University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Department of History

Student Handbook

Master of Arts and Doctoral Degrees
Welcome

Each year, as the faculty and staff greet a new cohort of graduate students, we are reminded of both what we have achieved and what we yet want to accomplish as a department. We selected you from a strong pool of candidates, which reflects your own past successes as well as the tireless labor of many who have made the Department of History at UNLV a destination of choice for promising graduate students.

Just as you symbolize past achievement, you also embody our hope for the future. You will go on to be the teachers, the curators, and the scholars of the next generation. Over the course of your professional lives, we will take pride in your accomplishment. When graduate education is done well, a special bond develops between a student and a department. Your successes will be our successes, and we have a deeply rooted interest in helping you reach your very highest potential.

To that end, we have designed our graduate programs to be both rigorous and supportive. We want them to be the best possible preparation for whatever lies ahead of you.

We have found that graduate programs function most effectively when the faculty, the staff and the students have a clear and universal understanding of the programs’ requirements and expectations. This handbook serves to clarify those requirements and expectations for everyone involved in your education. Please read it, keep it, and refer to it often. While it does not contain the final word on every matter you may encounter during your time here, it is a valuable resource for making your graduate training the enriching experience we all want it to be.
Contacts

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Registering for Classes

Registration begins in April for the fall semester and October for the spring semester.

New PhD students should schedule an advising appointment with the Graduate Coordinator before registering for classes; new MA students should schedule their appointment with the MA Program Director. Continuing students should schedule an appointment with their committee chair. All students should meet with the Graduate Coordinator or MA Program Director to obtain call numbers, or they may make the request by email.

Students are encouraged to register as soon as possible. Classes tend to fill up quickly. After the first two weeks of registration, the Graduate Coordinator makes call numbers available to non-degree seeking students.

Students must register for a minimum of six credits per year to remain in the program. Students who do not plan to register for classes must request a Leave of Absence by sending the Graduate Coordinator a letter or email stating the reasons for the absence. The Graduate Coordinator will petition the Graduate College on the students’ behalf.

Overload

Students wishing to take more than 13 credit hours (10 credit hours if the student is a graduate assistant) in a regular semester, more than six credits in one five-week summer session, or more than 12 credits in two summer sessions, must file an Authorization for Overload with the Graduate College. The Graduate Committee strongly discourages overloads.

Annual Evaluation

The History Department’s Graduate Committee conducts an annual evaluation of all graduate students in the program. The Graduate College requires all students to complete a minimum of six credits each calendar year. The Department expects all students to make continuous progress toward their degrees. The Graduate Committee and the relevant Advisory Committees review the cases of students whose satisfactory progress is in doubt. Students are then notified of their standing in the program. Students who have not made satisfactory progress will be placed on academic probation. After two semesters of probationary status, the History Department will ask the Graduate College to separate the students from the program.

Student Responsibilities

Students are responsible for reading the Graduate Catalog, familiarizing themselves with the requirements, and making regular advising appointments. This is a self-managed process.

Students are also responsible for filling out Graduate College paperwork at the appropriate time throughout the degree process. A checklist of all necessary paperwork and the forms themselves are available on the students’ Graduate College VIP pages. Students should familiarize themselves with the deadlines for this paperwork. The Graduate Coordinator and MA Program Director will advise students on the completion of Graduate College forms, but the students themselves will be responsible for
meeting the Graduate College deadlines throughout their tenure in the program.

**ADVISING**

**The Graduate Coordinator and MA Program Director**
The Graduate Coordinator advises doctoral students during their first year in the program. The MA Program Director advises first-year MA students.

The Graduate Coordinator and MA Program Director may advocate for the students, assisting with petitions and other Graduate College correspondence, but each individual student is responsible for filing the appropriate forms with the Graduate College. A copy of every form filed with the Graduate College must be given to Lynette Webber.

The Graduate Coordinator and MA Program Director may offer students advice about their coursework, but they do not act as mediators between students and faculty. The primary responsibility of the Graduate Coordinator and MA Program Director is to administer the graduate programs.

**The Faculty Advisor**
After completing between 12 and 20 credits, a student should choose a primary academic advisor and complete an Advisory Committee form. The faculty advisor assists the student in shaping the intellectual parameters of the student’s program of study by recommending courses and helping develop the student’s comprehensive examination fields. The faculty advisor is not responsible for filing Graduate College paperwork; this is the student’s responsibility.

**The Advisory Committee**
The student, in close consultation with the faculty advisor, will select an advisory committee. This committee will help guide the student up through the comprehensive exams and its members serve as the student’s examiners. Please note that faculty are under no obligation to take on new students. It is the individual student’s responsibility to approach faculty members about their participation on the committee.

An MA student’s committee consists of four faculty members: two in the major field (this typically includes the student’s primary advisor, who will chair the committee), one in the minor field, and a Graduate College Representative from outside the History Department.

A PhD student’s committee consists of five faculty members: two in the major field (this typically includes the student’s primary advisor, who will chair the committee), one in the minor field, one in theory and methods, and a Graduate College Representative from outside the History Department.

The advisory committee often is, but does not have to be, identical in make-up to the student’s thesis/dissertation committee.

**The Graduate College Representative**
The Graduate College Representative must be a member of the UNLV Graduate Faculty. The Graduate College Representative
ensures that the exam is rigorous and that the student is treated fairly. Although it is not essential that the Graduate College Representative help shape the intellectual parameters of the student’s program of study, it is preferable where appropriate. The Graduate College Representative is chosen in consultation with the chair of the student’s committee.

**Graduate College Forms**

**Student VIP Page**
Each student has a homepage that is created as part of the application process. This page contains a checklist of all the necessary forms and a record of the forms that have been filed.

**Advisory Committee Form**
Students should complete this form after taking between 12 and 20 credits. This form must be filed with the Graduate College before any other forms can be filed. Students must file this form before taking the comprehensive exams.

**Proposed Degree Program Form**
This is a two-page form. The cover page is available on the Graduate College website; the second page is available from Lynette Webber in the History Office. This form details a student’s full course of study. It is used by the Graduate College to determine a student’s eligibility for graduation. It must accurately reflect the degree requirements in the Graduate Catalog and the courses on a student’s transcript. The student should use the advising worksheet created by the Graduate Coordinator or MA Program Director to facilitate the completion of this form.

If a student changes the proposed program after this form has been filed, the student must file a Change in Proposed Degree Program form. The student should not file a new Proposed Degree Program form.

**Final Examination Results Form**
This form is filed by a student’s committee after a student has passed or failed the comprehensive exams.

**Prospectus Approval Form**
This form must be completed before a student will be allowed to register for thesis or dissertation credits. A two- to three-page abstract of the thesis/dissertation project must accompany the form. The level of detail in the prospectus is determined by the student’s advisor.

**Graduation Application**
This form is due in the first weeks of the semester that a student plans to graduate. If a student submits an application and then does not graduate in that semester, the student may file for an extension. A nominal fee is charged for an extension.

**Graduate Assistantships**

**Application and Eligibility**
All full-time graduate students in good academic standing are eligible to apply for a Graduate Assistantship.
Applications must be filed by February 1 for the following academic year. Applications should be submitted to Lynette Webber. Applications submitted after this date will not be considered. Graduate Assistantships are usually awarded for a full academic year. Previously funded students seeking continuing funding must reapply each year. MA students are eligible for no more than two years of Graduate Assistant funding. PhD students are eligible for no more than three years of Graduate Assistant funding but they are also eligible for a year of funding as a Part-Time Instructor Graduate Associate (PTIGA). PhD students beginning the program with no MA in hand are eligible for four years of Graduate Assistant funding and one year of funding as a PTIGA. A few Graduate Assistantships may become available in the spring semester. Students who missed the February 1 deadline and wish to be considered for any spring openings should apply by November 1.

Graduate Assistantships are awarded on a competitive basis. In addition to the application, students should submit a letter of recommendation from a faculty member. Although it is customary for Graduate Assistants in good standing to be renewed for a second year, renewal is not automatic. Graduate Assistants serve at the discretion of the Department.

**Duties and Responsibilities**

Graduate Assistants must attend a mandatory training session sponsored by the Graduate College. This session takes place in the week before the fall semester begins.

The Graduate College requires Graduate Assistants to take a minimum of six credits each semester. The History Department expects students with a Graduate Assistantship to take 9-10 credits. Students who fail to maintain a minimum G.P.A. of 3.0 will be put on academic probation and may have their Graduate Assistantships rescinded.

No Graduate Assistants may have an outstanding incomplete during the semesters they serve. Students with incomplete work may not be renewed as Graduate Assistants until they receive an acceptable grade.

Graduate Assistants are expected to work a maximum of 20 hours per week. This includes attending lectures, meeting with students when necessary, and grading student work. Some MA Graduate Assistants teach discussion sections for HIST 100, and some PTIGAs teach sections of History 101 or 102.

**Additional Employment**

- Additional employment outside of the assistantship is only offered to domestic students and is not to exceed 10 hours per week.
- International students can only work up to 20 hours per week and therefore cannot work outside of their assistantship.
- Additional Employment forms can be picked up during contract signing in FDH 312 or in FDH 301 or 302 after contract signing.
- This form is not required in order to work additional hours during the winter holiday or during spring break.
Academic Misconduct

The Department of History at UNLV upholds the highest standards of academic integrity and expects the same of all students. The following comes from the University’s “Student Academic Misconduct Policy” and reflects the views of the Department: “Academic integrity is a legitimate concern for every member of the campus community; all share in upholding the fundamental values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness, responsibility and professionalism. By choosing to join the UNLV community, students accept the expectations of the Academic Misconduct Policy and are encouraged when faced with choices to always take the ethical path. Students enrolling in UNLV assume the obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with UNLV’s function as an educational institution.”

An especially pernicious and—unfortunately—common form of academic misconduct is plagiarism, which involves the use of another’s ideas or words without proper attribution. The Department of History treats all forms of plagiarism and other academic misconduct with seriousness and severity.

Degree Requirements: M.A.

There are three tracks for the master’s degree in History: Thesis, Non-Thesis, and the Master of Arts in Teaching History (MATH). Each requires that a student’s advisor and the Graduate Coordinator approve all coursework plans.

For the thesis and non-thesis tracks students choose a major field and a minor field of study from the fields of Asia, Europe, the United States, Atlantic World (minor field only), Latin America (minor field only), Middle East (minor field only), Public History (minor field only). Students may also craft fields in Comparative History in consultation with their advisory committees. For the MATH track, students will take courses in three fields; Historical Content, Teaching Materials or Teaching Materials with Public History emphasis, and Educational Methods. The Educational Methods field is taken in the College of Education and all students must have a faculty member from that College on their graduate committee. All incoming graduate students must pass History 710: The Professional Historian.

A field outside of History may be presented as part of a student’s program.

Any grade below B- will not be accepted for graduate credit but will be reflected in the student’s grade-point average.

A minimum number of credit hours of coursework at the 700 level is required in each program (not including thesis credits):

Thesis Plan
A minimum of 32 graduate credits, including six credits of thesis.

A minimum of 16 credits in the major area of study. A minimum of nine credits in a minor area (the Public History minor field requires an additional three credits of internship).
Core course requirements are as follows: three credits of historiography (HIST 740); six credits of colloquium (724, 726, 728, 730, 732, 734, 736, 738); and four credits of seminar (725, 727, 729, 731, 733, 735, 737, 739).

A maximum of nine credits at the 600 level can count toward degree requirements.

Examinations
Students must also successfully complete a written examination in the major area of study. This may be taken at the completion of 22 credits of course work, and must be taken no later than the completion of 26 credits. The examination consists of two parts, each of which is comprised of two essay questions. Students write on one essay in each part of the exam (total of two essays, two hours for each essay; four hours total). Questions are written by the students’ two major field committee members.

Thesis Proposal
Students must submit a research prospectus for the thesis that includes a discussion of the significance of the topic and positions it in the relevant historiography, a summary of the archives or other primary sources that will be used, and an outline of the chapters with a brief discussion of each chapter. This prospectus must be attached to a Prospectus Approval Form and submitted to the Graduate College.

Thesis Defense
An oral defense of the thesis is required.

Non-Thesis Plan
A minimum of 35 graduate credits.

A minimum of 25 credits in the major area of study.

A minimum of nine credits in a minor area (the Public History minor requires an additional three credits of internship).

Core course requirements are as follows: three credits of historiography (HIST 740); six credits of colloquium (724, 726, 728, 730, 732, 734, 736, 738); and four credits of seminar (725, 727, 729, 731, 733, 735, 737, 739).

A maximum of nine credits at the 600 level can count toward degree requirements.

Examinations
Students must also successfully complete a written examination in the major and minor areas of study. This may be taken at the completion of 24 credits of course work, and must be taken no later than the completion of 35 credits. The examination consists of three parts, each of which is comprised of two essay questions. Students write on one essay in each part of the exam (total of three essays, two hours for each essay; six hours total). Questions are written by the students’ three advisors.

Master of Arts in Teaching History: Teachers’ Track (MATH)
Minimum of 32 graduate credits (34 credits for Public History option).

Coursework is divided into three required fields.
Field 1: Historical Content: 13 credits of History focused on a geographic region: Europe, United States or World (Latin America, Asia, Middle East, Atlantic World). Minimum of seven credits must be taken at the 700 level, including HIST 710 Professional Historian (one credit), three credits of Historiography (HIST 740) and three credits of colloquium (724, 726, 728, 730, 732, 734, 736, 738). Up to six credits may be taken at 600 level.

Field 2: Teaching Materials: 10 credits of 700-level coursework in History with a coordinated topical, thematic, or comparative focus, and including a three-credit colloquium (724, 726, 728, 730, 732, 734, 736, 739, 749, 769), four-credit seminar (725, 727, 729, 731, 733, 735, 737, 739) and three-credit HIST 780a:Capstone Project: Thesis Equivalent course (which culminates in a major teaching-related project). A field in Public History can count as the Teaching Materials field and would include HIST 749 and any two additional Public History courses (at least one of which must be at the 700 level), and the HIST 780a Capstone Project: Thesis Equivalent course.

Field 3: Educational Methods: Nine credits* of coursework in the College of Education divided into the following subfields:
   a) Educational Foundations: Select one course from CIG 660, CIS 617, CIL 610.
   b) Curriculum Development: Select one course from CIS 640, CIS 644, CIS 649, CIS 692.
   c) Educational Technology: Select one course from CIT 602, CIT 607, CIT 609, CIT 620.

   *Matriculants with extensive background in one of these subfields may, with the permission of their advisor in the College of Education, take an additional course from one of the two other sub-fields in place of a course in the field of existing expertise. Matriculants with an extensive background in two of these sub-fields may, with permission of the student’s advisor in Education, take three credits related to their program of study in another field outside of Education.

Examinations
Students must successfully complete a written examination in Field 1: Historical Content. This may be taken at the completion of 25 credits, and must be taken no later than the completion of 32 credits (34 for those doing Public History as the Teaching Field). The examination consists of two parts, each of which is comprised of two essay questions. Students write on one essay in each part of the exam (total of two essays, two hours for each essay; four hours total). Questions are written by the students’ committee members in the Historical Content field.

Degree Requirements: Ph.D
Minimum of 57 credits beyond the B.A. or 39 credits beyond the M.A. in History or closely related disciplines. Students choose a major field and a minor field of study from the fields of Asia, Europe, Latin America (minor field only), Public History (minor field only) and the United States.
Student may also craft fields in Comparative History in consultation with their advisory committees.

**United States History**

**Major Field**
Nine credits of historiography (HIST 740a, e, f, g, h)
Nine credits of colloquium (HIST 724, 726, 730), three credits of which must be in a non-U.S. field (HIST 728, 732, 734, 736, 738)
Eight credits of seminar (HIST 725, 727, 729, 731, 733)

**Minor Field**
12 credits of history work in a non-U.S. field of history. Six of these credits may be taken in an appropriate academic discipline other than history. Courses outside the field of history must be approved by a student’s academic advisor.

All students are required to take the one credit HIST 710: The Professional Historian

Students must choose one of the following areas of concentration:

**I. North American West**
Students are encouraged to take courses with as many members of the faculty who specialize in the history of the North American West as possible. As part of the minimum number of credits listed above, a student’s course work above must include HIST 740f, HIST 726, HIST 727. Students must also take two other historiography courses from the 740 category (e.g., 740a, b, e, g, h). Students are encouraged to take more than the minimum number of courses.

**II. North American Culture and Society**
As part of the minimum number of credits listed above, a student’s course work above must include HIST 740g, HIST 740 h, HIST 724, HIST 725. Students must also take one other historiography course from the 740 category (e.g., 740a, b, e, f). Students are encouraged to take more than the minimum number of courses.

**Minor Field for All Students of U.S. History**
12 credits of history work in non-U.S. field of history. Six of these credits may be taken in an appropriate academic discipline other than history. Courses outside the field of history must be approved by a student’s academic advisor.

All students are required to take the one credit HIST 710: The Professional Historian

Students are encouraged to take courses with various faculty, taking advantage of the department’s rich offerings and diverse areas of expertise.

**European History: Culture and Society**

**Major Field**
Nine credits of historiography (HIST 740b, and g, h).
Nine credits of colloquium, six of which must be from among HIST 728, 732, 734, 736, 738, and three of which must be in a non-European field from 724, 726, 730.
Eight credits of seminar from HIST 729, 731, 733, 735, 737, 739.
Minor Field for All Students of European History
12 credits of history work in non-European field of history. Six of these credits may be taken in an appropriate academic discipline other than history. Courses outside the field of history must be approved by a student’s academic advisor.

All students, US and European, are required to take the one credit HIST 710: The Professional Historian.

Students are expected to take courses with as many members of the faculty who specialize in the history of European Culture and Society as possible. Students are encouraged to take more than the minimum number of courses.

Public History in the Ph.D. program.
Students may choose Public History as a Theory and Methods field, or they may do a minor field in Public History.

Foreign Language Requirement
Students writing a thesis/dissertation must have reading competence of any foreign language required to do primary research in the students’ field.

Satisfaction of the foreign language requirement can be met in any of the following three ways, though the chosen option must be approved by the chair of the student’s examination committee:

i. Demonstrated reading knowledge of two foreign languages.

ii. Demonstrated reading knowledge of one foreign language and advanced reading knowledge of the same language, assessed through the writing of a substantial historiographical essay in English based on scholarly literature in that foreign language.

iii. Demonstrate reading knowledge of one foreign language and the successful completion of SOCIOLOGY 604: Statistical Methods In the Social Sciences.

Prospectus
Students must submit a research prospectus for the dissertation that includes a discussion of the significance of the topic and positions it in the relevant historiography, a summary of the archives or other primary sources that will be used, and an outline of the chapters with a brief discussion of each chapter. This prospectus must be attached to a Prospectus Approval Form and submitted to the Graduate College.

The dissertation prospectus colloquium must be held within three months of the successful completion of the comprehensive examinations. Students must formally present a prospectus for their proposed dissertation research to their advisory committee prior to taking dissertation credits. With the approval of the prospectus the students become doctoral candidates (ABD).

Dissertation
A dissertation of substantial length and quality containing original research and an interpretative framework on a topic in the field of North American West, North American Culture and Society, or European Culture and Society must be written and
approved by the dissertation committee. Students must take a minimum of twelve dissertation credits.

**Dissertation defense**
Students must offer an oral defense of the dissertation. All committee members must be notified and the defense must be scheduled through Lynette Webber. This is a public event—the entire Department of History will be notified of its occurrence.

**Courses**

The History Department offers graduate classes at the 600 and 700 levels.

600-level classes meet in conjunction with a 400-level advanced undergraduate class. Graduate students are required to do additional readings and generally meet with the instructor outside of class to discuss the readings. The writing and exam requirements differ from the undergraduate requirements. 600-level courses are usually content based and although only nine credits will count towards the degree, additional 600-level courses can be very useful for preparing for comprehensive exams.

700-level classes are divided into three types: Historiography, Colloquium, and Seminar. All students must take at least one of each type in their major field and at least one colloquium in their minor field, preferably in the first year of their degree program. Students are encouraged to take as many courses at the 700 level as possible. A typical reading load for a 700-level course ranges from 300 to 500 pages a week.

**Historiography:** These courses are designed to introduce students to the study of a particular field or subfield of history; they are the history of historical writing. Historiography courses have a methodological approach. They explore the development of schools of thought. The writing requirement for Historiography courses usually includes a series of historiographical essays or other assignments that engage the development of the field. These courses might also include an in-class examination that is designed to help students assess their preparedness for comprehensive exams.

**Colloquium:** These courses focus on reading in a particular subject area, usually the research interest of the faculty member teaching the course. They are designed to give students an in-depth exposure to scholarly work on a particular topic. Writing assignments vary with each instructor and may include review essays and a bibliographic essay on a research topic of interest to the student. Colloquia are often paired with a seminar. Students can use the readings from the colloquium and the bibliographic essay to lay the foundation for the research project conducted in a seminar.

**Seminar:** These courses are research and writing intensive. Students are expected to produce a publishable article-length research paper (30 pages). In addition to the work, students usually critique the papers of other students in the class and present their own work to the class.
**Independent Study**: Students may take six credits of independent study as a part of the MA degree program and nine credits for the PhD program. Independent study courses are variably weighted from one to three credits. The requirements of an independent study are the equivalent of a colloquium: a minimum of three books per credit and appropriate writing assignments. Students must fill out an independent study contract with the faculty member who will conduct the independent study. No call numbers will be given without a signed contract. Students who take an independent study in the summer term usually sign up for the course in the third summer session, but begin the work during the first summer session. It is customary for students to take regular coursework with a faculty member before they enroll in an independent study.

**Reading load**
Many faculty members will make the syllabus for the course available in advance of the beginning of the semester. Syllabi from previous semesters are on file in the History Department office and students may consult them with the understanding that faculty often update and revise syllabi from year to year.

Students in a 600-level course can expect to read at least three to four additional books, or equivalent articles, beyond the undergraduate reading requirements.

Students in 700-level courses can expect to read between 300 and 500 pages a week. In a Historiography course, which requires students to engage a broad spectrum of work in the field, a faculty member may assign additional weekly reading.

It is the responsibility of the student to master the techniques of digesting large amounts of material.

**Reading notes**
All students should take systematic reading notes to facilitate class discussion and preparation for comprehensive exams.

Always read with comprehensive exams in mind. Students should develop an accessible and comprehensive bibliographic resource that will not only be helpful for exams but also for any subsequent teaching or research. Include the following categories:

**Historiography** – How does the author position the book in the field? Is the book a departure from conventional scholarship? Is it a revisionist argument? Is it in dialogue with another book or set of books? In addition to the introduction and the footnotes, the acknowledgments are a good place to look for clues.

**Argument** – Read the introduction and conclusion together. Assess not only whether the author has successfully presented the argument, but also what some of the larger implications of the argument might be. The index is a very helpful tool for identifying the author’s key terms.

**Methodology** – Is this book a new look at familiar evidence or does it introduce new evidence? Is it a work of interdisciplinary scholarship, if so in what disciplines? What lens of historical analysis does the author put at the center of the inquiry: race, class, gender, politics, diplomacy, military
affairs, culture, intellectual thought, community life, economics, etc.? How does this shape the study? What theoretical approaches shape the intellectual project: Marxism, postmodernism, post-structuralism, psychology, new historicism, etc.? Is there a particular theoretician whose ideas are particularly salient?

Sources – How contemporary (to the publication of the book) are the secondary sources? What kind of primary evidence does the author use? How is this evidence analyzed?

Examples – It is always a good idea to choose three key examples from the text that raise particularly important points in the argument or generate questions about the author’s argument. Include key details as well as brief discussion of the importance of each example.

Critique – Include a brief discussion of any elements of the argument or other elements of presentation that are troubling.

Connection to Comprehensive Exams
Students should begin to compile reading notes for comprehensive exams from the beginning of their course work and to create the core of their comprehensive exam reading lists from the books and articles on the syllabi of the courses they take. These core lists will be augmented, in consultation with the student’s advisory committee members to create the final comprehensive exam lists. This is a collaborative process and students should plan to complete these lists the semester before they take their comprehensive exams.

Class Discussion
All students should participate in class discussion weekly. Failure to participate in class discussion is an indication that a student is not fulfilling the minimum requirements of intellectual work at the graduate level. An MA and a PhD are professional degrees and scholarly discussion is a professional requirement.

Minimum Degree Requirements
Although the Graduate College will grant a degree to a student who fulfills the minimum requirements, the Graduate Faculty of the History Department advise students to take the most comprehensive curriculum possible. Fulfilling the bare minimum requirements does not necessarily prepare a student for comprehensive exams.

Grades
A Excellent work, original ideas, well researched and clearly expressed.
A- Work with promise and the potential to be publishable with minimal revision.
B+ Work that shows progress despite its flaws. A “B+” is the lowest grade that indicates acceptable work at the graduate level.
B Weak work based on insufficient research or analysis, and failure to engage the broader historiographical issues. A “B” should be considered an indication of serious concern on the part of the faculty member about the quality of a student’s work.
B- Barely acceptable. Students who receive a B- will be placed on academic probation.
C-D No graduate credit. Students will be put on academic probation. A student already on academic probation will be recommended for separation from the Graduate College.

Incomplete Courses
An incomplete will only be given in the case of a documented personal or medical emergency.

Although the Graduate College allows one year for the completion of the course work, students should expect that the faculty member will require a much shorter time frame for completion of the work, usually before the beginning of the next semester.

Graduate Assistants who fail to complete course work before the next semester of their Graduate Assistantship may have their Assistantship rescinded. Please also note that incomplete credits do not count toward the nine-unit total required by the financial aid office and may therefore interfere with financial aid disbursements.

A faculty member who gives an incomplete must notify the Graduate Committee.

Students with more than one incomplete in a semester may be placed on academic probation.

Comprehensive Exams
Comprehensive exams test the knowledge that students have acquired through coursework and other study. They cover both historical fact and historiographical development. These exams form an essential part of the students’ graduate training.

Scheduling Exams
PhD students must take their written exams during the final full week of September or the final full week of February, and the oral exam must be taken within one week after the completion of the final written exam. (The department may be willing to adjust this calendar for extenuating circumstances.) For MA students, in the event that you have received permission to take your exams in your final semester, the exams must be scheduled no later than one month before the final Graduate College deadline.

Before you schedule your exam, you MUST confer with all members of your committee to confirm that each member agrees that you will be prepared by the date you have chosen. When your committee agrees that you are ready to write your exams, Lynette Webber will help you schedule a day and time.

You should plan to take your exams on a computer provided by the History Department.

Exam Format
M.A. Thesis
Two Exams in Major Field
   Committee Chair: 1 of 2 questions (2 hours)
Second Committee Member in Major Field: 1 of 2 questions (2 hours)

There is NO written exam in the minor field

Non-Thesis
Two Exams in Major Field and one minor field
  Committee Chair: 1 of 2 questions (2 hours)
  Second Committee Member in Major Field: 1 of 2 questions (2 hours)

  Committee Member in Minor Field: 1 of 2 questions (2 hours)

MATH
Students must successfully complete a written examination in Field 1: Historical Content. This may be taken at the completion of 25 credits, and must be taken no later than the completion of 32 credits (34 for those doing Public History as a Teaching Field). The examination consists of two parts; each part contains two essay questions. Students write on one essay in each part of the exam (total of two essays, two hour for each; four hours total). Questions are written by the student’s committee members in the Historical Content field, and each part of the exam is based on a list of approximately 20-30 books in conjunction with the members of the advisory committee.

Ph.D Exams
North American Culture and Society
  I. Major Field: United States History (Colonial Period through 1877 or 1850 to the Present) 5 hours: 2 of 4 questions (each question 2.5 hrs)

  II. Major Field: History of the North American West or History of American Culture or American Intellectual History. 5 hours: 2 of 4 questions (each question 2.5 hrs)

  III. Theory and Methods – organized by a topical field to be determined in consultation with committee member: e.g. urban, race, gender, class, etc., 2.5 hours: 1 of 2 questions

  IV. Minor Field: A student chooses one of the following fields: European History, World History, or Public History. A student may only be examined in Public History in one field. A student writes on 2 of 4 questions (each question 2.5 hrs).

European History: Culture and Society
  I. Major Field: European History 5 hours: 2 of 4 questions (each question 2.5 hrs)

  II. Major Field: History of European Culture or European Intellectual History 5 hours: 2 of 4 questions (each question 2.5 hrs)

  III. Theory and Methods – organized by a topical field to be determined in consultation with committee member:
e.g. urban, race, gender, class, etc., 2.5 hours: 1 of 2 questions

IV. Minor Field: A student chooses one of the following fields: European History, World History, or Public History. A student may only be examined in Public History in one field. A student writes on 2 of 4 questions (each question 2.5 hrs)

**Reading Lists**
MA students should have a book list of no less 20 books for each field. At the discretion of the advisors, PhD students’ booklists will be considerably more extensive. These lists include relevant readings from course work and additional readings necessary to cover the chosen field in a comprehensive fashion.

**How to Make a List**
**Your First Semester:** Begin to generate bibliographies in your anticipated major and minor field. These lists (in full bibliographic form – Chicago Style/Turabian) should include all relevant books/articles from course syllabi, research for papers, additional reading done during the semester.

**The Semester Before You Plan to Take Your Comprehensive Exams:** Take the lists to your committee members and confer with each member about additional books and articles to add to the lists you have compiled.

Another helpful resource for this process is *The American Historical Association Guide to Historical Literature*. This is an annotated bibliography (located in the reference section in the library) which will help you assess the importance of books in your fields.

You should have finished your book lists (this means correct citations as well as the full number of books) before the end of the semester. Not only does this help you budget your time, it helps avoid the problem of committee members adding books at the last minute.

**Preparing for Exams**
**Reading Notes**
Beginning in your first semester, take brief but comprehensive reading notes on every book/article. Keep all of these notes in hard copy or in a folder on your hard drive, organized by field. These notes refresh your memory of the book/article when you review it for your exams. Writing detailed (but brief) notes requires you to record your thoughts when the text is fresh in your mind.

**Meetings with Committee Members**
Schedule regular meetings with each member of your committee during the months you are reading for your exams to discuss the books as you read/review them. Prepare questions about the readings that incorporate subject matter, historiography and important thematic issues. If you can formulate good questions, you can answer any question.

Practice writing answers in the two-hour time frame for M.A and 2.5 hours for Ph.D. students. Remember taking a test is a skill you rarely practice as a graduate student.
Taking the Exam

MA students must take all exam questions within a five-day period, preferably in the same week. A student may take two exams on one day or spread out the questions over two days.

The exam essays will not be circulated to the committee members until all the exams have been completed. Once the committee has received the completed exam, members will submit their assessments of the questions to the Chair of the committee within three working days. The Chair will communicate the results of the exam to the student.

To pass the exam a student must pass all sections. If a student fails any section, the student must retake the failed section no sooner than three months after their first attempt. Comprehensive exams can only be taken twice. The Graduate College representative has veto power.

Thesis and Dissertation

Thesis/Dissertation Credits
Students must have a prospectus on file to be allowed to register for thesis or dissertation credits. Once the prospectus has been filed, students may sign up for such credits with their committee chairs. At the beginning of each semester, the student and the faculty member should draft a contract of the work to be completed during the semester. Successful completion of that work will result in an X grade. An X grade signifies a continuing project. After the successful defense and submission of the thesis/dissertation, the X grades will be changed to S. Students who cannot demonstrate significant progress on their thesis/dissertation in a semester in which they are enrolled in thesis/dissertation credits will not be allowed to register for further credits. Students who have not completed their comprehensive exams will not be allowed to register for thesis/dissertation credits, unless they plan to take their exams in the very beginning of the semester and spend the rest of the semester working on the thesis/dissertation.

Thesis/Dissertation Format
The Graduate College has very strict formatting guidelines.
All students should refer to the handbook available on the Graduate College website (graduatecollege.unlv.edu). All students should format their thesis/dissertation according to these guidelines from the earliest phase of the project.

All students should attend the workshop offered by the Graduate College on how to format a thesis or dissertation well in advance of the semester in which the document is submitted.

**Circulating a Draft**
Students must plan to circulate a full draft of the thesis/dissertation to the full committee well in advance of the defense.

Students planning to defend in the fall semester should submit a full draft to the committee by September 1.

Students planning to defend in the spring semester should submit a full draft to the committee by February 1.

**Thesis/Dissertation Defense**
A student is responsible for scheduling the defense.

Please query the committee as early as possible in order to accommodate conflicting schedules.

For students defending in the fall semester, the defense must be scheduled to take place on or before November 1.

A student who defends in the spring semester must schedule the defense by April 1.

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**Submission of Thesis/Dissertation**
In order to complete the Graduate College requirements for the submission and acceptance of an MA thesis or PhD dissertation please refer to the Graduate College web page on Thesis and Dissertation submissions. This is a rather lengthy process and the student is responsible for addressing all the required steps.

In addition to the copies required by the Graduate College, a student must submit two copies to the History Department: one bound, one unbound.

**Professional Development**

**Conferences**
Academic conferences offer very valuable opportunities for young scholars. First, conferences bring together people of shared intellectual interest, and the exchange of ideas in such a setting can be a powerful catalyst for students’ scholarly development. Second, conferences are an incomparable setting for learning more about the state of one’s field. Third, conferences allow students to network with people who may be helpful as mentors, colleagues, editors and employers.

Finally, conferences provide students with opportunities to formally present their work. Presenting a conference paper can greatly accelerate the rate of scholarly progress through both the process of preparation and through the feedback the students receive.
If students have research projects which they would like to present at a conference, they should consult with their respective advisors to determine whether the work is ready for such a presentation, what must be done to get it ready, which conference would offer the best venue, and how best to submit a paper proposal (note that every conference has its own submission guidelines). Usually submission requires a paper abstract, which is a brief synopsis of what the paper contains and why that content is valuable.

External Grants and Fellowships
One of the realities of professional life for historians is the regular search for funding to support one’s research. That process can and should begin in graduate school. A track record of successfully securing outside funding sources will both facilitate students’ work and impress potential employers. The Department often posts funding opportunities on the bulletin board in A-wing of Wright Hall. The best single source for such things is the American Historical Association’s Guide to Grants, Fellowships and Prizes of Interest to Historians, which can be purchased in hardcopy or viewed online by members of the AHA.

Professional Memberships
Students should seriously consider joining the leading professional association in their fields. Membership offers access to conferences and resources that can be very useful for scholarly development. It is a way to know and be known. Most professional associations offer reduced membership rates to students.

The Guidelines for Getting an Academic Job in History
First, read the American Historical Association’s Perspectives. This publication includes regular reports on the state of the field. The history job market is extremely competitive. There is no boom and bust cycle in history—it is a finite job market that is always very tight. The average history position will attract between 150-300 applicants. Of these, the vast majority will be qualified. You must understand what differentiates the candidates that ultimately get the jobs from those who do not. Be realistic—not pessimistic. One of things that all successful job candidates have in common is a clear understanding of their field and the requirements for getting a job. Do your homework and start NOW! Ignorance will cost you in the end.

For stats on the state of the field and the job market in particular see the following sites:

H-Net  http://www.h-net.org/
American Historical Association  http://www.historians.org/
Organization of American Historians  http://www.oah.org/
Western History Association  http://www.unm.edu/~wha/
American Studies Association  http://georgetown.edu/crossroads/asainfo.html
Job Crisis?

The Rules

1. Ph.D from a school with a highly rated program or prominent person in your area of interest. You need to be 98% done before you apply. (Few places hire ABDs).
2. 3.8-4.0 for all graduate work.
3. Awards—home, regional, national.
5. Inside/Outside fellowships.
7. Professional memberships in all appropriate general and specific organizations.
8. Join a list-serve on H-Net in your field & contribute when you can (don’t just lurk).
9. Attend conferences and meet the leaders in your field.
10. Present papers at major national/international conferences.
11. Build networking connections—you must be known nationally in your area of research.
12. An innovative dissertation topic that you have discussed with a major academic press in your field. (Major presses set up booths at academic meetings and send acquisitions editors to meet with potential authors. When you are ready you can make your pitch.)
13. Total mastery of your dissertation topic—i.e. you could talk about it with confidence for an hour in front of 100 people with no notes or give a concise version in 5 minutes.
14. Teach both halves of the survey course in your field at least once with good/excellent student evaluations.
15. Excellent letters of recommendation from within and outside your department.
16. You must have established yourself as a promising scholar outside the requirements of your program. Remember, no one cares about your GPA unless it is low. At least 50 percent of getting an academic job involves you working your way into a nationally based profession that evaluates people on a national scale. Local accomplishments are critical, but they are only the first step. Being a star in your home program does not guarantee success on a national job market.
17. Personality—you need to have one and a sense of humor won’t hurt either.
18. Temperament—you need to be self-motivated and really be able to convey that sense of initiative. Keep in mind that the people hiring you know that if you can’t get your work done you will not get tenure, which will result in a significant disruption in their department.

Sound impossible? It is not. Anyone who has gotten an academic job in the last fifteen years has met most or all of these requirements and many have far exceeded them. How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time. To have a record that looks like this you need to be doing these things as you go. Think about blending course and internal responsibilities with larger professional goals. Make a one-year plan that includes at least two accomplishments outside of your department (i.e. attend a conference and publish an article).
national conference, publish a book review, write a letter to a leading figure in your field, get an internship). Keep a running CV and compare it to those of your peers. Meet graduate students from other programs and pick their brains—are they doing things that you are not? Be enthusiastic in your quest for professional status. Everybody loves an enthusiastic student and most will be willing to help you. A friendly chat at a conference could lead to a job years later. By the time you graduate with your MA or Ph.D. you should be a historian not just the holder of a degree in history—there is a big difference and interviewers know it!

The Guidelines for Getting a Job in Public History
Not much different really from academic history.

1. **Temperament**—you need to be self-motivated and really be able to convey that sense of initiative. Even more than academic history, public history work often requires you to work completely without direction. If you like someone holding your hand or a tightly organized work environment maybe public history is not for you. If you can’t look someone in the eye and honestly tell them that you “can do it” even though you’ve never done “it” before then maybe public history is not for you. You need to be confident in your intellectual tool chest and willing to dive right into projects to test your skills.

2. M.A. or Ph.D. from a school that matches your intellectual interests and gives you the best chance at professional success.

3. A GPA of 3.8-4.0.

4. **Experience**. Internships, small contracts, consulting experiences are mandatory for you to move out on your own or qualify for a career position.

5. Excellent letters of recommendation from within and outside your department.

6. You must have established yourself as a promising scholar beyond the requirements of your program. At least 50 percent of getting a public history job involves you working your way into a nationally based profession that evaluates people on a national scale. Local accomplishments are critical, but are only the first step. Being a star in your home program does not guarantee success on a national job market.

7. Awards—home, regional, national.


10. Inside/Outside Research grants.

11. Professional memberships in all appropriate general and specific organizations.

12. Join H-Public & contribute when you can.

13. Attend NCPH conferences and meet the leaders of your field.

14. Present papers at major national/international conferences.

15. Build networking connections—you must be known nationally in your area of research.

16. Personality—you need to have one and a sense of humor won’t hurt either.
Conclusions

Always keep in mind that if you want to work in history you should look far beyond the walls of your institution. The truth is that no matter how supportive your institution is, once you graduate and attempt to get a job you and your CV must stand alone. To compete with confidence you need to take your act on the road and see how it plays to a national audience. Usually the professional historians you meet along the way will help you as you move from apprentice to master. Few will have any sympathy later, however, if you hit the job market with degree in hand but no clear understanding of professional realities.