



History Department

Why study history?

For starters, it's fun! You get to learn about ancient China, revolutionary America, the Soviet Union, the Roman empire, medieval Europe, indigenous peoples, the Songhai kingdom, and more. Not only do you get to learn fascinating stories about the past, but history also strengthens your mind to be skeptical, curious, empathetic, and able to see patterns across time. And, of course, you learn stories about human history...what happened, how, and why. Having a history-trained brain prepares you for the broadest possibility of careers imaginable. Plus, everything has a history...so, by majoring in history, you figure out how the past affects the present, and hopefully, how to shape a better future. As historian Dr. Lillian Guerra wrote, "We historians change the world because in our research and writing, we serve as witnesses to the forgotten, erased, denied, unknown, silenced, and sometimes seemingly insignificant people, events, perspectives, and emotions of the past."

What skills will I learn?

1. The capability to find, assess, and simplify information for any audience
2. The ability to research primary/secondary sources to make an original argument
3. Collaboration and teamwork with others
4. Communication—written, oral, and digital
5. Problem-solving—learning to make sense out of complex and contradictory data
6. Public speaking—arguing, and using evidence to win other people to your viewpoint
7. Time management and organization
8. How to filter out unreliable sources and identify credible evidence
9. How to edit and improve first drafts, second drafts, etc. until your thoughts are clear
10. How to tell stories that capture the attention of others
11. The ability to research hard-to-find information online and in physical archives
12. Good citizenship...an informed citizen contributes to society
13. How to "source" a document by probing it to understand meanings and contexts
14. Realize that history isn't just stuff that's already happened, but interpreting the past
15. Curiosity, and the ability to demonstrate to others that you have an inquisitive mind
16. How to read fast, accurately, and to retain important information
17. Decision-making based on hard evidence and interpretation
18. Able to connect the big picture with small details
19. The capability to empathize with people different from yourself
20. The confidence to always ask "How?" and "Why?"

What should I say to someone who asks what I'm going to do with a history degree?

"Whatever I want to!" By concentrating in a broad, stimulating, and versatile subject, you're preparing for a future with many possibilities. Instead of learning how to do specific tasks for specific jobs which may eventually become outdated, you will acquire knowledge and skills that will be crucial to any future. Plus, you only live once, so study what you like!

Where can I browse jobs/career options for history majors? -See the back of this sheet!

1. Teaching Jobs Across NY & the USA – <http://cnycda.org/> & <https://www.pnwboces.org/olas/#!/default> & <http://www.teachingjobs.com/>
 2. Society of American Archivists - <http://careers.archivists.org/jobs/type>
 3. College Grad Job Search Portal - <https://collegegrad.com/>
 4. Federal government jobs - <https://www.usajobs.gov/>
 5. Museum Jobs - <http://museum-employment.com/page5/rwjobindex.html> & <http://www.museumjobs.com/> & <https://aam-us-jobs.careerwebsite.com/jobseeker/search/results/>
 6. American Association for State & Local History - <https://jobs.aaslh.org/jobseeker/search/results/>
 7. National Park Service - <https://www.nps.gov/aboutus/workwithus.htm> & <https://www.nps.gov/history/hdp/jobs/index.htm>
 8. National Trust for Historic Preservation - <https://savingplaces.org/careers#.WQnpQ7zyui4>
 9. Public history jobs - <http://ncph.org/jobs/>
 10. Smithsonian - <https://www.si.edu/ohr>
 11. State jobs (links to all 50 state employment websites) - <http://www.statejobs.com/>
 12. US Intelligence - <https://www.intelligencecareers.gov/>
 13. Indeed “History Jobs” - <https://www.indeed.com/q-History-jobs.html>
- Graduate school ideas – <http://ncph.org/publications-resources/students/>
- Teacher Certification in New York State from Start to Finish – <http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/certificate/certprocess.html>
- SUNY Cortland’s Career Services – <http://www2.cortland.edu/offices/career-services/>
- RedDragon Jobs/Networking – <https://cortland.joinhandshake.com/login>
- Guide for Writing Cover Letters and Resumes - <https://career.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/pdf/Guide/ResumesCovLet.pdf>
- A good article with tips: “Entering the Job Market with a BA in History” - <http://blog.historians.org/2015/05/entering-job-market-ba-in-history/>
- Email or stop by to talk with history professors at SUNY Cortland!
<https://www2.cortland.edu/departments/history/>