

International History (Qatar), BSFS

See international relations through the lens of social, cultural, and intellectual history

Go beyond how history has been told to decode the real human stories of loss, triumph, resilience, and connection that endure to this day. The major in International History (IHIS) combines a broad introduction to the analysis of historical changes that transcend national boundaries with the opportunity to add to global understandings of a particular theme or question in the context of a self-designed concentration.

Requirements

Eight courses total required for the IHIS major:

- HIST-3105 Global History (Year 3)
- Four IHIS Electives
- Three courses toward self-designed concentration

At least 2, but no more than 3, of the courses applied to the IHIS major must be non-history courses, and at least 1 of these non-history courses must be in the concentration.

Writing in the Major

The major in International History (IHIS) in the School of Foreign Service is rooted in the history of diplomacy and international relations, but it goes beyond the study of the formal relationships between states—the traditional subject matter of diplomatic history—to address themes in comparative, trans-regional and global history. Interdisciplinary in focus, the major draws on ideas and methodologies from subjects as varied as anthropology, philosophy, sociology, political science, religious studies, and literature. It is grounded in history, a discipline which places special emphasis on the development of critical thinking, textual analysis, argumentation, and writing skills.

A. Writing in the Discipline of History

The study of history and writing are inseparable. As a form of knowledge based on the interpretation of fragmentary records that survive from the past, all historians use the written word to posit an argument and defend it with evidence. Because historical sources reveal only part of the whole story, no single historical work can ever be fully comprehensive or definitive. As a result, historians continually debate the varying interpretations that emerge between different schools of thought. Ultimately, the quality of historical writing is determined by the successful collection, organization, and presentation of evidence in support of a coherent and convincing thesis.

At its core, historical writing depends on judgment: the thoughtful selection of good research questions and the identification and interpretation of historical sources. Historians use two types of evidence: primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are documents or other records created at the time of the events under analysis; they come directly from the participants themselves. Secondary sources are the findings of writers who were not direct participants in a historical episode but those who have subsequently investigated primary evidence of it. Works of scholarship are the most

common secondary sources students of history will encounter. In certain situations, a secondary source can become a primary one.

Sources, whether primary or secondary, do not answer historical questions themselves. Students of history must sift with a critical eye through the information provided in their sources and then rely on their own judgment to construct a historical argument grounded in evidence. In order to determine the reliability of their sources, historians read documents closely and place them in historical context. They ask critical questions to determine who wrote the document, when and where it was created, and for what purpose. The capacity to determine what matters—to think critically about what evidence to include and what to exclude and how to frame one's analysis—is one of the core skills students of history acquire through writing.

Writing in history takes many forms. Some history papers are organized as narratives that tell stories of people and events in the past; others are more analytical and organized as an essay. Most historical writing incorporates both narrative and analysis. Some papers deal with historiography, that is, how different historians or schools of thought have approached the history of a particular subject. Other papers deal directly with history, analyzing not simply what happened but why and how it happened. Whatever the format, history students must begin with a thesis statement and the evidence bolstering their argument must always be divulged using a responsible and consistent citation style.

B. Integrated Writing in the IHIS Major

As they move through the SFS Core Curriculum and meet the requirements towards their major, IHIS students repeatedly encounter and practice various forms of historical writing. Students of history are typically asked to write many kinds of papers, including document analyses, book reviews, response papers, bibliographic surveys, historiographical essays, research or exhibit proposals, or research papers. They might also be asked to develop a digital history project, which would involve writing text to accompany any digital maps or images.

All SFS students, including IHIS majors, take history courses as part of the Core Curriculum. These courses introduce students to writing in the discipline of history through the careful reading and discussion of primary sources and writing assignments that require engagement with the past based on evidence-based analysis and interpretation. In HIST courses in the 1100-2999 range, students continue to work on primary sources, but they will more frequently encounter differing interpretations of modern scholars. They will become more fully cognizant of the wide variety of sources available for historical analysis, and they will experiment with different types of written assignments that further hone their ability to select and interpret reliable evidence, to contextualize that evidence, and to build and support analytical arguments in written form.

IHIS majors complete a total of eight courses, the majority of which are taught by historians. All IHIS majors are required to take HIST 3105, Global Perspectives on International History, which is a reading and writing-intensive gateway colloquium. In addition, they take four courses selected from an approved IHIS list, including at least one of which must be a seminar (numbered from HIST 3000-4999). They also select three courses, including at least one non-History course, as part of a thematic, regional, or periodic concentration within the major. At least 2, but no more than 3, of the courses applied to the major must come from outside the History Department.

All IHIS majors take at least two courses numbered HIST 3000+ but most take more than that. These discussion-based seminars require more substantial reading (in both primary and secondary sources) and more complex and substantial writing assignments, including those that require historical research and extensive use of the library. Many IHIS majors go on to complete the year-long Senior Honors Seminar, in which they research and write a significant and original historical thesis under the mentorship of the Seminar director and individual faculty members. In the Honors Seminar, students routinely review and comment on each other's drafts. This feedback, combined with that provided by faculty, allows students to continually develop and revise their writing across the academic year.

HIST 3105 Global Perspectives on International History fulfills the Integrated Writing requirement in the IHIS major.

Core Curriculum Requirements

All GU-Q students complete the same core curriculum requirements as students in Washington, D.C. There are, however, some slight differences in the sequencing of certain core courses at the Doha campus.

GU-Q students fulfill the core Writing and core Humanities: Art, Literature, and Cultures (HALM) requirements in one of the following ways:

1. Take WRIT 1155 (Fall Year 1) followed by WRIT 1165 (Spring Year 1) or
2. Take WRIT 1155 (Fall Year 1) followed by any HALM course (before Fall Year 3)

HALM courses cannot double count between the core and any other academic program.

GU-Q students must fulfill the core government requirement as follows:

1. GOVT 1400 Comparative Political Systems (Spring Year 1)
2. GOVT 1600 International Relations (Fall Year 2)

Failure to complete the core government sequence as described above will adversely affect a student's ability to declare the IPOL major and/or register for upper-level courses in government and politics.

GU-Q students are required to take two Engaging Diversity courses, one domestic and one global. At GU-Q, domestic diversity is defined as pertaining to the Arab World and global diversity is defined as pertaining to the rest of the world.

Students are expected to complete most of the core curriculum courses during their freshman and sophomore years.

Honors in the Major

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The honors program allows the student to examine a significant scholarly issue in detail and to focus his or her time and attention on an important issue in which he or she is deeply interested. Honors theses are original works of thought and research, not merely summaries of the work and ideas of others.

To apply for IHIS honors, as student must:

- Have a GPA of 3.5, or strong evidence of the capacity to achieve it
- Submit a thesis proposal to the IHIS faculty chairperson or curricular dean by the stated deadline.

To earn IHIS honors, a student must:

- Complete the IHIS Honors Seminar in the senior year
- Submit a final written thesis that is approved by the IHIS faculty. Honors theses are ordinarily 50-80 pages long; however, students should work with their thesis advisor to determine a suitable length
- Give a formal, public presentation of his or her research in the spring semester in which the thesis is completed. The entire Georgetown community is invited to this event
- Earn a cumulative grade point average of 3.5 and a grade point average of 3.67 in the major by the date of graduation.

For more details, please see the Honors in the Major Policy (<https://www.qatar.georgetown.edu/programs/academic-affairs-policies/honors-major-policy>) for Georgetown University in Qatar SFS students.