

History Major Field

SCIENCE, ENVIRONMENT, TECHNOLOGY AND HEALTH

Field Description

This field introduces students to the global history of science, technology, health and the environment. Through a range of courses in pre-modern and modern Americas, Asia, Africa and Europe, students will learn to denaturalize both knowledge about and control over the environment and the human body, contextualizing them in complex processes of social, cultural and political construction. Students will develop critical thinking and writing ability to 1) question the assumption that scientific knowledge is the product of a steady, linear process of development disconnected from the embodied existences of its practitioners, 2) identify the political and cultural nature of scientific and technological transformations, 3) historicize the shifting boundaries between science and other ways of viewing the world, 4) comprehend science, technology and medicine as contingent developments whose itineraries span continents, and 5) examine health challenges that minority populations face and healthcare inequalities between the Global North and South.

In addition to students majoring in other fields in History, this field invites students interested in pre-health studies, STEM, and environmental studies. Allowing them to link their interests in those areas with the study of history and its humanistic form of inquiry, the field will allow students to not only expand their interest in history but also gain essential perspectives to understand a wide range of issues in health, engineering, and environmental management and justice.

As a new addition to the History major, several of this field's courses are still in the process of being developed. Those that are not yet in the Course Catalog but will be taught sometime in the coming two or three years are listed separately below.

Existing Courses

HIST 238 – The Scientific Revolution and the European Enlightenment
HIST 272 – Global History of HIV/AIDS
HIST 331 – Alchemy, Astrology, and Magic in Early Modern Europe
HIST 342 – History of Public Health
HIST 360 – Corn, Farming and the Roots of American Culture
HIST 371 – Colonial Body Politics
HIST 3xx – Science and Technology in Modern China

Planned New Courses

HIST 1xx – Introduction to the History of Science
HIST 1xx – Health and Sickness in Early Modern Europe
HIST 2xx – Western Medicine Before the Twentieth Century
HIST 2xx – Histories of Sexually Transmitted Infections
HIST 2xx – Technology and Material Culture of Early Modern East Asia
HIST 2xx – History of North American Wilderness
HIST 3xx – Health and Healing in Africa