

**Department of History**  
**Columbia University**

**UNDERGRADUATE HANDBOOK**

Academic Year  
2025-2026



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## INTRODUCTION FROM OUR FACULTY

A global leader in historical scholarship, the [Department of History at Columbia](#) is deeply committed to undergraduate education. Many of us teach in the College Core. All of us teach undergraduate lectures and seminars in history.

Our rich undergraduate curriculum covers most areas of the world and most periods of history. Our courses explore various methodologies, a wide range of ways of writing history, and different approaches to the past. We emphasize no one approach to history and insist upon no single interpretive model. Thinking historically is an analytical skill of increasing value in an epoch dominated by short-term perspectives.

Whether you are interested in global inequality or medieval law, the evolution of drug trafficking or the history of human rights, the American West or Meiji Japan, you will find courses that speak to your interests and complement your other studies. Most of our courses are open to undergraduates from all majors and programs.

The History Department offers a major and a minor in history. Both enable students to achieve a deeper and broader knowledge of a particular field of history, while also developing the kinds of analytical and writing skills important in many areas of life. The heart of the undergraduate major is the senior thesis seminar, a small-group course in which students work closely with an individual faculty member on some subject. Undergraduate majors are not required to write a senior thesis, however in order to receive departmental honors a senior thesis must be completed. Each year the department offers 3 to 4 sections of [Senior Thesis Seminar](#) and students have the flexibility to work on any subject that they choose.

All aspects of undergraduate education are within the purview of the [Undergraduate Education Committee \(UNDED\)](#) which consists of a group faculty members advising the students on the major, addressing questions concerning requirements and credits. Students don't have individual advisors assigned to them.

### Key Contacts:

#### **Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS)**

Professor Stephanie McCurry  
dus-history@columbia.edu

#### **Undergraduate Administrator (UA)**

Michael Adan  
ma3167@columbia.edu

For general inquiries please email [undergraduate-history@columbia.edu](mailto:undergraduate-history@columbia.edu)

## UNDERGRADUATE ADVISING

The History Department **does not** assign individual advisors providing the [Undergraduate Education Committee \(UNDED\)](#) for undergraduate student advising. The UNDED, which consists of full-time faculty members, are ready to help undergraduates understand degree requirements, choose a specialization, guide students toward appropriate courses, and simply discuss students' experiences. Students may see any member of UNDED for advising concerns. UNDED advisors also approve a History student's Plan of Study, which serves as the course plan for students and lists the courses required to earn a History degree.

UNDED advisors hold office hours during the fall and spring terms and membership of UNDED changes from year to year, therefore please consult the department's website for an up-to- date roster.

History students are required to meet with an UNDED advisor at least twice once declaring History as their program of study.

**DIRECTOR OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES (DUS):** The DUS oversees the undergraduate program and serves as the chair of UNDED. The DUS makes final decisions on all matters concerning the major, minor, or concentration.

**UNDERGRADUATE ADMINISTRATOR (UA):** The UA keeps students informed of program deadlines, department events, the seminar application process, new courses, fellowships, and other matters of interest to majors and minors. The UA also processes signed Plan of Study forms and collects transfer credit applications.

## COLUMBIA HISTORY ASSOCIATION & UNDERGRADUATE HISTORY COUNCIL

The [Columbia History Association](#) (CHA) is a student organization comprised of all history majors, minors, and those otherwise interested in being more involved with history on campus through attending history-related events. CHA is always looking to expand its community of passionate history students and encourages its members to be active through participation in events such as study halls, professor lunches, and trivia nights. Being an active member of CHA will distinguish those who are interested in pursuing leadership opportunities within CHA.

The [Undergraduate History Council](#) The Undergraduate History Council (UHC) was founded in 2005 as a group of undergraduate representatives for history majors and concentrators. Since then, UHC's primary two functions are to organize history-related events throughout the academic year to foster a greater sense of community amongst undergraduate history students, as well as serve as a liaison for students to the Undergraduate Education Committee (UNDED).

UHC is comprised of the Columbia History Association (CHA) and the Columbia Journal of History (CJH), which are separate organizations with different processes for membership and leadership selection. UHC's Board is comprised of a Chair, Vice Chair, and Treasurer, who oversee CHA programming and directly speak to UNDED, and the two Editors-in-Chief of the Columbia Journal of History (CJH).

## THE HISTORY DEPARTMENT CURRICULUM

The History Department offers a variety of courses taught by over fifty faculty members. These courses typically fall into two types (lectures and seminars) and fulfill a History major, minor, and concentration requirements. Barnard College History Department courses taught by Barnard History faculty also count towards the Columbia History major or minor unless otherwise specified in course directories (e.g. Vergil, Directory of Classes).

Apart from the courses offered by the Columbia History (HIST) and Barnard History (HSTB/HIST BC) departments, some courses offered by other departments, such as East Asian Languages and Culture (EALAC), Middle Eastern, South Asian, African Studies (MESAAS), and American Studies (AMST) can be used towards a History degree. These courses will be cross-listed and included in the History Department's course list on department website and in Vergil.

Students who wish to take a particular course in any of these departments or any other Humanities and Social Sciences departments and wish to count that course towards History major should consult an Undergraduate Education Committee (UNDED) advisor for approval.

Though almost all History courses do not require placement exams, some seminars might require an application to join.

**LECTURES**, normally worth 4 points, meet twice a week for 1 hour and 15 minutes each session and generally have no pre-requisites. History lectures usually have additional required discussion sections that meet once a week. Lectures range from the very large (over 300 students) to the very small (fewer than 25). Most lecture courses require a midterm and a final examination and many also require written assignments and final papers. For identification purposes, history lectures are numbered at the **1000 or 2000 level** (exceptions exist for courses taught in the summer, which are sometimes listed at the 3000 level).

**SEMINARS**, worth 4 points, are more intensive, smaller courses capped at around 15 students. Seminars explore focused topics through concentrated reading in secondary literature, primary-source research, or both. They meet once a week for 1 hour and 50 minutes. The workload for seminars is generally heavier than for lectures, with more reading and more written work. Seminars normally do not have a final examination but often require a substantial paper. Some seminars have prerequisites, which are noted in the DOC. In many cases, students must receive permission from the instructor prior to registering for a seminar. History seminars are numbered at the **3000 or 4000 level** (some summer courses listed at the 3000 level may be lectures and do not qualify as seminars).

Notes regarding seminars:

- Only seminars offered by Columbia's History Department (HIST) or Barnard History (HSTB) can count toward the major seminar requirement.
- History seminars at the 4000 level are geared toward upper-level undergraduate students and graduate students. Seminars at the 3000 level are undergraduate only.
- For the two-term Senior Thesis Seminar (HIST UN3838/UN3839), both terms must be completed with a C or better to fulfill 1 seminar requirement.
- For Independent Senior Thesis (HIST UN3840/UN3841) the first term can count on a Plan of Study, while only the second term can count as a seminar (normally within the specialization) with the DUS approval. This only applies if each term is taken at 4 points.
- Supervised Individual Research (HIST UN3951/3952) do not count as seminars.

- Graduate HIST courses are eligible to count towards the seminar requirement.
- Some departments affiliated with Columbia History (e.g. EALAC, MESAAS) use the 3000-level designation for lectures. Refer to course type in the Vergil or DOC listing.

**INDEPENDENT STUDY:** Students may arrange independent research courses with individual members of the faculty (HIST UN3951 or HIST UN3952). In the semester before enrolling in a course, the student must find a faculty sponsor and submit a proposal to the DUS and the UA along with evidence of the sponsor's consent. The proposal is due by August 1 for the fall term or December 1 for the spring term. The UA will assist approved students with registration. These courses cannot fulfill the seminar requirement but may fulfill other requirements if taken at 4 points with a letter grade of C or better.

### WHAT COUNTS AS A HISTORY COURSE?

#### The following count as History courses:

- Courses in the History Departments of both Columbia and Barnard (HIST and HSTB).
- Cross-Listed courses for a specific term. These courses are listed in Vergil and department website and are typically:
  - a) Courses offered outside the Department but taught by History faculty members
  - b) Courses from other departments accepted by the Columbia History Department
- History Department courses used to fulfill the CC/GS Global Core or the GS Cultural Diversity Requirements (e.g., HIST UN2660/2661, Latin American Civilization I/II).
- Transfer courses accepted through a Transfer Credit Request.
- Graduate History courses taught by History Department faculty.

#### The following do NOT count as History courses:

- Advanced Placement courses from High School or British A-levels.
- Any course in which students have earned a D or lower.
- Any history course taken Pass/Fail. (Except for HIST UN3838)

**When in doubt, reach out to a member of UNDED or the Undergraduate Administrator**

**TRANSFER AND STUDY-ABROAD CREDITS:** Transfer credits are credits students have earned at an accredited college in the United States. Study abroad credits are credits earned at approved programs outside the United States. The department has a single set of procedures and requirements for approving courses taken for both types of credit. Credit is given only for transfer or study-abroad courses taken for a letter grade (refer to page 12 for details). Transfer or study-abroad courses may be used to fulfill the breadth requirements. Majors should keep in mind that seminar requirements must be fulfilled in the History Departments of Columbia or Barnard.

Students wishing to have transfer or study-abroad credits applied to their History Plan of Study must first receive approval from Columbia College or General Studies. **Credits that do not receive CC or GS approval will not be reviewed by the Department.** Once university approval has been obtained,

students should submit the materials listed below to [undergraduate-history@columbia.edu](mailto:undergraduate-history@columbia.edu) for review. Please be sure to provide the following:

- A completed Transfer Credit Form
- A current Plan of Study Form (*does not have to be officially signed by UNDED*)
- A copy of your transcript from the other institution, highlighting courses requested.
- A copy of the syllabus for any course you wish to have considered for history credit.

Available coursework from the courses, such as papers or exams (needed only for study abroad courses, unless otherwise specified by the DUS). Details can be found on the [Transfer Courses page](#).

Please note:

- European courses must be at least 6 ECTS credits
- Content of courses should be of historical context and be taught by a historian

## Studying Abroad

History students may choose to study abroad as part of their undergraduate education. This is typically done during the junior year for one term. A period of study overseas offers history students excellent opportunities to develop language skills as well as begin research projects that may be developed into a senior thesis. Members of UNDED will be happy to discuss your plans and how they fit both with your intellectual goals and with the requirements of your program. The University has direct ties to programs of study in several countries, including Reid Hall in Paris, the Oxford/Cambridge Program in Great Britain, Kyoto University in Japan, and the Berlin Consortium at the Freie Universität in Berlin. Study at other overseas universities must be approved by the College (not the Department) in advance, although students are strongly advised to discuss their program with a member of UNDED before leaving the United States. A list of approved study abroad programs is available on the [Office of Global Programs and Fellowships](#) website.

Details on the number of study-abroad and transfer credit courses that may be applied toward the major, concentration, and minor are found on page 12.

One exception exists to this rule: majors may receive up to 4 courses for a full year of study abroad studying History at Oxford or Cambridge University, no more than 3 of which may be applied toward the specialization.

**Before your departure:** Consult with the DUS, especially if you are going abroad for your entire junior year. The DUS may be able to give you a preliminary indication of which courses will be likely to count toward your requirements. However, remember that courses are formally approved only after you have returned with the documentation listed in the previous section.  
**Study abroad courses cannot be pre-approved prior to departure.**

Criteria for study abroad courses:

1. Course must be taught by a historian (with a Ph.d. in the discipline)
2. Course should be roughly equivalent in credit hours and content to a Columbia History department semester long 14 week 4 credit course

**While you are abroad:** Keep all your syllabi, notes, written work, and any and all written evaluations you receive, to aid the evaluation of your coursework. If evaluations are typically given orally, ask about the possibility of a written version of the evaluation.

Upon your return: Follow the procedures for evaluation of transfer and study-abroad credits.

## **DOUBLE-COUNTING COURSES:**

A student pursuing two programs of study may apply a maximum of two courses to both programs, if applicable. Offering departments, institutes, or centers may choose to restrict the double-counting of particular courses, and such restrictions cannot be appealed. Both programs may not both be owned by the same offering unit (department, institute, or center).

In addition, a maximum of two courses taken to fulfill the Global Core, Science or Foreign Language Requirements can also be counted toward the requirements of a program of study (major, minor, special minor), if applicable. Literature Humanities, Contemporary Civilization, Frontiers of Science, Art Humanities, Music Humanities, and University Writing **MAY NOT** be double-counted for any major, minor or special minor.

## **THE MAJOR, MINOR, and CONCENTRATION**

History students at Columbia College or the School of General Studies can either choose a major or minor. For students who entered Columbia in or before the 2023-2024 academic year the History concentration is an additional option.

Declaring History as your program of study is done through the student's home school. Once officially declared they will be added to the History Department listserv to receive information including events, course listings, departmental updates, grants, scholarships, internship opportunities, and more. Students not declared can also join the listserv by emailing [undergraduate-history@columbia.edu](mailto:undergraduate-history@columbia.edu).

Whether a major, minor, or concentrator, all History students **MUST** submit a **Plan of Study (POS)** approved by an UNDED advisor (page 4) in order to graduate with a History degree. On their POS, students choose their specialization, create their History course plan, and ensure that they are meeting the requirements of their program. Students must meet with a member of UNDED to review these forms, then file their signed Plan of Study forms with the Undergraduate Administrator. This form needs to be submitted twice, once during junior year and once during the fall of senior year.

A Plan of Study form and examples are available in the back of this handbook, in the department office (413 Fayerweather) and on the department's website.

## PLAN OF STUDY DEADLINES

December 1: Seniors

Last Day of Classes – Spring Semester: Juniors and newly declared History students

**HOW TO SUBMIT A PLAN OF STUDY:** Approved POS forms should be submitted to the Undergraduate Administrator. The Plan of Study form will be compared against the transcript to certify students for graduation. **Seniors who fail to submit an UNDED approved POS can end up short of fulfilling requirements and may delay or prevent graduation!**

### Degree requirements

All majors, minors, and concentrators are required to choose a “specialization” and take courses focused on that specialization (specialization courses). In addition, History students are also required to complete breadth courses and additional History courses to fulfill their degree. Seminar courses are only required of History majors.

**SPECIALIZATION:** Students are required to choose and complete a “specialization”—that is, a set of courses on a specific field, theme, or subject. In most cases, the regional specialization must be bound by a time period (for example, “20th Century U.S. History” as opposed to just “U.S. History”); any exceptions must be approved by a member of UNDED. A specialization does not appear on the student’s transcript but provides an organizing principle for the program and is required to complete the major or minor. Students must fulfill a breadth requirements by taking courses outside the field of their specialization. In order to make sure that the students take the right courses to fulfill the specialization requirement, the department obliges them to fill a Plan of Study form (POS) and get that form approved by a member of the UNDED.

The requirements of the undergraduate program encourage students to develop in-depth knowledge of the history of a particular time and/or place and to gain a sense of the full scope of history as a discipline.

Sample specializations are listed below; in general, if many courses are offered in a given region, students are asked to specialize as narrowly as possible with regards to the chosen time period:

- Ancient history
- Medieval European history
- Modern European history
- 19th c. United States history
- Latin American and Caribbean history
- Middle Eastern history
- African history
- South Asian history

Students may also work with UNDED to develop thematic specializations; some examples are below:

- Intellectual history
- Women’s history
- History of science
- Jewish history
- Economic history
- International history w/ regional focus

These specializations are only examples. Students should work with a member of UNDED to craft a specialization on the topic that most interests them.

**BREADTH REQUIREMENT:** History students must fulfill a breadth requirement by taking courses outside of their specialization. This requirement has two areas: time and space. Seminars can be used to fulfill this requirement.

**Removed-In-Time:** Majors and concentrators must take 1 course covering a time period far removed from their specialization. Students specializing in the modern period must take a course in the pre-modern period; students specializing in the pre-modern period must take a course in the modern.

Pre-modern courses cover a wide range of regions, and the course used for the chronological breadth requirement can cover any region. However, if you are considering a course that is in the same regional field as your specialization, take care that it is as far removed in time as possible. For example, a student specializing in Modern European History could not take a course in Early Modern European History for the pre-modern requirement but should instead take something further removed, such as Ancient Greek History. Please consult with a member of the UNDED to be sure that the course you have selected is appropriate (whether or not it is in the same region as your specialization).

History **minors** must take at least one course from the pre-1750 period and at least one course from the post-1750 period to qualify for the History minor. In other words, if a student takes four courses in the post-1750 period, they will be required to take one course in the pre-1750 period. Conversely, if a student takes four courses in the pre-1750 period, they will be required to take one course in the post-1750 period

**Removed-In-Space:** Majors must take 2 courses in regions removed from their chosen specialization. These courses must cover two different regions. Therefore, a student specializing in some part of Europe must take two courses in Africa, East or South Asia, Latin America/Caribbean, Middle East, and/or the U.S. Concentrators are required to take one removed-in-space course. There is no removed-in-space course required for History minors.

For students having a thematic specialization time & space requirements are determined in an ad-hoc basis. Such students should consult with a member of UNDED to determine what courses would fulfill the breadth requirement.

In the event a course covers multiple geographic regions where one of the regions involves the specialization, that course cannot be used to fulfill the breadth requirement (except in rare instances approved by the DUS). For example, a student specializing in “20th Century U.S. History” cannot fulfill the requirement with a class on WWII in a global perspective.

**Thematic Specializations:** Students with thematic or cross-regional specializations will have their breadth requirements modified, if necessary, in consultation with a member of UNDED.

**Note:** Students may not use a single course to fulfill more than one part of the breadth requirement. For example, a student specializing in Modern Latin American History could not count “History of Ancient China to the End of the Han” toward both their “time” and “space” breadth requirements.

**ADDITIONAL HISTORY COURSES:** With each degree (major, minor, concentration) History students are afforded the opportunity to take History courses outside of their specialization and breadth requirements. These courses must be History courses and still be approved by an UNDED advisor on a student's Plan of Study.

**SEMINAR REQUIREMENT (FOR MAJORS):** History majors must complete a seminar requirement by taking two seminars (which are normally listed at the 3000 or 4000 level). At least one of these courses must be in the student's specialization. Seminars must be completed at either Columbia or Barnard. Seminars taken abroad or at other universities may count toward the overall number of credits, but do NOT fulfill the seminar requirement. Registration for undergraduate seminars is often (but not always) by instructor's permission.

The two-term Senior Thesis Seminar (HIST UN3838 & UN3839) counts as 2 courses, but only as 1 seminar requirement, normally within the specialization. Only majors may write a senior thesis.

## Comparing the Major, Minor, and Concentration

### History Major

<b>History Major - Total Courses in History = 9</b>	
Specialization Courses	4
Breadth Requirements	3
Additional History courses	2
Seminar Requirement - Yes (see details below)	

- Seminar requirement: At least 2 of the 9 major courses are required to be seminars with at least 1 being a seminar in specialization.
- Breadth requirement: 1 removed in time and 2 removed in space
- Majors may apply a maximum of 3 transfer or study-abroad courses toward the major, no more than 2 of which may be applied toward the specialization.

### History Minor

<b>History Minor – Total Courses in History = 5</b>	
Specialization Courses	2
Additional History courses	3
Breadth Requirement – Yes (see details below)	
Seminar Requirement - None	

- Breadth (Removed-In-Time) requirement: Minor students must take at least one course from the pre-1750 period and at least one course from the post-1750 period to qualify for the History Minor. In other words, if a student takes four courses in the post-1750 period, they will be required to take one course in the pre-1750 period. Conversely, if a student takes four courses in the pre-1750 period, they will be required to take one course in the post-1750 period.
- Transfer courses cannot be applied toward the History minor
- Up to 1 Columbia University study abroad course via Global Engagement (UGE) can be applied to the History minor. Course must be approved via a transfer credit request.
- The History minor does not require a seminar course.

### History Concentration

<b>History Concentration - Total Courses in History = 6</b>	
Specialization Courses	3
Breadth Requirements	2
Additional History courses	1
Seminar Requirement - None	

- The History concentration does not require a seminar course.
- Breadth requirement: 1 removed in time and 1 removed in space
- Concentrators may apply a maximum of 2 transfer or study-abroad courses toward the minor, no more than 1 of which may be applied toward the specialization.
- Only students who entered Columbia in or before the 2023-2024 academic year are eligible.

## **SENIOR THESIS (*majors only*)**

History majors have the option of writing a senior thesis over one or two terms. This process involves original research, normally with extensive use of primary materials. The department encourages students with a strong interest in a particular subject to consider a thesis and strongly advises all students considering an academic career to write one. Many students find the senior thesis the most rewarding academic experience of their undergraduate career.

Students are advised to begin thinking about whether they wish to write a thesis, and about possible topics by the start of junior year.

**Senior Thesis Seminar Pre-requisite:** Students writing a senior thesis must take at least 1 HIST seminar by the fall of their senior year so that they have experience writing a substantial research paper. However, exceptions might be made for students who declared their specialization late in their junior year and were therefore unable to take a research seminar before. Such students should consult with the DUS.

With some prior planning, it is possible to gain access (whether through travel or through inter-library loan) to sources not available at Columbia. Many students begin thesis research the summer before their senior year; others are able to do original research while studying abroad as juniors. It is quite possible to research and write a fine thesis during the senior year, using only sources available in the New York area. Columbia College and the School of General Studies grant research funds for thesis writers in the fall semester of senior year. The department keeps thesis writers informed of the application process.

Senior theses are capped at 17,000 words. This cap includes footnotes but does not include bibliography. Determinations of honors rest on quality, not length. Verbosity and diffuseness work against the awarding of honors and prizes.

**A thesis written in two consecutive fall to spring terms is required for a student to be considered for departmental honors and/or prizes.**

A thesis is normally written in the year-long Senior Thesis Seminar (HIST UN3838/3839). Students interested in taking a Senior Thesis Seminar must submit an application by the announced deadline in the preceding spring semester.

**Senior Thesis Seminar Grading Policy:** All students registered in the year-long Senior Thesis Seminar will receive a "YC" (year course) grade at the end of the fall term and their final letter grade at the end of the spring term. After completing the seminar, the letter grade will count for both semesters, and students will have 8 credits (or two courses) to be applied toward their major in History. The first term (HIST UN3838) can be applied as a Specialization Course or Additional Course and the second term of the seminar (HIST UN3839) can count as an Additional Course. The completion of both HIST 3838 and HIST 3839 with a passing grade is also eligible to fulfill 1 seminar requirement on a Plan of Study. Should the student's thesis be in their major specialization it can fulfill their seminar in specialization.

**Note:** If students withdraw after the fall term, they will receive a 4-credit Pass/Fail grade, to which a Pass grade can count as an Additional Course in a Plan of Study but cannot be applied as a Specialization Course or fulfill a seminar requirement.

Alternatively, students who wish to work with a member of the department on an individual basis may register for a one or two-term independent senior thesis section for 2-4 credits per term (HIST UN3840/3841). If you wish to pursue this option, you should identify an appropriate supervisor (History Department faculty member) in the term before you begin the thesis. A short proposal, approved by the supervisor, should be forwarded to the Director of Undergraduate Studies before the beginning of the thesis term: by August 1 for the fall term and December 1 for the spring term. After receiving approval, please contact the Undergraduate Administrator regarding registration. If both terms of HIST UN3840/UN3841 are completed within an academic year, only the second term can be used to fulfill the seminar requirement (with DUS approval). **Independent theses cannot be considered for honors and prizes consideration.**

Theses are read and graded by the thesis advisor. All theses are also read by faculty Second Readers chosen by students in consultation with the senior thesis instructor. Students will receive formal written comments from their Second Reader.

**SENIOR THESIS FELLOWSHIPS:** A variety of fellowships are available for senior thesis writers. Application vary but due dates are typically during the spring semester. Below were the fellowships for the 2023-24 academic year but consult the fellowships page on the History websites for updates.

- **Columbia Research Initiative on the Global History of Sexualities Summer Research Fellowship (CRIGHS):** Preference given to CC and GS junior history majors conducting research for the senior thesis, but applications from other students conducting historical research are welcome. The CRIGHS with the generous support of Paul D. Lerner, CC '83, and Stephen Reis, provides 1-2 summer research fellowships to support 4-8 weeks of research in LGBTQ history and the history of sexuality.
- **Senior Thesis Fellowship – Research in European Archives:** Junior History majors in CC, Barnard, and GS working on a senior thesis topic that can be researched through sources currently located in Europe. The Research in European Archives supports 6-8 students for 4-6 weeks of research in European archives. Program includes a workshop in Paris in July to troubleshoot and consult with Columbia faculty and graduate student instructors.
- **American Studies: Margaret “Maggie” Nolan O’Neill Fellowship :** The fellowship is intended to support a student pursuing a summer research project for 8-10 weeks at the Jay Heritage Center (JHC). The JHC is an educational nonprofit and the steward of the Jay Estate in Rye, New York, a 23-acre National Historic Landmark site and public park, which hosts programs in American history, social justice, environmental stewardship, architecture, and historic preservation.
- **CC/GS Thesis Funding:** Columbia College and the School of General Studies both offer grants towards writing senior theses. Grant amounts normally range from \$50 to \$250 (with grants up to \$500 occasionally granted) and cover expenses like photocopying and traveling. The two schools have different deadlines, which vary year to year.

**UNDERGRADUATE THESIS PRIZES:** Senior Thesis Seminar writers have the opportunity to submit their thesis for prizes given by the History Department, the College, and General Studies. Prizes not administered by the department are also available and details can be found through your school's academic affairs office.

- **Charles A. Beard Prize:** Given by the Department for a senior thesis of distinction in any historical field or period.
- **Garrett Mattingly Prize:** Given by the Department for a senior thesis of distinction in any historical field or period.

- **Lily Prize:** Given by the Department for the best senior thesis in history on a non-U.S. topic. Established by James P. Shenton in memory of his mother.
- **Herbert H. Lehman Prize for Excellence in History:** Given to a General Studies student with an outstanding record of accomplishment in history courses at Columbia. Preference given to those with substantial coursework in U.S. History.
- **Chanler Historical Prize:** Given by the College for the best essay submitted by a senior on a topic dealing with the history of the American civil government.
- **Albert Marion Elsberg Prize:** Given by the College for a sophomore, junior, or senior who has demonstrated excellence in modern history.
- **Alan J. Willen Memorial Prize:** Given by the College and awarded by the Departments of History and Political Science for the best seminar paper on a contemporary American political problem.
- **Undergraduate Education Committee Prize:** The Undergraduate Education Committee Prize is given to a thesis of excellence written in any field of history.

**DEPARTMENTAL HONORS:** UNDED awards departmental honors on the basis of a high grade point average in a challenging mix of history courses (at least 3.6) as well as an excellent senior thesis. Students must also have an overall GPA of at least 3.6. The committee takes into account the depth and breadth of the program of study for each honors candidate. Normally, no more than 10% of graduating majors receive Departmental Honors.

**Important:** In order to submit a senior thesis for departmental honors (or senior thesis prize) consideration, the thesis must be written in two consecutive terms beginning in the fall and culminating in the spring. A thesis written in one term cannot be considered for honors and prizes consideration and Independent theses cannot be considered for honors and prizes consideration.

### **UNDERGRADUATE FELLOWSHIPS (*non-thesis*)**

**SUMMER RESEARCH PROGRAM:** A department sponsored program for history majors or minors; graduating seniors are not eligible. Selected students have the opportunity to support a faculty member with his or her summer research projects. Students may not work for greater than 60 hours. Information on how to apply is announced to eligible majors and minors in early spring, and the submission deadline is normally in April.

Please consult the fellowships page on the History website for updates

## **UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOLS & SPECIAL PROGRAMS**

**COLUMBIA COLLEGE:** Columbia College students typically declare their major in the spring of their sophomore year during the time frame scheduled by the College. Declaration is done through the Center for Student Advising website. Students must consult with their College advisor to be certain all college Core (as opposed to history) requirements are completed.

**SCHOOL OF GENERAL STUDIES:** General Studies students may declare a major or minor by submitting a Major Declaration Form to the Office of the GS Dean of Students. A Plan of Study form should then be completed and approved by a member of UNDED. Note that unlike Columbia College, GS requires a major for graduation; a minor alone is not sufficient. GS Declaration Forms are available in 403 Lewisohn.

### GS/JTS Dual Degree Program

Students in the JTS dual degree program may transfer up to 3 courses worth of history courses for a history major (following the normal procedures and rules for transferring credits on page 6). No more than 2 courses can be applied to the specialization, as with all other transfers of credit.

### General Studies-Sciences Po joint BA Program

Soon after arrival on campus, students in the General Studies-Sciences Po joint BA program should apply with the Undergraduate Administrator to transfer history coursework from Sciences Po. If approved by the DUS, Science Po history courses can be used to fulfill the departmental distribution requirements as well as requirements for the specialization within the major. Page 6 outlines how to submit a Transfer Credit request and how transfer courses apply towards the major.

#### **Please note:**

- Students are advised to take courses in a diversity of areas (and not only Europe) to maximize the number of transferable credits.
- Majors must fulfill the seminar requirement in history at Columbia or Barnard.
- The required “Introduction to Contemporary History” can only count as a modern Europe class.

**SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES:** Requirements for students in the Second Majors Program are the same as those for students in Columbia College.

## GUIDELINES FOR PAPERS

**FOOTNOTING AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL STYLE:** Good practice in citing sources in history papers calls for footnotes (or endnotes) and bibliographies. Consistency of style is essential, though the department has no required particular style; instructors have the last word in what is appropriate for their courses. On the whole the History Department advises that you follow *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th ed. Chicago, Chicago University Press, 2010 (online at <https://goo.gl/Yw4TNw>). We urge you to develop good habits in citing authorities for history papers along the guidelines below.

**Footnotes are preferred to in-text citations.** In this respect, history differs from most science, social science and some humanities disciplines. Short essays with only a few well-identified sources may simply employ in-text citations, for example: (Smith, 34), but longer essays should use full footnotes and include a bibliography.

In footnotes, authors' names are arranged in normal order with given names first, followed by family names, e.g. Fredrick Flintstone and Barnaby Rubble, *Of Rocks and Dinosaurs*. The first footnote for a given source should contain all information for that source, while subsequent ones may be shortened.

*Below are footnotes from a hypothetical research paper about The New York Times and reports from Moscow and Hanoi by the correspondent and writer Harrison Salisbury, as an example:*

1. Gay Talese, *The Kingdom and the Power*, 2nd ed. (New York: Ivy Press, 1992): 501.
2. Richard F. Shepard, *The Paper's Papers: A Reporter's Journey through the Archives of the New York Times* (New York: Times Books, 1996): 100.
3. Harrison Salisbury, 'Without Fear or Favor': *The New York Times and its Times* (New York: Times Books, 1996): 13.
4. Salisbury, *A Journey for Our Times: A Memoir* (New York: Harper & Row, 1983): 323.
5. Shepard, *Paper's Papers*, 178.
6. Salisbury, *Journey*, 15.
7. Mark A. Lawrence, "Mission Intolerable: Harrison Salisbury's Trip to Hanoi," *Pacific Historical Review* 75 (August 2006): 430.
8. Susan E. Tifft and Alex S. Jones, *The Trust: the Private and Powerful Family behind the New York Times* (Boston: Little Brown, 1999): 630.

In footnotes containing repeated citations of the same source, current practice prefers the author's last name and page. If you cite multiple works by the same author, use a shortened version of the title, such as *Salisbury, Journey*, followed by a page number, as shown above. The older forms of citation, *ibid.* and *loc. cit.* are no longer used.

**Bibliographies are arranged alphabetically by authors' last names.** For titles with multiple authors, the family name of the first author comes first, and subsequent authors are listed in normal order, e.g. *Flintstone, Frederick and Barnaby Rubble, Of Rocks and Dinosaurs*.

*Below is a hypothetical bibliography to accompany the preceding notes, as an example:*

Lawrence, Mark A. "Mission Intolerable: Harrison Salisbury's Trip to Hanoi." *Pacific Historical Review*, 75 (August 2006): 429-458.

Salisbury, Harrison. *A Journey for Our Times: A Memoir*. New York: Harper & Row, 1983.

\_\_\_\_\_. 'Without Fear or Favor': *The New York Times and its Times*. New York: Times Books, 1996.

Shepard, Richard F. *The Paper's Papers: A Reporter's Journey Through the Archives of the New York Times*. New York: Times Books, 1996.

Talese, Gay. *The Kingdom and the Power*. 2nd ed. New York: Ivy Press, 1992.

Tifft, Susan E. and Alex S. Jones. *The Trust: the Private and Powerful Family behind the New York Times*. Boston: Little Brown, 1999.

**Footnotes to websites.** Give author, title, URL address, <date posted> and (date accessed). For example: Harry Hopkins, Work Relief Administration Press Conference, 11 June 1934, New Deal Network, <http://newdeal.feri.org/workrelief/hop06.htm>, <posted 7/14/02> (accessed 8/23/05).

**DEVELOPING YOUR OWN VOICE:** As teachers of history, we want students to develop their own ideas and the ability to express them. A distinctive voice is one of the most important things a college education can give you. Studying history is an excellent way to develop your voice. Contrary to popular belief, history is not just a series of dates and facts without argument or analytical framework. History involves reflection about past events, the people involved, their causes, and their significance. No history professor wants a student simply to repeat what he or she has read or been told. They want to see students consider the issue at hand and reframe it in a creative way. Originality draws upon ideas and information from other sources but requires that you put them together in a novel, distinctive, and coherent way.

Proper citation allows you to separate what you know and think from what others have said, so that readers can appreciate the power of your ideas. It reveals where you got your information and enables your readers to trust you as a reliable writer. All scholarship depends on that trust. Without good citations that can be traced to the sources you have used, your work is something else: fiction, propaganda, lies, deception, or fantasy. For your citations to be effective, you have to know when to use them. You don't have to use them for widely known facts (example: "George Washington was the first president of the United States."). You must cite when you put lesser-known information into your paper (the population of the U.S. in 1800, say), or use someone else's words, ideas, or analytical framework. The citation lets you show the reader that you have done your research and marks those findings from your own thoughts and interpretations of that research. It also lets readers verify and follow up on your claims. Without citations, your voice and credibility gets lost.

## ACADEMIC HONESTY

Plagiarism means passing off someone else's ideas, research, words, or analytical frameworks as your own, intentionally or not. It is intellectual theft. Many examples of plagiarism are flagrant and obvious, if increasingly common: copying, purchasing, or stealing someone else's paper and turning it in as your own; copying out a whole section directly from a book, an article, or off the Internet and putting it into your paper without showing its source; or including important facts or data without citing a source as if you compiled them yourself. Often plagiarism is unintentional or unconscious. For example, you may like what a source says and actually quote a sentence from it directly and put a footnote to the source, which would not be considered plagiarism. But if you continue to paraphrase or summarize more from the same source without another footnote acknowledging that you are still drawing on that source, you will be misleading the reader into thinking that the author's ideas are your own.

**FRAMEWORKS:** If you borrow someone else's analytical framework without telling the reader, you are still unjustly passing off someone else's work as your own. So, for example, if you read an article by

Arthur Finkelstein where he claims “There are two forms of nationalism in China: ethnic and religious,” you cannot simply repeat this in your paper without attribution. You have to say, “According to Finkelstein, Chinese nationalism comes in two forms. One is ethnic. The other is religious.” And then provide a footnote. You can use his framework to help make sense of the material in question, but you must be clear that you are doing so. Giving credit does not make you less original or intelligent. Writers of all sorts give credit all the time. You just have to be clear about it. Otherwise you are committing plagiarism. Good history is a collective enterprise: it builds on the work of earlier scholars and furnishes a basis that future scholars will use as their point of departure. Yes, we see farther than our predecessors did, but without their work to support us, our understanding would be extremely limited.

Quotations and citations acknowledge your debt to earlier scholars and illustrate how you are building on their ideas. For this reason, it is important to keep quotations brief and to make sure that they illustrate a point of yours. Just presenting long quotations from important scholars, even if you agree with everything they say, does not let your reader understand your thinking or advance your argument. You must render your claims in your own words and let the reader understand why you agree with a particular interpretation.

When you write a paper, you become part of this collective enterprise of history writing. Taking advantage of the work of previous scholars means you’re in the fortunate position of not having to reinvent the wheel. Your voice adds to the discussion that keeps the common stock of knowledge growing. Make sure your reader can see it.

**NOTE-TAKING:** A number of students, and even the occasional professional historian, have been caught plagiarizing because they took disorganized notes. Be careful when doing your research. Remember that the main goal is not just to absorb the information but also to distinguish your ideas from those of the source--even when you agree with it. If you are copying down a whole passage, include the quotes and note the page number. You can also write down whatever ideas come to you while you are reading the source, but be sure to distinguish these from what you are copying out of the source itself. You can put the thoughts in parentheses, or in a different script, or on a different part of the page. Figure out a notational system that makes sense to you and be consistent with it. If you are taking notes on a computer, keep them in a separate file from your paper.

The History Department treats issues of academic integrity on a case-by-case basis. You should be aware of the Columbia University Undergraduate Guide to Academic Integrity: <https://goo.gl/TkY1Ny>.

If you want to learn more about plagiarism, or test your knowledge, please review this online tutorial: <https://goo.gl/93iadT>.

## HELPFUL LINKS

### **History Department Website**

[history.columbia.edu](https://history.columbia.edu)

### **Undergraduate Advising (UNDED)**

<https://history.columbia.edu/undergraduate/advising/>

### **History Department course list**

<https://history.columbia.edu/courses/>

### **Columbia History Association**

<https://www.cuhistory.com/>

### **Columbia College Bulletin**

<https://bulletin.columbia.edu/columbia-college/>

### **Columbia Directory of Classes (DOC)**

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/bulletin/uwb/>

### **Declaring a major: Columbia College**

<https://www.cc-seas.columbia.edu/csa/faqs>

### **Declaring a major: General Studies**

<https://bulletin.columbia.edu/general-studies/degree-fulfillment/>