

Career Path to Teaching History/Social Studies at the Secondary School Level

Are you interested in history? Do you like working with young people? You may be interested in a career as a middle school or high school history/social studies teacher. In middle school and high school (secondary school), teachers specialize in a particular subject area and teach that single subject only. They teach specialized classes, in United States or world history, economics, civics, and geography. In the state of California, History-Social Science Content Standards determine what instruction most schools offer at each grade level:

Grade Six	World History & Geography: Ancient Civilizations
Grade Seven	World History & Geography: Medieval & Early Modern Times
Grade Eight	United States History & Geography: Constitution to World War I
Grade Ten	World History, Culture, & Geography: The Modern World
Grade Eleven	United States History & Geography: 1900 to the Present
Grade Twelve	Principles of American Democracy (Civics) and Economics

Students interested in teaching history or social sciences at the secondary level must be prepared to teach these subjects. The following is intended as a guide for students interested in preparing for and finding out more about secondary-school teaching in the social sciences as a career.

Where can I find out more about teaching history/social science?

-The History Department at SSU offers several useful sources of information:

-Steve Estes, School of Social Sciences Advisor for secondary teachers, is also available for advising. You can find him in Stevenson 2070D or email him at estess@sonoma.edu

-The SSU School of Education offers workshops for students interested in becoming teachers and informational packets about the requirements of the SSU single-subject credential program.

To-Do List for Students Interested in Becoming Single-Subject History/Social Sciences Teachers:

___ GET INFORMATION:

-Learn more about the School of Education: <http://www.sonoma.edu/education/>

-Apply for the Single-Subject Credential Program: <https://web.sonoma.edu/education/csse/single-subject/apply.html>

-Read about or join professional organizations for history/social studies teachers. Most of these organizations have discounts for students. They offer regular newsletters and journals that will help give you a good idea of the teaching profession and will improve your subject knowledge as well. If one of these organizations holds a conference in your area, go. See professional organizations listed below.

___ TAKE CLASSES:

-To prepare yourself to teach the history/social science curriculum, you will need to take classes in the areas you will be expected to teach. A minimum list of recommended courses is given below. The more you prepare, the better-informed teacher you will be.

-Ask professors for other reading in these areas to learn more.

___ WORK WITH STUDENTS:

Before you apply to a credential program, you will need 45 hours of work with young people *in the age you want to teach*. Options include: Assisting in a high school or middle school class; interning or service learning at a school or other organization for youth, counseling at camps, or coaching. Several majors at SSU offer internship programs in which you may be able to receive academic credit while completing these hours. Check with your major department.

PREPARE FOR AND TAKE EXAMS:

Basic Skills Requirement: California State law requires all teachers to pass the CBEST (California Basic Skills Test). Sign up for this exam (www.ctcexams.nesinc.com) early in your junior year.

Subject Matter Competency: California State law requires all teachers to demonstrate competency in their subject matter area, either by completing a waiver program or by passing the CSET (California Subject Examinations for Teachers). Sonoma State University does not have a Social Science Waiver program. You should plan to take the CSET (www.ctcexams.nesinc.com) late in your junior year to assess your strengths and where you need to focus your studies. You can retake sections you do not pass. You must pass all sections of the CSET before you begin the credential program.

To prepare for the CSET, you should review your coursework in relevant courses. Use the library of secondary-school textbooks in the SSU History Department to review the ways in which topics are covered in California classrooms. In addition, test guides are available (see below).

CHOOSE AND APPLY TO A SINGLE-SUBJECT TEACHING CREDENTIAL PROGRAM.

-Check the website for the school(s) in which you are interested to see if they have additional requirements you need to meet. The website for SSU's Credential Program is <http://www.sonoma.edu/education/>

Recommended Courses for future history and social sciences teachers at the secondary level:

These are courses that will provide you with basic content in the areas you will be expected to teach. They offer overviews of United States and world history, American government, economics, and geography. Ideally, students will go beyond these overviews to take upper-division courses in history. In addition, you should read widely in your field. Consult your professors for additional reading you can do. (Please note that the suggested courses listed here are the SSU numbers. Students may take equivalent courses at other institutions with the same subject matter.)

HISTORY Courses

History 201 Foundations of World Civilizations (satisfies GE Area D2) **History 202** Development of the Modern World (satisfies GE Area D2) **History 251** United States History to 1877 (satisfies GE Area D3)

History 252 United States History since 1865 (satisfies GE Area D3)

History 380 Twentieth Century World (satisfies GE Area D2 and may count as upper-division GE if taken when a student has earned 60 or more units)

History 472 California History I (Pre-Contact through 1920)

(The CSET tests knowledge of California History from the Pre-Columbian Era to the present. Students may wish to do additional reading on California History from 1920 to the present OR take History 473 California History II.)

Other Social Sciences Courses

Political Science 200 (satisfies GE Area D4)

Economics 204 OR Economics 205 (Econ 204 satisfies GE Area D5)

Geography 302 World Regional Geography (satisfies GE Area D5)

Students may wish to take other coursework in the Geography of North America, the American Constitutional System, Anthropology, Psychology, and Sociology. In addition, coursework providing perspectives on gender, race & ethnicity, sexuality, and international connections may be of value.

School of Education, Single Subject Credential Program, Pre-Requisites:

(must be taken before entering the program)

Education (EDUC) 417 School and Society (satisfies GE Area D1)

Education (EDSS) 418 Development in Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood (satisfies GE Area E)

NOTE: Currently, teachers who possess a valid teaching credential in one subject field (e.g. English or biology) who wish to be considered qualified to teach in History/Social Studies must demonstrate competence by EITHER completing 32 semester units of non-remedial course work in history (16 units in world and 16 units in United States) OR completing a major in history OR passing the CSET in history/social studies. A history minor does not meet these requirements.

Resources

CSET Preparation:

There is a small library in the history department of History/Social Sciences textbooks currently being used in California secondary schools. Students preparing for the CSET would be well-advised to look at the textbooks to see the topics covered and the level of understanding expected. These textbooks include questions at the end of the chapters, which you should review in preparation for the exam.

Exam preparation books for the CSET include: CliffsTestPrep CSET: Social Science by Shana Pate
CSET Social Science 114, 115 by Sharon Wynne.

Professional Organizations:

California Council for the Social Studies (<http://www.ccss.org/>) National Council for the Social Studies (<http://www.socialstudies.org/>) Organization of American Historians (<http://www.oah.org/>)
American Historical Association (<http://www.historians.org/teaching/Index.cfm>)

The World History Association (<http://www.thewha.org/>)

FAQs

Should I attend the School of Education Informational Meeting for Single-Subject Credential if I came to the History Department meeting? Yes. They have additional information and a different perspective.

Do my 45 pre-observation hours need to be completed before I apply to the credential program? No, they must be in process. Note that taking Education 250 will earn you 30 hours, but you will need 15 additional hours. Hours do not expire if part of a course.

Do my 45 hours need to be in the subject matter I want to teach? No, just working with kids in the age group you want to work with (middle- or high-school age). These hours must be not older than two years from the time you apply to the program.

Can I do a history internship to complete these hours? Yes, the history department has an internship program. You can earn 1 unit for every 45 hours you complete. All internship units are CR/NC, and you can count up to 3 CR/NC units toward the history major. Other CR/NC units beyond that limit will still count toward units for graduation. For more information, check with the History Department internship advisor.

What if I don't take all the preparatory classes recommended on your handout? The recommended history and social sciences courses will help you prepare for the CSET, but they are not required. You can try a CSET practice test to see where you need additional preparation. You can use textbooks (AP textbooks are good) to prepare. The Education pre-requisites are required however.

How long will my CSET results be valid? Can I take it now and apply later? As of now, the CSET results are valid for 5 years.

When should I apply to the credential program? You should plan to apply during your senior year unless you are planning to take some time off before doing the program. SSU's program is a Fall admission only.

I hear the Credential Program has a 2 semester and a 3 semester program. Any advice about which one I should do? Doing the credential program in 3 semesters allows you more time, particularly if you are trying to combine doing the program with a job or a family. You also have more time to take courses in your subject matter while you're in the program. On the other hand, a 2 semester program gets you out and on the job market sooner.

What other advice can you give me about preparing for the program or getting a job? What else can I do while I'm an undergraduate to make myself more marketable?

-The more skills you bring to the table, the more marketable you will be. Can you speak Spanish? Can you teach economics? Do you have training in special education? Can you pass the CSET in more than one area?

-If you complete your BA and pass the CBEST, you will be qualified to be a substitute teacher, a challenging but good way to get to know more people and more about teaching.

-Choose classes in a wide range of subjects.

-Study for the CSET using the preparation book. Use textbooks to refresh your memory about government, economics, parts of history you don't recall, etc.

-You can take different parts of the CSET on different days. Be sure to take the CSET early in case you don't pass and need to take it again.

-Do MORE pre-observation hours than required, preferably in different settings, to see if this career is really for you.

-Make sure your record is clean—pay ticket, go to traffic school etc.—to avoid problems with the Legal Information Requirement.