on the add and drop period, other withdrawals, and fees. If you are adding a course after the first day of classes, you are responsible for making up missed course content. Because many history courses fill quickly during registration, however, this may be the best way for you to get into a course you are interested in. There is significant movement in and out of classes during the week before and the first week of a semester. Consider contacting the instructor to discuss your chances of adding the class, and asking for the syllabus so you can catch up quickly if you register after another student drops the course.

After the add-drop date, there is a week-long period where you may be able to add a class if a seat becomes available and the professor believes you could make up the significant amount of course time and work missed. A late add of a class in the second week of the semester may not be approved. Please remember that there is no guarantee you will be able to get the permission to enter a class at a late date, and given the workload of history courses in general, many professors will not feel a student can catch up after the course has met several times. To ensure you have sufficient credits and are progressing towards the degree, aim to have your schedule in place at the beginning of the semester.

You may withdraw from a class at any point up until the withdrawal date posted in the [Academic Calendar](#). Be sure to have a conversation with your advisor and the professor whose course you are dropping to make sure withdrawing is the right choice for you, since doing so may adversely affect your financial aid or progress towards degree. You will need them to approve your request to withdraw in any case.

For answers to any questions about withdrawing from the college, retroactive withdrawals, leaves of absences, or other issues not specific to your history courses, please refer to the [undergraduate catalog](#) and consider meeting with the dean of students for LA&S.

IX. Registration, the Progress Report, and the Advising Process

Toward the middle of each semester, the schedule for the following academic semester is released along with the specific date and time you may register through my.newpaltz.edu. In the weeks before your scheduled registration time, you should:

- Review your progress report and make sure your previous coursework is appropriately placed in that system
- Determine what remaining requirements you would like to tackle in the following semester.
- Pick your ideal schedule or two. You may not get into all the classes you want if your registration is at a later day or time. Your registration times are based on your total credits, so by your senior year, you will be able to get into all the courses you need and want, so long as you register on time.
- Do not use the progress report to pick your classes; instead, go to the posted schedule

of classes to see what is available for the upcoming semester. This is available from the main website of the university, under 'Academics.' There are a variety of search tools to help you find a class that will fit your requirements and available time slots.

- Find out your advisor's policy for scheduling advising sessions. Some have sign-up sheets, others drop in hours, and still others will make appointments over Starfish or email. You may get an email from your advisor during the weeks before registration explaining their process.
- During your advising session, review your planned schedule and your progress report. Talk with your advisor about any questions or plans you have about progress towards graduation. If you want to take a course that requires pre-approval, like the internship seminar or the senior seminar, talk with your advisor about how to go about that.
- If you have an Education major with history concentration or double major, you will also need to see advisors in the other programs. You do not necessarily need to meet with minor advisors.
- After you and your advisor have determined on a clear registration plan, you will be released to register. You must meet with your advisor and share your plans for progressing towards graduation in order to be able to register for classes for the next semester.
- Once you have been released to register, make sure you are ready at your assigned registration time or shortly thereafter. If your registration time is during work or a class session, you can wait until after to register. To add courses to your schedule, you'll need to log into my.newpaltz.edu and have the CRN numbers (not the course and section numbers) ready to type in.
- If you wish to make any changes in your schedule, you can freely add and drop classes up through the first week of the semester, with the exception of a the time period when registration is frozen to enable transfer and freshman students to sign up for their courses. The dates of the registration freeze will be announced by the Office of Records & Registration.

Beyond registration season, you may have other times when you wish to see your advisor. You will have one advisor in the history department through your entire time at New Paltz, unless your advisor goes on a leave, and then you will be assigned to another faculty member for advising. Whoever you have as an advisor, feel free to turn to them for advice at any point during the semester. You can go to them for questions about transferring classes, study abroad, life after graduation, applications to graduate programs, or general advice about doing well in college. Faculty office hours are posted in the department office, on faculty office doors, and most also post their office hours online. You can reach them through email or by calling their office phone numbers (when they are not off teaching, doing research, or in meetings). Do keep in mind that faculty might prefer to keep normal work hours – they are not necessarily going to be responsive at night or on weekends! The department office is always open to you as well for questions or help – again during normal business hours. During the fall and spring semesters, the office is open from 8:30am to 5:00pm. Between sessions, the office hours may be shortened to 8:00am to 4:00pm.

X. Opportunities and Awards for History Students

Be sure to regularly check for emails from the history department chair or check in with your advisor if you want to be made aware of any upcoming opportunities within the department. Regular possibilities for awards and scholarships for history majors and minors include:

Scholarships: Students can apply for scholarships through the SUNY New Paltz research foundation. These alumni-donated scholarships provide significant support for the award recipient. The availability of scholarships depends on donations and the balances in those foundation accounts. One available currently that is mostly focused on history students is the *B. Aratonsky Memorial Scholarship*, which is designed to promote the study of the classics. The applicant must have reached junior status at the time of application and completed a minimum of 6 credits in ancient history, Greek or Latin at the time of application. The applicant must have a minimum GPA of 3.33 (B+) in the field of classics and submit an essay dealing with the study of the classics.

Other scholarships are open to students in different majors, but may be particularly applicable to our students. The *Cetrino Family/Rubin Benjamin Scholarship*, the *Cetrino Scholarship*, and the *Donald P. and Sandra K. Christian Presidential Scholarship* are open to outstanding juniors or seniors who are interested in a career in public service. The *Presidential Scholarship* offers a \$2000 award. The *Cetrino Family/Rubin Benjamin scholarship* and the *Cetrino Scholarship* each provides up to full tuition for the academic year. These scholarships also include a paid internship at the Benjamin Center. Interested applicants must be full-time students and may be in any academic major. Applicants should be entering their junior or senior year at SUNY New Paltz in the fall of a 2018, have a grade point average of at least 3.0, and be available to intern at the Benjamin Center for at least 10 hours per week during the academic year and at least half-time for the following summer. In addition to academic performance, financial need will be considered in making this award.

Prize for the Best Seminar Paper: Every year a committee of faculty members reviews the top papers from the seminars offered over the previous two semesters. The best of the best is then awarded a prize. Recent recipients have impressed the faculty with their work on U.S. progressive reformers' use of parks and playgrounds to mold immigrant children into what they viewed as ideal Americans; a study of children in China's Cultural Revolution; a study of queer women and the rise of Nationalism in Post-Soviet Russia; and an analysis of a French intellectual's representations of Egypt as a reflection of Europe in the early nineteenth century. The top seminar papers in the department are published every year on the [history department's website](#). You can take a look at the work fellow students have done when you are getting ready to sign up for the Senior Seminar.

Internship Recognition Award: Students doing an internship may be nominated by the faculty for their work in applied history.

Outstanding Graduates Award: History students in the major or concentration and the graduate program are eligible for this award. The department reviews all of our students with an eligible GPA and come together to discuss student performance. We typically are able to settle on three to four outstanding graduates every semester. These students then receive a certificate at a ceremony that celebrates the outstanding students from departments across the university.

Phi Alpha Theta – the History Honors Society: SUNY New Paltz also has a chapter of the international history honors society, Phi Alpha Theta. Each spring, the chapter inducts students with demonstrated strengths in history coursework. Phi Alpha Theta is one of the oldest, largest, and most prestigious academic honor societies active on college campuses. The society is active in organizing regional and national conferences, where many of our students have presented their undergraduate research. Students who have taken a significant number of history courses at New Paltz and done well in them, are eligible to join Alpha Theta Xi, the New Paltz chapter of Phi Alpha Theta. Membership has a few privileges: it builds your resume and draws attention to the quality of your academic work; you are eligible to apply to present at their conferences or even publish your advanced research papers in their history journal; you can wear graduation cords in the pale blue and red colors of the honors society (they can be bought through [phialphatheta.org](#)); and you get a certificate and a year's subscription to the organization's history journal. Yearly inductions for the New Paltz chapter are held in the spring. If you wish to join, contact the faculty advisor at the beginning of that semester. To be eligible for membership, you must have completed at least 12 credit hours in history at New Paltz and have a minimum GPA of 3.1 in your history classes and 3.0 overall. The national dues are \$50 to join. Both the application form and the dues should be submitted to the faculty advisor by the deadline in the spring, announced in advance every year in emails and classes. If you have any questions, contact the history department secretary to find out which faculty member is overseeing the program.

XI. Graduation

Early in your last semester of college, you will need to fill out a graduation application, located on [my.newpaltz.edu](#), and submit it to the registrar. The due dates are listed on every semester's official Academic Calendar. To be ready for the due date, make sure you are going into your last semester with all of your requirements fulfilled, and all your courses properly applied to those requirements in the progress report system. Any errors in the progress report will need to be fixed by your advisor ahead of time.

Closer to the date of graduation, the department has a series of events to celebrate you in your last weeks on campus. Pay attention to any announcements over email for end of the year parties for the history department. We also hold a spring event every year to celebrate honors students. In the graduation ceremony itself, you will see – and hear – history faculty cheering you on. Be sure to join them for some graduation cake after the commencement ceremony.

XII. Careers and the Job Hunt

Maybe you already know what you want to do for the rest of your life, maybe you have no idea. In any case, it can be intimidating to think about life after college. The department and the History Club periodically offers career panels or bring back alumni to talk about how they transitioned. Consider going to those – many students have found them heartening and informative. The Career Resource Center, located between the Humanities building and Lecture Center, is staffed with people who can offer advice and help you prepare resumes and interviewing skills. They hold Career Fairs and bring potential employers to campus. They can also just talk you through career options.

While the media and maybe even some of your relatives might tell you it will be hard to get a job with a history major, we know that is not usually true. And we have evidence to prove it. The Office of Institutional Research surveys graduates a couple of years after graduation. Over eighty percent are working in the State of New York by that point, which means we have access to data on the earnings of a good portion of our graduates (not that 19% are unemployed – working in NJ or MA or elsewhere just leaves us without the ability to look up how much these graduates earn). The average salary of our graduates is almost \$35,000 a year. This beats the starting salaries of the vast majority of other majors on campus. Of Liberal Arts degrees, only Journalism (by ~\$1500) and Communication Studies (by ~\$1,000) majors are out-earning ours, but they also have lower numbers employed to be reported on. You chose your major well. History is even competitive with the earnings of Science majors, despite everything you've heard about the desirability of STEM fields. Engineering and Business majors do out-earn History students right out of college though. But, even that shouldn't be too depressing, because of what happens down the road. Again, there is evidence for this. A typical Accounting major earns more and finds a job much more quickly than a History major. But, a Liberal Arts History major who becomes an Accountant ends up out-earning the Business Major within five years. In all sorts of fields of work, people look for History majors because of the rigor of your education and the skills you develop as you build knowledge. In the corporate world, for example, Human Resources offices are looking to hire people with the sorts of skills you have from your degree in history. Speaking of rigor, remember this during those weeks when you are being asked to write multiple analytical and research papers by your demanding History professors – we are preparing you to do well throughout your life! Because of the quality of New Paltz's History department, our graduates out-earn History majors from other SUNY schools and History majors in general.

You do have a challenge ahead of you in figuring out what you want to do with your life. In our society, this is a common one. The majority of people completely switch careers multiple times in their lives. Now and in the future, figuring out a career path can be scary because of the unknown. But, your major has given you clear skills that you can market and rely on to become a desirable employee and thrive in your working life. Here we will highlight some of the most important things to remember as you start thinking about careers.

Success of past graduates: A great way to get ideas of what potential fields might be

open to you is to look at what our alumni are doing. We have alumni teaching in elementary and secondary schools across the state. Our students have also gone into public history in large numbers, working in the State Archives, as county historians, and in Museums like the Fraunces Tavern museum in the city. We have students who have gone on to graduate school. One graduate from the last decade just started a job as an assistant professor at Michigan State. Some students end up spending a little time after graduation figuring out what career track to go into. We have graduates who work in various fields, from helping to head a snowboarding company to running a successful local flower farm. Watch for alumni events and alumni profiles to see what past history majors are up to. [History alumni page.](#)

There are no limits to your career possibilities with a liberal arts degree like History:

Consider these famous people who were all history majors: Sonia Sotomayor, Joe Biden, Elena Kagan, Carly Fiorina, Larry David, Conan O'Brien, Martha Stewart, Jimmy Buffett, Wolf Blitzer, Chris Berman (on ESPN), and Robert Johnson (founder of BET). W.E.B. DuBois, Winston Churchill, Julia Child, Katharine Hepburn, and Woodrow Wilson also received history degrees. There are many more – google it! Maybe you'll be the next Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.

Graduate School: A quarter of our majors end up going for a higher degree. This makes sense, for if you really fall in love with the work of doing history, most careers that will allow you to continue to learn or share it require Masters degrees or more. We have students who go on to work as public historians at museums and memorial sites, as archivists or librarians working with historical sources, or as teachers. If students apply to PhD programs, they may end up working as professors, book editors, or state department historians.

Trying to figure out a career: Your professors may not be able to help you figure out what to do with your life, since they just never left university. There are some exceptions, though. Feel free to ask Professors Albi, Roper, Scott-Childress, and Vargas about their pre-academic careers. Also, remember the trained professionals in the Career Resource Center know how to talk through ideas for employment prospects and provide suggestions on how to start looking into how to get into a career you choose.

How to use your major to get jobs: It might be important for you to think about how you will present your history major to future employers. Imagine sitting in front of an interviewer who asks: "I see you have a history degree, what skills did your education bring you that might be useful here?" Your Historians' Craft course might have talked a bit about what the skills of history are. You may have figured out for yourself how you have grown through your learning in the major. If you feel you need help, consider looking over the 'skills' associated with the practices of history highlighted in the first section of this Advising Handbook. Do you feel any of those apply as an ability you've developed? They include practical skills like research and critical reading abilities, but they also concern attitudes that are useful in all things – like comfort with complexity or the ability to adapt when evidence proves you wrong. In addition to thinking through

what you've learned, look through other materials provided by the Career Resource Center or the American Historical Association to make sure you are prepared to convey the value your education brings to a job. Often, employers might be more comfortable if you have some practical experience as well as knowledge and skills. Consider doing an internship through the department so you have such work experience. Also, the part time jobs you pick up during college can lead to valuable experiences or connections. Many graduates have found work after graduation with companies or organizations they connected with for summer jobs or internships.

Key Advice for Students thinking about the Future:

- Learn how to talk about how your education as a history major prepares you well for work and life.
- Sign up for an internship and take the internship seminar. This will allow you to present yourself as someone who has completed applied work in the field as a historian.
- Go to any Career panels, Alumni talks, or Internship presentations the department organizes. These extracurricular events will inspire and inform you about post-university life for our graduates.
- Attend special guest lectures on historical topics to see the applications of history.
- Talk about this with your advisors and fellow students – you are part of a community here and everyone will want to listen and offer what help they can.
- Remember the Career Resource Center. People are employed on this campus to help liberal arts majors prepare for the job market and figure out next steps.