

This course satisfies Indiana State University's Historical Studies requirement for the General Education program.

History offers a unique way to understand the world. It is a path to knowledge that engages in a creative and critical exploration of the past in order to illuminate the patterns, complexities, and contingencies that shape the human experience. As a result, History encompasses not only the individuals and groups whose interactions spark change over time but also the economic, political, social, cultural, scientific, religious, gender, and geographic forces, among others, that influence their behavior. Historians seek to understand the past by emphasizing the importance of context, establishing cause and effect, determining connections between individuals and events, applying cross-cultural analyses, and weighing different perspectives, all while carefully relying on documented source material to arrive at well-supported conclusions.

Because of this distinct approach, the study of History provides students with the opportunity to build valuable critical thinking skills based on the analysis of evidence and construction of argument. At the same time, it encourages students to think beyond the constraints of contemporary viewpoints. The application of an historical perspective to any problem means taking account of its long-term causes and considering the long-term implications of any solution. A student whose knowledge of the world and its development is informed by an understanding of historical time, context, and perspective is someone who can connect the present with the past, who has acquired a sense of the richness and diversity of the human experience, and who, therefore, is prepared to be an informed and engaged citizen.

Specific learning objectives of this, and all Historical Studies courses, include:

1. understanding cause and effect, particularly over time and in context
2. understanding change and continuity over time
3. understanding sources or evidence within the context of time, place, and culture
4. recognizing the value of an historical perspective to understanding the world today