This spring quarter, the History Department is offering more than 40 courses on a broad range of topics, spanning ancient to modern history and covering the Pacific Northwest, Europe, Africa, Asia, and beyond. These classes satisfy DIV, W, I&S, and VLPA requirements. With the most Distinguished Teaching Awards of any UW department and an average course evaluation rating of 4.7 last quarter, students find History courses to be enjoyable, rigorous, and relevant no matter their major. We sat down with our faculty to learn more about the courses they're teaching next quarter.

Professors Lynn Thomas and Laurie Marhoefer have been working together to design a fascinating new class titled The AIDS Epidemic: A Global History (HSTCMP 248). This course examines the AIDS epidemic from a global perspective and considers how the intersections of race, class, gender, citizenship, and sexuality affect historical and health inequalities. In addition to the 36 million people living with HIV/AIDS, roughly 50 million people have lost their lives to the virus. This epidemic truly transformed human history, bringing about different forms of political activism and philanthropy. Students will hear from guest speakers, read first-person accounts, and study the work of historians and anthropologists in order to locate human experiences within historical contexts and explain how individual lives and social structures shape one another.

The other new course is Professor James Felak's Twelve Events That Shook Modern Europe: From the French Revolution to the EU (HSTEU 251 or JSISA 251). It surveys many important historical events, including several revolutions, the rise of Hitler, decolonization, and the collapse of communism. Which topic is Felak most looking forward to covering? He told us, “That would definitely be the revolutions of 1989 across East Central Europe. My next book project involves a study of some of the major figures who helped bring down Communism in Eastern Europe, and I have much to share about a development that I have been examining for decades. It also raises some of the most significant moral and political questions of modern times.” Students will complete this course with a better understanding of the power of ideas to create and to destroy, as we see displayed so vividly over the past quarter millennium in Europe.

Francophiles, history buffs, and anyone who likes macarons will be signing up for Professor Raymond Jonas's class Paris (HSTEU 210). By focusing on one city, Jonas is able to play with time span, thematic variables, and different types of history. Students examine Paris through the history of politics, the history of business, gender and sexuality studies, and urban history. Jonas would love to load everyone on a plane and fly there; instead, he uses technology such as historical map overlays and clips from French cinema to accompany lectures. Past students often remark that his use of historic and modern maps adds an interesting and engaging element.
to lectures. Jonas says, “Doing a course like this takes me back to some of my earliest days as a scholar. I lived in Paris for the first time in 1978. My scholarship has since moved on—my most recent book centered on an episode in the history of Ethiopia, and my current research concerns Mexico—but those projects have taken me back to the archives and libraries of Paris.”

The Colloquium in History series is an excellent option for students who are looking for a broad introduction to the discipline of history. The colloquia consider questions of historiography (i.e., a history of how historians treated a given topic); foster critical reading and clear writing; examine different types of primary sources with an eye to their reliability; and allow students to conduct their own research. John Findlay, a professor of Pacific Northwest history, will teach next quarter’s colloquium Washington goes to War, 1940-1960 (HSTRY 388). Findlay explains, “World War Two transformed the U.S. and Washington State in multiple ways. Mobilization for war has always accelerated change. To appreciate those changes, we will consider two main case studies: a) the construction and operation of the Hanford plant, which made plutonium for atomic bombs; and b) the expulsion and incarceration of people of Japanese descent (often called ‘internment’) for the duration of the war.” Students will examine works of history, memoirs, oral interviews, novels, poetry, interpersonal letters, and films. Findlay has also invited Neil Nakadate, author of the memoir Looking After Minidoka, to speak with the class. Hanford is the site of a massive clean-up effort and the home of much controversy concerning exposure of Northwest residents to radiation and other pollutants. What happened to people of Japanese descent is a central discussion point of 20th-century civil rights struggles. The legacies of these events are still with us and still relevant, making this course particularly compelling.

Spring quarter registration opens February 15—get a seat before these popular classes fill up! If you have more questions about history courses, declaring a history major or minor, or declaring a diversity minor, our academic advisors are always here to meet with you.

View history courses through MyPlan here: myplan.uw.edu/home

Make an appointment to meet with an advisor here: histadv.acuityscheduling.com/schedule.php