The History Department offers a special track with a certificate in Public History for students who are interested in museum work or national park service. Public History students learn to present historical information to the public, curate museum exhibits, and work in historic sites such as Living History Farms. Our students have been very successful in finding employment. The curator for the Johnson County Historical Society is a UNI graduate. Another of our students is presently working as Curator of Interpretation at the Wisconsin Historical Society–Old World Wisconsin after holding the position of Education Coordinator at Elmhurst Historical Museum (Illinois).

Explore the Options
This pamphlet highlights just a few of the opportunities History degrees offer to students. Other students have become pastors, lieutenant colonels in the army, print production specialists, and, of course, teachers. We encourage you to come and explore the possibilities that UNI’s History program can offer to you!

Museums and National Parks

Studying the past to shape the future!

Department of History

https://csbs.uni.edu/history

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Discover the Possibilities at the University of Northern Iowa!
History at Work for You

CONNECTING YOU TO THE WORLDS OF BUSINESS, LAW, EDUCATION AND A VARIETY OF OTHER EXCITING CAREERS

- Education
- Law
- Business/Finance
- Archives/Historic Site Management
- Costume Design
- Government/Politics
- Journalism/Media
- Anthropology
- Institutional Administration
- Military
- Museums/National Parks
- Non-Profit Management
- Digital Humanities
- Writing/Publishing

Politics and Law

For students interested in politics or law, studying history is a fantastic choice. Many History students double major or minor in Political Science or Communication Studies. Majoring in History provides students with the context they need to understand contemporary political and social problems. It also prepares them for law school if they choose to pursue that path. Many well-known politicians including American Presidents Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt, Senator George McGovern, and former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown received degrees in History. President John F. Kennedy, an international affairs major, clearly understood the importance of history and authored two history books himself. Nancy Powell, the current ambassador to India, is a graduate of the UNI History program. Numerous UNI History graduates have gone on to become successful lawyers. One of our graduates is now a claims attorney at Federal Reserve Bank of Boston. Another former graduate of the History Department now works as the assistant director of human resources at a major corporation. A third alumnus became a policy analyst at the Center for Strategic & International Studies.

Administration and Human Resources

Some of our students pursue graduate education in History once they leave UNI and become professors or instructors at colleges and universities. Many others find jobs in administration or human resources. These jobs generally do not require advanced degrees. One of our former students is now Assistant Director of Outreach at the University of Northern Iowa. Another alumnus became UNI’s Athletic Academic Advisor. In addition to academic services, a History degree provides students with skills to become administrators or service providers in medical centers, nursing homes, child care centers, and corporations. One former graduate of the History Department now works as the senior human resource generalist at Emergency Medical Services Corporation.

Business and Finance

Creating a successful career in business does not require a business degree. History majors study diplomacy and conflict resolution, they practice communicating effectively, and they learn how differing personalities shape institutions and societies. Students study the history of economic crises and the impact different policy decisions have on economic growth. Many of our History students go on to develop successful careers in business, banking, and finance. One of our 2004 graduates is now Market Coordinator at Midtown Global Market. Another found a position as the Training & Organizational Development Manager at Franklin Energy Services. “Firms are looking for talent. They’re not looking for content knowledge, per se,” says Scott Rostan, founder of Training the Street Inc., which provides financial training courses for new hires at a number of investment banks.” (Melissa Korn, "Wealth or Waste? Rethinking the Value of a Business Degree," Wall Street Journal, Thursday, April 1, 2012)

Note from the Faculty

What can you do with a History Degree?

This is a question that students and their parents frequently ask when students consider majoring in History. As an undergraduate considering a History degree, I asked the same question. I had always enjoyed history, but I didn’t really want to teach high school, and I wasn’t sure what other options were available. UNI has a strong commitment to teacher training but, as it turns out, only about half of our 200 students are History education majors. History students go on to develop a wide range of interesting and lucrative careers. My undergraduate degree in History led me to graduate school and a career as a college History professor, but this is only one of many paths students can take. Our students have found jobs in business, banking, finance, museums, and administration in medical centers. Others have become pastors or pursued careers in the military. This pamphlet highlights a few of the many opportunities available to History Majors.

Emily Machen
Assistant Professor of History

History in the Press: What the Journalists Say

The press has focused considerable attention in the last decade on degrees leading to good jobs. History has fared well in these discussions. Graham Snowdon, deputy editor of The Guardian Weekly, recently reminded his readers that “from the aisles of a library to the corridors of power ... there will always be opportunities for those who can apply the lessons of the past to the problems of the present. History provides graduates with a wide range of transferrable skills. Principally, students develop the ability to understand and analyze issues and events to a high level of competence.” (http://www.guardian.co.uk/money/2010/jan/16/history-degree-careers)

Melissa Korn similarly promoted the liberal arts in a recent contribution to the Wall Street Journal. “Companies” she discovered, “say they need flexible thinkers with innovative ideas and a broad knowledge base derived from exposure to multiple disciplines. And while most recruiters don’t outright avoid business majors, companies in consulting, technology and even finance say they’re looking for candidates with a broader academic background. The business schools at George Washington University, Georgetown University, Santa Clara University and others are tweaking their undergraduate business curricula in an attempt to better integrate lessons on history, ethics and writing into courses about finance and marketing.” (Wall Street Journal, Thursday, April 12, 2012)