HISTORY

Director of undergraduate studies: Mark Peterson (mark.a.peterson@yale.edu), 190 York St., 432-2724; history.yale.edu

The History major is for students who understand that shaping the future requires knowing the past. History courses explore many centuries of human experimentation and ingenuity, from the global to the individual scale. History majors learn to be effective storytellers and analysts, and to craft arguments that speak to broad audiences. They make extensive use of Yale’s vast library resources to create pioneering original research projects. Students of history learn to think about politics and government, sexuality, the economy, cultural and intellectual life, war and society, and other themes in broadly humanistic—rather than narrowly technocratic—ways.

History is one of Yale College’s most popular and intellectually diverse majors, encompassing nearly every region and time period of the global past. The study of history is excellent preparation for careers in many fields, including law, journalism, business and finance, education, politics and public policy, social activism, and the arts.

COURSE NUMBERING

Courses numbered HIST 001–099 are First-Year Seminars, with enrollment limited to eighteen. Remaining course numbers are organized by region, not by rigor or difficulty. Courses numbered in the 100s explore the history of the United States or Canada; those in the 200s, Europe, Russia, and Britain; and those in the 300s, Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East. Courses numbered in the 400s address global topics. Courses whose numbers end with the letter “J” are departmental seminars; all departmental seminars are available for preregistration by History majors and are capped at fifteen students.

PREREQUISITE

The prerequisite for the major is two term courses in History. Courses completed in fulfillment of the prerequisite may be applied toward the requirements of the major.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAJOR

Ten term courses in History are required, including prerequisites, and in addition to the senior essay.

Upon declaration, all History majors select either the global or the specialist track. The global track is designed for students seeking a broad understanding of major trends in the history of human societies throughout the world. The specialist track is for students seeking to focus in a particular geographic region, such as the United States, or in a thematic pathway, such as empires and colonialism. Majors may change tracks until the end of the course selection period in the second term of the junior year.

The global track requires one course in each of six different geographic regions (see below). Students must also take two preindustrial courses, covering material before the year 1800, and two departmental seminars, identified by a “J” suffix to the course number (such as HIST 138J).

The specialist track requires at least five (and up to eight) courses in a particular geographic region or in a thematic pathway (see list below). Courses appropriate for each region and pathway are listed on the department website. Students must also take at least two courses outside their area of specialization, and their overall course work must include at least three geographic regions. Like students in the global track, students in the specialist track must take two preindustrial courses, covering material before the year 1800, and at least two departmental seminars, identified by a “J” suffix to the course number (e.g. HIST 138J). Students in the specialist track may design an area of specialization with the approval of a faculty adviser and the director of undergraduate studies (DUS).

Regions: United States; Europe; Latin America; Asia; Middle East; and Africa.

Pathways: cultural history; empires and colonialism; environmental history; ideas and intellectuals; international and diplomatic history (formerly international history); politics, law, and government (formerly politics and law); race, gender, and sexuality; religion in context; science, technology, and medicine; social change and social movements; war and society; the world economy.

Students in either track may count the same courses toward geographical, preindustrial, and seminar requirements. For instance, a departmental seminar on premodern Japan simultaneously fulfills the preindustrial, seminar, and Asia geographical requirements.

Departmental seminars All students who declare the History major are entitled to preregister for two departmental seminars (designated by a course number ending in J, such as HIST 138J). Many seminars are popular and fill up quickly. Students may use their preregistration privileges at any time after declaring the major, in their sophomore, junior, or senior years. Sophomores contemplating study abroad are urged to consider taking at least one seminar in the sophomore year. Residential College Seminars, study abroad courses, and courses in other departments that count toward the History major do not fulfill the departmental seminar requirement.

Distinction in the major Students who receive an A or A– on the two-term senior essay and who receive the requisite grades in their remaining coursework are awarded Distinction in the Major. (See The Undergraduate Curriculum, Honors.) Students who do not complete the two-term senior essay are not eligible for Distinction.

Credit/D/Fail Departmental seminars cannot be taken Credit/D/Fail.
The Yale History Department offers a range of courses that help students to explore the past, make sense of the present, and shape the future. Students of history investigate why societies have changed and developed over time and how human beings both make the world and are made by it. The study of history develops not only an understanding of the significant
ideas and experiences of the past, but also such skills as organizing research projects, writing expository prose, and presenting effective oral arguments.

History courses cover a wide range of topics; there is no single introductory course. The department offers several First-Year Seminars each year, and most History lecture courses are open to all students, including first-year students. History departmental seminars require the instructor’s permission for enrollment and are open chiefly to majors.

The History major is one of the largest, most diverse, and most popular majors at Yale. Before they enter the major, students must take two term courses in history, preferably in the first two years. Most students begin with a First-Year Seminar, Directed Studies, or introductory lecture courses in areas that interest them. These courses count toward the major requirements. Upon declaring their major, students select either the global track, which emphasizes a broad understanding of world history, or the specialist track in which students specialize in a region (such as U.S. History) or a thematic pathway (such as politics, law, and government) within their History coursework. A list of pathways and regions, along with the courses relevant to them is available on the department website.

After graduation, History majors enter many fields, including law, medicine, public policy, business, journalism, and the arts. Some go on to graduate study in history.

Questions about history courses may be addressed to the director of undergraduate studies (mark.a.peterson@yale.edu) (DUS). Students who want to accelerate, combine history with another major, or study abroad should consult the DUS in the fall.

FACULTY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY


Associate Professors Paola Bertucci, Rohit De, Marcela Echeverri, Anne Eller, Crystal Feimster, Elizabeth Hinton, Andrew Johnston, Isaac Nakhimovsky, Joanna Radin, William Rankin, Edward Rugemer, Marci Shore, Eliyahu Stern, Jonathan Wyrtzen

Assistant Professors Jennifer Allen, Sergei Antonov, Denise Ho, Jessica Lamont, Ben Machava, Nana Quarshie, Carolyn Roberts

Senior Lecturers Jay Gitlin, William Klein, Stuart Semmel, Rebecca Tannenbaum

Lecturers Sakena Abedin, Ria Chac, Ivano Dal Prete, Suzanne Gay, Maria Jordan, Tyler Kynn, George Levesque, Chitra Ramalingam, Terence Renaud, Miriam Rich

First-Year Seminars Lecture Courses Departmental Seminars Writing Tutorial Courses Senior Essay Courses