

# The University Senate of Michigan Technological University

Proposal 11-25

## Proposal to Establish a History Concentration within the Bachelor of Science in Social Science

### Basic Program Information

**Primary Contact:** Laura Rouleau, Associate Teaching Professor

**Program/Degree type:** Concentration

**Program Title:** Bachelor of Science in Social Science, History Concentration

**Planned Implementation Date:** Fall 2025

**Program location/modality:** On-campus

**Target student population:** Existing students as double majors, new students interested in history concentration within a BS curriculum that focuses on methods and experience

### Proposal

We propose transitioning the current BA in History program into a concentration within the Social Sciences BS. A history concentration within the Social Sciences BS will effectively and efficiently draw on the strengths of faculty throughout the Social Sciences department by placing a strong emphasis on research methods from across a diverse set of disciplines, including history, sociology, political science, archaeology, anthropology, law, and geography. We expect that this interdisciplinary methodological foundation will attract a wider range of students seeking to develop skills that are in demand in museums and historical institutions — the desired destination of the majority of our current History BA students— and beyond. This new program will also have an applied focus, allowing students to put these methods into practice through hands-on, experiential learning. This proposal will also begin the process of removing the History BA major (Program Code: SSH). We believe this will more effectively and efficiently draw on the strengths of faculty throughout the Social Sciences department by placing a greater emphasis on research methods from across a diverse set of disciplines, including history, sociology, political science, archaeology, anthropology, law, and geography.

This history program will build on the existing strengths of the Social Sciences department, allowing history students to graduate with one of the few history-focused Bachelor's of Science degrees in the country. This degree's emphasis on social science methods will also create more opportunities for our history majors to develop analytical skills and critical thinking abilities that will also be applicable outside of a history context, making them more adaptable as well as

increasing their marketable skills. This degree will emphasize critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and evidence-based historical interpretation, preparing students for a wide range of careers that require strong analytical and communication skills, including academia, public policy, law, journalism, museums, and education.

History is inherently interdisciplinary, drawing on insights from various social science disciplines. Studying history within a social sciences department encourages collaboration and interdisciplinary dialogue among faculty and students, enriching the educational experience and fostering a deeper understanding of historical phenomena within their broader social contexts.

In addition, history complements other social science disciplines by providing historical context and perspective to contemporary social issues and phenomena. The study of history within a Social Sciences department allows students to explore the historical roots of current societal challenges, enabling them to develop a more nuanced understanding of complex social dynamics. By studying the historical roots of inequality, conflict, globalization, and environmental change, students develop a deeper appreciation of the complexities of the modern world and are better equipped to address contemporary challenges.

### General description and characteristics of program

This proposal creates a History concentration in the Bachelor of Science in Social Science degree program. The proposal emerged from a 2-day faculty workshop in April 2024, facilitated by the Chipstone Foundation, to reimagine the History major in the context of our Social Sciences Department. Faculty worked to identify departmental strengths that could contribute to a focused, skills-oriented program in historical research, addressing student interest in hands-on experiences and more immersive research. This proposal also builds on earlier work over the course of the last 2 years that has involved the history faculty reimagining the existing history program.

The purpose of creating this degree is three-fold. First, it will meet the existing demand among students pursuing other BS degrees who have been unable to earn a double major with the existing History BA. Second, it creates a history curriculum that more intentionally draws on the department's existing social scientific STEM methodologies. Third, because enrollments in the current BA in History (SSH) remain low despite concentrated efforts to increase them, folding history into social sciences as a concentration will contribute to building a larger cohort in the Social Science major and offer history students more options for other Social Science coursework. When this concentration is approved, the BA in History (SSH) will be simultaneously shelved and then dropped after the usual parking period.

## Rationale

The first rationale is to facilitate dual majors in the history concentration. Rules at our University ([Senate Policy 402.1](#)) and general practice across the state (though no specific rule) require that a dual-major have the same degree type (BA or BS). In other words, students cannot double major in the History BA (SSH) unless their other degree is also a BA. However, there are only 9 other programs at Michigan Tech which offer BAs. A BA/BS combination is treated as two separate degrees (despite common parlance, the term ‘degree’ really only refers to the type, like BA, MS, MBA, or PhD), not a dual-major (the subject), and in order to earn a second degree, a student must complete at least an additional 32 credit hours at Michigan Tech that are not applied to their first other program’s degree requirements, effectively another full year in attendance. This rule prohibiting combining a BA and BS has prevented a number of students from pursuing a History degree in the past. Shifting History to a concentration in the Social Sciences BS will create more dual majors for BS-enrolled students within the Social Sciences Department (we have, for example, had a number of Anthropology majors who wanted History as well, but were blocked in that pursuit), as well as from across campus.

The second rationale for creating a History concentration within the Social Sciences BS is to leverage an increasing emphasis in the Social Sciences department on interdisciplinary scientific training, including natural and social sciences, in specialist areas such as archaeology, geographical information sciences (GIS), and quantitative analysis. This new focus better reflects core expertise among the department faculty in fields including environmental history, spatial history, architectural history, industrial history, and the history of science and technology. This History concentration option will provide students with technical skills demonstrated through hands-on projects (experiential learning, internships, capstone projects) that will allow them to more effectively showcase their skills for future employers.

The third rationale is that this redesign will also allow students to apply their social science methods skill set to real-world experiences during their course of study. We have developed substantial partnerships with community-based organizations eager to have history interns help to further their missions. These local organizations include the MTU Library Archives, the Finnish American Heritage Center’s Archives, the Carnegie Museum of the Keweenaw, and the Keweenaw and Houghton County Historical Societies. On campus, we regularly work with the Geospatial Research Facility and the MTU Archaeological Lab. We have also developed a partnership with the Visual and Performing Arts department to foster student collaboration across campus and across disciplines, particularly with regard to museums and museum displays, which will be the basis of a new course “Experiencing Museums.” These experiential learning opportunities are rare among history programs across the country and will set our

graduates apart and provide professional skills for jobs in many different kinds of cultural institutions.

### Related programs: within MTU and at other institutions

Virtually all colleges across the country have degrees in History, most being BAs with a handful of BSs. History BS degrees are available at, notably, Georgia Tech, Florida A&M, and Utah State, which seem to have specifically decided to offer this degree in order to connect with their large populations of STEM-degree student populations. The only BS in History in the upper Midwest that we can find is at UW-Eau Claire.

Our proposed history concentration in the social sciences would attract interest from Michigan Tech students in current BS programs and students interested in a greater methodological focus for their area of study. Most of our undergrads are interested in a more applied history focus, that would allow them to go on to work in museums and other cultural institutions. This BS degree would also allow Michigan Tech students to dual major in a program with a strong focus in History. The emphasis in coursework on applied skills and research methods differentiates the proposed concentration from existing History curricula elsewhere

### Projected Enrollment

5-7 students per year

### Specialized Accreditation Requirements

None

### Professional Licensure Requirements

None

## Curriculum Details

### Learning Goals

Upon completion of the Social Sciences, History Concentration BS program, students will be able to:

1. Identify major themes, issues, and developments in American history and in the historical experiences of other world regions; identify how those developments compare with larger historical patterns.
2. Understand and engage in interpretive discussions and/or debates about major societal changes, demonstrating a grasp of key historiographical issues.

3. Interpret and present the results of historical research effectively in both written and oral form using varied and appropriate technologies.
4. Work independently and collaboratively using interdisciplinary social science methods to conduct effective historical research using both primary sources and appropriate secondary sources.

## Assessment Plan

Current history BA faculty will assess the History concentration within the Social Sciences BS and will work with the Assessment Manager to investigate ways to streamline or combine assessment and reporting.

## Curriculum Design

**Total Credits:120**

### **I. ESSENTIAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS: 37 credits (24 credits not met by major)**

A. <b>Michigan Tech Seminar</b> (fulfilled by SS1001)	(1 credit)
B. Math	(3 credits)
C. Natural and Physical Science	(3 credits)
D. STEM	(3 credits)
E. UN1015 Composition	(3 credits)
F. Foundations in the Human World (fulfilled by SS250X)	(3 credits)
G. Communication Intensive (fulfilled by SS4001)	(3 credits)
H. Intercultural Competency (fulfilled by SS3750)	(3 credits)
I. Arts and Culture	(3 credits)
J. SHAPE Elective (fulfilled by SS2001)	(3 credits)
K. STEM	(3 credits)
L. Essential Education Experience	(3 credits)
M. Activities for Well-being and Success	(3 credits)
	<b>37 total credits</b>

### **II. DEPARTMENTAL MAJOR REQUIREMENTS**

A. **Core** (11 credits)

Students must take all of the following courses:

SS 1001 (1) Orientation to Social Sciences

SS 2001 (3) Introduction to Social Science Research

SS 3750 (3) Social Inequality

SS 4001 (3) History of Social Thought

SS 4910 (1) Professional Development for the Social Sciences

**B. Social Science Research Methods (6-7 credits)** Choose 2 classes from the following list:

- SS 2050 (3) Fundamentals of Geographic Information Systems and Technologies
- SS 2720 (3) Statistics for Social Science
- SS 3221+SS 3222 (4) Archaeological Sciences & Lab
- SS 3090 (3) Undergraduate Program for Exploration and Research in Social Sciences
- SS 3210 (3) Field Archaeology
- SS 3501 (3) Making History
- SS 3960 (3) Cross-Cultural Immersion
- SS 4009 (3) Introduction to Survey Methodology
- SS 4010 (3) Applied Statistics for the Social Sciences
- SS 4040 (3) Civic Communications
- SS 4050 (3) Advanced GIS Methods and Projects
- SS 4211 (3) Ethnographic Methods
- SS 4220 (3) Archaeological Thought in Society
- SS 4700 (3) Communities & Research

**C. Culminating Experience: (3–4 credits)**

Capstone, internship, thesis, or research experience. Take 1 from one of the following, in consultation with an advisor:

- SS 3090 (3) Undergraduate Program for Exploration and Research in Social Sciences
- SS 4000 (3) Independent Study
- SS 4501 (3) Senior Thesis (Note: SS 4630 is a pre-req for this course; strongly recommended if student is intent on graduate school)
- SS 4630 (1) Advanced Research in Social Science
- SS 4700 (3) Communities & Research
- SS 4920 (3) Internship Experience

**Concentration Requirements (36 credits total)**

**D. Historical Foundations (12 credits)**

Choose classes from the following list:

- SS 1500 (3) Introduction to History
- SS 2500 (3) United States History to 1877
- SS 2501 (3) United States History since 1877
- SS 2502 (3) European History to 1650
- SS 2503 (3) European History since 1650
- SS 2504 (3) World History to 1500
- SS 2505 (3) World History since 1500
- SS 3501 (3) Making History

**E. Historical Knowledge Areas:** (24 credits)

Choose courses from the following Area lists, with at least 12 cr. in any one area and at least 3 cr from each Area.

**Area 1: Environment**

SS 4530 (3) Deindustrialization and Urban Environment  
SS 3515 (3) History of American Architecture  
SS 3315 (3) Population, Health and Environment  
SS 3240 (3) Reading the Landscape: Anthropology, Geography, History  
SS 3520 (3) US Environmental History  
SS 4120 (3) Sustainability Development & Communities  
FW 4111 (3) Indigenous History  
SS 4553 (3) Material Culture Studies  
SS 4200 (3) Environmental Anthropology  
SS 4540 (3) Global Environmental History

**Area 2: Science & Technology**

SS 3530 (3) Automobile in America  
SS 4530 (3) Deindustrialization and the Urban Environment  
SS 3513 (3) History of Making Things: Craft and Industry in America  
SS 3510 (3) History of American Technology  
SS 3511 (3) History of Science in America  
SS 3581 (3) History of Science  
SS 3580 (3) Technology and Society in History  
SS 3230 (3) Archaeology of Industry  
SS 4550 (3) History of Technology  
SS 4600 (3) Industrial Archaeology  
SS 3505 (3) Military History of the U.S.  
SS 3535 (3) History of Privacy  
SS 3801 (3) Science, Technology, & Society

**Area 3: Social & Cultural History**

SS 2510 (3) Gender and the Past  
SS 2750 (3) Contemporary Racial Inequality in the United States  
SS 3105 (3) Native American and Indigenous Communities  
SS 3260 (3) Latin American Cultural History  
SS 3540 (3) History of Michigan  
SS 3541 (3) Copper Country  
SS 3542 (3) History of Detroit  
SS 3552 (3) Renaissance & Reformation  
SS 3553 (3) Empires in World History  
SS 3560 (3) History of England I  
SS 3561 (3) History of England II  
SS 3661 (3) Civil Rights & Civil Liberties

SS 3750 (3) Social Inequality  
SS 3910 (3) Histories and Cultures  
SS 3915 (3) Experiencing Museums  
SS 3950 (3) Topics in American History  
SS 3951 (3) Topics in European History  
SS 3952 (3) Topics in World History  
SS 4001 (3) History of Social Thought

F. Free electives (38-40 credits)



## Model Schedule

Year	Fall	Spring
1	SS1001 Orientation to the Social Sciences (1cr) SS1500 Introduction to History (3) SS2500/SS2502/SS2504 Area History I (3) MA1020 Quantitative Literacy (4) UN 1015 Composition (3) <b>14 credits</b>	SS2001 Introduction to Social Science Research (3cr) SS2501/SS2503/SS2504 Area History II (3) SS2501/SS2503/SS2504 Area History II (3) SS3221 Archaeological Sciences (3) + SS3222 Archaeological Sciences Laboratory (1) SHAPE Elective (3) <b>16 credits</b>
2	SS2510 Gender and the Past (3cr) SS3513 History of Making Things (3) SS3505 Military History of the US (3) SS2720 Statistics for Social Sciences (4) Science course (3) <b>16 credits</b>	SS3510 History of American Technology (3cr) SS3511 History of Science in America (3) SS3530 The Automobile in America (3) STEM (3) Free Elective (3) <b>15 credits</b>
3	SS2050 Intro to GIS (3cr) SS3501 Making History (3) SS3580 Technology and Society in History (3) SS3801 Science, Technology and Society (3) Communication Intensive (3) <b>15 credits</b>	SS3090 Archival Experience (3cr) SS4550 History of Technology (3) Essential Education Experience(3) SS4910 Professional Development for Social Sciences (1) Free Elective (3) Free Elective (3) <b>16 credits</b>
4	SS3240 Reading the Landscape (3cr) SS4553 Material Culture Studies (3) SS4630 Advanced Research in Social Sciences (1) Arts and Culture (3) Free Elective (3) Free Elective (3) <b>16 credits</b>	SS4501 Senior Thesis (3cr) [or other capstone] Intercultural Competency (3) Free Elective (3) Free Elective (3) <b>12 credits</b>

## Faculty Qualifications

Current faculty for the History degree include Don Lafreniere, Mark Rhodes, Jonathan Robins, Laura Rouleau, Sarah Scarlett, and Steven Walton. All hold PhDs in history or cognate disciplines (e.g., history, archaeology, anthropology, geography) and are members of the graduate faculty. See links for their departmental faculty webpages.

Name	Role
<a href="#">Laura Walikainen Rouleau</a>	Advisor/Associate Teaching Professor of History
<a href="#">Don Lafreniere</a>	Professor of Geography and GIS
<a href="#">Mark Rhodes</a>	Assistant Professor of Geography
<a href="#">Jonathan Robins</a>	Associate Professor of History
<a href="#">Sarah Fayen Scarlett</a>	Associate Professor of History
<a href="#">Steven Walton</a>	Associate Professor of History

## Resources Needed

### Library and other learning resources needed

None. The degree program will make use of existing, sufficient resources.

### Suitability of existing space, facilities, and equipment

Existing space, facilities, and equipment are suitable and sufficient for the new concentration in history.

### Program Costs

No new costs; uses existing labs and resources