

**History Department  
Sonoma State University  
FOR WEBSITE**

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

The History Department at Sonoma State prepares its students to analyze primary and secondary sources and understand the subjectivities inherent in such texts. During their final year, students must take a Senior Seminar (Hist 498), where they write and orally present twenty- to forty-page research papers, which are based on primary and secondary sources, and which identify key historiography.

*Objectives:*

**1 – Analyze and use primary and secondary sources.**

Students learn to differentiate between primary and secondary sources and to evaluate the reliability of such sources.

**2 – Understand historical debate and controversies.**

Students learn to understand diverse interpretations and to examine different sides of historical debates.

**3 – Gain an understanding of historiography in given region and time period.**

Students learn to understand the ways historians in given regions and time periods have approached history and how the field has changed as new evidence is uncovered and re-examined.

**4 – Understand how to use evidence in writing research papers.**

Students learn to use leading historical journals, texts, and primary sources to examine the ways historians build arguments from evidence. Students in the history program also learn to use proper citations.

**5 – Productive skills: writing and oral expression.**

Students hone their writing and speaking skills and learn to articulate an argument regarding key historical events.

*Rationale for Objectives:*

The American Historical Association notes that history is at the heart of liberal learning and, as such, students shall participate knowledgeably in the affairs in the world around them, drawing upon understandings shaped through reading, writing, discussions, and lectures concerning the past. Students need to exhibit sensitivities to human values in their own and other cultural traditions and, in turn, establish values of their own. Ultimately, students ought to respect scientific and technological developments and recognize the impact of these developments on humankind, grasping the connections between history and life.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>This is paraphrased from “Liberal Learning and the History Major,” The American Historical Association website. (Accessed June 5, 2007 at: <http://www.historians.org/pubs/Free/Liberallearning.htm>)