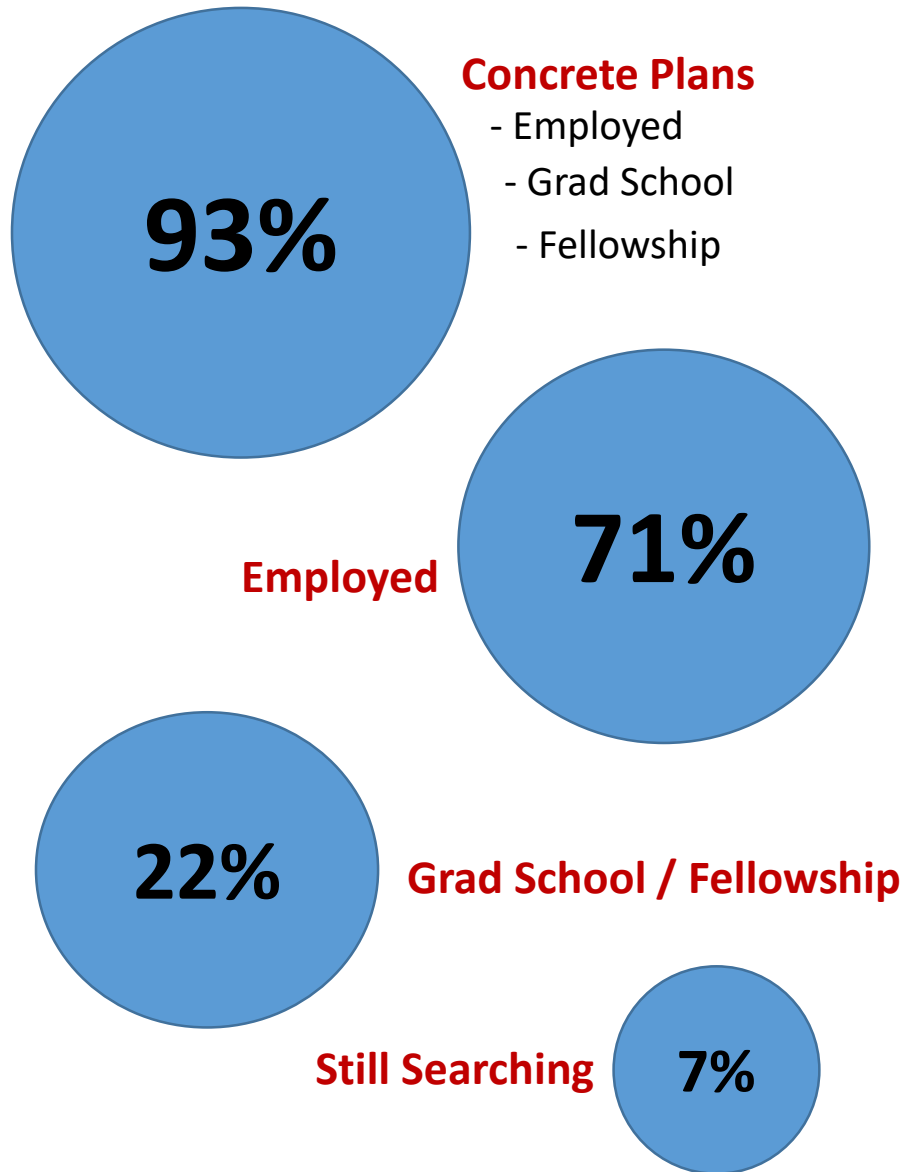


# Majoring in History at Columbia



## My History degree prepares me to:

Conduct primary and secondary source research

Find and evaluate sources, both qualitative and quantitative

Analyze complex concepts and situations

Employ evidence to support or refute an argument

Synthesize information from traditional and electronic sources

Write clear, organized, and persuasive texts

Clearly explain and present ideas and information orally

Command detailed knowledge of a well-defined area of historical study

Think historically and critically, reflecting on the context, causes, and significance of past events

Understand and translate across different cultures and perspectives

Carefully document and cite sources

# Department of History - *Student and Alumni Stories...*

## **Stumbling into History**

Michelle Yan (CC '20) entered Columbia certain she'd become a Financial Economics major, and her first history class was, literally, a mistake. During her first week of classes, she got lost, and ended up in the front row of the wrong class—as it turned out, professor Caterina Pizzigoni's introductory Latin American history course.

Michelle was hooked. Now a History and Hispanic Studies double major, Michelle wrote a [senior thesis](#) that bridges both areas of study.

Outside the classroom, she explored opportunities at the intersections of art business and finance, before securing an internship at consulting firm McKinsey & Co, where she will be returning after graduation.

Studying history, Michelle reflected, has not only strengthened her ability to think critically, analytically, and empathically, but also, in her words, made her a more interesting person.

## **Using history skills to get the job**

Karen Rios (GS' 12) has worked in educational technology, on a political campaign, in financial compliance, and now as the co-founder and CEO of Lifesaver, a financial literacy app—but coming into college as a first-generation college student and the child of immigrants, she had only a few careers on her radar: doctor, lawyer, engineer.

After high school, Karen enrolled in engineering school. Soon, though, she realized that it wasn't for her, and eventually transferred to Columbia. Here, a transformative course on immigration allowed her to “for the first time see herself in a class” and, ultimately, find her path toward the History major.

With graduation nearing, the pressure to repay student loans was foremost on Karen's mind. Though history was not at the center of her first post-grad job, at a hedge fund, it was crucial in helping her secure it: not only did Karen leverage the persuasion skills she built through her history coursework to make her case, but, she later found out, her senior thesis had served as compelling evidence that she could tackle any project or problem for her future employer.

“Don't focus on the employment,” Karen said, looking back. “Focus on what you learn.”

## **History for social impact**

Ever since Tommy Song (CC '20) was a kid and learned about the civil rights movement in school, he wanted to become a civil rights lawyer.

This brought him to Columbia and, at first, to Political Science, which Tommy had believed would provide the best preparation for this career. Yet it was in the History department that Tommy would find an intellectual home to further his goals.

Since taking the Columbia University and Slavery seminar with Karl Jacoby his first year, Tommy has remained involved in this project. In 2018, with the support of Dr. Jacoby, Tommy founded the Columbia University Historical Justice Initiative, a research project and walking tour focused on marginalized narratives of the university.

For students considering the major, Tommy recommended taking the initiative to speak to professors after class and during [office hours](#).

Seeing where it took him, we couldn't agree more!