

The University Senate of Michigan Technological University

Proposal 11-25

Proposal to Establish a History Concentration within the Bachelor of Science in Social Science

Basic Program Information

Primary Contact: Laura Rouleau, Associate Teaching Professor

Program/Degree type: Concentration

Program Title: Bachelor of Science in Social Science, History Concentration

Planned Implementation Date: Fall 2025

Program location/modality: On-campus

Target student population: Existing students as double majors, new students interested in history concentration within a BS curriculum that focuses on methods and experience

Proposal

We propose transitioning the current BA in History program into a concentration within the Social Sciences BS. A history concentration within the Social Sciences BS will effectively and efficiently draw on the strengths of faculty throughout the Social Sciences department by placing a strong emphasis on research methods from across a diverse set of disciplines, including history, sociology, political science, archaeology, anthropology, law, and geography. We expect that this interdisciplinary methodological foundation will attract a wider range of students seeking to develop skills that are in demand in museums and historical institutions — the desired destination of the majority of our current History BA students— and beyond. This new program will also have an applied focus, allowing students to put these methods into practice through hands-on, experiential learning. This proposal will also begin the process of removing the History BA major (Program Code: SSH). We believe this will more effectively and efficiently draw on the strengths of faculty throughout the Social Sciences department by placing a greater emphasis on research methods from across a diverse set of disciplines, including history, sociology, political science, archaeology, anthropology, law, and geography.

This history program will build on the existing strengths of the Social Sciences department, allowing history students to graduate with one of the few history-focused Bachelor's of Science degrees in the country. This degree's emphasis on social science methods will also create more opportunities for our history majors to develop analytical skills and critical thinking abilities that will also be applicable outside of a history context, making them more adaptable as well as

increasing their marketable skills. This degree will emphasize critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and evidence-based historical interpretation, preparing students for a wide range of careers that require strong analytical and communication skills, including academia, public policy, law, journalism, museums, and education.

History is inherently interdisciplinary, drawing on insights from various social science disciplines. Studying history within a social sciences department encourages collaboration and interdisciplinary dialogue among faculty and students, enriching the educational experience and fostering a deeper understanding of historical phenomena within their broader social contexts.

In addition, history complements other social science disciplines by providing historical context and perspective to contemporary social issues and phenomena. The study of history within a Social Sciences department allows students to explore the historical roots of current societal challenges, enabling them to develop a more nuanced understanding of complex social dynamics. By studying the historical roots of inequality, conflict, globalization, and environmental change, students develop a deeper appreciation of the complexities of the modern world and are better equipped to address contemporary challenges.

General description and characteristics of program

This proposal creates a History concentration in the Bachelor of Science in Social Science degree program. The proposal emerged from a 2-day faculty workshop in April 2024, facilitated by the Chipstone Foundation, to reimagine the History major in the context of our Social Sciences Department. Faculty worked to identify departmental strengths that could contribute to a focused, skills-oriented program in historical research, addressing student interest in hands-on experiences and more immersive research. This proposal also builds on earlier work over the course of the last 2 years that has involved the history faculty reimagining the existing history program.

The purpose of creating this degree is three-fold. First, it will meet the existing demand among students pursuing other BS degrees who have been unable to earn a double major with the existing History BA. Second, it creates a history curriculum that more intentionally draws on the department's existing social scientific STEM methodologies. Third, because enrollments in the current BA in History (SSH) remain low despite concentrated efforts to increase them, folding history into social sciences as a concentration will contribute to building a larger cohort in the Social Science major and offer history students more options for other Social Science coursework. When this concentration is approved, the BA in History (SSH) will be simultaneously shelved and then dropped after the usual parking period.

Rationale

The first rationale is to facilitate dual majors in the history concentration. Rules at our University ([Senate Policy 402.1](#)) and general practice across the state (though no specific rule) require that a dual-major have the same degree type (BA or BS). In other words, students cannot double major in the History BA (SSH) unless their other degree is also a BA. However, there are only 9 other programs at Michigan Tech which offer BAs. A BA/BS combination is treated as two separate degrees (despite common parlance, the term ‘degree’ really only refers to the type, like BA, MS, MBA, or PhD), not a dual-major (the subject), and in order to earn a second degree, a student must complete at least an additional 32 credit hours at Michigan Tech that are not applied to their first other program’s degree requirements, effectively another full year in attendance. This rule prohibiting combining a BA and BS has prevented a number of students from pursuing a History degree in the past. Shifting History to a concentration in the Social Sciences BS will create more dual majors for BS-enrolled students within the Social Sciences Department (we have, for example, had a number of Anthropology majors who wanted History as well, but were blocked in that pursuit), as well as from across campus.

The second rationale for creating a History concentration within the Social Sciences BS is to leverage an increasing emphasis in the Social Sciences department on interdisciplinary scientific training, including natural and social sciences, in specialist areas such as archaeology, geographical information sciences (GIS), and quantitative analysis. This new focus better reflects core expertise among the department faculty in fields including environmental history, spatial history, architectural history, industrial history, and the history of science and technology. This History concentration option will provide students with technical skills demonstrated through hands-on projects (experiential learning, internships, capstone projects) that will allow them to more effectively showcase their skills for future employers.

The third rationale is that this redesign will also allow students to apply their social science methods skill set to real-world experiences during their course of study. We have developed substantial partnerships with community-based organizations eager to have history interns help to further their missions. These local organizations include the MTU Library Archives, the Finnish American Heritage Center’s Archives, the Carnegie Museum of the Keweenaw, and the Keweenaw and Houghton County Historical Societies. On campus, we regularly work with the Geospatial Research Facility and the MTU Archaeological Lab. We have also developed a partnership with the Visual and Performing Arts department to foster student collaboration across campus and across disciplines, particularly with regard to museums and museum displays, which will be the basis of a new course “Experiencing Museums.” These experiential learning opportunities are rare among history programs across the country and will set our

graduates apart and provide professional skills for jobs in many different kinds of cultural institutions.

Related programs: within MTU and at other institutions

Virtually all colleges across the country have degrees in History, most being BAs with a handful of BSs. History BS degrees are available at, notably, Georgia Tech, Florida A&M, and Utah State, which seem to have specifically decided to offer this degree in order to connect with their large populations of STEM-degree student populations. The only BS in History in the upper Midwest that we can find is at UW-Eau Claire.

Our proposed history concentration in the social sciences would attract interest from Michigan Tech students in current BS programs and students interested in a greater methodological focus for their area of study. Most of our undergrads are interested in a more applied history focus, that would allow them to go on to work in museums and other cultural institutions. This BS degree would also allow Michigan Tech students to dual major in a program with a strong focus in History. The emphasis in coursework on applied skills and research methods differentiates the proposed concentration from existing History curricula elsewhere

Projected Enrollment

5-7 students per year

Specialized Accreditation Requirements

None

Professional Licensure Requirements

None

Curriculum Details

Learning Goals

Upon completion of the Social Sciences, History Concentration BS program, students will be able to:

1. Identify major themes, issues, and developments in American history and in the historical experiences of other world regions; identify how those developments compare with larger historical patterns.
2. Understand and engage in interpretive discussions and/or debates about major societal changes, demonstrating a grasp of key historiographical issues.

3. Interpret and present the results of historical research effectively in both written and oral form using varied and appropriate technologies.
4. Work independently and collaboratively using interdisciplinary social science methods to conduct effective historical research using both primary sources and appropriate secondary sources.

Assessment Plan

Current history BA faculty will assess the History concentration within the Social Sciences BS and will work with the Assessment Manager to investigate ways to streamline or combine assessment and reporting.

Curriculum Design

Total Credits:120

I. ESSENTIAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS: 37 credits (24 credits not met by major)

A. Michigan Tech Seminar (fulfilled by SS1001)	(1 credit)
B. Math	(3 credits)
C. Natural and Physical Science	(3 credits)
D. STEM	(3 credits)
E. UN1015 Composition	(3 credits)
F. Foundations in the Human World (fulfilled by SS250X)	(3 credits)
G. Communication Intensive (fulfilled by SS4001)	(3 credits)
H. Intercultural Competency (fulfilled by SS3750)	(3 credits)
I. Arts and Culture	(3 credits)
J. SHAPE Elective (fulfilled by SS2001)	(3 credits)
K. STEM	(3 credits)
L. Essential Education Experience	(3 credits)
M. Activities for Well-being and Success	(3 credits)
	37 total credits

II.DEPARTMENTAL MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

A. Core (11 credits)

Students must take all of the following courses:

SS 1001 (1) Orientation to Social Sciences
 SS 2001 (3) Introduction to Social Science Research
 SS 3750 (3) Social Inequality
 SS 4001 (3) History of Social Thought
 SS 4910 (1) Professional Development for the Social Sciences

B. Social Science Research Methods (6-7 credits) Choose 2 classes from the following list:

SS 2050 (3) Fundamentals of Geographic Information Systems and Technologies
SS 2720 (3) Statistics for Social Science
SS 3221+SS 3222 (4) Archaeological Sciences & Lab
SS 3090 (3) Undergraduate Program for Exploration and Research in Social Sciences
SS 3210 (3) Field Archaeology
SS 3501 (3) Making History
SS 3960 (3) Cross-Cultural Immersion
SS 4009 (3) Introduction to Survey Methodology
SS 4010 (3) Applied Statistics for the Social Sciences
SS 4040 (3) Civic Communications
SS 4050 (3) Advanced GIS Methods and Projects
SS 4211 (3) Ethnographic Methods
SS 4220 (3) Archaeological Thought in Society
SS 4700 (3) Communities & Research

C. Culminating Experience: (3–4 credits)

Capstone, internship, thesis, or research experience. Take 1 from one of the following, in consultation with an advisor:

SS 3090 (3) Undergraduate Program for Exploration and Research in Social Sciences
SS 4000 (3) Independent Study
SS 4501 (3) Senior Thesis (Note: SS 4630 is a pre-req for this course; strongly recommended if student is intent on graduate school)
SS 4630 (1) Advanced Research in Social Science
SS 4700 (3) Communities & Research
SS 4920 (3) Internship Experience

Concentration Requirements (36 credits total)

D. Historical Foundations (12 credits)

Choose classes from the following list:

SS 1500 (3) Introduction to History
SS 2500 (3) United States History to 1877
SS 2501 (3) United States History since 1877
SS 2502 (3) European History to 1650
SS 2503 (3) European History since 1650
SS 2504 (3) World History to 1500
SS 2505 (3) World History since 1500
SS 3501 (3) Making History

E. Historical Knowledge Areas: (24 credits)

Choose courses from the following Area lists, with at least 12 cr. in any one area and at least 3 cr from each Area.

Area 1: Environment

SS 4530 (3) Deindustrialization and Urban Environment
SS 3515 (3) History of American Architecture
SS 3315 (3) Population, Health and Environment
SS 3240 (3) Reading the Landscape: Anthropology, Geography, History
SS 3520 (3) US Environmental History
SS 4120 (3) Sustainability Development & Communities
FW 4111 (3) Indigenous Natural Resource Management
SS 4553 (3) Material Culture Studies
SS 4200 (3) Environmental Anthropology
SS 4540 (3) Global Environmental History

Area 2: Science & Technology

SS 3530 (3) Automobile in America
SS 4530 (3) Deindustrialization and the Urban Environment
SS 3513 (3) History of Making Things: Craft and Industry in America
SS 3510 (3) History of American Technology
SS 3511 (3) History of Science in America
SS 3581 (3) History of Science
SS 3580 (3) Technology and Society in History
SS 3230 (3) Archaeology of Industry
SS 4550 (3) History of Technology
SS 4600 (3) Industrial Archaeology
SS 3505 (3) Military History of the U.S.
SS 3535 (3) History of Privacy
SS 3801 (3) Science, Technology, & Society

Area 3: Social & Cultural History

SS 2510 (3) Gender and the Past
SS 2750 (3) Contemporary Racial Inequality in the United States
SS 3105 (3) Native American and Indigenous Communities
SS 3260 (3) Latin American Cultural History
SS 3540 (3) History of Michigan
SS 3541 (3) Copper Country
SS 3542 (3) History of Detroit
SS 3552 (3) Renaissance & Reformation
SS 3553 (3) Empires in World History
SS 3560 (3) History of England I
SS 3561 (3) History of England II
SS 3661 (3) Civil Rights & Civil Liberties
SS 3750 (3) Social Inequality
SS 3910 (3) Histories and Cultures
SS 3915 (3) Experiencing Museums

SS 3950 (3) Topics in American History
SS 3951 (3) Topics in European History
SS 3952 (3) Topics in World History
SS 4001 (3) History of Social Thought

F. Free electives are required to bring the total number of credits to 120 credits.

Model Schedule

Year	Fall	Spring
1	SS1001 Orientation to the Social Sciences (1cr) SS1500 Introduction to History (3) SS2500/SS2502/SS2504 Area History I (3) MA1020 Quantitative Literacy (4) UN 1015 Composition (3) 14 credits	SS2001 Introduction to Social Science Research (3cr) SS2501/SS2503/SS2504 Area History II (3) SS2501/SS2503/SS2504 Area History II (3) SS3221 Archaeological Sciences (3) + SS3222 Archaeological Sciences Laboratory (1) SHAPE Elective (3) 16 credits
2	SS2510 Gender and the Past (3cr) SS3513 History of Making Things (3) SS3505 Military History of the US (3) SS2720 Statistics for Social Sciences (4) Science course (3) 16 credits	SS3510 History of American Technology (3cr) SS3511 History of Science in America (3) SS3530 The Automobile in America (3) STEM (3) Free Elective (3) 15 credits
3	SS2050 Intro to GIS (3cr) SS3501 Making History (3) SS3580 Technology and Society in History (3) SS3801 Science, Technology and Society (3) Communication Intensive (3) 15 credits	SS3090 Archival Experience (3cr) SS4550 History of Technology (3) Essential Education Experience(3) SS4910 Professional Development for Social Sciences (1) Free Elective (3) Free Elective (3) 16 credits
4	SS3240 Reading the Landscape (3cr) SS4553 Material Culture Studies (3) SS4630 Advanced Research in Social Sciences (1) Arts and Culture (3) Free Elective (3) Free Elective (3) 16 credits	SS4501 Senior Thesis (3cr) [or other capstone] Intercultural Competency (3) Free Elective (3) Free Elective (3) 12 credits

Faculty Qualifications

Current faculty for the History degree include Don Lafreniere, Mark Rhodes, Jonathan Robins, Laura Rouleau, Sarah Scarlett, and Steven Walton. All hold PhDs in history or cognate disciplines (e.g., history, archaeology, anthropology, geography) and are members of the graduate faculty. See links for their departmental faculty webpages.

Name	Role
Laura Walikainen Rouleau	Advisor/Associate Teaching Professor of History
Don Lafreniere	Professor of Geography and GIS
Mark Rhodes	Assistant Professor of Geography
Jonathan Robins	Associate Professor of History
Sarah Fayen Scarlett	Associate Professor of History
Steven Walton	Associate Professor of History

Resources Needed

Library and other learning resources needed

None. The degree program will make use of existing, sufficient resources.

Suitability of existing space, facilities, and equipment

Existing space, facilities, and equipment are suitable and sufficient for the new concentration in history.

Program Costs

No new costs; uses existing labs and resources