

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Department of History

Student Handbook

Master of Arts and Doctoral Degrees

Edited and Revised  
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## **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 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.

## Contacts

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### Graduate College University Gateway Building

Non-Academic Advising: Valerie Burke, Assistant Dean of Graduate Student Services  
Office: GTW 211  
Phone: 895-5773  
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Evaluator:  
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Graduate Assistantships:

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Office: GTW 275

Phone: 895-3320

[brianne.heinle@unlv.edu](mailto:brianne.heinle@unlv.edu)

Cathy “CC” Dyer, GA Program Coordinator

Office: GTW 2000

Phone: 895-4273

[Cathy.dyer@unlv.edu](mailto:Cathy.dyer@unlv.edu)

**Graduate Student Professional Association**

Lied Library Building (LLB), 2nd floor, room 2141

Phone: 702-895-2261

Fax: 702-895-2158

[gpsa@unlv.edu](mailto:gpsa@unlv.edu)

## **REGISTERING FOR CLASSES**

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

All incoming graduate students must take HIST 710: The Professional Historian.

New MA & PhD students should schedule an advising appointment with the Graduate Coordinator before registering for classes. Continuing students should schedule an appointment with the Graduate Coordinator and 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 and on the History Department website. Advanced students, after consulting with the Graduate Coordinator and chair of their committee, may request permission to register via email. 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**

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 (6) 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. In the Spring semester all students, are required to fill out a self-evaluation form provided by the Graduate College. The chair of each student's committee will add comments and submit the evaluation to the Graduate Committee for review. 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.

### **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 requested that the Graduate Coordinator NOT 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 does not act as a go-between for you and 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.

### **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 his/her 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: two in the major field (this typically includes the student's primary advisor, who will chair the committee), one in theory and methods, one in the minor field, and a Graduate College Representative from outside the History Department.



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](#). 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

### **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 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 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. See prospectus writing guidelines. 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. 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**

### **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 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. 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 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 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 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. Some MA Graduate Assistants teach discussion sections for HIST 100, and some PTIGAs teach sections of History 101, 102, 103, 110 or other non-400 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.

## **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 (United State or Europe) and a minor field of study (United States, Europe, Asia, Latin America, World, or Public History). Students may also craft fields in Comparative History in consultation with their advisory committees. For the Teaching History track, students will take courses in three fields; Historical Content, Curriculum Materials, 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 of 16 credit hours of coursework at the 700 level is required in each program (not including thesis credits):

### **Thesis Track**

A minimum of 35 graduate credits, including six credits of thesis

A minimum of 16 credits in the major area of study

A minimum of 12 credits in a minor area (the Public History minor field requires an internship).

### **Course Requirements**

Required Courses – Credits: 4

HIST 710

HIST 740

Colloquium Courses – Credits: 6

3 credit in Major Field, 3 credits in Minor Field

HIST 724

HIST 726

HIST 728

HIST 730

HIST 732

HIST 734

HIST 736

HIST 738

HIST 741

Seminar Course – Credits: 4 (Major Field)

HIST 725

HIST 727

HIST 729

HIST 731

HIST 733

HIST 735

HIST 737

HIST 739

HIST 742

Major Field Elective Courses – Credits: 6

Students completing a thesis must complete 6 credits of history elective coursework, or other advisor-approved courses.

Minor Field Elective Courses – Credits: 9

In consultation with your advisor, select 9 credits of electives.

Thesis – Credits: 6

HIST 790

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.

### **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 29 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. When a student passes his/her comprehensive exams, a [\*\*CULMINATING EXPERIENCE FORM\*\*](#) must be submitted.

### **Thesis Prospectus**

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. Students will not be allowed to register for thesis credits until the [\*\*PROSPECTUS APPROVAL FORM\*\*](#) has been submitted.

### **Thesis Defense**

An oral defense of the thesis is required. This is a public event. An invitation to graduate faculty in History must be circulated at least two weeks before the defense is held.

### **Non-Thesis Track**

A minimum of 35 graduate credits

A minimum of 22 credits in the major area of study

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

### **Course Requirements**

Required Courses – Credits: 4

HIST 710

HIST 740

Colloquium Courses – Credits: 6

3 credit in Major Field, 3 credits in Minor Field

HIST 724

HIST 726

HIST 728

HIST 730

HIST 732

HIST 734

HIST 736

HIST 738

HIST 741

Seminar Course – Credits: 4 (Major Field)

HIST 725

HIST 727

HIST 729

HIST 731

HIST 733

HIST 735

HIST 737

HIST 739

HIST 742

Major Field Elective Courses – Credits: 12

Students not completing a thesis must complete 12 credits of history elective coursework, or other advisor-approved courses.

Minor Field Elective Courses – Credits: 9



In consultation with your advisor, select 9 credits of electives.

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 or MA Coordinator.

### **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 22 credits of course work, and must be taken no later than the completion of 29 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 committee members. When a student passes his/her comprehensive exams, a [CULMINATING EXPERIENCE FORM](#) must be submitted.

### **Teaching History Track**

Minimum of 35 graduate credits.

This program is not a certification program. It is designed for teachers who have completed their certification.

### **Course Requirements**

Historical Content Required Courses – Credits: 4

HIST 710

HIST 740

Historical Content Colloquium Course – Credits: 3

Complete one of the following courses:

HIST 724

HIST 726

HIST 728

HIST 730

HIST 732

HIST 734

HIST 736

HIST 738

HIST 741

Historical Content Elective Courses – Credits: 6

Complete 6 credits of History electives.

Curriculum Materials Colloquium Course – Credits: 3

Complete one of the following courses:

HIST 724

HIST 726  
HIST 728  
HIST 730  
HIST 732  
HIST 734  
HIST 736  
HIST 738  
HIST 741

Curriculum Materials Elective Courses – Credits: 7

Complete seven credits of advisor-approved history courses (at least one of which must be at the 700-level).

Educational Methods Foundations Course – Credits: 3

Complete one of the following courses:

CIG 660  
CIS 617  
CIL 610

Educational Methods Development Course – Credits: 3

Complete one of the following courses:

CIS 640  
CIS 644  
CIS 649  
CIG 692

Educational Methods Technology Course – Credits: 3

Complete one of the following courses:

CIT 602  
CIT 607  
CIT 609  
CIT 608

Capstone Course – Credits: 3

HIST 790A

A student with extensive background in Educational Studies may, with the permission of his/her 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. A student with an extensive background in two of these sub-fields may, with permission of his/her 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 29 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' committee members in the Historical Content field. When a student passes his/her comprehensive exams, a [\*\*CULMINATING EXPERIENCE FORM\*\*](#) must be submitted.

## **DEGREE REQUIREMENTS: PHD**

A minimum of 57 credits beyond the B.A., or 35 credits beyond an M.A. in History, or an M.A. in a closely related discipline. Students who did not complete their M.A. at UNLV will be required to take HIST 710. This course will not count toward the 35 credits of coursework required for the degree.

In addition, all Ph.D. students take a minimum of 12 dissertation credits.

### **United States History: Post Bachelors (69 credits)**

HIST 710 – The Professional Historian (1 credit)

Major Field Courses: 44 credits

Nine credits of historiography (HIST 740a, e, f, g, h)

Six credits of colloquium (HIST 724, 726, 730)

Eight credits of seminar (HIST 725, 727, 731)

Twenty-one credits of advisor approved history courses. No more than 9 credits of coursework at the 600 level will count toward a student's degree.

Minor Field Courses: 12 credits

Three credits colloquium (HIST 728, 732, 734, 736, 738, 741, 749). Nine credits of approved history courses. 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.

Students in United States History must choose one of the following Minor Fields: Asia, Europe, Latin America, World, Public History.

Twelve Credits of Dissertation (HIST 791)

*Students in United States History must choose one of the following tracks:*

#### **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 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 740h, HIST 724, HIST 725. Students are encouraged to take more than the minimum number of courses.

### **United States History: Post Masters (47 credits)**

Major Field Courses: 23 credits

Six credits of historiography (HIST 740a, e, f, g, h)

Six credits of colloquium (HIST 724, 726, 730)

Eight credits of seminar (HIST 725, 727, 731)

Three credits of an advisor approved history course.

Minor Field Courses: 12 credits

Three credits colloquium (HIST 728, 732, 734, 736, 738, 741, 749) Nine credits of approved history courses. 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.

Students in United States History must choose one of the following Minor Fields: Asia, Europe, Latin America, World, Public History.

Twelve Credits of Dissertation (HIST 791)

### **European History: Post Bachelors (69 credits)**

**All Students in European History choose the European Culture and Society Track.**

HIST 710 – The Professional Historian (1 credit)

Major Field Courses: 44 credits

Nine credits of historiography (HIST 740b, and g, h)

Six credits of colloquium (HIST 728, 732, 734, 736, 738, 741)

Eight credits of seminar from (HIST 729, 733, 735, 737, 739, 742)

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

Minor Field Courses: 12 credits

Three credits colloquium (HIST 724, 726, 730, 735, 737, 739, 741, 749)

Nine credits of approved history courses. 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

Students in European History much choose one of the following Minor Fields: Asia, Latin America, United States, World, Public History.

Students are expected to take courses with as many members of the faculty who specialize in

European History as possible. Students are encouraged to take more than the minimum number of courses.

### **European History: Post Masters (48 credits)**

Major Field Courses:

HIST 710

Six credits of historiography (HIST 740b, and g, h)

Six credits of colloquium (HIST 728, 732, 734, 736, 738, 741)

Eight credits of seminar (HIST 729, 733, 735, 737, 739, 742).

Three credits of an approved history course.

Minor Field Courses: 12 credits

Three credits colloquium (HIST 724, 726, 730, 736, 738, 741)

Nine credits of approved history courses. 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

Students in European History much choose one of the following Minor Fields: Asia, Latin America, United States, World, Public History.

Students are expected to take courses with as many members of the faculty who specialize in European History 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. Only one examination field may be in Public History.

### **Foreign Language Requirement**

All Ph.D. 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 chair of the student's examination committee:

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.

### **Comprehensive Exams**

Exams are taken in the Fall semester of the third year of the Ph.D. program. There is a written and an oral component to the exams. Students must pass the written exam to be allowed to take the oral exam. Student may take up to 6 credits of HIST 788 Comprehensive Exam Preparation. This is an independent readings 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. When a student passes the comprehensive exams, a [CULMINATING EXPERIENCE FORM](#) must be submitted to the Graduate College.

### **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 should be held in the Spring semester of the third year, and must be held within three months of the successful completion of the comprehensive examinations. 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, s/he must submit the [ADVANCEMENT TO DOCTORAL CANDIDACY FORM](#) to the Graduate College.

### **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. A student, in consultation with the chair of his/her 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. All committee members must be notified and the defense must be scheduled through the AAIH. This is a public event that will be publicized on the Graduate College website to notify the Graduate Faculty. A dissertation defense may only be held once. An unsuccessful defense will result in the separation of the student from the program without the degree. 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). 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, must fill out an independent study contract, including a detailed discussion of the work to be completed

and a full bibliography. **This form is located in the AIII office.** Permission to register will be given without a completed contract signed by student, faculty member and the Graduate Coordinator. 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-** Barely acceptable. Students who receive a B- may 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.

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 s/he will be placed on academic probation. If the student does not fulfill the terms of the probation s/he 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**

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, please submit the **COMPREHENSIVE EXAM FORM** to the AAIH, who will assign you a spot in the exam room on the scheduled date and time of the test.

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

You should plan to take your exams on a computer provided by the History Department or the exam will be administered through Canvas because of the COVID pandemic.

### **Exam Format**

#### **MA Thesis Track**

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**

#### **MA Non-Thesis Track**

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)

One Exam in Minor Field

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

#### **Teaching History Track**

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.

### **PhD Exams**

#### **North American West**

- I. Major Field: (General) United States History (to 1877 or since 1850) 5 hours: 2 of 4 questions (each question 2.5 hrs)
  
- II. Major Field: (Topical) North American West. 5 hours: 2 of 4 questions (each question 2.5 hrs)
  
- III. Theory and Methods: A student chooses one of the following fields: Applied Theory, Public History, or Comparative History 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. 2.5 hours: 1 of 2 questions

#### **North American Culture and Society**

- I. Major Field: (General) United States History (to 1877 or since 1850) 5 hours: 2 of 4 questions (each question 2.5 hrs)
  
- II. Major Field: (Topical) North American Culture and Society. 5 hours: 2 of 4 questions (each question 2.5 hrs)
  
- III. Theory and Methods: A student chooses one of the following fields: Applied Theory, Public History, or Comparative History 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. 2.5 hours: 1 of 2 questions

#### **European Culture and Society**

- I. Major Field: (General) European History 5 hours: 2 of 4 questions (each question 2.5 hrs)
  
- II. Major Field: (Topical) European Culture and Society 5 hours: 2 of 4 questions (each question 2.5 hrs)
  
- III. Theory and Methods: A student chooses one of the following fields: Applied Theory, Public History, or Comparative History 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. 2.5 hours: 1 of 2 questions)

### **Reading Lists**

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.

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

### **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.

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 2 months intensively preparing for their exams. PhD students should plan to spend 3-4 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 his/her 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 his/her 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 M.A. students the list should include 40-50 books/articles. For Ph.D. 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 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.

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.

### **Scheduling the Exam**

A student must submit the **COMPREHENSIVE EXAM FORM** to the AAIH at least one month in advance of the exam date. A student must also submit the final version of all exam bibliographies (each field should have a separate list) to all the members of his/her committee electronically and a hard copy to be placed in his/her permanent file. A student will not be allowed to schedule exams until s/he has submitted the final version of the book lists.

### **Taking the Exam**

#### **MA**

MA students will take both exams in the same day. If MA students require a third exam, they will take the exam the following week.

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 his/her 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. 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. The Graduate College Representative has veto power.

### **PhD**

PhD students will take all their exams, at the rate of two per day, during the period of one week.

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 his/her 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. 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. The Graduate College Representative has veto power.

A student may not take the oral examination until s/he has passed the full written exam. A student must pass both the written and the oral exam to pass the comprehensive exams.

## THESIS AND 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. This 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 his/her 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 as substantial bibliography to his/her 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 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 first week 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 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 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.

### **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.

Do not schedule a defense of a thesis or dissertation that is still a work in progress. Although the committee may recommend changes to the thesis or dissertation to be completed after the defense, these should be minor changes. The draft of the thesis or dissertation circulated to the committee should be correctly formatted and include all the materials that will be submitted with the final version.

A student may only defend a thesis or dissertation once. If the student does not successfully defend the thesis or dissertation, s/he will be immediately separated from the program.

### **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! 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/>

HigherEd Jobs <https://www.higheredjobs.com>

American Historical Association <http://www.historians.org/>

Organization of American Historians <http://www.oah.org/>

National Council on Public History <http://www.ncph.org/>

Chronicle of Higher Ed. <http://chronicle.com/>

Western History Association <https://westernhistoryassociation.wildapricot.org>

American Studies Association <https://www.theasa.net>

Overview of profession <http://www.historians.org/perspectives/issues/2003/0305/0305aha2.cfm>

Job Crisis? <http://www.historians.org/perspectives/issues/2004/0405/0405vie2.cfm>

## The Rules

1. PhD 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.
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 (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 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.
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.