

History Major

Student and Advisor Reference Sheet

These requirements apply to History Majors declared after June 1, 2018

This is a worksheet to help guide your through selecting classes. The College Catalog is the definitive statement of all requirements.

Major Requirements

A history major is planned in consultation with a student's advisor and comprises no fewer than 40 history credits. These credits may include up to four internship credits ([HIST 624](#)) if approved by a history department member, and four independent study credits ([HIST 614](#)) carried out under the supervision of a member of the department. Preceptorship in history credits ([HIST 634](#)) may not be counted among the first 40 credits for the major but may be a supplement to them. Courses completed for college credit prior to matriculation at a collegiate level institution, such as Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate courses, may not be used in completion of a major. Except with consent of the department, the major will include no more than eight introductory level course credits and no more than eight history credits taught by faculty outside the department. (For a list of full-time and visiting faculty in the department, see the department webpage at [https://www.macalester.edu/history/facultystaff/.](https://www.macalester.edu/history/facultystaff/))

All history majors are required to take

- [HIST 290 - History: Then and Now](#), which examines the different approaches and analytical frameworks of historical scholarship. Prospective majors are strongly encouraged to take this course during their sophomore year.
- At least 4 credits in a history course at the 300-level, ideally before taking [HIST 490 - Senior Seminar](#).
- [HIST 490](#), taken in the fall of the senior year, is an advanced study seminar in which a major research paper is written. The college senior capstone requirement is to be met by completion of [HIST 490](#).
- All history majors complete 16 credits in a thematic or geographic field selected in consultation with the advisor.
- 4 credits in courses that deal primarily with the history of a period prior to 1800,
- 4 credits in courses that deal primarily with the period since 1800,
- 8 credits in courses in global/comparative history.
- A single course may simultaneously fulfill a chronological requirement, a thematic requirement, and a global/comparative history requirement.

Global and Comparative Courses

Each student is required to take eight credits labelled GC.

There are several kinds of courses that may meet this requirement:

1. Courses that are billed as “World History” or “Global History” (such as “Intro to Global History” or “The Global in the Local”).
2. Courses that explore processes in history that are fundamentally transnational (For example: colonialism, trade, slavery, immigration, decolonization, the history of international organizations, development).
3. Courses that explore a topic by comparing two or more regions.
4. Courses that explore the history of a region or regions through a transnational lens, with a deep engagement of the way that region is connected to the rest of the globe.

Fields

Each student selects ONE field of sixteen credits. Existing strengths exist in the following

Colonization and Empire

Environment

Gender

Law and Social Justice

Public History

Race and Indigeneity

Self-designed Field

Africa and Atlantic World

Asia

Europe

Global and Comparative

Latin America and the Caribbean

North America

Fields Descriptions

Colonization and Empire

Courses in this field relate to both formal and informal empires, from antiquity to the present, across the globe. These courses relate to the establishment, functioning, and demise of empires and can also engage broader notions of coloniality and decoloniality along with theories of imperialism and decolonization.

Environment

Environmental history courses focus on the ways that human society has been shaped by, and in turn reshaped, the natural and built environments, including how technological systems have mediated and structured people's relationships with the natural world.

Gender

This field examines the way states and societies have constructed ideas about gender and how those definitions, meanings, and the lived experience of gender have changed over time. Many of the courses in this field engage with gender and the ways that it has intersected with other dimensions of identity, such as race, class, ethnicity, religion, family, nationality, and sexuality. Focus will also be given to movements for social change and the ways in which activists--broadly defined--have worked towards equality for women, LGBTQ+, trans, and non-binary people. Courses can address any geographic location, and many are comparative or transnational in nature. Gender history is a relatively new field of historical inquiry and continues to evolve and change. This dynamism of gender history is reflected in our course offerings.

Law and Social Justice

Courses in this field emphasize the possibilities and the limitations of the law, legal systems and legal processes broadly defined. Local, national and global human rights problems and solutions are examined, paying attention to the ways in which individuals and communities encounter, engage with, and sometimes resist legal and political structures in order to enact social change. Courses may count for the Legal Studies and/or Human Rights and Humanitarianism concentrations.

Public History

Public history has been defined as “the many and diverse ways in which history is put to work in the world.” It aims to be in conversation with a wide variety of audiences - including stakeholders, practitioners, academics, and the general public. It values community knowledge alongside academic inquiry and emphasizes collaborative work. Approaches may include oral history, digital history, material culture studies, museum studies, and policy studies. Students are expected to understand

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theoretical, ethical and methodological concerns as well as to engage in practical applications.

Race and Indigeneity

This field examines the historically constructed categories of race and indigeneity. Courses can address any geographic location, but they are focused on themes such as racism, discrimination, scientific theories of race, and anti-racism movements, among others. Courses can tackle additional ideas including, but not limited to: diaspora, group origins, transnational movements, and interactions with majority and other traditionally underrepresented groups. The syllabus should include at least two analytical works to help students interpret the specific categories of race and indigeneity in a scholarly fashion. Some courses may meet the Macalester USID requirement, but not all will.

Self-designed Field

Students can propose a thematic field not listed among these options. The proposal will be prepared in consultation with the Student's advisor and the Department chair and will consist of a 1-2 page proposal naming and describing the field, and identifying the courses that will be counted.¹

Africa and Atlantic World

This course designation covers two discrete areas: courses that deal significantly with the continent of Africa and African diaspora, or courses that address the interactions between continents on the Atlantic seaboard (Europe, North America, South America, and Africa). Courses do not need to satisfy both to get this designation.

Asia

Courses designed to consider the national history of an Asian country and/or the major changes in the politics, economy, society, foreign relations and cultural development in East Asia and other regions in Asia.

Global and Comparative

The guidelines for this field are outlined under the heading of "Global and Comparative Courses" above.

Europe

Courses that count towards the Europe field are those that connect directly to the history of all or parts of the European continent (defined by the boundaries of the European continental shelf). Because an important portion of Russia fits within these geographic boundaries, courses that deal

¹ Requires an application prepared in consultation with the Student's advisor and Departmental Approval.

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with Russian history will also count towards the “Europe” field. “Europe” courses can be related to any time period in European history, from the Classical era to the present. Courses that deal with Europe and its overseas empires will also count towards the “Colonization and Empire” field.

Latin America and the Caribbean

This field considers the history of two American regions that lie at the crossroads of global colonial and political cultures since the fifteenth century: Latin America and the Caribbean. While most courses emphasize the history of the Spanish and Portuguese empires and the independent nations of Iberoamerica, several also place these histories alongside or in dialogue with the British or French Caribbean or the history of the US-Mexico borderlands. Chronologically, courses consider the development of European empires in the Americas and the formation of postcolonial nation-states, cultures, and politics.

North America

Courses in this field address issues that focus primarily on the history of the Americas north of the Rio Grande. These classes that examine the history of the United States and Canada as well as the history of the Anglophone and Francophone empires prior to independence. Some of these courses will cross-list with American Studies or fulfill USID general education requirements.

For Reference: Compact view of the new major requirements

Note on double and triple counting courses. Some courses will fulfill multiple requirements simultaneously. For example, a course could count for a chronological period, a Field, and a G course. Especially distinctive courses may not fulfill any of these general requirements, but still count toward the total number of classes required for the major.

8 GC (GLOBAL/COMPARATIVE) credits. These could be offered in FYC courses or in free-standing courses. They could be submitted for inclusion in the Internationalism General Education requirement.	1:	2:		
CHRONOLOGICAL DISTRIBUTION 4 credits in courses that deal primarily with the history of a period prior to 1800. 4 credits in courses that deal primarily with the period since 1800. Some expansive courses will not fit into either of these categories.	Pre-1800	Post-1800		
FIELD Sixteen credits constituting a FIELD. See list of offered FIELDS. Student's selected FIELD is: _____	1:	2:	3.	4.
HIST 290 - History: Then and Now Ideally during the sophomore year.	HIST 290			
4 300-LEVEL CREDITS 4 300-level credits must be completed before the capstone seminar.	1.			
CAPSTONE Seminar HIST 490 Senior Seminar. Ideally, fall of senior year	HIST 490			
A total of 40 History credits. Up to 8 credits may be taken with faculty from outside the Macalester History Department. These non-departmental courses may be courses taken on study-away.				