

History – Pre-Law

Department of History, College of Arts and Sciences



Career Opportunities

As the only History – pre-law degree offered by a public college or university in Illinois, Western's pre-law major prepares students for success in law school, after which they may pursue careers as attorneys in public or private legal fields; as civil rights or immigration attorneys; corporate or tax lawyers; defense or prosecuting attorneys; real estate or tax attorneys; sports or entertainment lawyers; employment or labor advocates; or specialists in constitutional, education, environmental, family, health, international or intellectual property law. WIU's History alumni are partners or associates in a variety of major law firms, own their own law firms or work in a variety of other private and public settings.

The WIU Department of History co-sponsors WIU's Annual Pre-Law Symposium, which features a keynote speaker from the legal profession, as well as a panel of law school admissions counselors, faculty and students, who all provide advice on applying to law school and pursuing legal careers.

Program Objective

The successful and varied legal careers of Western's history graduates stem in part from the nature of their undergraduate preparation in history. History's pre-law degree focuses on the historical origins and evolution of Anglo-American legal traditions. Like WIU's other history degrees, it provides graduates with the skills to formulate logical arguments, support those arguments with a wealth of critically evaluated and corroborated evidence and present their conclusions clearly and cogently in oral and written forms. The study of history also offers a valuable exploration of the historical contexts and institutional circumstances that shaped the creation and implementation of the law and legal processes, past and present.

History and Pre-Law Scholarships

The history department offers six scholarships for undergraduate majors with annual stipends between \$1,000 and \$5,000 each. History – pre-law majors enrolled in the Honors pre-law minor are also eligible to compete for several pre-law scholarships awarded by the Centennial Honors College.

History – Pre-Law Major

The Pre-Law degree includes 36 semester hours (SH) of history courses, 12 SH of courses in other fields and a minor field.

Students majoring in pre-law may also enroll in the honors pre-law minor (if a member of the Centennial Honors College) or the interdisciplinary minor in law and society, or may minor in legal studies, public administration or other fields related to their interests.

Student-Faculty Interaction

WIU history faculty members are award-winning teachers and scholars with advanced degrees from some of the finest universities in the world. Although many of Western's outstanding history faculty have gained national and international reputations as scholars through their publications and conference presentations, all history faculty regularly teach classes at all levels, including freshman surveys, sophomore seminars, specialized upper-division courses and senior seminars. As a result, all WIU history courses are taught by full members of the History faculty dedicated to contributing to the success of our students. Graduate

student assistants, selected from among the most outstanding graduate students pursuing the M.A. in History, provide individualized tutoring for those students needing it through the department's academic assistance center.

The history department stresses excellent teaching, outstanding professional advising and close student-faculty interaction. Student evaluations of faculty in all classes reflect the department's and University's emphasis on outstanding teaching. The department's academic advisor meets with each student each semester to plan and adjust their course of study. Small class sizes and individualized independent research and reading courses enrich students' educational experiences as history – pre-law majors. Students and alumni have consistently praised the quality of instruction and advising they receive from the history faculty at Western because of this attention.



Honors College Admission Requirements

The history department is proudly and actively engaged with WIU's Centennial Honors College. History faculty regularly teach Honors courses and supervise Honors research projects; history students have served as prestigious Centennial Honors College Scholars; and the department's Gordon W. Kirk Honors History Scholarship is reserved for history Honors students. To be eligible for the Centennial Honors College, entering freshmen must meet two of the following three criteria: Have an 1160 SAT (24 ACT), have a 3.4/4.0 GPA or higher, or be in the top 15 percent of their graduating class. Transfer and current WIU students who wish to join the Honors College (including the Quad Cities Honors Program) must have a 3.4 grade point average on a 4.0 scale based on 12 or more semester hours. Honors credit is given for honors coursework completed at other accredited institutions. Honors history students preparing a thesis are also eligible to compete for funding to support thesis research and travel, as well as the department's Honors Thesis Award.

Transfer Students

Students may become history – pre-law majors after beginning their higher education at a community college or another four-year college or university. Prospective transfer students are encouraged to contact the history department as early as possible in their academic career to ensure a smooth transition to WIU.

Research, Presentation and Publication Opportunities

History – pre-law majors are eligible for research funding through the WIU Department of History and College of Arts and Sciences Undergraduate Research Grants to cover the costs of conducting or presenting their historical or legal research. Each year, the history department provides opportunities for its students to give presentations on campus at WIU's Undergraduate Research Day and off campus at various academic conferences. WIU's online history journal, "Western Illinois Historical Review," publishes articles each year representing the most outstanding research produced by WIU history majors. History department faculty regularly lead short-term study-abroad programs for interested students, and students also have opportunities to spend a semester studying abroad.

University Libraries

Malpass Library contains more than one million catalogued volumes, more than 3,000 current journal subscriptions and access to thousands of online databases, including LexisNexis and the Congressional Serial Set. LexisNexis Academic contains all of the state and federal "Court Reporters," "Shepard's Citations" and more than 600 law review journals. The U.S. Congressional Serial Set includes all reports and other periodicals issued by the U.S. Congress from 1817-1980. The Library also provides a wealth of legal references in print, including the "Illinois Compiled Statutes Annotated," "U.S. Code Annotated," "Illinois Digest," "Northeast Reporter," "Illinois Legal Forms," all of the Illinois Institute of Continuing Legal Information treatises and many other treatises on a variety of legal topics. For a guide to the legal resources WIU offers, see wiu.edu/library/govpubs/legal.

In addition, the library provides computer access to legal and historical resources worldwide, including 800 other Illinois libraries with more than 22 million volumes. Moreover, the library's Interlibrary Loan Program brings materials from across the state and nation to WIU students within a day or two.

Campus Visits

The Admissions Reception Center (Sherman Hall 115) is open most weekdays from 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. when the University is in session. Group information sessions are available on Mondays and Fridays at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m., and individual appointments can be made on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Campus tours are conducted at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m., Monday through Friday. Appointments with advisors, faculty or a financial aid advisor may be arranged separately during the week. The Admissions Reception Center is open from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. most Saturdays when the University is in session. A group information session is available at 10 a.m., and a campus tour is conducted at 11 a.m. Schedule a visit or tour online at wiu.edu/admissions by selecting "Visit Campus." You may also schedule a visit, tour or individual appointment by calling toll free (877) PICKWIU (742-5948) or (309) 298-3157, or by emailing admissions@wiu.edu.

wiu.edu/history

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