

UNIVERSITY
OF MIAMI



DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY



GRADUATE PROGRAM HANDBOOK

University of Miami History Graduate Program Handbook

Welcome to the History Department at the University of Miami. We pride ourselves in providing a close individualized training for the next generation of teachers and researchers who will form and lead the historical profession in the twenty-first century. We take particular pride in our high success rate to date in placing our Ph.D. students in jobs. We also aim to help in the development of exciting, well prepared, and innovative individuals who will contribute in significant ways to the culture and life of our society. With a program and a faculty that are recognized regionally, nationally, and internationally, we are committed to producing M.A.s and Ph.D.s of the highest quality, capable of living up to these goals and going beyond them.

Graduate Advising and Counseling Activities

Careful advising is crucial to the success of graduate education. The department provides counseling to graduate students in a variety of forms:

- 1) The student's main advisor is key: students can expect frequent interaction with their main advisors. A provisional advisor is assigned to each student upon admission. Students should then concur or select a different advisor by the beginning of the second semester in the program. The student may subsequently change the advisor as long as the faculty member selected agrees.
- 2) A copy of this handbook is given to students and posted on the department website.
- 3) All new students attend an orientation hosted by the Department Chair and Director of Graduate Studies (DGS). All Teaching Assistants also attend an orientation on teaching.
- 4) Through the office of the DGS, students receive notifications concerning deadlines, colloquia, and social events.
- 5) The history graduate faculty meets once a year to discuss the progress of our students. The history graduate faculty may instruct the DGS or the major advisor to take specific actions as a result of the review.
- 6) At least once a year the DGS meets with each student and the respective advisor. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the student's progress through the program.
- 7) Once a Ph.D. student has fulfilled course requirements and passed the comprehensive examinations, the doctoral committee reviews the student's progress toward the degree each year to make sure that the student gets the best direction possible.
- 8) The DGS schedules regular office hours to be available to meet with students.
- 9) The department, as general policy, promotes close association between professors and

students, and expects a close working relationship between mentors and advisees.

Admissions

We are looking for applicants with a record of outstanding academic achievement and evidence of potential success in graduate studies, attributes which can be measured in various ways such as grades, recommendations, written work, and test scores. Students with a master's degree from an accredited institution may apply for admission to the doctoral program. Students with a bachelor's degree only and with very strong credentials may be admitted into the doctoral program. Applicants must meet the admissions requirements set by both the graduate school, which are listed in its materials, and the Department of History.

Because one of the strengths of our program is a close working relationship between faculty members and students, we cannot always accept qualified applicants when no one in the department can provide the guidance they need in their area of interest. Applicants should explore the listing of faculty on our website and contact the DGS or relevant faculty members if they have any questions.

The complete application contains:

- 1) A completed application form.
- 2) A completed financial aid application, if seeking aid.
- 3) Three letters of recommendation, preferably from the applicant's former professors. If recommenders experience difficulties with the on-line system, they should feel free to email their letters to the Program Coordinator.
- 4) A detailed statement from the student indicating: a) the student's background and education; b) the student's interests (field, topic, etc.); c) why the student wants to pursue a graduate degree in history at the University of Miami; and d) what the student plans to do with the degree upon completion. This statement constitutes a very important part of the application review process and should indicate the student's understanding of the professional nature of the training that the student is about to begin.
- 5) Transcripts. Request one official transcript from each post-secondary institution (college or university) that you have attended. Transcripts are not considered official if provided by or received via the applicant.
- 6) A representative writing sample of at least 20 pages.

All 6 components above must be submitted on time in order for an applicant to be considered.

- 7) For international students, recent TOEFL (within five years of application date) scores.

8) Official original transcripts with English translation.

9) A copy of diploma (with English translation) for degrees earned outside of the United States.

10) If you require an F-1 Visa, you will need to submit a Bank/Sponsorship letter and a copy of the first page of your passport. Download a sample bank letter.

Deadlines

January 5: Applications for admission and financial aid for the fall semester.

The DGS may, at her or his discretion, ask the graduate committee to consider admitting stellar candidates at a later date, and if a teaching assistantship is open, the committee may consider granting it to the person in question.

Review of Applications

All applications are reviewed by at least three members of the graduate faculty. The DGS or a designated member of the graduate committee appoints the reviewers. Each reviewer indicates on the standard form provided whether they recommend for or against admission. No candidate will be admitted unless there is an appropriate potential advisor who is in favor of admission. The graduate committee reviews all files, votes on each case, and informs the department of its decisions.

Admission from M.A. to Ph.D. Status

Students admitted at the master's level who are performing well in their studies are encouraged to proceed to Ph.D. status. Advisors who believe that a student should be admitted to the Ph.D. program, and have the consent of the student, inform the DGS of this desire early in the spring semester and before the annual departmental meeting reviewing graduate students' progress. The request is then reviewed by the department at its annual meeting for recommendation to the graduate committee. Students who move from the M.A. to the Ph.D. program are eligible for the same number of years of aid as students entering the Ph.D. program directly from the B. A., minus the years of aid they have already received. For course requirements, see below under the Ph.D. program.

Assigning of Teaching Assistantships

Students who are making good progress through our program may normally expect up to 5 years of funding. Students already in the money stream and who are performing up to our high expectations have priority over all new applicants. Students who receive single year funding from outside grants are still eligible for the full number of years of aid in addition to the grant year's funding.

THE M.A PROGRAM

Committee

Upon admission to the Master's Program in History, the student is assigned a provisional major

advisor. An advisory committee of three, including the major advisor and a faculty member representing the student's secondary field, must be formed no later than the student's second semester in the program. There are then two options for completing the master's. One requires 30 hours of coursework and an exam. The other requires 24 hours of coursework, a master's thesis (6 thesis credits), and an exam. In the case of both options, one member of the committee may be from a cognate discipline, but this is not required. It is the responsibility of the student and the advisor to form the committee and to notify the DGS of its composition. The major advisor chairs the advisory committee and oversees the student's course of study and progress in the program. The advisory committee also administers the oral comprehensive exam that is given in the case of either option. In the case of the second (thesis) option, the advisory committee and the thesis committee are usually, but not necessarily, composed of the same faculty members.

Requirements

- 1) 30 credits at the 600 level or above, of which at least 18 must be at the 700 level or above.
- 2) The comprehensive examination for the M.A. degree in history is both a written and an oral examination in two fields that will normally not exceed two hours. Students selecting the thesis examination should expect questioning on the thesis as well as their fields during the examination. For such students the comprehensive will also act as a thesis defense.
- 3) Completion of History 721 (Historiography). This course is normally given in the fall semester. All students are required to take the Historiography course in their first year.
- 4) Students may, if they wish, write an M.A. thesis. Students who elect this option should consult with their advisor. Any student writing a thesis should register for 6 credits of History 810, which count toward the 30 required credits.
- 5) Language Requirements: Students must demonstrate a reading knowledge in at least one foreign language. Reading knowledge in additional languages may be required by the major advisor. See under Ph.D. requirements for more information on fulfilling language requirements.
- 6) The student must apply for graduation in his or her penultimate semester (i.e. fall semester for spring semester).

THE PH.D. PROGRAM

Committee

Upon admission to the program, the student is assigned a provisional major advisor. As noted above, students should then concur or select a different advisor by the beginning of the second semester in the program. An advisory committee of at least three people, including the major advisor and faculty members representing the second and third fields, must be formed no later than the student's third semester in the program. It is the responsibility of the student and the

advisor to form this committee and notify the DGS of its composition. The major advisor chairs the advisory committee and oversees the student's course of study and progress in the program. The advisory committee will also administer the oral and written comprehensive examinations. Students may change advisor and other committee members throughout the program provided that the faculty member(s) selected agree(s).

Requirements

1a) For students entering the Ph.D. program with a B.A, 45 credit hours (5 semesters) of graduate coursework at the University of Miami.

1b) For students entering the Ph.D. program with a master's from another university, at least 30 credit hours (3 semesters) of graduate coursework at the University of Miami.

1c) For students entering the Ph.D. program with a master's from another program at the University of Miami, at least 30 additional credit hours (3 semesters) of graduate coursework at the University of Miami.

1d) For students entering the Ph.D. program with a master's from the History Department at the University of Miami, 24 additional credit hours of graduate coursework (to conform to a Graduate School requirement) at the University of Miami.

1e) All doctoral students are expected to take their comprehensive exams no later than their 6th semester in the History Graduate Program at the University of Miami.

2) Completion of History 721 (Historiography), included in the above number of credits. All students are required to take the Historiography course in their first year.

3) Completion of History 701 and 702 (the two-semester Research Seminar), included in the above number of credits, at least once. Typically, students take History 701 and 702 in their 2nd and 3rd semesters in the program.

4) Completion of History 762 (History as a Profession), included in the above number of credits. Typically, students take History 762 in their 4th semester in the program.

5) Completion of History 722 (Prospectus Seminar), included in the above number of credits. Typically, students take History 722 in their 5th semester in the program.

6) Completion of language requirement. (See details below.)

7a) Passage of a major field in written and oral exams.

7b) Passage of a 2nd field in written and oral exams.

7c) Passage of a 3rd field in written and oral exams.

7d) Passage of a 4th (cognate) field in the oral exam alone, only if the student and their advisor have decided to prepare a 4th field.

8) Following completion of course credit hours, students will need to take sufficient dissertation research credits (History 830 if before the comprehensives have been passed; History 840 after the comprehensives have been passed) to reach a total of 60 credit hours beyond the B.A. in order to receive the doctorate. Graduate School rules require that students take a minimum of 12 dissertation credits. Students who enter the Ph.D. program with an M.A. from another university or from another program at the U. of M. receive 30 credit hours towards the 60 credit hour requirement.

The required credits of coursework are only the formal minimum. Although course work is necessary preparation for the comprehensive examination, students are examined on the mastery of fields of knowledge rather than courses. The number of courses taken depends on the student's background, choice of fields, nature of related work, language skills, etc. Courses should be selected only after consultation with the Major Advisor.

Incompletes

All incompletes from the fall semester must be made up by the official end of the following spring semester. All incompletes from the spring semester must be made up before the official start of the subsequent fall semester. No student will be allowed to proceed to exams until all incompletes have been made up.

Language Requirement

Reading knowledge of at least one foreign language is required. More than one foreign language may be required if the major advisor deems it necessary. The Modern Languages and Literatures (MLL) Department offers preparation courses in a handful of languages. Students wishing to study foreign languages not covered by MLL's regular offerings should consult with the DGS. Students must, in conjunction with their advisor, prepare a plan that specifies how they will demonstrate language proficiency. Language proficiency exams are administered within the department. The language requirement must be completed before a student can take the comprehensive examinations (see below).

Prospectus

The dissertation prospectus is completed in HIS 722, where it is drafted, revised, and finally presented to the department. Students should have already identified and begun formulating a viable topic before taking the course. At the conclusion of the class, the student's committee makes the final decision as to whether a prospectus is acceptable to advance to Ph.D. candidacy.

Comprehensive Examinations

It is the responsibility of the student and major advisor to organize the comprehensive examinations. Students may take them at any time of the year that classes are in session. Arrangements for the exams, including selection of their dates and a final list of committee

members, should be made by the end of the first month of the semester in question, with notification to the Department Chair and DGS.

The student takes the written part of the examinations in three history fields (see list below), which are normally administered over a period of one but no longer than two successive weeks. The portion for each field is four hours in duration. Only after the advisory committee deems that the student has successfully passed the written portions for each field is the student permitted to take the oral part of the examination.

The oral section covers the three history fields and is approximately two hours in duration. The prospectus may form part of the discussion, but the examination will focus on coverage of the fields. The committee consists of at least three faculty members.

The student advances to candidate status after passing the comprehensive examinations, completing HIS 722, and submitting an acceptable dissertation prospectus.

Students who have not already received a master's degree from the University of Miami will be awarded an M.A. upon successful completion of their doctoral comprehensive exams.

Dissertation

After passing the examinations, students form a dissertation committee. This may be the original advisory committee, but it may also be revised to meet the needs of the dissertation work. The student, in consultation with the Major Advisor, puts forward the names of individuals suggested to serve on the dissertation committee. The committee is then approved and appointed by the dean of the graduate school.

The dissertation must make a significant contribution to the candidate's field of specialization. It must meet the highest standards of research, substance, and form, and demonstrate an ability to conduct and report independent and original scholarly investigation.

The student must apply for graduation in his or her penultimate semester (i.e. fall semester for spring semester).

Upon completion of the dissertation and its tentative approval by the dissertation committee, the student takes a final oral examination that is a "defense" of the dissertation and that lasts for approximately two hours. It is open to the university community. Following the defense of the dissertation, the dissertation committee will render its decision to accept or reject the dissertation. Approval of the dissertation must be indicated by the signature of all members of the dissertation committee.

EXAM FIELDS

Chronological/ Geographical fields

- Medieval Europe
- Early Modern Europe
- Modern Europe
- Early America
- Modern U.S.
- Colonial Latin America
- Modern Latin America
- East Asia
- Russian Empire
- Soviet Union
- Africa
- Caribbean

Topical Fields

These must cover either two of the geographic or two of the temporal fields listed above.

- African American History
- African Diaspora
- Race and Ethnicity
- Gender and Sexuality
- History of Religion
- History of Science and Medicine
- History of Crime and Law
- Political History
- Diplomatic History
- Urban and Environmental History
- Economic History
- Business History
- Labor History
- History of Sport
- Military History
- Cultural and Intellectual History
- Public History
- Atlantic World
- Renaissance
- Mediterranean World
- Empires and Nations
- Global 19th Century
- Colonialism

Customized Fields

Students may create their own fields in consultation with their advisory committee. The student opting for this approach must file a plan of study listing relevant courses, the faculty member(s)

involved, and the rationale. To pursue the individualized concentration, the student must obtain written approval of the plan by the major advisor, DGS, and the Department Chair. The plan and signed approvals are placed in the student's file. With rare exceptions, a customized field may not be the major field of study.

Affiliated Programs

- Caribbean Studies Concentration
- Medieval and Early Modern Studies Concentration (EMSH_CN)
- Digital Humanities Certificate (DH)

Opportunities for Students

- Center for Global Black Studies (CGBS)
- Center for Humanities (COH)
- Digital Humanities Research Institute Leadership (DHRI)
- Tinker Foundation Field Research
- UGROW
- ULINK Laboratory for Integrative Knowledge
- UMIA Field Research

TYPES OF COURSES

Historiography

This course is required of all first semester graduate students. It is designed to introduce the student to a challenging range of approaches across the field of history and beyond. Students entering in the fall will take the course in their first semester. Should a student be admitted for the spring, that student will take it in the following fall.

600-Level Seminars

Some of these seminars include an advanced undergraduate component, while others are for graduate students exclusively. Generally they focus on specific topics but are designed to help students develop broader research, analytical, and methodological skills.

Field Preparation Seminars

These courses are designed to introduce graduate students to key historiographic works in specific fields. They are offered whenever there is sufficient demand for them. In some cases, they may be offered through a directed readings course.

700-Level Seminars

These courses are limited to graduate students and involve a variety of approaches and styles. Like the 600-level seminars, they generally focus on specific topics, but are designed to help students develop broader research, analytical, and methodological skills.

Research Seminar

This is two-semester graduate course that stresses research in primary materials and the

production of a substantial paper.

History as a Profession

This course is designed to prepare graduate students for entering the profession. Students are introduced to material and exercises that prepare them for different aspects of a career as a professional historian, such as the preparation of conference papers, organizing a job talk, and writing an article.

Prospectus Seminar

This course is designed to assist students in writing a strong, viable, and innovative dissertation prospectus.

Directed Readings Courses

These offer students tailored courses with professors. Arrangements for taking directed readings courses are made between the student and faculty member in consultation with the major advisor. M.A. students and Ph.D. students who enter with a M.A. can take no more than 12 credits of directed readings. Ph.D. students entering without an M.A. may take no more than 18 credits. A list of readings and requirements should be placed in the student's file.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The University of Miami is committed to holding research and scholarly activities to the highest ethical standards. Graduate students are expected to exhibit a professional level of personal and academic integrity and honesty as they engage in scholarly discourse and research. As specified in the University of Miami Honor Code, areas of violation include:

Cheating

Implies an intent to deceive. It includes all actions, devices, and/or deceptions involved in committing the act. Examples include, but are not limited to, utilizing crib notes/cheat sheet on an exam and copying answers directly from another student's exam.

Plagiarism

Representing the words or ideas of someone else as your own. Examples include, but are not limited to, failing to properly cite direct quotes and failing to give credit for someone else's ideas.

Collusion

The act of working together on an academic undertaking for which a student is individually responsible. Examples include, but are not limited to, sharing information in labs that are to be done individually.

Academic Dishonesty

Includes any other act not specifically covered that compromises the integrity of a student or intrudes, violates, or disturbs the academic environment of the University Community.

Examples are attempting or agreeing to commit, or assisting in or facilitating the commission of, any scholastic dishonesty violation, failing to appear or testify without good cause when requested by the Honor Council, failing to keep information about cases confidential, supplying false information to the Honor Council and accusing a student of a violation of this Code in bad faith.

Please see the [Graduate Honor Code](#) for more specific information on different violations and other important information.

Resources

University of Miami Graduate Honor Code

The above information comes from the [University's Honor Code website](#) and [Graduate Honor Code](#), which was established for the graduate student body to protect the academic integrity of the University of Miami, to encourage consistent ethical behavior among graduate students, and to foster a climate of fair competition. As this page only outlines some of the guidelines found within the code, you may refer to all guidelines in the official [Graduate Honor Code](#).

SafeAssign

SafeAssign is a resource provided through Blackboard that detects unoriginal content in papers. Students have access through the Writing Center and advisor.

UM Writing Center Consultations

The Writing Center at the University of Miami offers free, one-on-one assistance with all types of writing. You can schedule a consultation with them by requesting it [online, \(Writing Center | College of Arts and Sciences \(miami.edu\)\)](#).

APPENDIX ONE

Degree Requirements

All graduate courses earn 3 credit hours.

All full-time students take three courses (9 graduate credit hours) per semester.

Coursework refers to graduate courses taken at the University of Miami.

I. Master's

Exam Option Only:	30 credit hours of graduate coursework
Thesis + Exam Option:	24 credit hours of graduate coursework. The thesis earns an additional 6 credit hours to total 30

II. Ph.D.

Entering with B.A. Only:	45 credit hours of graduate coursework
Entering with master's from Another University:	At least 30 credit hours of graduate coursework
Entering with master's from Another U.M. Program:	At least 30 additional credit hours of graduate coursework
Entering with a master's in History Earned at U.M.:	24 additional credit hours of graduate coursework

All Ph.D. students must complete 60 credit hours beyond the B.A. to receive the doctorate. After completion of coursework and the comprehensive exams, all students sign up for dissertation research credits (History 840; History 830 if the comprehensive exams have not yet been taken) to complete this requirement. Graduate School rules require that a minimum of 12 dissertation credits must be taken. Students who enter the Ph.D. program with an M.A. from another university or from another program at the U.M. receive 30 credit hours towards the 60 credit hour requirement.

APPENDIX TWO

Prospectus Guidelines

Below are some general guidelines to use when preparing the dissertation prospectus. Remember that each advisor may have specific requirements for his or her students. The guidelines below are meant to give you a general framework from which to begin drafting the prospectus. The prospectus should be between 10 and 20 pages in length, and should include a tentative bibliography.

Every dissertation prospectus should answer the following questions:

- 1) What is the main question that the dissertation seeks to answer? Why is this question interesting and important?
- 2) What are the main areas of historiography with which this study will engage? What have other authors written about the topic? How will this study change, revise, or enhance the existing literature? What could become some significant contributions of the project?
- 3) What are the main sources the author will use in the study, both primary and secondary? What archives exist to support the work and what specific collections within these archives will be or have been explored? Why are these the most appropriate sources to help answer the questions under study?
- 4) How will the dissertation be organized? What is the general structure of the narrative? What might a chapter outline look like?

Remember that writing a prospectus necessarily involves some degree of speculation about what you plan to do and hope to find. As you get deeper into the research and writing, your argument will become more focused and your understanding of your contribution to the field more defined. The process of writing the prospectus is designed to help you begin the process of articulating your argument and situating your work within a larger historical framework.