History MA

The History M.A. program offers study in U.S. History, World History, History Education, Public History and Cultural Heritage, and Museum Studies. All students receive disciplined advanced work in preparation for doctoral programs or advanced training leading to teaching or other careers. Students select one of two options for completing the Master of Arts degree: thesis or research papers. The first path requires a substantial master's thesis; this path emphasizes depth of knowledge and research competence. The second path requires several research papers. This path emphasizes breadth of historical knowledge. Students should consult with the Director of Graduate Studies to be sure that they have properly selected their fields of study.

The M.A in History provides a broad-based program of study that emphasizes historical writing, research, and analysis. Students pursuing an M.A. in History can specialize in World History, U.S. History, Public History, or History Education.

Admission Requirements

Applicants must meet several departmental admission requirements in addition to the general criteria of the Graduate School. The applicant's undergraduate studies need not have been in history, but they must demonstrate high academic potential. We also welcome applications from returning students with high motivation to study in the field.

Applicants must submit three letters of recommendation, preferably from former teachers, and a sample of their written work. The History Department bases its admission decisions upon the undergraduate transcript, the letters of recommendation, and the sample of written work. The department admits applications throughout the year. Students should consult the Graduate School's Admission timeline

Core

All candidates for the M.A. degree in history must complete a core of 26 hours of course work (excluding thesis credit), with no more than nine hours of history and related fields at the 5000 level. This 26-hour core must include seven courses at 3 credit hours each (21 hours in all), and one 5-credit-hour writing seminar consisting of a 2-credit-hour research paper supplement to a 3-credit-hour, 6000-level history readings course.

To earn the 26-hour core, candidates must complete HIST 6000, complete one section of either HIST 5142 or HIST 5143 and select at least one field of study with a minimum of three courses (each at 3 credit hours or more.) Students may use the remaining hours to complete a second field.

In addition to this core, each candidate must select one of the two following degree options:

1. Thesis Option--32 hours total

   In addition to the core, the candidate choosing this option must enroll for 6 hours of thesis credit and submit an acceptable thesis. The thesis is based on original research in primary sources. Normally, theses do not exceed 100 pages of text. Candidates receive a grade for the thesis upon its approval by an advisory committee. The committee consists of professors selected by the candidate after consultation with the major professor. One member of the committee must be from the department but outside the candidate's general area of study, and one may be outside the history department.

   The advisory committee conducts an oral examination on the thesis during the candidate's last semester of residence.

   The committee decides whether the candidate shall pass, fail, or fail with the option to repeat the oral examination at a later date. Students may not take the oral examination more than twice. The second examination must be held no less than one and no more than two semesters following the date of the first examination. Summer session may be counted as a semester under this procedure, but students should be aware of the difficulties involved in assembling faculty committees during the summer.

   Thesis candidates must demonstrate competence in one foreign language or in quantitative methods as applied to historical study. Prior to beginning thesis research, candidates shall demonstrate foreign language competence by translating, with the use of a dictionary, 500 words in one hour. Normally a member of the history faculty will conduct this examination and choose the test for translation. Candidates shall demonstrate quantitative methods competence by satisfactory completion of either PSYCH 2201 Psychological Statistics or SOC 3220 Sociological Statistics, or their equivalent.
2. Research Paper Option-36 hours total

   To complete this option, the candidate must complete two 5-credit-hour seminars (each consisting of a 6000-level reading seminar plus 2 credit hours of supplementary work on a substantial research paper), in addition to the core. The candidate may choose a fourth field in addition to the three already represented in the core to complete this option.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the program, graduates will be able to:

- Conduct empirical historical research based on primary source evidence
- Compose publishable-quality scholarship that makes an original contribution to knowledge
- Evaluate recent scholarship within chosen subfield of study in the context of historiographical trends
- Synthesize historical research in interpretive formats, including written papers and essays
- Demonstrate facility for presenting historical argument orally and describing research and findings to an audience
- Distinguish between different methodological approaches to historical research, writing, and interpretation