

HISTORY (BA IN HISTORY)

Structure of the Curriculum

History courses are generally divided into two main categories: seminars and lecture courses. There are different levels of difficulty within each category.

Seminars in History are generally capped at 15 students and tend to be reading and writing intensive. Many seminars have a research component. Faculty rarely lecture in seminars, so students should expect to participate regularly. In the History Department, seminars range from freshman seminars at the 100-level to capstone courses at the 400-level. 200-level seminars fall in between in terms of their level of difficulty.

100-level Seminars

The 150 Freshman Seminars are required of all incoming first-year students. Freshmen are given priority for these classes, although other students may take them if there is space. These classes delve deeply into a relatively narrow topic, so students can discuss, interpret, and write about that topic intensively. Freshman seminars can be on a broad range of topics in any department at the College, and topics vary by semester. Freshmen who think they may become history majors are urged to take a freshman seminar in History (HIST 150 First-Year Seminar), although not taking one in history does not preclude majoring in history.

200-level seminars

The 200 designation is reserved for intermediate seminars that are somewhat more difficult than freshman seminars. Some are special topics courses offered by visiting instructors.

400-level seminars

400-level seminars are small courses that involve intensive reading, writing, discussion, and often research.

HIST 490C Senior Colloquium/HIST 491C Senior Colloquium ("Capstone Seminar"). In these intensive colloquia, students produce a substantial paper and grapple with evidentiary and historiographical issues at a sophisticated level. These courses are open to all students with some background in the subject-matter of the course. Majors are required to take at least one HIST 490C Senior Colloquium/HIST 491C Senior Colloquium, and must receive a C or better in it. These courses are excellent preparation for writing a senior honors thesis, and majors are urged to consider taking one in their junior year. The "Capstone Seminar" meets both the major writing and the major computing requirement. Topics vary by semester.

Lecture courses in History are generally capped at 35. The one major exception is Global History, which is much larger and has discussion sections led by graduate teaching assistants. Lecture courses range from introductory surveys to demanding 300-level courses. Lecture courses may involve class discussions.

100-level lectures

These are introductory surveys that acquaint students with a broad geographic area over an extended chronological period. They assume little or no prior knowledge of the topic covered, and aim to build a foundation for future study. Students who are new to the study of history at the college level should start here. Students who expect to take upper-level courses in a new area are encouraged to take the 100-level survey that covers that region first.

200-level lectures

These are intermediate lecture courses designed for students with some background in history, either through AP courses or lower level survey courses taken at the College. Many are geographically or topically narrower than the introductory surveys.

HIST 299 History Courses Taken Abroad is the designation for history courses taken abroad and approved for William and Mary history credit.

300-level lectures

These are advanced lecture courses. They assume prior familiarity with the basics of the subject, assign larger quantities of more challenging readings, and expect a greater degree of intellectual sophistication and compositional expertise on students' part. 300-level courses generally pay serious attention to primary sources and to historiographical issues (that is, debates among historians in the field).

HIST 301 The Historian's Craft ("The Historian's Craft") is designed for history majors or for students who intend to be history majors. Ideally, they will take this class either in the semester in which they declare their history major, or in the following term. The class will familiarize students with historiographical schools and with the idea of history as a discipline while also covering the arts and techniques of historical writing. It will typically require a final paper demonstrating the use of reason, evidence, compositional skills, and scholarly apparatus.

The National Institute of American History and Democracy

The National Institute of American History and Democracy (NIAHD) is a partnership between the College of William and Mary and The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. It is dedicated to the study of the American past, material culture, and museums. The NIAHD sponsors the Williamsburg Collegiate Program in Early American History, Material Culture, and Museum Studies. This is a certificate program, combining museum internships, material culture field schools, and coursework at the College of William and Mary. It is open to any degree-seeking student in good standing in any discipline at the College of William and Mary. The NIAHD sponsors special courses in History, American Studies, and Anthropology, many taught by experts from The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation in such fields as Historical Archaeology, Public History, and Vernacular Architectural History. Students officially enrolled in the Collegiate Program have priority in registering for these special courses, but they are open to any William and Mary students on a space-available basis. The National Institute of American History and Democracy also sponsors the William and Mary Pre-Collegiate Summer Program in Early American History for high school students. More information is available on all NIAHD Programs at <http://www.wm.edu/niahd>.

Course Requirements

Required Credit Hours: 33

Core Requirements

Students majoring in History must complete 33 credits. Of those 33 credit hours, at least 18 must be taken in residence at the College, at the W&M in Washington Program, and/or in William & Mary faculty-led and faculty-assisted study abroad programs. No more than six of the remaining 15 semester credits may be derived from Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Cambridge A-Levels, or other non-W&M pre-collegiate programs. No more than 6 credits may be derived from online courses. The 33 credit hours must include the following:

Major Computing Requirement

Students satisfy the Major Computing Requirement (MCR) for History by attaining a C or better in the HIST 490C Senior Colloquium or HIST 491C Senior Colloquium (Capstone Seminar) required by the major.

Major Writing Requirement

Students satisfy the Major Writing Requirement (MWR) for History by attaining a C or better in the HIST 490C Senior Colloquium or HIST 491C Senior Colloquium (Capstone Seminar) required by the major.

Capstone Seminar Requirement

Completion of at least one HIST 490C Senior Colloquium / HIST 491C Senior Colloquium, "Capstone Seminar" is required for the history degree. It will count for 4 credits. Students usually enroll in a colloquium in the junior or senior year. Individuals who intend to write an Honors thesis in History are encouraged to take the colloquium in their junior year in order to gain desirable writing and research experience. Students must earn at least a C in the "Capstone Seminar." The HIST 490C Senior Colloquium / HIST 491C Senior Colloquium "Capstone Seminar" will fulfill the major writing and computing requirements.

Upper-Division Course Requirement

History majors must complete at least six courses at the 200-level or above. The "Capstone Seminar" counts as one of these.

Geographic and Cultural Distribution Requirement

History majors must successfully complete:

One course in each of at least five of the following six regions:

1. Asia,
2. Africa and/or the Middle East,
3. Europe,
4. Latin America and the Caribbean,
5. North America north of Mexico, and
6. trans-regional

Research Methods Requirement

History majors must complete HIST 301 The Historian's Craft, ideally in the sophomore or junior year. This course should be taken prior to the capstone seminar, HIST 490C Senior Colloquium/HIST 491C Senior Colloquium.

Chronological Distribution Requirement

History majors are encouraged to complete at least one course focusing primarily on pre-1800 material and at least one course focusing primarily on post-1800 material.

Historian's Craft

This course should be taken prior to the capstone seminar, HIST 490C Senior Colloquium/HIST 491C Senior Colloquium.

HIST 301 The Historian's Craft

Additional Information

Student will receive a maximum of six hours of History Department credit for a 5 on an AP history examination.

- A 5 on the first AP history exam will count for 6 credits toward the major, and exemption from the geographic spread in that area.
- A 5 on a second AP history exam will count for 0 credits toward the major, and exemption from the geographic spread in that area.
- A 5 on a third AP history exam will count for 0 credits toward the major, and no exemption from the geographic spread in that area.
- Students with IB credit should meet with the Director of Undergraduate Studies before declaring the major.

Foreign languages are recommended for students planning to major in History, especially if they plan to enter graduate programs in the discipline. Students are advised not to limit their junior and senior year classes to courses focused only on the history of a single country or region. Students must have a 3.0 cumulative grade point average in order to pursue independent study in History.