

**The Department of History
Social Sciences Element**

**General Education Program
Pacific Lutheran University**

Framing Language and Program Goals

History is the study of change and continuity in human society over time. Historians develop skills in evaluating evidence, organizing information, clarifying and structuring concepts, and writing narratives and expositions. Majoring in History is an excellent way to prepare for a career in teaching, research, library and information sciences, government services, journalism, law and business. In addition to offering a major and minor in History, the History Department offers a full range of courses in American, Asian, European, Latin American, and World history and students may complete any History course numbered in the 100s or 200s to meet part of the Social Sciences General Education Element.

General Education Element Description

Investigating Human Behavior, Culture, and Institutions

The social sciences investigate individual and collective human behavior, and the history, development and variation of human culture and institutions. To assure exposure to a wide variety of social science concepts, theories, and methods, student must select at least two courses chosen from different disciplines

History: studies variation and development over time and space within human societies and other units of human organization.

The discipline of history focuses on critical analysis of text-based evidence from the past and seeks a detailed, complex understanding of individual and collective human behaviors as they have emerged, intersected, and altered over time. Historical study examines and attempts to explain processes of change over time as they pertain to cultures, nations, institutions, value systems, and other major social phenomena. Historians also consider and outline patterns of causation that affect individual lives over time and how individuals, in turn, influence the world in which they live. Students of history develop lifelong habits of critical thinking, inquiry-based reading of texts, effective research skills, and appreciation of complexity and diversity in human behavior.

General Education Learning Outcomes

All History courses numbered between 100-299 at PLU meet the General Education Social Sciences criteria. History faculty have structured these courses to create the following learning outcomes for students who complete them successfully.

Students will:

- 1) read and learn to distinguish between primary and secondary written texts (*sources*) in the field of History;
- 2) identify, comprehend, and explain the structure of written arguments and claims made in specific primary and secondary sources;
- 3) learn and summarize key concepts presented in course activities and readings through identifying, analyzing, and explaining specific claims or ideas offered in primary and secondary sources;
- 4) learn and practice skills of critical oral expression and dialogue through interpreting and analyzing primary and secondary sources in small-group and large-group discussions;
- 5) learn and practice the evaluation of evidence (primary and secondary sources) as a means of forming and supporting a written or oral argument about a historical topic or question;
- 6) develop the ability to write a clear, cogent, and formal paper that uses a thesis statement to make an appropriate evidence-based argument about a selected topic or question in history (evidence may include primary and secondary sources);

- 7) use conflicting evidence when necessary in a paper or in other learning activities to achieve historical accuracy; demonstrate the ability to evaluate and explain multiple, complex sources or ideas when explaining a thesis statement;
- 8) use proper citations and footnotes within formal written assignments (history papers should conform to the *Chicago Manual of Style*);
- 9) develop the ability to determine, within reasonable limits, the magnitude and significance of historical changes that take place within a society or culture; and,
- 10) develop the capacity to *recognize diversity, complexity, and the moral dilemmas* inherent in the study of the history.

Alignment to ILOs

Critical Reflection: All history courses focus on contextual, detailed examination of primary and secondary sources courses. History students learn to compare the merits of specific, evidence-based claims about the past and to construct and explain their own claims about the past.

- Select sources of information using appropriate research methods, including those employing technology, and make use of that information carefully and critically.
- Consider issues from multiple perspectives.
- Evaluate assumptions and consequences of different perspectives in assessing possible solutions to problems.
- Understand and explain divergent viewpoints on complex issues, critically assess the support available for each, and defend one's own judgments.

Expression: History students must learn to identify and explain their evaluations of evidence in both written and oral formats.

- Communicate clearly and effectively in both oral and written forms.

Interacting with Others: Through critical discussions of evidence, history students learn to recognize the potential merits of others' claims about the past. History students learn how historians address conflict or disagreement through debates over evidence and its most accurate interpretation.

- Work creatively to identify and clarify issues of concern.
- Acknowledge and respond to conflicting ideas and principles, and identify common interests where possible.

Valuing: History classes encourage students to consider how a variety of human values have been formed and expressed in specific historical contexts. Students learn how values from the past have affected contemporary values in selected cases. History students learn to recognize and evaluate processes of conflict, conciliation, and reform in particular settings in the past. History students also learn how to set and meet high standards of accuracy and respect for evidence in their research practices, their written work, and their intellectual engagements with colleagues.

- Articulate and critically assess one's own values, with an awareness of the communities and traditions that have helped to shape them.
- Recognize how others have arrived at values different from one's own, and consider their views charitably and with an appreciation for the context in which they emerged.
- Approach one's commitments with a high level of personal responsibility and professional accountability.

Multiple Frameworks: To understand and appreciate the complexity of the past, history students must consistently examine evidence in its specific contexts and be capable of explaining historical phenomena through the perspectives of those living at the time in which the phenomena occurred.

- Recognize and understand how cultures profoundly shape different assumptions and behaviors.
- Cultivate respect for diverse cultures, practices, and traditions.