

TO: Social Studies Sophomores
FROM: Anya Bassett, Director of Undergraduate Studies
RE: Sophomore Advising
DATE: January 2017

Welcome back, and welcome to Social Studies! I look forward to getting to know you over the next two and a half years. The purpose of this memo is to explain how the advising system works in Social Studies.

All Social Studies students are assigned an academic advisor in Social Studies. You will start with the person who is your Social Studies 10b tutor. At the end of your sophomore year, I will ask you whether you would like to stay with your current advisor, assuming that he or she will be teaching again in Social Studies, or whether you would like a new advisor. About two-thirds of students elect to stay with their current advisor. If you would like a new advisor, I will ask you what your intellectual interests are and I will try to assign you to an advisor who shares these interests.

This semester, you should plan to meet with your advisor twice during shopping period. The purpose of the first meeting is to get acquainted (or reacquainted), to discuss your experience at Harvard so far, and to discuss requirements, your focus field and plan of study, and course selection for this term. This meeting should last about a half hour. Following your first meeting, your advisor will “release” your electronic study card so that you can register for classes. However, we encourage you to meet again (briefly, if need be) with your advisor before finalizing your courses.

In preparation for your first meeting of the semester with your academic advisor, please write a short essay describing your academic interests and listing goals, questions, concerns, and other information your advisor should know in order to do a good job advising you. If you are new to your relationship with your advisor, offer details about yourself (your background, your interests, your work habits). If you have already worked with your advisor, provide him or her with an update, including information that she or he may not already have (a description of other courses you took last semester, changes in your family situation). And please answer the following questions: how do you hope to change and grow this semester? What would make this semester a success for you (however you define success)?

Please email your essay as a Word attachment to your advisor by 8 p.m. the night before your first advising meeting or at a mutually agreed upon time. I hope that your essay will help structure your first advising conversation and will facilitate good communication between you and your advisor.

I strongly recommend that you remain in contact with your advisor throughout the semester, either in person or via email. While I ask advisors to email their students for updates on their progress, I also ask students to initiate contact as well.