

# Study: 1 in 3 History Majors Don't Take U.S. History

The [Nation's Report Card](#) has presented us with a sad reality in recent years: not even half of American high school seniors are proficient in any subject area.

There is one subject, however, in which students score worse than all others. That subject is U.S. history. Only 12 percent of American high school seniors attain proficiency in this area.

But no matter, right? Students will surely make up that slack in college.

According to a [new report](#) from The American Council of Trustees and Alumni, that assumption couldn't be further from the truth. Indeed, it seems that America's colleges are assuming that the U.S. history foundation has already been laid in high school graduates.

The Council explored course syllabi for the major colleges and universities in the U.S. and found that *even history majors* were often not required to take a course in American history. When requirements for top national universities, top liberal arts colleges, and top public institutions were collected, only one third required a U.S. history course.

The chart below offers a glimpse of history courses at America's top universities:



As The Council went on to report, the fact that a college or university required a U.S. history course did not necessarily guarantee that it was comprehensive. Many of the U.S. history courses which filled the requirement were quite specialized,

including “‘Mad Men and Mad Women’ (Middlebury College), ‘Uncovering Early UVA’ (University of Virginia), ‘Hip-Hop, Politics, and Youth Culture in America’ (University of Connecticut), and ‘Jews in American Entertainment’ (University of Texas).”

Thomas Jefferson [once said](#), “History, in general, only informs us what bad government is.”

When combined with the facts of America’s limited knowledge of history, does Jefferson’s statement shed some light on why so many Americans are disgruntled with our current government? Could it be that we have enabled the current “bad government” by a failure to stress the importance of history to the nation’s students?

*Image Credit: Animal House*