As a PhD student, I rely on my history degree from Western even more, both in terms of course content and skills. The wide range of history classes I took at Western all introduced me to key historical texts, narratives, and ideas that I draw upon constantly as a graduate student. More importantly, the history degree taught me skills that I'm finding incredibly useful in my graduate work. Whether it is analyzing primary sources or writing historiographical essays, I feel that the program has prepared me well to undertake demanding graduate-level work.

What would you tell an incoming History student?
I would tell current and prospective students that a degree in history will be useful regardless of whether you choose an academic or a non-academic career. If you are interested in an academic career or further study, you should feel confident in knowing that Western prepares you to perform well in the most competitive graduate and professional programs worldwide. On the other hand, if you are considering non-academic careers, the history degree will help you to develop key skills in which employers from a variety of sectors are interested.

But, setting aside the question of career utility, I also want to suggest that studying history can help us to become better readers, more informed citizens, and more critical consumers of ideas. A history education helps to develop a critical and creative imagination. In an age in which we are constantly bombarded with information, the skills we learn as history students teach us to read more carefully and evaluate ideas more critically. In this way, studying history can have lasting impact on one’s personal development.

Any other thoughts or comments?
I would like to thank the department for an incredibly rich learning experience throughout my time there. I hope history students at Western know that they have access to a great department with wonderful faculty and resources, which they should take advantage of!