



ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Students who major in history explore the emergence of the modern world from the places and peoples of the past. The major is flexible, enabling students to devise individual programs tailored to their specific needs and interests. Students interested in careers such as law or business can design programs of study that complement their course work in other departments and programs (for example, legal studies or economics). The department recommends that students acquire geographic and chronological breadth, taking courses in American, European and non-Western history of the pre-1800 and post-1800 periods.

What makes the program distinctive?

The history department's faculty includes prize-winning scholars of international reputation. Distinguished for research and teaching alike, our faculty brings cutting-edge knowledge to the undergraduate classroom. In our seminars, students

are challenged to articulate reasoned arguments in support of their views before an audience of their peers. Consistent with the Brandeis emphasis on providing a high-quality liberal arts education, we emphasize critical reading, thinking and writing skills.

FAST FACTS

Current number of majors and minors: 154

Number of faculty: 20

Can you minor in this program? Yes

Emphasis within the major:
East Asia, Latin America, modern Europe, U.S. history

Popular second majors:
Near Eastern and Judaic studies, politics

Website:
brandeis.edu/departments/history

ACADEMICS AND RESEARCH

Course offerings

Recent courses include “History of the Modern Middle East,” “History of Comparative Race and Ethnic Relations,” “Cultures in Conflict since 1300” and “Silk, Silver and Slaves: China and the Industrial Revolution.”

Requirements in the major

Majors must choose one course each in American history, European history, non-Western history, pre-1800 history and post-1800 history, as well as one course requiring a significant research paper.

Independent work in history

Students undertake independent studies in special topics of their interest guided by members of the history faculty. Those pursuing departmental honors write a senior thesis, a significant piece of original research closely advised by a faculty member. Thesis writers become true experts in their topic areas; some senior theses have led quickly to books.

BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Student-run clubs

History majors have the opportunity to participate in student-run organizations such as the Medieval Society, which is dedicated to celebrating the historical period of the Middle Ages, and the George Washington Club, which aims to celebrate and appreciate American history through literature.

Diverse internships

History and comparative literature double-major Michal D. '11 worked in community outreach and event planning at an Argentine organization that offers free legal advice and fights for the rights of minorities (specifically, indigenous groups), women and those struggling with poverty. History major Hilda P. '10 interned as a grant-writer for a Los Angeles nonprofit that helps other nonprofits develop business strategies while providing infrastructure and support.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Student awards

Recent graduates have won Brandeis University awards such as the Eugene C. Black Prize for Excellence in History and the Patrick Thomas Campbell Award in History.

Distinguished faculty

Five of our students and faculty have won Pulitzer Prizes, four in history and one in journalism. David Hackett Fischer, who serves as the Earl Warren Professor of History and university professor, won the Pulitzer Prize in History for “Washington’s Crossing,” one of many books that have made him one of the nation’s most beloved historians. His sweeping, event-centered undergraduate courses on the American Revolution, the Civil War and World War II are among the highest rated at Brandeis.

AFTER BRANDEIS

Prominent alumni

Among Brandeis’ history graduates are Allen Alter ’71, Emmy Award-winning producer at CBS News; Judith Shapiro ’63, the former president of Barnard College; Michael Walzer ’56, renowned political theorist; Jon Landau ’68, music producer and manager for Bruce Springsteen; Mitch Caplan ’79, former president and CEO of E*Trade; Martin Peretz ’59, editor-in-chief of The New Republic; and Tim Morehouse ’00, Olympic silver medalist in fencing.

Real jobs

Recent history alumni have gone on to become an FBI special agent, a celebrity style consultant on About.com, the program operation officer at International Relief and Development, the senior marketing director at Polar Electronics, counsel at Motion Picture Lic. Corp. and an admissions coordinator at Cambridge School of Weston. Many history alumni have changed lives through their work with Teach for America and the Peace Corps.

“My favorite class at Brandeis so far was ‘American Legal History’ taught by Professor Michael Willrich. The class was intensive, but Professor Willrich inspired the class to keep up with class work, encouraged discussion every class and offered assistance with study tips and suggestions on how to write a cohesive, effective paper.”

Linda L. '13, history and politics double major



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