

HISTORY

Division of Social Sciences

Through stimulating teaching of the works of historians and non-historians, we foster in our students a sense of the development of past societies and a curiosity about why these developments occurred. We believe that understanding the past through a maturing historical consciousness and instruction in the proficient use of primary and secondary sources can improve students' understanding of their own time. Students at Washington College are trained as generalists, studying a variety of geographical areas and eras, and able to apply their skills of research and analytical thinking to whatever interests them.

The study of history is closely related to other disciplines that inform the student's understanding of the world. History gives a context to and a wider perspective on the approaches offered by the political scientist, the geographer, the economist, the sociologist, as well as the disciplines of art history, music, and literature. History is in many ways the broadest of the traditional disciplines. In other words, it has a great deal to contribute to the making of a cultured person. We endeavor to promote among our students an appreciation for outstanding cultural achievements, an appreciation which helps them to know who they are and who they might become.

Engaging in historical studies at Washington College is an excellent preparation for future careers. Our graduates have been successful in secondary school and college teaching, archival, curatorial, and museum work, law, journalism, and publishing. Many of our majors work in other areas traditionally attracting liberal arts graduates—business and government, for example.

Distribution Credit

To satisfy the requirement of two paired courses for Social Science distribution, students may take HIS 111 Introduction to History or any 200-level history course and pair it with any other history course.

To satisfy the requirement of an unpaired third course for Social Science distribution, students may take HIS 111 Introduction to History or any 200-level history course

- History Major (<https://catalog.washcoll.edu/catalog/departments-programs/history/history-major/>)
- History Minor (<https://catalog.washcoll.edu/catalog/departments-programs/history/history-minor/>)

Kenneth Miller, Chair
 T. Clayton Black
 Adam Goodheart
 Janet Sorrentino
 Carol Wilson

HIS SCE Senior Capstone Experience 2 Credits

The Senior Capstone Experience (SCE) consists of the design of a research project. It includes studies in historiographical techniques and preparation of a substantial senior thesis. During Spring Semester of the Junior year, students participate in a required course, Historical Method (HIS 399). In connection with this course, students are assigned a thesis advisor under whose supervision a prospectus, preliminary bibliography and other elements are prepared. Students who wish to be considered for departmental honors, or who are preparing for graduate study in history or related fields, should request permission to attempt an honors thesis. Candidates for thesis honors must have and maintain a 3.5 cum. GPA by Spring semester of the Junior year.

Term(s) Offered: All Terms, All Years

HIS 111 Introduction to History 4 Credits

This course introduces students to the discipline of history by exploring compelling themes or problems in history. Through study of different topics, each section instructor teaches students the core methodological skills of historical analysis and interpretation. Students are expected to appreciate differing interpretations of the same historical questions. Students study appropriate primary and secondary sources in the field and learn the basic analytical and writing skills historians use to interpret the past. Examples of topics offered include The Underground Railroad, The Invention of Childhood, American Home Front, Russian Revolution, Harry Potter's World: Renaissance Science, Magic, and Medicine, Small Worlds of Early America, and America in the 1960s.

Term(s) Offered: All Terms, All Years

HIS 194 Special Topics 4 Credits

Topics not regularly offered in a department's normal course offerings, chosen based on current student interest and faculty expertise. Special topic courses can only be offered 3 times; after this, the course must be approved as a regular course. Graded A-F or Pass/Fail.

Term(s) Offered: All Terms, All Years

HIS 201 History of the United States to 1865 4 Credits

A survey of United States history through the Civil War, this course begins with the history of the first residents of North America, Native Americans. Includes the founding and development of the various colonies that eventually joined to form a new nation, and the early history of that nation—political, economic, and social.

Term(s) Offered: Fall, All Years

HIS 202 History of the United States Since 1865 4 Credits

This survey of United States history starts with the Reconstruction era and traces the growth of the nation to the present. We will study how the nation was restored after the Civil War, how the United States industrialized, urbanized and became a world power in the twentieth century.

Term(s) Offered: Spring, All Years

HIS 203 Modern World History I 4 Credits

A survey of world history from roughly 1000 AD to the end of the eighteenth century. This course treats the increasing integration of world civilizations through commercial and cultural interactions and traces the emergence of Europe as a center of global economic and military power. Prominent themes include the Mongol empire, Black Death, Age of Exploration, Reformation, Gunpowder empires, Enlightenment, and French revolution.

Term(s) Offered: Fall, All Years

HIS 204 Modern World History II 4 Credits

A survey of world history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The course examines the world in the age of global integration and includes such themes as the rise of republicanism and nationalism, the industrial revolution, imperialism, communism and fascism, the world wars, the Cold War and globalization, among others.

Term(s) Offered: Spring, All Years

HIS 205 Early Origins of Western Civilization I 4 Credits

Focuses on ancient societies, from Sumer through imperial Rome, whose cultures contributed to the development of western civilization. The course stresses the multiplicity of cultures that melded and conflicted in the ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean worlds, and looks to the origins of cultural symbols that appear and reappear in the emerging Western world.

Term(s) Offered: Fall, All Years

HIS 206 Early Origins of Western Civilization II 4 Credits

Studies European society from the fall of the western Roman empire through Galileo and Newton. This course is a continuation of History 205; it builds on the assimilation of ancient culture into a multi-cultural milieu that included Roman, Germanic, Greek, Christian, Jewish and Islamic societies. It traces the development of Europe through the Middle Ages, Renaissance, Reformation and Scientific Revolution.

Term(s) Offered: Spring, All Years

HIS 294 Special Topics 4 Credits

Topics not regularly offered in a department's normal course offerings, chosen based on current student interest and faculty expertise. Special topic courses can only be offered 3 times; after this, the course must be approved as a regular course. Graded A-F or Pass/Fail.

Term(s) Offered: All Terms, All Years

HIS 313 17th and 18th Century America 4 Credits

The social, economic, and political structure of Colonial America; the background and development of the American Revolution; and the interaction of social and political life during the Confederation, Constitutional, and Federalist periods.

Term(s) Offered: Other, Non Conforming

HIS 315 The Early Republic 4 Credits

This course explores the history of the early American republic from the framing of the Constitution to the Civil War. The course investigates the clash between Hamiltonian and Jeffersonian visions, the development of party politics and a popular political culture, territorial expansion and dispossession of Native Americans, the spread of King Cotton and slavery, the transportation and market revolutions, religious revival and social reform, and the sectional conflict between North and South.

Term(s) Offered: Other, Non Conforming

HIS 319 African - American History 4 Credits

This course examines the history of African Americans from the colonial era to the present. We trace the Black experience from African origins through more than two centuries of enslavement to emancipation in 1865. We examine the fight for citizenship and equality during Reconstruction, the segregation era, and the civil rights movement. While including examination of the nature of racism and race relations, we are focusing particularly on Black initiative, and the role African Americans have played in all aspects of American history.

Term(s) Offered: Other, Non Conforming

HIS 334 The American Civil War 4 Credits

This course encompasses the U.S. Civil War (1861-1865) in all pertinent areas. In addition to military history, the course reviews significant historical interpretations of the causes and effects of the Civil War; the dimensions of social, economic, political, and diplomatic history pertaining to the war; and the evolution of war aims relating to the central issues of slavery and race relations.

Term(s) Offered: Other, Non Conforming

HIS 335 Reconstruction and the Gilded Age 4 Credits

The era from the end of the Civil War to the end of the nineteenth century saw some of the greatest changes in American history. We examine the rebuilding of Reconstruction from the desire to restore national unity to the attempts of individual freedmen and women to carve out new lives and rights for themselves. The era also saw a turn from Victorianism to Modernity, as industrialization, urbanization, and immigration proceeded at a rapid pace, causing tension between rural and urban people, old ways and new.

Term(s) Offered: Other, Non Conforming

HIS 336 Progressivism and the Twenties 4 Credits

Focuses on one of the great reform eras in American history. Beginning in the late 19th century, the Progressives pushed for women's rights, prohibition, good government, protection for workers and consumers, and more. We also look at World War I, especially the impact on the home front. We examine both the well-known side of the Twenties—economic success and high living, and the not-so-well known aspects, like the rise of the Ku Klux Klan, and anti-immigration sentiment.

Term(s) Offered: Other, Non Conforming

HIS 342 Victorian America 4 Credits

Examination of American social attitudes and behavior in both the public and private spheres during the nineteenth century. Topics include marriage and the family, childhood; the individual's role in society; entertainment; race and ethnicity; religion; migration; immigration; urbanization; and reform movements.

Term(s) Offered: Other, Non Conforming

HIS 343 History of American Women 4 Credits

Examines the private lives and public roles of women throughout American history, from colonial settlement to the near-present. Social attitudes, laws and policies affecting women are studied, as well as women's daily lives, experiences, and accomplishments. Our focus includes women of different races, classes, and ethnic backgrounds.

Term(s) Offered: Other, Non Conforming

HIS 350 Empire and Papacy 4 Credits

Germany and Italy emerged as modern nations only in the nineteenth century. Both experienced turbulent internal divisions for centuries prior to their respective national unifications. A common thread bound their political difficulties, that is, the tension between two supranational ideas: The Roman Empire and the Roman Papacy. This course explores the origins and development of this conflict between the Holy Roman Emperors and the Papacy and its effect on the histories of medieval Germany and medieval Italy.

Term(s) Offered: Other, Non Conforming

HIS 351 Ancient Rome 4 Credits

The social, cultural, and political history of ancient Rome and its dominions, from prehistory through the decline and fall of the Roman Empire in the fifth century C.E. Topics include republican and imperial government, Rome's army and conquests, the Roman family, Roman religion, and the rise of Christianity.

Term(s) Offered: Other, Non Conforming

HIS 352 Castles, Cloisters, Cathedrals, Mosques 4 Credits

This course traces the history of France and Spain from the 8th to 14th centuries from the perspective of their castles, monastic cloisters, cathedrals, and mosques. Topics include architectural structure and style; pre-modern French and Spanish history; history and regular routines of religious life; social and cultural aspects of buildings including their roles in military technology, guild organization, palatial residence, and church life.

Term(s) Offered: Other, Non Conforming

HIS 354 Renaissance & Reformation 4 Credits

A study of Europe in the period of 1400-1648. Cultural developments in fifteenth-century Italy are the starting point; students then explore religious and political change, and social and economic trends throughout Europe.

Term(s) Offered: Other, Non Conforming

HIS 355 Women in Medieval Europe 4 Credits

A seminar exploring the lives of women and their role in society from the fifth through the fifteenth centuries. Topics include legal status, economic activity, marriage and family, and women in religion. Readings include both traditional and feminist-influenced secondary works, medieval works about and for women, and the writings of medieval women themselves. Discussion is a major component of the course.

Term(s) Offered: Other, Non Conforming

HIS 357 Early Islamic Civilization 4 Credits

Early Islamic civilization from its origins in Arabia to its expression in several imperial regimes in the sixteenth century (e.g. Ottoman, Mughal). We examine the creation of a Muslim community, the development of a rich and dynamic civilization, the competing claims for political and religious authority, the forging of empires and their break-up, as well as contacts with the non-Muslim societies. Thus we study a universal religion as it was expressed and incorporated into a variety of unique cultures that differed in ethnicity, language, geography, and beliefs. Students acquire an understanding of basic vocabulary, geography, historical sources and narrative, through directed readings, lecture and class discussion.

Term(s) Offered: Other, Non Conforming

HIS 360 Modern Germany 4 Credits

An examination of Central Europe from the unification of the German lands in the mid-nineteenth century through the Kaiserreich, World War I, Weimar Republic, National Socialism, Cold War division, and reunification.

Term(s) Offered: Other, Non Conforming

HIS 371 History of South Africa 4 Credits

This course examines the political, economic, and social history of the Republic of South Africa. Beginning with the earliest inhabitants, we trace the diversity of African life, the arrival of Europeans and the establishment of colonies, the policies of segregation and apartheid, and African resistance to them. We also assess the importance of history to individual and group identities, as well as for interpreting issues of the present.

Term(s) Offered: Other, Non Conforming

HIS 381 History of Modern China 4 Credits

This course traces the history of China from roughly 1800 to the present. It devotes special attention to the development of nationalism and communism in China and China's uneasy relationship with the West. Topics include the Opium War and Taiping Rebellion, Republican era warlordism, China in the Pacific War, Maoism and the reforms of Deng Xiaoping, among others.

Term(s) Offered: Other, Non Conforming

HIS 383 History of Modern Japan 4 Credits

An examination of Japan from the late Tokugawa era (ca. 1800-1868) to the present. The course looks at the causes and consequences of the Meiji Restoration, Japan's rise as a modern industrial state, its struggle with democratic government, imperialist expansion, the impact of World War II on the country's subsequent political, social, and economic development, the Japanese Miracle of the 1970s, and Japan's current difficulties in confronting its past and defining its place in the twenty-first century.

Term(s) Offered: Other, Non Conforming

HIS 391 Russia and the Soviet Union 4 Credits

Russian political, social, economic, and cultural developments from the founding of the first eastern Slavic state to the present. The first semester treats Kievan Rus, Muscovy, and the Imperial period from Peter the Great to Alexander II. The second semester deals with the final decades of the Russian autocracy, the revolutionary movement, World War I, the revolutions of 1917, the Civil War, and the history of the Soviet Union to the end of the Gorbachev era.

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Term(s) Offered: Other, Non Conforming

HIS 394 Special Topics 4 Credits

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Term(s) Offered: All Terms, All Years

HIS 399 Historical Method 4 Credits

A study of history as a discipline. Classroom lecture and discussion on fundamental aspects of research and synthesis plus the history of historical writing. With the help of an assigned advisor, each student prepares first a prospectus and then a preliminary chapter of the eventual senior thesis in history. Both papers are presented to the class for comment and review in workshop format. Enrollment is limited to history majors.

Term(s) Offered: Spring, All Years

HIS 414 Comparative Cultural Encounters 4 Credits

This seminar examines interactions among native, European, and African peoples during the initial centuries of North American colonization. Situating the American colonies within a broader Atlantic World and offering a comparative approach, the course investigates processes of cultural conflict, exchange, adaption, and transformation.

Term(s) Offered: Other, Non Conforming

HIS 466 Europe in Age of Revolution, 1789-1871 4 Credits

This course provides a detailed examination of the upheavals across Europe from the 1789 revolution in France to the experiment in socialism of the Paris Commune in 1871. We pay special attention to ideological changes across the period and their relationship to the political and economic transformations that dramatically transformed the modern world. Topics of particular focus include the French revolution, the industrial revolution, romanticism, political reaction, popular movements and socialism, and the revolutions of 1848. In addition to providing students with an understanding of these topics, the course helps students develop research skills, along with critical analysis, oral presentation, and writing techniques.

Term(s) Offered: Other, Non Conforming

HIS 473 Latin American Literature as History 4 Credits

This seminar employs new and classic novels to investigate diverse trends in modern Latin American history, focusing on the insight each text offers into the land's people and institutions. Collectively, these volumes illuminate sweeping historical themes, harnessing personal stories to broad, impersonal forces and surveying a range of topics, from poverty and repression to adaptation and rebellion.

Term(s) Offered: Other, Non Conforming

HIS 494 Special Topics 4 Credits

Topics not regularly offered in a department's normal course offerings, chosen based on current student interest and faculty expertise. Special topic courses can only be offered 3 times; after this, the course must be approved as a regular course. Graded A-F or Pass/Fail.

Term(s) Offered: All Terms, All Years