



COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES HISTORY

What Can I Do With a History Degree?

Only a small percentage of history majors go on to be historians; most go on, instead, to become lawyers, librarians, businesspersons, writers, archivists, researchers, teachers, politicians, and even entertainers. Leaders in every industry, from business to the arts, can point to their training as history majors as the starting point for their success.

Debunking Myths about History

Myth #1: HISTORY IS JUST OLD-FASHIONED LIBERAL ARTS. I NEED “REAL WORLD” SKILLS. I SHOULD MAJOR IN SOMETHING “SENSIBLE” EVEN IF IT’S NOT WHAT I’M REALLY EXCITED ABOUT.

A major study, the Collegiate Learning Assessment, recently tested college students nationwide at the start of their freshman year and then again after two years of study to gauge how well they were learning. It asked students to read a series of documents on a political or business problem and then write a memo about how to respond to it. **Liberal arts majors consistently outperformed their peers in business, communications, and other newer “practical” majors.**

Studying liberal arts teaches you critical thinking as well as imagination, empathy, and resourcefulness. It teaches you to research, evaluate evidence, communicate, and problem solve. Rather than train you narrowly for today’s job world (which will be obsolete twenty years from now), it teaches you **how to learn for a lifetime**. It teaches you not what to think (which will one day be outdated) but rather how to think.

Myth #2: I WON’T MAKE ANY MONEY IF I MAJOR IN HISTORY

A 2014 study by the Pew Research Center shows that the most important divide in terms of career earning potential is between those who earn a bachelor’s degree and those who do not. For young millennials, those who have a college degree earn on average \$17,500 a year than those who do not have degrees. You will be happier in life and much more likely to succeed if you study something you are passionate about rather majoring in something you are not interested in simply because you or your parents think it will lead to a higher salary.

A new report from Georgetown University’s Center on Education and the Workforce shows that **history majors earn higher median salaries than all other humanities majors and earn the same or more than those who majored in education, communications, or international relations**. Twenty percent of those history graduates were employed in management positions.

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UM-Flint History Majors Work / Have Worked As:

- Morning TV News Anchor at WJRT
- Curator of Collections, Michigan Historical Society
- Vice-President, Mid-State Bolt and Screw
- Assistant Prosecutor, Maryland Department of Transportation
- Public Information Officer, City of Flint
- Curator, Colorado Railroad Museum
- Many lawyers in the Flint area and beyond

Want to Talk about Becoming a History Major or Minor?

DROP BY FRENCH HALL 260 AND TALK TO ANY OF OUR FACULTY MEMBERS OR ADMINISTRATORS; OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE: umflint.edu/history/department-history

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