Career Paths for History Majors and How to Pursue Them
Oklahoma State University

Business
Why it’s a good choice: The critical thinking and communication skills that History majors learn, along with our students’ ability to analyze how societies change over time, are a good preparation for careers in business.

Digital History Technologies
Why it’s a good choice: Technologies such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS), network imaging, mobile technologies, and web design are changing how we study and represent historical processes such as environmental change, migration, and economic activity. Acquiring digital skills can make students more competitive for various jobs in government, public history, NGOs, and the private sector.
What to do: Enroll in HIST 4073 Digital Methods in History, and pursue a minor in Geography, including courses that incorporate remote sensing and GIS technologies. Contact Dr. Jennifer Borland jennifer.borland@okstate.edu to find out more about the Digital Humanities Initiative.

Graduate School in History (M.A. and/or Ph.D.)
Why it’s a good choice: If you love history and have the aptitude, graduate studies can provide intellectual stimulation and lead to a career teaching history at the university level or working in the field of public history (see below), especially if you get funding for graduate work.
What to do: Talk to a History Department faculty member who teaches in your field(s) of interest about graduate programs and about the courses you should plan to take now to prepare for graduate school. The History Department at OSU offers an M.A. and Ph.D. in History. Explore our website history.okstate.edu or contact the Director of Graduate Studies, Dr. Richard Rohrs, richard.rohrs@okstate.edu to learn more.

Nonprofit Organizations
Why it’s a good choice: Working in nonprofit organizations requires knowledge of a broad range of areas and skills. The History major prepares you for writing, critical thinking, data analysis, and public presentations.
What to do: Consider graduate certificates in Nonprofit Management or Sustainable Business through the Spears School of Business. Take POLS 4000 Nonprofits and NGOs, with Dr. Haley Murphy, or contact her for more information haley.c.murphy@okstate.edu. Volunteer or intern with a local nonprofit.

Pre-Law
Why it’s a good choice: The History major, with its emphasis on critical thinking and communication skills (both oral and written), is excellent preparation for law school.
What to do: Consider the pre-law track of the History major. Review the pre-law advising resources at prelaw.okstate.edu and make an appointment with the Prelaw advisor Keely James keely.james@okstate.edu.

Public History
Why it’s a good choice: Public history—the profession of presenting history to the public through museums; archives; national parks; historical buildings and landscapes; film and new media; or writing histories for
government, corporate, or public audiences—is a good fit for students who want to work in history outside the teaching professions.

**What to do:** Talk with our public history faculty members, Dr. Bill Bryans bill.bryans@okstate.edu and Dr. Laura Arata larata@okstate.edu, and public history graduate students. The Art History program also often has Museum Studies courses to consider. Volunteer or do an internship for credit (HIST 4990) at a local museum, archive, or oral history program. Talk to History faculty members about other useful undergraduate courses, careers in this subfield, and our M.A. program’s concentration in public history, which has an excellent placement record for internship and jobs.

**Public Policy**

**Why it’s a good choice:** If you’d like to work in government, administration, or even nonprofits, a history degree can help you get there.

**What to do:** Consider a minor in Political Science, with courses from the Public Policy track: POLS 3493, 4403, 4413, 4453, 4593. Talk to your advisor about a Master of Public Administration degree. Volunteer or intern in local, state, or federal government positions.

**Social Studies Teaching**

**Why it’s a good choice:** Teaching history and related subjects in the K-12 schools is a great career with many employment opportunities. Our education system needs teachers with rigorous historical training.

**What to do:** Talk to your History academic advisor about how the Social Studies certification requirements fit with the History degree and how many additional hours it will take. Visit education.okstate.edu/peu/certification to see the Social Studies requirements. Also consider other methods of teaching—in private schools, abroad, or through on-the-job certification.

**Other Resources to Explore Careers in History:** Make an appointment to see a career counselor, see job listings, and take a career assessment at OSU’s career services: hireosugrads.com. The American Historical Association’s booklet Careers for Students of History is available online at http://www.historians.org/pubs/careers/index.htm. Explore the rest of the web site, too!

**What Have They Done with Their History Degree?**

A small sample of what recent OSU graduates have done while pursuing or after completing their history degrees.

**Internships:** National Wrestling Hall of Fame; Philbrook Museum of Art; OSU Museum of Art, Oklahoma Oral History Research Program; Sheerar Museum; OSU Special Collections and University Archives

**Further Education:** Purdue University History PhD program; Cambridge University History PhD program; University of Texas-Arlington History PhD program; IUPUI Museum Studies Masters program; University of Arkansas Law School; University of Oklahoma Law School; University of Arizona Masters of Public Health program; University of Oklahoma Masters of Public Administration

**Nonprofit Work:** City Year; Oklahoma American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU); Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma; Let’s Fix This

**Museums:** Cherokee Strip Museum; Gilcrease Museum; Philbrook Museum of Art

**Business:** Cornerstone Corporation; The Persimmon Group; Kicker Corporation

**Careers:** U.S. Foreign Service; Photographer; Writer; Social Studies teacher; National Park Service; Sustainable Farmer; U.S. Air Force, Army, and Marine Corps; International Consultant; Academic Advisor; Librarian