



GENEVA COLLEGE

Department of History, Political Science, and Sociology History Major

DEPARTMENTAL MISSION

The Department of History, Political Science & Sociology seeks to give all students an understanding of human society, its history and its present condition from a Christian perspective, and it seeks to develop in students an awareness of their appropriate role that society. The department offers majors in history, political science and sociology for students who wish to concentrate in those fields and it offers selected minors in related professional fields such as pre-law and criminal justice.

HISTORY MAJOR MISSION

The history major seeks to help students understand and evaluate the past through the collection, organization, and interpretations of evidence (historical research and writing), taking into consideration the dynamics of historical events, cause-and-effect relationships and the interpretations of historical periods and civilizations. In other words, the program is designed to encourage students to develop an historical imagination for the “how’s and why’s” of history as much as the “what’s, when’s, and where’s,” and to articulate their findings. It particularly seeks to help students approach the past in the spirit of Biblical faithfulness. The major is intended to complement Geneva’s core curriculum and to encourage students to gain a liberal arts background as the basis for future development and contributions to the Christian community and society.

OVERVIEW OF THE MAJOR

Introduction to Historical Studies is taken by all freshman history majors during the spring semester. It focuses on developing research and writing skills; asks “What is history?”; explores the intersection of faith and history; and helps students begin to think about careers for people who earn a degree in history.

The U.S. History and European History surveys are offered in three semesters rather than the traditional two semesters, allowing the student to delve deeper into the content and focus on subjects normally neglected in a two-semester survey. This also provides history majors with a firmer foundation for approaching upper-level courses within the history major.

After completing a variety of courses in U.S., European and non-western history, all history majors complete the Senior Seminar, a course designed as a capstone with focused reading, research and writing on a narrow topic. Recent offerings have included Colonialism and Post-Colonialism and Green History and Thought.

The members of the Geneva College history faculty seek to develop close working relationships with all history majors, in the hope of guiding them toward a vocational arena for which they are especially suited. Students interested in advanced study in a given area often pursue an independent study with a professor whose specializations intersect with their interests.

SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATION IN SOCIAL STUDIES

History and political science majors can achieve secondary education social studies certification. This makes Geneva students more marketable than others who are certified only in history or political science. Students seeking this certification must complete their major, a set of supplementary courses in other social studies disciplines, and a set of professional education courses, including student teaching. There are opportunities for students to participate in student teaching overseas. Additional information is available through the department of History, Political Science, & Sociology or through the department of Education.

OPPORTUNITIES

History majors at Geneva College can participate in internships at institutions such as the Heinz History Center in Pittsburgh (an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution) and the Merrick Art Gallery in New Brighton, Pennsylvania. Students have obtained internships through Pennsylvania. Historical and Museum Commission. Also, they have presented papers at the Student Conference of the biennial meeting of the Conference on Faith and History. Some students pursue graduate work in history or go to law school.

OFF-CAMPUS STUDY

The History department encourages students to spend a semester studying at the college’s campus in Rome or at other programs in England, South Africa, Uganda, Russia, Lithuania, China, Egypt, Costa Rica, Spain, and a number of other locations. In the U.S., the American Studies Program in Washington, D.C. provides internship opportunities in a variety of fields.

Short-term opportunities are also available during spring break, May term and the summer. These experiences broaden our students’ perspectives of the world in which they live and challenge their ideas about what it means to be a Christian. Off-campus programs can usually be completed as part of a student’s four-year program with courses often fulfilling major and college core requirements.

OUTCOMES

Students in the history program at Geneva College will develop:

- An understanding of major events and trends in American, European, and global history
- The capacity to gather evidence in a variety of forms (archival, textual, material, etc.); to critically read, analyze, interpret and discuss such evidence; and to clearly and concisely articulate his or her perspective in writing.
- The ability to understand the past through the study of historiographical literature, the philosophy of history (both of which will include expressly Christian perspectives), and the subsequent application of this material in class assignments and activities
- The ability to understand the contemporary world from the narrowly personal to the broadly global in view of past historical developments.

Our graduates regularly obtain teaching positions in both private and public schools. Currently, some of our recent graduates are pursuing graduate degrees in history at Kent State University, Syracuse University, the University of Wyoming, and Villanova University. Some of our students with history degrees have gone on to seminary and others to medical school.

OUR FACULTY

JEFFERY COLE (2003), Associate Professor of History and Coordinator of the department of Humanities; B.S., Lynchburg College; M.Ed., Lynchburg College; Ph.D., Bowling Green State University

THOMAS COPELAND (2004), Assistant Professor of Political Science; B.A., Geneva College; M.A., University of Pittsburgh; Ph.D., University of Pittsburgh

SEAN DOYLE (2008), Assistant Professor of History; B.A., Toccoa Falls, College; M.A., Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary; Ph.D., University of Edinburgh

BRADSHAW FREY (1984), Professor of Sociology; B.A., Geneva College; M.Div., STM, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary; Ph.D., University of Pittsburgh; department chair

ERIC J. MILLER (1999), Associate Professor of History; B.S., Lancaster Bible College; M.A., Trinity International University; Ph.D., University of Delaware

FREDERICK R. NEIKIRK, JR. (1992), Professor of Political Science; B.A., M.A., University of Delaware; Ph.D., University of Illinois

DONALD OPITZ (1999), Associate Professor of Sociology and Director, M.A. in Higher Education Program; B.A., Westminster College; M.Div., Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary; Ph.D., Boston University

ANDREA SMIDT-SITTEMA (2006), Assistant Professor of History; B.A., Calvin College; M.A., Ohio State University; Ph.D., Ohio State University



GENEVA COLLEGE

3200 College Avenue, Beaver Falls, PA 15010 | www.geneva.edu

ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE™