

HISTORY



The writer Zadie Smith has said that in history, “every moment happens twice, in the inside and the outside.”

At Swarthmore College, the study of history engages the inside and the outside, the personal and the collective.

We think about how history feels but also what its consequences are in the world. We study change over time and wrestle with essential questions of how and why. We study the distance between then and now, and work to understand the past for its own sake as well as its consequences in the present.

History students sift and interpret evidence and craft their own distinctive interpretations. We are detectives chasing clues, we are storytellers and mediators.

Our faculty members have diverse interests: Some study social, cultural, and political movements; others examine everything from ecology to sexuality to the history of food. What they all share is a commitment to empowering students to take a global, comparative approach to the art, practice, and study of history.

Ultimately, Swarthmore’s History Department gives students the intellectual and analytical skills to think critically about the past, the present, and the future.



Emma Otheguy '09

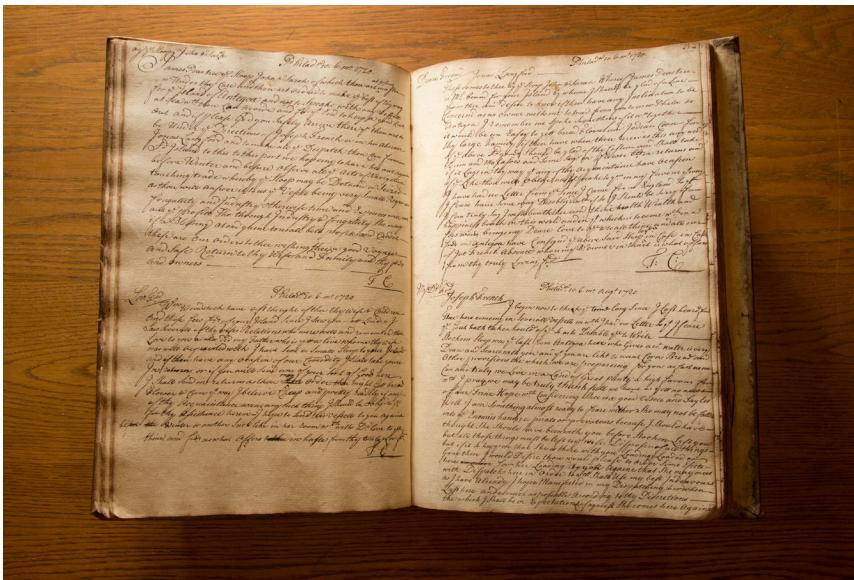
Honors History major

“Meaningful relationships defined my history experience here—I came to understand the humanities as a way of building community. In and out of irreverent but truth-seeking seminars, I honed the skills that have shaped my life as an author and historian.”

WHAT MAKES OUR PROGRAM UNIQUE

- Swarthmore history majors have the option to complete the requirements to graduate with a teaching certificate.
- Because it supports and supplements all disciplines, history makes an ideal and enriching double major with any subject.
- History courses bolster interdisciplinary programs in Asian Studies, Black Studies, Environmental Studies, Gender & Sexuality Studies, Interpretation Theory, Islamic Studies, Latin American and Latino Studies, and Peace & Conflict Studies.





INTERNSHIP AND RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

Here are just some of the countless institutions where Swarthmore history majors have gotten hands-on learning experiences:

- Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum
- Chadds Ford Historical Society
- Dominican Studies Institute at the City University of New York
- Historical Society of Pennsylvania
- Library of Congress
- Lower East Side Tenement Museum
- Mütter Museum
- NASA
- National Museum of American Jewish History
- National Security Archive
- Philadelphia Museum of Art
- Smithsonian Institute
- Supreme Court

EMPLOYMENT PATHS

From doctors to writers, professors to lawyers, Swarthmore history alumni are limited only by their ambition and imagination. Among our graduates are podcasters and labor organizers, politicians and entrepreneurs—even the director of baseball operations for a Major League team.

“The past is the biggest source of data and evidence about what we are and the biggest source of wisdom about what we might become. No story or artwork is complete without historical perspective; no policy should be made in ignorance of the past. History matters when we are at rest and when we are in motion.”

—TIMOTHY BURKE, PROFESSOR AND CHAIR OF HISTORY



WORLD-CLASS ARCHIVES

Swarthmore students are uniquely positioned to hone their skills as historians. In addition to other Philadelphia institutions—and the city itself—students have firsthand access to these rich collections on campus in McCabe Library.

Friends Historical Library

The largest research library in the U.S. for studying the Religious Society of Friends, FHL is utilized by scholars around the globe. In addition to Quaker history, FHL is an outstanding resource for studying abolitionism, women's rights, Native American history, and many other topics.

Swarthmore College Peace Collection

An unparalleled depository of antiwar and disarmament materials, SCPC houses the papers of many legendary social activists and is a leading resource on everything from women and peace to conscientious objection to the history of social work and other reform movements.

The Rare Book Room

Exceptional, distinctive materials—rare books, journals, periodicals, art publications, and other delights—await your use for research, scholarship, or enjoyment.



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