

History (MA)

Master



Universiteit
Leiden

Discover the world at Leiden University

Specialisations

- Ancient History: Empires, Societies and Cultures (MA)
- Beyond Borders: Global and European History (MA)
- Geschiedenis van Nederland in de Wereld (MA)
- Governance of Migration and Diversity (History) (MA)
- History of Inequality and Power (MA)

At Leiden University, we have one of the world's leading centres for the study of European and non-European history. The master's in History is your opportunity to access this world-class expertise.

You might also be interested in the [History Research Master](#).

[Apply in Studielink](#) [Admission guide](#) [Chat](#)



A top-ranked programme

According to the [QS World University Rankings 2026](#), History at Leiden University is rated 1st in the Netherlands and 13th in the world.

Why study History at Leiden University?

The Master's programme in History enables you to learn from some of the leading scholars in the field. With a broad curriculum and flexible design, the programme allows you to tailor your degree to suit your career goals. You will be able to specialise in niche subject areas that aren't offered anywhere else, including European and non-European history spanning from Classical Antiquity to the present.

Leading scholars and an individualised approach

At Leiden University, you learn from some of the leading scholars in the field. We have a specialised faculty 'chair' in almost every area of European and non-European history, while covering almost all periods from Classical Antiquity to the present. Small-scale classes and intensive mentoring ensure you benefit from their expertise both in and outside of the classroom.

Global and comparative approach

All subjects in the master's in History have a strong international orientation. Whichever your focus area, you will acquire a broad, comparative dimension to your knowledge and connect this to the latest global events. This approach to learning is not only unique to this programme but brings you a far broader understanding and an aptitude for critical thinking both of which are highly valued by employers today.

[Learn more about the study programme](#)

What are your career prospects?

This Master's prepares you for a wide range of roles in almost every sector of the job market. Our graduates work at different types of organisations, such as research institutes, international organisations, government bodies, NGOs and academia. Jobs include policy officer, consultant, history teacher and PhD candidate.

[Find out more about your career prospects](#)

Michiel van Groesen

Professor of Maritime History



Teaching in the MA in History programme continues to inspire me. It offers the chance not only to share my ongoing research with a cohort of advanced students from diverse backgrounds, but also to help each of them discover the direction of their own intellectual passions. Because the world around us is transforming ever more rapidly, the meaning we draw from the past is constantly evolving as well. History matters for the present. At the intersection of research and public debates, the MA in History provides a strong foundation for a lifetime of engagement.

Is History the programme for you?

Are you interested in the past and how it continues to influence today's world? Do you want to specialise in subject areas not offered anywhere else? Then History at Leiden University is the right Master's programme for you. Find out if you are eligible for this Master's programme by checking the admission requirements.

[Check the admission requirements](#)

History Research Master

Do you want to get more out of your studies? Are you particularly interested in doing research? Do you want to pursue a career in academia after your studies? Consider the [History Research Master](#).

Why Leiden University?

Leiden University offers ambitious students a world-class environment in which to reach their full potential.

A top-ranked programme

The Leiden Institute for History is rated 1st in the Netherlands and 18th in the world in the QS World University Rankings 2025.

Access to unique resources

At Leiden University, the oldest university in the Netherlands, you can access resources found nowhere else in the world, such as those of the famous Leiden University Library and its collections of original manuscripts and periodicals.

An ideal location for the study of history

Leiden University offers you one of the best locations from which to explore and study the world, as well as start your career. Our historical location close to The Hague brings you within easy reach of the country's seat of government, politics, and international organisations, as well as the unique resources of the Dutch National Library and the National Archives, with its extensive collections.

An individual approach to learning

Leiden University's History department has a committed teaching staff who are both outstanding researchers and dedicated teachers consistently ranked highly by their own students. Small classes and intensive one-on-one mentoring give all our students the extra stimulation and support to go the extra step in their performance and their ideas for their future.

Specialist chairs

Leiden's History department has chairs in:

- Ancient History
- Medieval History
- Dutch History
- Early Modern History
- Contemporary History
- Europe after 1945
- American History
- African History
- Colonial and Global History
- Maritime History
- History of Global Economic Networks
- Social History
- Migration History
- Comparative Urban History

Adjacent departments in the Faculty of Humanities have chairs in International Studies, Latin American History, Brazilian Studies, African, Turkish, Indonesian, Indian, Korean, Chinese and Japanese History.

Access to the Humanities Hub labs

As a Humanities master's student you will have access to the Humanities Hub which comprises labs with digital facilities for both students and researchers. The labs include an AI Lab, Media lab, film studio and podcast studio and give you the opportunity to develop your digital and media skills within the field of the humanities. Check the [Humanities Hub](#) page for a full list of all the labs and facilities.



Humanities Hub Leiden

Diversity and inclusion

We are convinced that our education can only flourish if everyone within the programme feels supported, respected and empowered to do their best work. We find it important to offer a learning environment that allows for different perspectives and points of view that students bring with them, depending on their ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, health, religion, age or socio-economic background. Every new generation sees the world from a new perspective – and our students are the newest generation. [We look forward to hearing more about your perspective.](#) Leiden University has been pursuing diversity policy since 2014, with the aim of creating a diverse and inclusive learning and working environment for all staff and students.

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About the programme

Choose from five History specialisations

You can choose one of the six specialisations that the master in History offers. Within these specialisations, a flexible format allows you to further tailor your qualification to reflect your interests.

- [Ancient History: Empires, Societies and Cultures](#): provides you with a comprehensive overview of the history of the Greek and Roman period.
- [Beyond Borders: Global and European History](#): in which you will explore the political and cultural evolution of the world from a long-term, and broad comparative perspective.
- [Geschiedenis van Nederland in de Wereld](#): this new Dutch-taught master's specialisation offers an in-depth analysis of the position of the Netherlands in a global context, from the Middle Ages and the early modern Republic to the kingdom of today.
- [Governance of Migration and Diversity](#): this interdisciplinary programme offers you the expertise of three universities on the topics of migration and diversity.
- [History of Inequality and Power](#): in this master's specialisation you will investigate how social, political and economic inequalities have been created, maintained and challenged throughout history.

Programme structure

The general structure of the programme is as follows.

- Literature Seminar (10 EC)
- Research Seminar (10 EC)
- Optional Courses (10 EC)
- Thesis and exam (30 EC)
- Thesis Seminar

For a more detailed programme overview, please check the specialisation of your interest.

Objectives

The one-year Master of Arts in History (study load 60 EC) aims to bring you state-of-the-art knowledge in your subject area of choice. You will pay specific attention to the analysis of historical process, the study of primary sources, conducting historical research, historiography and methodology.

The acquisition of advanced academic skills in the interpretation of texts and the analysis of complex conceptual problems, and the ability to independently conduct high-quality scientific research are key goals of the programme.

Latest knowledge

All courses are taught by academics who are active researchers. The curriculum is regularly updated to reflect contemporary academic debates and the very latest insights. Regular seminars are held presenting students with our researchers' latest findings. Your research thesis is often linked to one of the research projects of our faculty members, who play an active role in every individual's education, acting as mentors and community builders.

Detailed programme

For a detailed programme, please check the [Prospectus](#). Please note that this guide applies to the current academic year, which means that the curriculum for next year may slightly differ.

Kitty O'Connor Morse

History MA student



"Throughout my studies I have had the opportunity to critically engage with both primary and secondary material, something that has significantly sharpened my analytical and research skills. I wrote a research paper exploring the transition of armed groups into electoral politics, utilising my primary research to explore how political legitimacy is constructed in periods of armed conflict. One of the most academically intense, but also rewarding, modules involved reading a book a week on American history, which was massively helpful in improving my critical reading skills, time management, and my ability to synthesise complex narratives."

Extracurricular

Get the most out of your studies at Leiden University by taking part in our extracurricular activities.

Social and academic programme events

We want you to be part of the academic community that is formed by our staff. As a student you will be invited to take part in our social and academic gatherings. Among those are gatherings where members of staff present new research.

Studying abroad

Studying abroad is an option during your master in History. If you wish to take optional courses and/or write your thesis abroad, Leiden University offers a wide range of options for spending part of your studies abroad. The International Office of the Faculty of Humanities will be able to help you make the right decision for your time studying abroad.

Leiden Leadership Programme

If you're interested in developing your leadership potential, the [Leiden Leadership Programme](#) offers training sessions, seminars, and a Personal Leadership Roadmap to help you grow.

Study at the Academy of Creative and Performing Arts

The Academy of the Creative and Performing Arts (ACPA) is a research institute and part of the Faculty of Humanities. The ACPA offers education such as electives, and talent programmes such as the Practicum Artium (PA), which gives you the opportunity to study photography, graphic design or drawing, and the Practicum Musicae at the Royal Conservatoire The Hague, where you can study classical music, singing, early music or jazz.

[Find out more about ACPA.](#)

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Career prospects

What our graduates do

Your master will qualify you for roles in almost every sector of the employment market. Many of our graduates work for government and semi-government organisations, education, research institutes, information services, IT, cultural institutes, financial institutions, communications, marketing, business services and welfare services.

Examples of the diverse roles of our graduates include:

- Senior assistant at the European Union
- Parliamentary assistant at the European Parliament
- Consultant in information management
- PhD candidate at various universities
- History teacher at a secondary school
- Public educational work at a Dutch museum
- Project manager at a text agency
- Heritage researcher of Indonesia for a Dutch museum
- Archive clerk at a Dutch archive
- Communication and organisation officer for a Dutch political party
- Digital education officer at a museum
- Policy advisor at a Dutch Ministry
- Research assistant at a Spanish university
- Editor at a publishing house
- Web journalist at a multimedia publishing house

Your qualifications

The MA in History offers outstanding preparation for students seeking a profession that requires in-depth knowledge of history and strong academic skills, with a focus on analytical and writing skills.

Teaching qualification

If you are interested in a career in teaching, you may be eligible to follow a teacher-training master's at the ICLON Graduate School of Education once you have graduated from the master programme in History. You must speak fluent Dutch and there are other, additional entry requirements.

Tika Ramadhini

PhD-student at Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient



"It did not take long for me to be involved in other academic activities after I graduated from the MA Colonial and Global History. Back in Indonesia, I became a part of a research for a joint-publication about Indonesian history with some young historians in Jakarta. I have always been passionate about history, and now I have figured out that doing an academic career is my true calling. I believe my two-years studying experience in Leiden has influenced me so much in life."

Working on my PhD dissertation

"Since March, I live in Berlin. I work as a doctoral research fellow at Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient, a German research institute devoted to an interdisciplinary and comparative study of the Middle East, Africa, and Asia from a historical perspective. Besides engaging myself in the research activities of the institute, I am currently working on my PhD dissertation about Southeast Asian women, at the Institute of Asian and African Studies of Humboldt Universität zu Berlin. Training that I received in Leiden, especially in conducting research independently, helped me a lot in doing my works today."

Thomas Kerstens

Followed the Europaeum programme European History and Civilisation: Leiden-Oxford-Paris Programme (MA History)



"Currently, I work as a researcher at the Brussels office of APCO Worldwide, a global public affairs consultancy. Every day, I work with an international team to analyse EU policies and developments which are relevant to clients from all over the world."

Trimesters in Leiden, Paris, and Oxford

"Since the Europaeum MA had a diverse programme, consisting of trimesters in Leiden, Paris, and Oxford, I learned two valuable lessons. First, students had to familiarise themselves with new concepts and master them quickly. This skill proved vital when I started working in public affairs. The common denominator of my clients was that they all demanded a rapid elucidation of political or industrial policies, no matter how complicated or novel. Secondly, studying in different countries with fellow students of various nationalities taught me how to work in international groups or teams. Since my masters' degree, I continued to use this skill on a daily basis, during subsequent studies abroad, a traineeship at the Cabinet of First Vice-President Timmermans at the European Commission and my work at APCO Worldwide."

The perfect foundation for an international career

"I decided to apply for the Europaeum MA as the prospect of being taught by leading academics at three renowned European universities seemed very exciting. Moreover, it felt like this unique programme would be the perfect foundation for an international career. Looking back at precious memories, such as my discussions in Parisian bars with my favourite professor from the Sorbonne, and the new doors that the Europaeum opened for me in academic and professional circles, I can say that the programme definitely lived up to my expectations and even went beyond."

Alice Eaton

International Conversion Adviser at UWE Bristol



"I decided to study Cities, Migration and Global Interdependence because I am very interested in migration and the history of migratory movements. I wrote my BA dissertation about the movement of Dutch East-Indians to the Netherlands, the research for which introduced me to Leiden and then made me think a master's in this field would be a fascinating subject to study and Leiden was the best place for me."

"I currently work as an International Conversion Adviser at UWE Bristol. I work with a diverse team to provide information to students and help to make them feel welcomed and supported by the university prior to their arrival. This process goes from the initial enquiry right up to the final enrolment."

Analyzing as an essential skill

"A large part of my MA was reading texts from different sources and analyzing it to gain an answer. Much of what I do in my job is the same: I analyze industry reports, information from regional offices and student feedback to see what trends are rising within higher education, and what we can do to meet these trends as well as improve our services. Being able to critique my own work is essential, because higher education is constantly evolving and I need to be able to adapt to these changing circumstances in order to make the student experience as positive as possible. This was a skill I learned during my time at Leiden, as was the need to make the university experience for international students as seamless and positive as possible."

How I found the right job after graduating

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In this video, History alumnus Friso talks about how he used the Humanities Career Service to find the right job after graduating.

In which sector do students find jobs?

The graphs below are based on alumni data from the MA History 2020 through 2024.

- 25 Graduates of History Advice
- 25 Graduates of History Education
- 13 Graduates of History Government and semi-government organisations
- 13 Graduates of History Communication and marketing
- 13 Graduates of History Media and journalism
- 13 Graduates of History Non-profit

Career preparation

Find out how this programme prepares you for your future career and check our career preparation activities.

Knowledge and skills

Launch your career with a master's degree

Continuing your studies after your bachelor's degree pays off. Graduates with a master's degree are more likely to find higher-level positions: 77% start at a university of applied sciences (hbo) or university level, compared to 63% of graduates who only hold a bachelor's degree. This difference remains visible in the long term. After more than two years of work experience, 87% of master's alumni work at a university of applied sciences or university level, compared to 76% of bachelor's alumni.

A unique strength on the job market

The Master's programme in History at Leiden University equips you with a range of transferable skills and knowledge that will help you stand out in your future career. Your specialised knowledge is complemented by a broad and contextual understanding as well as critical-thinking skills that can be applied to complex conceptual problems. Other skills you may encounter in the various History courses are:

- Analysis
- Problem-solving skills
- Research
- Collaboration
- Creative thinking

Internships

You have the opportunity to do an internship at an organisation in the Netherlands or abroad. Internships are a great way to gain first-hand experience in your area of interest and deepen your expertise. Organisations that our students have interned at include:

- Huygens Institute for the History of the Netherlands
- KITLV (Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies)
- Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael

- Netherlands Institute for Military History

Please note that you will need to find your own internship and have to follow an internship procedure for approval. Pursuing an internship may have consequences for the date of your graduation.

Humanities Career Service

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Our staff can help you identify both the career that is right for you, and the necessary steps to get you there. Our team at the [Humanities Career Service](#) provides all Leiden University Humanities students with professional advice and guidance on everything from internships and career planning to job applications. The Humanities Career Service also organises regular workshops on topics such as effective interview skills and creating a successful CV. Check our video and hear from our alumni how they have benefited from our services!

Workshops and courses

The Humanities Career Service offers you various (online) workshops, webinars and info sessions. [Check our overview of career activities.](#)

LU Career Zone

The [Leiden University Career Zone](#) is an online career portal that helps you to prepare for the job market. Here you can find information, tools and tips to help you gain more personal insight, learn about the job market, develop your application skills, plan your academic and professional career, find job vacancies and discover what the [Career Service](#) can do for you.

Ask Alumni: Leiden University Mentor Network

Join the [Mentor Network](#) to contact alumni with experience on the labour market and ask them for advice. More than 1200 alumni are happy to help you!

Jelle on finding an internship via Leiden University's Mentor Network

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Admission and Application

We invite motivated students from around the world to apply for the Master of Arts in History. Admission requirements may vary per specialisation, please visit the specialisation of your interest to find out more about the entry requirements.

- [Ancient History: Empires, Societies and Cultures](#)
- [Beyond Borders: Global and European History](#)
- [Geschiedenis van Nederland en de Wereld](#)
- [Governance of Migration and Diversity](#)
- [History of Inequality and Power](#)

Pre-master's programme

The pre-master's programme helps students to meet the admission requirements to the History master's programme. This one-year programme of 60 EC is taught in Dutch.

If you have a bachelor's degree in History from a university of applied sciences (HBO), you will be admitted to the MA History after completing the pre-master's programme. This one-year programme of 60 EC is taught in Dutch.

If you have a bachelor's degree from a research university that does not meet the requirements, you may be eligible for a pre-master programme (in Dutch) tailored to your individual background. If you have completed the imposed pre-master programme, you will be admitted to the Master's programme.

Language requirements

The language requirements for a pre-master's programme are identical to the language requirements for the master's programme for which admission has been requested. These requirements must be met before the start of the pre-master.

More details

For more information, please check the [Prospectus](#) or contact the [Study Advisor](#), Sabine van Veelen.

Student life

Your time at Leiden is about more than just studying. Some of your best experiences will stem from being a part of our lively and diverse student community, as well as from life in the beautiful city of Leiden.

The study associations related to History are:

- [HSVl](#) for all specialisations. Contact via info@dehsvl.nl.
- [MVSL Floris V](#) for Europe 1000-1800. Contact via bestuur.msvlflorisv@gmail.com.

Humanities Master's Buddy Programme

The Humanities Master's Buddy Programme has been set up by the Faculty of Humanities to help all students who are new to the university to integrate quickly and easily into university life. You will be matched to a buddy who can help you out with your academic and practical questions. Additionally you will be able to attend fun monthly activities and make friends from all over the world.

For more information about the Buddy Programme, please visit the [Humanities Buddy Programme page](#).

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International Student Associations

Leiden has several student organisations that specifically cater for international students. These associations organise regular social events and activities that help create the strong sense of community that exists within our international student body. The main two organisations are:

Erasmus Student Network Leiden (ESN)

[ESN Leiden](#) is an international student organisation which hosts a range of activities and programmes. They also have a buddy programme which provides new students with the right support to assimilate into Leiden and the university.

AEGEE Leiden

[AEGEE](#) is a leading European student association with sister organisations in over 40 countries across Europe. AEGEE organises many activities in Leiden, from dinners and pool nights to boat trips and guest lectures.

For an overview of all of our student associations, please visit our [Student associations page](#).

Welcome and orientation programme

In August and February each year, Leiden University hosts the English-language [Orientation Week Leiden \(OWL\)](#), which welcomes both international and Dutch students. The OWL is an excellent way to get to know Leiden University, the city, and other students.

Life in Leiden

Picturesque and the perfect size, Leiden is the ideal place to spend your university days. The Faculty of Humanities is located within the heart of the city, where dozens of cafes, shops and bars line its historic laneways and leafy canals. Small enough to run into familiar faces, but big enough to keep offering surprises – you will treasure your time at Leiden. And for adventures further afield, the major cities of The Hague and Amsterdam are a short train ride away, along with Schiphol Airport, which is just half an hour away by train.

Our study and student associations organise a huge variety of social, cultural, and study events to keep you busy all year round. You can also join the University Sports Centre, which offers scheduled group sports and fitness classes, amongst other activities.

Information activities

Get to know us through our online and in-person events for prospective students!



Two speakers at the open day

Are you thinking about joining this Master's programme, and want to determine if it will be the right fit for you? Below, you can browse the events that we have coming up, and sign up to experience Leiden University and the programme for yourself. Alternatively, take a look at the Master Talks videos to find out more about the programme or check out our virtual campus tours!

Upcoming events

Master's Open Days

Master's Open Days

During the Master's Open Days you'll have the opportunity to learn all about Leiden University's master's programmes. Attend presentations about your chosen programme(s) or practical matters such as admissions and housing. Get real insight into the content of your preferred master's, along with the career opportunities it will bring.

When are the next Open Days?

- [15 & 16 October 2026: Master's Online Open Days](#)

Master Talks: Programme videos

On the [Master Talks: programme videos platform](#) you can find videos for each master's programme. This includes a video which gives a short introduction to the programme. You can also find the recording of the previous Master's Online Open Days and watch the programme presentation on the platform.

Get to know the campus

Check out our virtual campus tours, filmed in 360 degrees – by dragging the video, you can look around at the surroundings yourself. Below is the video recorded at the Humanities faculty, where most of your lectures will take place; you can also view other 360 campus tours of the various university faculties [here](#).

360 Campus tour: the Humanities faculty

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Contact

If you have a question, there are various ways to get in touch with us.

This website and our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) are the quickest ways to find an answer to many of your questions.

Questions about the Programme

Study adviser

Ms. Sabine van Veelen – Blankenstein

Email: mahistory@hum.leidenuniv.nl

Please note: The study adviser cannot give any information about students' chances of being admitted to the programme. The Board of Admissions will base their decision on your application as a whole.

Student ambassador

Do you have a question about studying at Leiden University or student life in Leiden? Do you want more information about the History master's programme?

[Chat with Enid](#) for answers to your questions!

Questions about the application procedure, tuition fees and scholarships

Student Affairs Front Office

Phone: +31 (0)71 527 80 11

Email: [Contact form](#)
Or visit their [website](#)

Visiting address

Leiden: Plexus Student Centre
Kaiserstraat 25, ground floor
2311 GN Leiden
Monday to Thursday, between 13:00 and 16:00

Chat with a student

Do you have a question about student life in Leiden, studying at Leiden University, or do you want more information about the History master's programme? Chat with a current student for answers to your questions!