

**MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE IN HISTORY
AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN CONCENTRATIONS
FALL 2005
GENERAL REQUIREMENTS**

The requirements for the M.A. degree in History are spelled out in detail in the Graduate School Bulletin. The major outlines of the program are as follows:

- Students are required to take 33 hours (30 hours if language exam is passed) with a major concentration of 21 hours and a minor concentration of 12 hours (9 if the language exam is passed).
- Concentrations, both major and minor, may be chosen from U.S. or European. In addition, with the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies, students may construct a minor from the wider world area, including African, Asian, Latin American, and Public History.
- All students must complete the two-course, 700-level colloquium sequence, normally in their first year of study. The colloquia are designed to introduce students to interpretive and methodological approaches in their chosen area of study. American and European majors must take the colloquium sequence in their concentration (HIS 701-702 for American, HIS 705-706 for European).
- All students, during their first year of studies (and before their first 700-level seminar), are required to take one HIS 709, a course designed to introduce students to historical research at a graduate level.
- Students are required to take the two-course, 700-level seminar sequence in their concentration, normally in the second year of study (HIS703-704 for American; HIS 707-708 for European).
- The Graduate School requires that students must complete at least 15 hours at the above the 500-level. However, this requirement is satisfied by the fact that a student must complete 15 hours of required departmental “core” courses (HIS 709 plus the two colloquia and the two advanced seminars).

ADVISING

The Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) will be your first adviser within the Department. He or she will help you design your course of studies, answer questions you may have about the M.A. program, and be your contact person with the Faculty. *You must consult with the DGS each semester before registering to draw up your course of study to update your Plan of Study* (see below).

THE MENTOR

You are required to select a mentor *by the end of your first year of courses* (or upon approaching the completion of 18 credit hours). The mentor, with whom you will do a good deal of work, should obviously have expertise in your major field. Also he/she will be the person from whom you take at least one, and possibly both, 700-level seminars.

The mentor will advise you on scholarly and professional matters and will chair your M.A. Comprehensive Examination Committee (see below). Unless your mentor makes some other arrangements with you, it will be expected that you will draw up a reading list of works that you have read in your major field for which you will be responsible on the Comprehensive Examination. This will include works that you have read both inside and outside your classes; the mentor will check the list and, if necessary, make suggestions for filling in any gaps or omissions. *It is strongly advised that students draw up their reading lists and consult with their mentors at least one semester before their Comprehensive Exam.*

It is, of course, necessary to consult with the person whom you would like to serve as your mentor and secure his or her agreement to act in that capacity. As soon as you identify your mentor, please request the "mentor form" from the Director of Graduate Studies, get the necessary signatures, and return it to the Director.

THE 700-LEVEL SEMINAR SEQUENCE

In each of the two 700-level seminars (HIS 703-704 for American; HIS 707-708 for European), students must complete a major research paper (approximately 25-30 pages).

For students with a US concentration, HIS 703 will be organized as follows: a) students will meet regularly as a group under the auspices of a faculty member designated as "seminar director"; b) the director will be fully responsible for directing each student's project and for determining the final grade; c) each seminar will be designated either pre-1865 or post-1865, and students, upon consultation with the seminar director, will find a topic suitable for a research paper.

For students with a European concentration, HIS 707 will be organized as follows: a) before signing up for the seminar, each student must find an individual faculty member who will become his or her seminar director (often, but not necessarily, the student's mentor); b) directors will work one-on-one with their respective student(s) in the process of researching, writing, and revising a research paper and will be responsible for determining the final grade; c) all students

taking the European seminar, along with their faculty directors, will meet several times during the semester (the times and content of these meetings will be discussed at an organizational meeting held the first week of classes).

The organization for both HIS 704 (for US history students) and HIS 708 (for European history students) will be essentially the same. Before signing up for the each seminar, the student must find an individual faculty member who will become his or her seminar director (often, but not necessarily, the student's mentor). Seminar directors will work one-on-one with their respective student(s) in the process of researching, writing, and revising a research paper and will be responsible for determining the final grade. In addition to one-on-one sessions with the director, all students will participate in a student conference where they will present a report on the findings of their seminar projects, receive criticism from a student commentator, and respond to questions. This conference will be organized by the students themselves in conjunction with their seminar directors and the Director of Graduate Studies (For details, see handout "Student Conferences").

It is also important to understand that, though the two seminar papers may be connected in subject matter, *each must be a completed, stand-alone research paper*. Further, inasmuch as most students find the time constraint of a 16-week semester a challenge, we encourage first year students to begin thinking about potential topics and about reading in relevant secondary materials well in advance of the beginning of each advanced seminar.

THE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION COMMITTEE

All students in the M.A. program are responsible for organizing their Comprehensive Examination Committee. As the title suggests, the primary task of the Committee will be to write questions for your Comprehensive Exam (see below). Each Committee will be composed of three members: the mentor, who will serve as chair; another faculty member from the student's concentration (but usually in a different area); and a third faculty member from the student's minor concentration.

You should also draw up reading lists in consultation with the other two members of your Committee in order to clarify the remaining material that will be covered on the Comprehensive Exam questions. When you secure the agreement of two other faculty members to serve on your Committee, please request the "Comprehensive Examination Committee" form from the Director of Graduate Studies.

THE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

The day-long comprehensive exam, which students usually take in their last semester of course work, is divided into four sessions of one and one-half hours each. Two of the sessions are held in the morning and two in the afternoon. In each session students will be given two questions; they will choose one and will write on it for the hour and a half period.

As a rule, the mentor is responsible for writing the questions for the two morning sessions. The

second faculty member from the student's major field is responsible for the first session in the afternoon. The faculty member from the student's minor field is responsible for the questions during the final session. A sign-up sheet is posted on the Bulletin Board at the beginning of each semester; students must sign up by the deadline indicated on the sign-up sheet.

For students majoring in American history, we require that they answer questions in the pre-1865 period as well as the post-1865 period.

One final note about "Comps." You should not view this exam with foreboding or as a massive obstacle in your path on the way to graduation; we have designed the Comprehensive Exam Committee to help you get a pretty good idea of the material on which you will be tested. You should look upon your preparation for Comps as a time to review, appreciate, and perhaps even marvel at all that you have learned. Comfort yourself in the knowledge that, almost without exception, students who perform well in the program also perform well on the Comps.

ADVANCED TOPICS AND INDEPENDENT STUDY

Two courses, HIS 692 and HIS 697, offer our MA students options often not available through our regular courses. HIS 692, Advanced Topics, allows students to take 300-level courses, *with the prior permission of the instructor*, and to receive 600-level credit. Normally, the 300-level course in question would cover material not covered in our 500- or 600-level offerings. *The instructor, of course, will increase the work load to make the course appropriate for graduate credit.* To enroll in HIS 692, students must obtain the appropriate form from the Director of Graduate Studies, have the instructor sign off, and return the form prior to registering for the course.

HIS 697, Directed Readings, allows students to explore particular topics not available in other courses (or not treated with enough specificity or in sufficient depth). Once again, students can only sign up for HIS 697 with the prior agreement of the instructor. To enroll in HIS 697, students must first fill out the "Permission to Register for Independent Study," which requires signatures of the instructor, the Department Head, and the Graduate Dean.

LANGUAGE EXAM

Many areas of historical research require proficiency in foreign languages. Students that intend to concentrate in such areas are encouraged to receive certification of language competence by passing the written language exam administered by the Department. Passage of the language exam will reduce the minor from 12 to 9 hours (and the total degree hours from 33 to 30). Students intending to pass the language exam are urged to take it during their first or second semester in order to determine their level of proficiency; there is no penalty for re-taking the exam. Students are strongly discouraged from taking the language exam for the first time during their last semester. The language exam consists of a translation of two pages of historical prose. Students can use a dictionary and are allowed one and a half hours to complete the translation.

PLAN OF STUDY

The Plan of Study is an audit sheet of all the requirements for the degree. You may obtain the form from the Director of Graduate Studies. It must be filed twice with the Graduate School: the first should be turned in before achieving 18 credit hours; the second should be turned in when you pay your application fee for graduation (check with the Graduate School for deadline). You should also turn in a duplicate copy to the DGS and keep a copy for your personal files. Keeping this sheet up to date is important so as to avoid any last semester surprises that may delay graduation.

PETITIONS

Despite the seeming abundance of rules, we like to think of ourselves as flexible. Therefore, the Graduate Committee will entertain requests from students who can demonstrate a reason for making exception to certain rules. For example a student might, in conjunction with a faculty member, design an "expanded minor" or a minor that includes courses from outside the Department. The student should write a brief description of the proposed modification and present it to the Director of Graduate Studies.