

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Department of History

Program Handbook

Master of Arts and Doctoral Degrees

Edited and Revised

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Welcome Message

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 the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (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 accomplishments. 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.

Purpose

The purpose of this handbook is to provide program-specific information that is not found in the [UNLV Graduate Catalog](#). Students are responsible for understanding and following the policies and procedures delineated in this document and the [UNLV Graduate Catalog](#), as well as the NSHE Code, UNLV Bylaws, and the UNLV Student Conduct Code. Questions about policies should be directed to the Graduate College: gradassociatedean@unlv.edu.

Department Graduate Faculty

A current listing of the graduate faculty can be found in the [UNLV Graduate Catalog](#). Faculty must hold graduate faculty status to be involved in graduate education at UNLV. For up-to-date information regarding graduate faculty status in your department, visit the [Graduate Faculty status web page](#).

Contacts

History Department

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Graduate College University Gateway Building

Non-Academic Advising: Assistant Dean of Graduate Student Services
Office: GTW 211
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grad.rebel@unlv.edu

RPC Coordinator: Tracy Johnson, Director of RPC
Office: GTW
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Graduate Assistantships:
Ashlyn Gray, Director of Graduate Financial Services & Business Operations
Office: GTW
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Office: GTW 2000
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Graduate Student Professional Association

Lied Library Building (LLB), 2nd floor, room 2141
Phone: 702.895.2261
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gpsa@unlv.edu

Program Requirements

Program requirements regarding [admission, coursework and culminating experience](#) are found in the [graduate catalog](#).

REGISTERING FOR CLASSES

Registration begins in April for the Fall semester and November for the Spring semester.

New MA & PhD students should schedule an advising appointment with the Graduate Coordinator before registering for classes. Continuing students should schedule their appointment with the Graduate Coordinator after consulting their committee chair. Students are responsible for keeping their Plan of Study Part II form up to date. Plan of Study Part II forms are available from the Graduate Coordinator. Students will not be given permission to register without written confirmation from the Graduate Coordinator.

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 should plan to register before the end of the previous semester. Students must register for a minimum of six (6) credits per year to remain in the program. Students who do not plan to register for classes must request approval for a leave of absence and file a [LEAVE OF ABSENCE](#) form. Students who do not register for classes, or request a leave of absence, will be separated from the program.

Overload

Graduate students normally may not take more than 15 credits during the fall and spring terms, unless they are in a professional program that specifically requires additional credits. Graduate students may take no more than 6 credit hours in a single five-week summer term and earn no more than a total of 15 credits during the summer term (pre, post, and regular five-week sessions combined). Students who want to exceed the standard maximum credit load, must submit an Authorization for Overload form available through the [Grad Rebel Gateway](#). Overload requests will be processed by the Graduate College in MyUNLV on approval of the form. The Graduate Committee strongly discourages overloads.

Annual Mandatory Individual Development Plan (IDP)

The History Department's Graduate Committee conducts an annual evaluation of all graduate students in the program. Each winter break and early spring term, graduate students are **required** to complete the Graduate Student Individual Development Plan (IDP) form. The review covers the prior calendar year and assesses student progress, and it establishes reasonable goals for the year ahead.

The chair of each student's committee will add comments and submit the evaluation to the Graduate Committee for review and have the option to provide feedback to each student's submitted IDP and provide acknowledgement that they have reviewed the IDP. 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. Failure to meet the conditions of probation will result in separation from the Graduate College.

Reported student data is shared with students' graduate coordinators and advisors to foster opportunities for discussion about students' strengths and weaknesses, accomplishments and next requirements, and mentoring plans so that students know what they need to do in order to progress successfully through their programs in a timely manner.

Students who are graduating are also required to complete the form in order to record their achievements since the data is also used to track UNLV metrics related to the annual productivity of all students.

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 a student's My UNLV. Students should familiarize themselves with the deadlines for this paperwork. The Graduate Coordinator will advise students on the completion of Graduate College forms, but the students themselves will be responsible for filing the correct forms, and for meeting the Graduate College deadlines throughout their tenure in the program.

ADVISING

The Graduate Coordinator

The Graduate Coordinator advises graduate students during their first year in the program.

The Graduate Coordinator 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 and interacting with other departments on campus. The Graduate College does NOT want the Graduate Coordinator to serve as a go-between on issues.

The Graduate Coordinator 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 is to administer the graduate programs.

If you receive notifications from the Graduate College or Financial Aid, you must contact those offices on your own. The Graduate Coordinator is not responsible for managing your relationship or standing with these offices.

The Faculty Advisor

After completing between 12 and 20 credits, a student should choose a primary academic advisor and complete an [APPOINTMENT OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE](#) form. The faculty advisor, who serves as chair of the student's committee, 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. When students complete the Appointment of Advisory Committee form, they should make sure they insert their advisor's name and email address in the appropriate location so that their advisor can complete their IDP (see above).

The Advisory Committee

The student, in close consultation with the faculty advisor, will select an advisory committee. This committee will help guide the student through the comprehensive exams; its members serve as the student's examiners. Faculty are under no obligation to take on new students. It is the individual student's responsibility to approach a faculty member about their participation on the committee. Faculty who are already serving on a significant number of committees may not agree to serve on a student's committee.

An MA student's committee consists of four faculty members: two in the major field (this includes the student's faculty advisor, who is the chair of 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: one in the Major field (this typically includes the student's primary advisor, who will chair the committee), one in the Survey field, and one in Portfolio. There will also be an additional member from the department's faculty and a Graduate College Representative from outside the History Department. The two latter committee members contribute to assessing the candidate's work but do not assign Comprehensive Exam questions.

After a student passes comprehensive exams, a student may change the members of the committee and configure a thesis or dissertation committee. If changes are made to the committee, a [CHANGE IN ADVISORY COMMITTEE](#) form must be filed with the Graduate College.

The Graduate College Representative

The Graduate College Representative must be a member of the [UNLV Graduate Faculty](#) and have appropriately approved privileges to serve in this role. 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

All forms will be filled out, submitted, and signed online through the Grad Rebel Gateway

MyUNLV “To Do” checklist

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.

Appointment of 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. Best practices suggest that students complete this form sooner than later.

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 on the [UNLV Degree Directory website](#) or from the AAIH 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 to facilitate the completion 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.

Culminating Experience Results Form

This form is filed after a student has successfully defended their MA thesis/PhD dissertation or passed their MA 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. See prospectus writing guidelines. The level of detail in the prospectus is determined by the student’s advisor. The prospectus does not have to be publicly defended. Once the advisory committee is pleased that it is complete, the student can submit their Prospectus Approval Form. Students may not enroll in Thesis/Dissertation credits until the Prospectus Approval Form has been signed by all parties.

Graduation Application

This form is due in the first weeks of the semester that a student plans to graduate. All students must apply to graduate. If you do not submit an application, your degree will not be conferred. If a student submits an application but does not graduate in that semester, the student must file for an extension. A nominal fee is charged for an extension.

GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS AND FINANCIAL AID

(See [Graduate Assistant Handbook](#) for more information)

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 through the link on the Graduate College website. 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 two years of Graduate Assistant funding. PhD students are eligible for three years of Graduate Assistant funding but they are also eligible for up to two years 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. In other words, PhD students receive a maximum of five years of funding. A few Graduate Assistantships may become available in the Spring semester but this is very rare. Students who miss 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 ask a faculty member to submit a letter of recommendation. Although it is customary for Graduate Assistants in good standing to be renewed for a second year, renewal is not automatic. Students must reapply each year. Graduate Assistants serve at the discretion of the Department.

Duties and Responsibilities

Graduate Assistants must attend an orientation sponsored by the History Department and a mandatory training session sponsored by the Graduate College. These sessions take place in the week before the fall semester begins.

The Graduate College requires Graduate Assistants to take a minimum of 6 credits each semester. The History Department expects students with a Graduate Assistantship to take 9-10 credits. The semester a PhD student takes their comprehensive exams they are only required to take 6 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 will not be renewed as Graduate Assistants.

Graduate Assistants are expected to work a maximum of 20 hours per week. This includes attending lectures, holding office hours, and grading student work. Junior Graduate Assistants tend to lead discussion sections of lower-level courses while some senior GAs teach sections of introductory 100- or 200-level courses.

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 are located in the Grad Rebel Gateway.
- 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.

See the [UNLV Student Academic Misconduct Policy](#) for more information.

PROGRESSION AND COMPLETION

All graduate students are expected to complete their degree in a timely manner. The UNLV [Graduate College Catalog](#) has recommended guidelines on "maximum time to degree": six years for an MA, six years for a Post-MA PhD, and eight years for a post-BA PhD.

Any student who fails to meet these guidelines may be put on "Academic Probation," a non-punitive mechanism designed to provide graduate students with clear information and support to guide them to appropriate progression and successful program completion. For more details on the university's "Progression and Completion" and "Probation" policies, please see the [UNLV Graduate Student Handbook](#).

Sample MA SUBPLANS

(Official Degree Requirements can be found in the [Graduate Catalog](#))

There are three MA subplans:

- North American History (Thesis or Exams)
- World History (Thesis or Exams)
- Accelerated General History (Portfolio)

All three subplans require a minimum of 31 credits.

The North American and World History MA subplans each have two possible culminating experiences: Thesis or Exams (Non-Thesis). Both require that a student's advisor and the Graduate Coordinator approve of all coursework, including the intention to write a Thesis.

The Accelerated General History MA subplan has only one possible culminating experience: a Portfolio.

The North American and World History MA subplans include 12 Minor credits and (for those students pursuing a Thesis) 6 Thesis credits.

The North American and World History MA students must select a Minor: North America, World, Europe, or Public History. All Minors require 12 credits except Public History, which requires 13 credits including a 3-credit internship.

A field outside of History may be presented as part of a student's program but must be approved by both the student's advisor and the Graduate Coordinator.

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

A minimum of 16 credit hours of coursework at the 700 level is required (not including thesis credits).

No more than 9 credits of coursework at the 600 level will count toward a student's degree. Students with a major field in World history may petition to count additional courses at the 600 level, but this must be approved by the Graduate Coordinator.

MA Thesis

Students pursuing a Thesis must submit a research Prospectus for the project 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 prospectus does not have to be publicly defended. Once the advisory committee approves

the prospectus, the student can submit their Prospectus Approval Form. Students may not enroll in Thesis/Dissertation credits until the Prospectus Approval Form has been signed by all parties.

An oral defense of the thesis is required. See additional details see “Scheduling/Completing the Defense (MA Thesis and PhD Dissertation)” below.

MA Exams (Non-Thesis)

Non-Thesis MA students must successfully complete **three written exams** (two in their major and one in their minor areas of study). These may be taken at the completion of 18 credits of coursework, and must be taken no later than the completion of 25 credits (during the student’s final semester). Each examiner/committee member provides the student with two questions. The student then has 14 days to answer **one** of each examiners’ questions (for a total of three written exams). Each essay/answer should be double-spaced in 12 Times New Roman font and 10-12 pages long, **not including** endnotes. No oral defense is required for MA (Non-Thesis) Examinations. When a student passes their MA Exams, they must submit their [**CULMINATING EXPERIENCE FORM**](#). For more details, see below.

MA Portfolio (Accelerated General MA only)

Instead of writing a Thesis or sitting three Exams, Accelerated General History MA students submit a Portfolio as their Culminating Experience. Each Portfolio comprises four elements:

- HIST 651 capstone final essay
- Colloquium final essay
- Seminar final essay
- Culminating Essay (2,500-word reflection on how these assignments reflect the student’s intellectual growth during their MA)

Sample PhD SUBPLANS

(Official Degree Requirements can be found in the [Graduate Catalog](#))

There are six PhD subplans:

- Post-Bachelor's—North American West (68 credits)
- Post-Bachelor's—North American Culture and Society (68 credits)
- Post-Bachelor's—European Culture and Society (68 credits)
- Post-Master's—North American West (57 credits)
- Post-Master's—North American Culture and Society (57 credits)
- Post-Master's—European Culture and Society (57 credits)

All PhD subplans include a minimum of 12 Minor credits and 12 dissertation credits.

PhD students must select a Minor: North America, World, Europe, or Public History. All Minors require 12 credits except Public History, which requires 13 credits including a 3-credit internship.

A field outside of History may be presented as part of a student's program but must be approved by both the student's advisor and the Graduate Coordinator.

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

The subplans require a minimum of 45 (Post-BA) and 26 (Post-MA) credit hours of coursework at the 700-level.

No more than 9 credits of coursework at the 600 level will count toward a student's degree. Students with a major field in European history may petition to count additional courses at the 600 level, but this must be approved by the Graduate Coordinator.

Students are encouraged to take courses with as many members of the faculty who specialize in their Major/Minor as possible. Students may take more than the minimum number of courses.

Public History in the PhD Program

Students may choose Public History as a Minor field. Only one examination field may be in Public History (see "Portfolio Field" below). A Minor in Public History requires 13 credits, which include a 3-credit internship.

Foreign Language Requirement

All PhD students are required to have reading knowledge of at least one foreign language. A student writing a thesis/dissertation must have reading competence of any foreign language required to do primary research in the student's field. The language requirement must be completed before the comprehensive exams.

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 student's advisor and/or the Graduate Coordinator:

1. Demonstrated reading knowledge of two foreign languages.
2. 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.
3. Demonstrate reading knowledge of one foreign language and the successful completion of a course outside the department.

PhD Comprehensive Exams

Doctoral students take **three Comprehensive Exams** (Major, Survey, Portfolio) in the Fall semester of the third year in the PhD program. Each exam consists of a written dimension (which students have 14 days to complete) and an oral dimension (two-hour meeting involving the student and all three of their examiners). Students must pass the written exam in order to take the oral exam. In the semester they are due to sit their exams (usually the Fall of their third year), students may take up to 6 credits of HIST 788 Comprehensive Exam Preparation. This is an independent reading course taken with one or two members of the student's committee. **This course does not count toward the minimum number of credits required for the degree.** For more details, see below.

PhD 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 and a bibliography. This should be circulated to the student's committee in advance of the dissertation prospectus colloquium.

The dissertation prospectus colloquium is usually held in the Spring semester of the third year and must be held within three months of the successful completion of the comprehensive examinations. The prospectus does not have to be publicly defended. Once the committee has approved the prospectus, the student submits a short version (2-3 pages) with the [**PROSPECTUS APPROVAL FORM**](#) to the Graduate College. This form must be submitted before the beginning of the semester in which the student enrolls in dissertation credits. Students will not be allowed to enroll in dissertation credits without an approved prospectus. This prospectus must be attached to a Prospectus Approval Form and submitted to the Graduate College.

Advancement to Doctoral Candidacy

Once a student has completed all required coursework, except dissertation credits, completed the foreign language requirement, passed the written and oral portions of the comprehensive exams, and submitted and approved prospectus, they must submit the [**ADVANCEMENT TO DOCTORAL CANDIDACY FORM**](#) to the Graduate College. Only students who have advancement to doctoral candidacy status may enroll in dissertation credits.

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 by the student and approved by their advisory committee. Students must take a minimum of 12 dissertation credits. A student, in consultation with the chair of their committee should circulate a draft of the dissertation to the full committee **at least one month** before the dissertation defense. Student must apply for Graduation in the semester they schedule a dissertation defense.

Dissertation defense

Students must offer an oral defense of the dissertation. For additional details, see “Scheduling/Completing the Defense (MA Thesis and PhD Dissertation)” below. After a successful defense, in addition to submission of the dissertation according to Graduate College guidelines, a student must also submit a [CULMINATING EXPERIENCE](#) **FORM** to the Graduate College.

EXPLANATION OF GRADUATE 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) or, in the case of Public History seminars, a significant, research-based, public-facing deliverable on par with the kind of research essay submitted in other seminars. 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, in consultation with the faculty member who will conduct the independent study. 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. Faculty agree to direct independent study at their own discretion. These courses are offered in addition to a faculty member's regular teaching load. Independent study courses are designed to meet curricular needs not met by the regular course offerings. Whenever possible, students should enroll in the regularly scheduled courses. Full student participation in these courses is necessary to ensure that 700 level courses can be offered. Low enrollment can result in the cancellation of courses.

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 demonstrates potential despite flaws in the argument or the prose. A "B+" is the lowest grade that indicates acceptable work at the graduate level.

B Weak work based on insufficient research or analysis, or failure to engage 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 – or lower 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.

Students must maintain a minimum G.P.A of 3.0 in all semesters. If a student's G.P.A. drops below 3.0 they will be placed on academic probation. If the student does not fulfill the terms of the probation they will be separated from the program.

Incomplete Courses

The grade of I — incomplete — can be granted when a student has satisfactorily completed at least three-fourths of the semester but for reason(s) beyond the student's control, and acceptable to the instructor, cannot complete the last part of the course, and the instructor believes that the student can finish the course without repeating it. A student who receives an I is responsible for making up whatever work was lacking at the end of the semester. The incomplete work must be made up before the end of the following regular semester. If course requirements are not completed within the time indicated, a grade of F will be recorded and the GPA will be adjusted accordingly. Students who are fulfilling an incomplete do not register for the course but make individual arrangements with the instructor who assigned the I grade.

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. A student who is Graduate Assistant must complete any incomplete coursework at least one month before the beginning of the next semester.

Graduate Assistants who fail to complete course work before the next semester of their Graduate Assistantship will 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 Coordinator. 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. The exams cover both historical fact and historiographical development. These exams form an essential part of a student's graduate training.

Scheduling Exams (PhD and MA)

When you are ready to schedule your exams, you **MUST** begin by conferring with all members of your committee to confirm that each agrees that you will be prepared by the date you have chosen.

When your committee agrees that you are ready, your Committee Chair will create a Module for your Exams in a Canvas/WebCampus "course" to which you will have access (the three Exams will appear as "Assignments" within the Module). In the case of PhD students, this will be the HIST 788 Comps Prep course. For MA students, this will either be a HIST 760 you are currently enrolled in or a "course shell" specifically built by UNLV's Office of Information Technology (your Committee Chair will need to reach out to OIT to request this).

This course shell is where each of your three prompts/questions will be posted. It will also include three corresponding "file upload" pages where you will be able to submit your essays/answers or portfolio.

Once you have been given access to your exam questions, you will have 14 days to submit your essays/answers. Your Committee Chair will download your essays/answers and distribute them to the rest of the committee.

In the Fall and Spring semesters, exams are generally scheduled in October and March respectively. Students must schedule them during the regular academic year. Comprehensive exams are not offered between semesters or in the summer.

Exam Format

MA Non-Thesis Track

Two Exams in Major Field

Committee Chair: Submits two questions—student must answer one of them.

Second Committee Member in Major Field: Submits two questions—student must answer one of them.

One Exam in Minor Field

Committee Member in Minor Field: Submits two questions—student must answer one of them.

All three essays must be submitted within 14 days of being administered. Each MA essay should be 10-12 pages long (**not including** endnotes).

PhD Comprehensive Exams

All PhD students will prepare three comprehensive examination fields: one Major Field, one Survey Field, and one Portfolio Field. The Major Field and Survey Field will each require a **written exam** completed over the course of **14 days**. The Portfolio Field will focus on either Public History or History Pedagogy and will require a **portfolio** rather than a written exam. All three fields will be covered in a subsequent **oral exam** (two hours long).

Major Field (North American West; North American Culture and Society; or European Culture and Society):

The student will be given two questions and allowed to choose which one they wish to answer. They should do so in an essay 12-15 pages long (**not including** endnotes), and may consult relevant books, articles, and notes while writing it.

Survey Field (North America/U.S. to 1877; U.S. since 1848; or Europe [time frame/exam composition to be determined in consultation with committee]):

The student will be given two questions and allowed to choose which one they wish to answer. They should do so in an essay 12-15 pages long (**not including** endnotes), and may consult relevant books, articles, and notes while writing it.

Portfolio Field (Public History or History Pedagogy):

Finally, the student will complete a **portfolio** that demonstrates their proficiency in either Public History or History Pedagogy.

Every **portfolio** must include a 750 to 1000-word statement that describes the student's development as a historian as well as the preliminary development of their dissertation project (this statement does not take the place of a dissertation prospectus, which the student will complete after they have passed their comprehensive examinations). Every **portfolio** must also include the student's current *curriculum vitae*.

Students preparing a **History Pedagogy Portfolio** will also include the following:

1. A proposed syllabus for one of the following two UNLV courses:
HIST 103: Global Problems in Historical Perspective
HIST 110: History of Multiculturalism in America
2. A 7-10 page essay explaining the historiographic and pedagogical decisions that shaped the syllabus.
3. A formal bibliography of the scholarship that informs the syllabus.

Students preparing a **Public History Portfolio** will also include the following:

1. A table of contents
2. A 5-page essay explaining the student's philosophy of and approach to public history.
3. At least one major scholarly paper completed in a public history course or with a focus on public history completed in another history course.
4. All materials that reflect public history work that the student has undertaken while at UNLV, including internships, other public history projects, websites (provide links and/or printouts), grant applications, and the like.

The student must submit their **portfolio** (whether History Pedagogy or Public History) to their committee before starting their **written exam**.

Oral Exam

In consultation with the student and the rest of the student's committee, the major advisor will schedule a 2-hour **oral exam** 7-14 days after the **written exam** is submitted. The **oral exam** will cover all three fields: Major, Survey, and Portfolio.

Any variations on or exceptions to these rules must be formally proposed by the student and approved by both the student's full committee and the Graduate Committee.

Reading Lists

Creating the reading lists for each field is an important part of the exam process.

MA students should generate a book list for each field that incorporates at least 20 books/articles from the syllabi of courses they have taken and at least an equal number of additional books and articles (a total of 40-50 books).

PhD students should generate a book list for each field that incorporates at least 40 books/articles from the syllabi of courses they have taken and research papers they have written, and at least an equal number of additional books and articles (a total of 80 to 100 books). Each book list should include books and articles that let students write comprehensively about historical change over time and major historiographical issues in the field, and additional readings necessary to cover the chosen field in a comprehensive fashion.

How to Build a Reading List

Begin in **your first semester** by generating bibliographies in your anticipated major and minor fields. 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.

It is also helpful to create two additional versions of your list for each field, one organized chronologically and one organized thematically (five major themes is a good guideline). These versions of the list help students to identify gaps in the list to be filled and help them to articulate the main issues in the field by identifying key themes.

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 online annotated bibliography which will help you assess the importance of books in your fields. The recommended additional readings at the end of textbook chapters are also a good resource for identifying major works in the field.

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

MA students should plan to spend approximately two months intensively preparing for their exams. PhD students should plan to spend three to four months preparing for their exams. Students may take up to six credits of HIST 788 as part of their preparation for comprehensive exams. This is an optional course and does not count toward the credits required for the degree.

It is an independent study course. A student should ask one or two members of their committee to direct a section of this course. In order to enroll in HIST 788, a student must submit a complete reading list. This course is designed to be taken in the semester that the comprehensive exams will be taken. Students should have already begun to prepare for their exams before they enroll in the course.

HIST 788

Course Description: This course organizes the preparation process for comprehensive exams. A student, in conjunction with one of the members of their advisory committee, will follow a rigorous schedule of reading, question preparation, and preparatory writing.

Prerequisite: Students must submit an approved list of books to register for this course. For MA students the list should include 40-50 books/articles. For PhD students, the list should include 100 books/articles (PhD). This prerequisite will be enforced by the History Department. Students should also begin reading for comprehensive exams before the semester begins. This course is not intended to encompass the full preparation for the exams. It organizes the final process of study that leads up to the exams. The majority of the work for this course is in the first 8 weeks. Comprehensive exams must be taken before the end of Week 11.

Course Objectives: To assist students in rigorous preparation for comprehensive exams, advise students during the process, and promote successful completion of the exams.

Grading: The course is graded pass/fail. A student who attends meetings with the advisory committee member, submit reading notes for the requisite number of books, sample exam questions, and 10 pages of acceptable preparatory writing will pass the course. Passing comprehensive exams is not a requirement.

Course requirements:

Reading notes: one page of reading notes for each book/article read during the course of the semester.

A minimum of 20 books/articles (MA) (40 for PhD) from the list must be read during the semester.

5-10 exam questions. Students will draft and revise sample exam questions.

10 pages of preparatory writing. This may be a sample answer or a historiographical essay.

Biweekly meetings with Advisory Committee member.

Preparation Log

Students are encouraged to keep a daily log of their progress preparing for comps. Suggested entries include number of hours spent preparing (even if it zero), ideas generated by the day's reading, possible exam questions, additional books of interest that the student might want to read after the exam process is complete. Recording the number of hours helps students quantify their progress and to budget their time realistically in relation to their other responsibilities.

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. You are evaluated on your preparation for the exam as well as your performance in the exam.

Scheduling the Exam

See "Scheduling Exams" (see above).

Taking the Exam

MA

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. Once the chair has received all comments from History faculty, the exam will be sent to the Graduate College Representative. The chair will communicate the results of the exam to the student after the Graduate College Representative returns their evaluation form. This process takes about 10 days.

To pass the exam, students must pass all sections. If a student fails any section, the student must retake the failed section no sooner than three months after the first attempt but within one year after the first exam was given. After the first failed attempt, the student will be placed on probation via the Graduate College process. If a student does not retake the failed exam within one year, the History Department will recommend that the student be separated from the program. Comprehensive exams can only be taken twice.

PhD

PhD students will take all their exams during the period of two weeks.

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, each member will submit an assessment of the questions to the Chair of the committee within three working days. Once the chair has received all comments from History faculty, the exam will be sent to the Graduate College Representative. The chair will communicate the results of the exam to the student after the Graduate College Representative returns their evaluation form. This process takes about 10 days.

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 the first attempt but within one year after the first exam was given. After the first failed attempt, the student will be placed on probation via the Graduate College process. If a student does not retake the failed exam within one year, the History Department will recommend that the student be separated from the program. Comprehensive exams can only be taken twice.

A student may not take the oral examination until they have passed the full written exam. A student must pass both the written and the oral exam to pass the comprehensive exams.

THESIS AND DISSERTATION

Students should consult the UNLV “Graduate Student Handbook” for detailed instructions on writing/defending a Thesis/Dissertation.

Prospectus

All students must submit a Prospectus before they will be allowed to register for Thesis or Dissertation credits. For MA students, a short prospectus (2-3 pages) and bibliography are sufficient. For PhD students, a longer prospectus (10 pages) is required. The prospectus does not have to be publicly defended but must be approved by the student’s committee and discussed in the Prospectus Colloquium. All students are required to submit a 2-page version of their prospectus to the Graduate College with the [PROSPECTUS APPROVAL FORM](#).

Guidelines for writing a prospectus:

For an MA prospectus, or the short version to send to the Graduate College for the PhD students, each number represents a paragraph. For the longer (10 page) PhD prospectus, each number represents a section.

What makes this project interesting?

1. Introduce topic, issues, and span of time.
2. Introduce the key people in your study.
3. Raise main questions that your research explores and the argument you will make.
4. Present the conclusions you hope to make.

What is the contribution to the current scholarship?

5. Present the way other historians have set the stage for your project.
6. Frame the way your project fits into the relevant historiographical conversations.

What makes it possible to pursue this project this way?

7. Present the sources you will use and discuss how you will use them to explore the issues raised above.
8. Identify the archives/databases, etc. you will use.

How will the project be organized?

9. Outline the chapters and discuss the way they build your argument.

Sources

10. Include a full bibliography. For MA thesis this should be 3-4 pages of sources. For a PhD this should be 10 pages of sources.

PhD students may take HIST 789 as part of their preparation of the dissertation prospectus. This is an optional course and does not count toward the credits required for the degree.

Course Description: This course organizes the preparation and defense of the dissertation prospectus. The student, in conjunction with the members of their advisory committee will

follow a rigorous schedule of research and writing to prepare the prospectus for the prospectus colloquium.

Prerequisites: The student must have completed the Foreign Language Exam and all required coursework. The student must have passed comprehensive exams or be scheduled to take them at the beginning of the concurrent semester. The student must submit a substantial bibliography to their Advisory Committee chair to be permitted to register for this course.

Grading: The course is graded S/F. A student who attends meetings with the advisory committee member, writes a prospectus, and successfully defends it in the prospectus colloquium will pass the course.

Course requirements:

Bibliography of primary and secondary sources (approximately 10 pages)
 Prospectus (approximately 10 pages)
 Meetings with Advisory Committee members

Thesis/Dissertation Credits

Students must have a prospectus on file and have advanced to candidacy (PhD students) 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 be placed on academic probation via the Grad College process. Students who have not completed their comprehensive exams will not be allowed to register for thesis/dissertation credits.

Thesis/Dissertation Format

The Graduate College has very strict formatting guidelines. All students should refer to the sample document provided as a template on the Graduate College website under Thesis and Dissertation Information. Formatting guidelines do change. You must use the current template. All students should review this template and 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 (and meet accessibility standards) well in advance of the semester in which the document is submitted.

The History Department does not stipulate a minimum page length for a thesis or a dissertation. An MA thesis should be a significant and original contribution to the scholarly conversation. A PhD dissertation should be a significant contribution to scholarship based on original research. Students should refer to the Theses and Dissertations written by students who have completed

their degree at UNLV to gauge the appropriate length for their own thesis or dissertations. A thesis ranges from 80 to 100 pages. Dissertations range from 200-400 pages.

Scheduling/Completing the Defense (MA Thesis and PhD Dissertation)

A student must be enrolled in at least 3 graduate credits during the semester they defend their thesis/dissertation. Students should defend their thesis/dissertation at least three weeks before the last day of instruction of the semester in which they plan to graduate.

The student is responsible for working with the chair and the rest of their committee to identify a suitable defense date and time that works for their entire committee. Oral defenses of both MA theses and PhD dissertations are public events so, once the date has been finalized, the student must notify the department's AAIII, who will publicize it in two places. First, they will send the details to gradrebel@unlv.edu so that the defense can be posted to the UNLV Master Calendar. Second, the department's AAIII will post flyers throughout the History Department. These announcements must be posted at least two weeks before the defense date, so the student should schedule the defense and inform the History Department staff of the schedule well before that.

Each committee member is entitled to see a final draft of the document being defended at least two weeks before the defense date. The student is responsible for making sure that they get to the final draft to their committee members on time and in the format each committee member requires (PDF, Word document, and/or hard copy). This final draft should not be a work-in-progress. Although the committee may recommend some changes be made to the thesis/dissertation after the defense, the defense version must be polished, complete, and correctly formatted. It must include all of the materials that will be submitted in the final thesis/dissertation including cover page, table of contents, bibliography, illustrations, and the like.

Students are also responsible for running the final draft of their thesis/dissertation through an online similarity-check software program that the UNLV Graduate College provides free of charge. A copy of this similarity report must be sent to all members of the graduate advisory committee at least seven days in advance of the defense date. See the UNLV Graduate Student Handbook for more details.

If the student's committee decides that the student has failed to defend their thesis/dissertation adequately, the committee may offer the possibility of a second examination at least three months later. Students will be placed on academic probation via the Graduate College process after the first failed attempt. See the UNLV Graduate Student Handbook for more details.

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 Information. 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 a bound copy to the History Department.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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.

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.

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!

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

[H-Net](#)
[HigherEd Jobs](#)
[American Historical Association](#)
[Organization of American Historians](#)
[National Council on Public History](#)
[Chronicle of Higher Ed.](#)
[Western History Association](#)
[American Studies Association](#)
[Overview of profession](#)
[Job Crisis?](#)

Guidelines for Getting An Academic Job

1. PhD from a school with a highly rated program or prominent advisor in your area of interest. It is better (but not required) to be 98% done before you apply.
2. 3.8-4.0 for all graduate work.
3. Awards—home, regional, national.
4. Publications—books, articles, book reviews (at the very least book reviews).
5. Inside/Outside fellowships.
6. Inside/Outside Research grants.
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
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 or explain it to your grandmother in 30 seconds.
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 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 PhD 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. MA or PhD 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.
8. Publications—books, articles, book reviews (at the very least book reviews).
9. Inside/Outside fellowships.
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 will not 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.

University Resources

The Graduate Academy: Innovative Leadership, Professional, and Career Development

The goal of the Graduate Academy is to serve as a virtual resource providing support and many professional opportunities to UNLV graduate students. The Academy offers information about events and services such as graduate certificate programs, workshops, training sessions and career services. You can follow Academy activities via social media or look for regular updates on the website.

Alumni Engagement

With an alumni base 150,000+ strong, the UNLV Alumni Engagement offers a variety of services and opportunities in support of alumni and their families. UNLV alumni are encouraged to support the values of higher learning through advocacy, involvement, and giving.

Commencement Office

Located in the UNLV Office of the Registrar, the [commencement office](#) is the last step in the graduation process. Please check with the commencement office for information on the commencement ceremony and your diploma; for all other information about graduate student degree completion and graduation, including thesis/dissertation requirements and doctoral hooding, please contact the Graduate College. It is the students' responsibility to ensure they apply for [graduation on time](#) and submit all required forms to the Graduate College. Questions regarding thesis/dissertation should be directed to the Graduate College [Student Services Team](#) and questions regarding required forms should be directed to the Graduate College [RPC Team](#).

Institutional Engagement and Experience

The vision of the [Institutional Engagement and Experience](#) is to advocate, promote, and support the advancement of equity, inclusiveness, and empowerment of a continuously changing collegiate and global community. The mission is to provide leadership and support for UNLV's engagement mission: *to nurture equity, diversity, and inclusiveness that promotes respect, support, and empowerment*. This Office is housed under the Division of Human Resources and also handles UNLV Title IX questions, inquiries, and reporting.

Disability Resource Center (DRC)

The [DRC](#) is committed to supporting students with disabilities at UNLV through the appropriate use of advocacy, accommodations, and supportive services to ensure access to campus courses, services, and activities. The DRC is the university-designated office that determines and facilitates reasonable accommodations in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Graduate students with disabilities must disclose to the DRC in order to receive appropriate accommodations.

Graduate Appeals and Issue Resolution

The Office of Graduate Student Services at the Graduate College assists graduate and professional students with addressing concerns and overcoming personal, academic, or financial challenges that might hinder their ability to be successful in their program. The office also provides information and student-centered issue-resolution services and offers guidance, information, and assistance when regular channels have failed to provide graduate students with the information they need to solve problems. Please see website for more information: <https://www.unlv.edu/graduatecollege/appeals-issue-resolution>

UNLV Global and the Office of International Student and Scholar Compliance

[International Student and Scholar Compliance \(ISSC\)](#) ensures compliance with both SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System) and federal law, so that the university can continue to be authorized by the U.S. federal government to enroll international students; host and hire international scholars; assist and advise employment eligibility and authorization relating to international students and scholars, and visa, travel, and immigration issues; provide critical and specialized services to the international students and scholars of the UNLV community; and facilitate their transition to the campus and the U.S.

The Care Center

The [Care Center](#) is committed to creating a supportive and inclusive environment for all genders through programming, services, and advocacy for the UNLV community. The Women's Center has informational resources, brochures, and flyers for a variety of on and off campus organizations to help empower and protect yourself, and learn about your options. They also provide free tampons, pads, and condoms.

The Intersection

[The Intersection](#) is a one-stop resource for UNLV's highly diverse student body — a comprehensive multicultural center grounded in the academic life of our students. As an intersecting campus resource, the Intersection helps ensure students, particularly first-generation and students of color, successfully navigate their academic careers. Here, all members of campus can discuss their differences, discover their similarities, and build a shared sense of belonging.

UNLV Libraries

[UNLV Libraries](#) has always been more than books; they are about encouraging students and creating quality programs that elevate growth and learning. Please visit their website for important information about the services they offer to graduate students.

Graduate & Professional Student Association (GPSA)

The [Graduate & Professional Student Association](#) serves all currently enrolled University of Nevada, Las Vegas graduate and professional students. The GPSA maintains the Graduate Student Commons located in the Lied Library room 2141 and Gateway Building PDAC Room. The facility a working office equipped with a copier, fax, flatbed scanners, color laser printer, office supplies, and computers with printers and a small kitchen area. The GPSA is the graduate student governance body at UNLV; the GPSA Council consists of one graduate student representative from each graduate department, and they meet monthly. The GPSA also provides volunteer opportunities, sponsors social events, and supports graduate student research through the graduate research and travel grants program.

Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities

The [Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) is a student-centered, service-oriented office located within the Division of Student Affairs. The Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities collaborates with the UNLV community to provide an inclusive system through enforcement of the *UNLV Student Code of Conduct* by:

- Promoting awareness of student rights and responsibilities;
- Establishing accountability for student choices;
- Creating opportunities for involvement in the process; and
- Striving to uphold the values and ethics that advance the common good.

Military and Veteran Services Center

The [Military and Veteran Service Center](#) is staffed with veterans and veteran education benefits-experienced staff to assist more than 1,800 veterans, dependents, active duty service members, National Guard members, and reservists attending UNLV. Their mission is to develop a welcoming, veteran-friendly campus environment that fosters academic and personal success.

The Financial Aid & Scholarships Office

The [Financial Aid & Scholarships Office](#) supports higher-education access and persistence by providing financial aid to eligible students. The office partners with student organizations, the UNLV Foundation, the Graduate College, and other external constituents to provide financial aid learning opportunities and scholarship support for graduate students.

Writing Center

This is a free service to UNLV students to help you with any writing project, from papers to creative writing, to resumes, and we can work with you at any stage of the writing process. The center can help you brainstorm, make an outline, work on your drafts, or just be a soundboard for your ideas. The center staff can assist you in person, or via the [Online Writing Lab \(OWL\)](#) page.

University Policies and Procedures

Graduate students are responsible for knowing and acting in accordance with UNLV Policies and Procedures. To view the most commonly referenced campus policies and procedures, you can refer to the following websites:

- [Academic Integrity](#)
- [Activation for Military Service](#)
- [Change of Address](#)
- [FERPA/Privacy Rights](#)
- [Health Insurance - Mandatory](#)
- [Jean Clery Campus Safety and Security Report](#)
- [Proof of Immunization](#)
- [Policies and Procedures on the Protection of Research Subjects](#)
- [Rebelmail Policy](#)
- [Student Conduct Code](#)
- [Student Computer Use Policy](#)
- [Title IX](#)

UNLV does not discriminate in its employment practices or in its educational programs or activities, including admissions, on the basis of sex/gender pursuant to Title IX, or on the basis of any other legally protected category as is set forth in NSHE Handbook Title 4, Chapter 8, Section 13. Reports of discriminatory misconduct, questions regarding Title IX, and/or concerns about noncompliance with Title IX or any other anti-discrimination laws or policies should be directed to UNLV's Title IX Coordinator Michelle Sposito.

The Title IX Coordinator can be reached through the [online reporting form](#), by email at titleixcoordinator@unlv.edu, by phone at (702) 895-4055, by mail at 4505 S. Maryland Parkway, Box 451062, Las Vegas, NV, 89154-1062, or in person at Frank and Estella Beam Hall (BEH), Room 555.

To ensure compliance with Graduate College policies and procedures, please review the relevant sections of the [Graduate Catalog](#):

- [Academic Calendar](#)
- [Academic Policies](#)
- [Admission and Registration Information](#)
- [Degree Progression Policies & Procedures](#)

In addition, the [Graduate College website](#) contains additional information regarding policies and procedures.

Nothing in this handbook supersedes any NSHE, UNLV, or Graduate College policy.

Handbook Information

Last revised	Revised by	Department Vote Tally: Yes/No/Abs. (date of vote)	Changes summary
4/26/2024	Cian T. McMahon	N/A	Clarified language on PhD Advisory Committee, and MA and PhD Exam formats. Corrected language on Culminating Experience Form. No faculty vote was required because there were no changes implemented; we merely clarified and corrected the language.
4/1/2025	Cian T. McMahon	N/A	No faculty votes were required for any of this year's changes to our Handbook: Removed obsolete references to Latin American and Asian Minors; inserted language clarifying deliverable assignment for Public History seminars; inserted clarifying language re: how Exams and oral defenses are scheduled; inserted language reiterating Graduate College's policy on "maximum time to completion"; inserted various other little copy-edits.
4/1/2026	Cian T. McMahon	N/A	No faculty votes were required for any of this year's changes to our Handbook because all changes were simply designed to reflect the program changes to our MA and PhD subplans, which were approved at multiple levels of the university, including History's Faculty. On advice from the VP of

Last revised	Revised by	Department Vote Tally: Yes/No/Abs. (date of vote)	Changes summary
			the GC (Emily Lin), I did delete large amounts of “Degree Requirements” text because all up-to-date information on such matters is always available through the online Graduate Catalog (see links above). And I also clarified some perennial questions: does the Prospectus need to be publicly "defended" (no) and does the grade of B – count for graduate credit in a History course (no).