

# GRADUATE STUDENTS' MANUAL

Department of History  
California State University, Chico  
Chico, California 95929-0735

Robert Tinkler, Graduate Coordinator  
Trinity Hall  
Fall 2009

**Department of History**  
***Mission Statement***

*The mission of the Department of History is to provide students with knowledge about the origins and development of peoples in the past, as well as to develop their ability to conduct research, analyze evidence, and express defensible conclusions orally and in writing. History majors will be prepared for successful professional careers as secondary teachers, college or university professors, journalists, lawyers, civil servants, and historians in government and private agencies. Studying the past will prepare literate, conscientious, and informed persons who appreciate the legacies of history and understand how it affects the present.*

**History Graduate Program Student Learning Outcomes**

1. Student's work demonstrates critical use and proper citation of both primary and secondary sources.
2. Student's work demonstrates mastery of the formal styles of writing, argumentation, and presentation that historians use.
3. Student's work demonstrates mastery of research techniques that historians use.
4. Oral presentations are clear, comprehensive, and professional.
5. Student's work reflects mastery of historiographic traditions.
6. Student's work reflects advanced understanding of global intellectual, political, economic, social, and cultural currents in history.
7. Student's work reflects advanced understanding the roles of race, class, gender, or ethnicity in history.

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## GRADUATE STUDENTS' MANUAL

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

California State University, Chico

### *Purpose of This Manual*

The purpose of this manual is to help students seeking a master's degree in History to understand the process and procedures that are used by the Department of History in its graduate program. However, **this manual does not supersede the *University Catalog* and students should familiarize themselves with the section on Graduate Education in that publication.** In addition, students should also obtain a copy of *A Guide to Graduate Studies: Policies, Procedures, and Format*. This detailed and helpful guide is available at the School of Graduate, International, and Sponsored Programs (Student Services Center, room 440). Finally, it must be emphasized that this manual is not a substitute for graduate students consulting regularly with the Department's Graduate Coordinator. **Students should meet with the Graduate Coordinator at least once each semester** and more frequently if questions arise.

### *Nature of Graduate Education*

Graduate education is advanced study in a specific program which goes substantially beyond upper-division undergraduate coursework. Graduate study requires greater independence on the part of students. It is intended to develop in-depth knowledge and introduce students to research techniques so that they can later make significant and independent contributions to their fields of study.

### *Requirements for Admission into the History M.A. Program*

1. Satisfactory grade point average, as specified in "Admission to Master's Degree Program" in *University Catalog*.
2. Completion of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) with minimum scores of 500 on the verbal portion and 850 on the verbal and analytical sections combined. Or, if taking the GRE after November 2003, a minimum score of 500 on the verbal section and 3.5 on the analytical writing section.
3. An acceptable baccalaureate in History from an accredited institution or an acceptable baccalaureate in another discipline and a program in remedial work in History which has the prior approval of the Graduate Coordinator.

4. A Statement of Purpose of approximately 250-500 words, i.e., 1-2 typed, double-spaced pages in length.
5. A sample of the applicant's academic writing, e.g., a term paper, essay, etc.
6. Two letters of recommendation.
7. Approval by the History Department and the Graduate School.

***Master of Arts in History Program***

The program consists of 30 units of advanced lecture coursework, seminars, and directed individual study leading either: 1) to the completion of a Comprehensive Oral Examination, preceded by the completion of three substantial “sub-field” essays, or 2) to the writing of a thesis followed by its oral defense. The 30 units must be earned in a minimum of 18 units of 600-level courses (previously numbered 300-level) and a maximum of 12 units of 400 or 500-level courses (previously 200-level) taken for graduate credit. **Note:** students intending to apply **400-level courses** to their M.A. degree programs **must make special arrangements with their instructors** in order to satisfy the higher workload and standards expected of a graduate student taking an undergraduate course (see *University Catalog* section on Master’s Degree Courses).

Up to 3 units of relevant course work outside the Department of History may be counted towards the M.A. in History with the prior approval of the Graduate Advisory Committee.

***Comprehensive Oral Examination/Essay Plan***

Students not writing a thesis will take a Comprehensive Oral Examination as the culmination of their work towards the M.A. This will be a one-hour oral examination conducted by the student's Graduate Advisory Committee. In the Comprehensive Oral Examination candidates for the M.A. will present themselves for examination in three of the following sub-fields of History:

<b><i>Sub-Fields of History</i></b>		
Classical	Africa	U.S. to 1877
Medieval-Renaissance Europe	East Asia	U.S. 1877 to
Europe, 1500-1815	Latin America	present
Europe, 1815 to present	Middle East and India	

Prior to taking the Comprehensive Oral Examination, a candidate for the M.A. will submit an essay on a topic within each of his or her sub-fields. Since a candidate has three sub-fields, the candidate will submit three essays.

It is recommended that at least six courses (18 units) be selected from the candidate's three sub-fields in order to prepare for the essays. It is expected that

the essays will have been written specifically for the purpose of preparing for the Comprehensive Oral Examination. The faculty member for each field in which the student is to be examined will agree on the essay to be submitted to the candidate's examining committee. The graduate student's committee members will read each of the essays that the student submits. They will confer with one another as to whether each of the three essays is of sufficient quality to be accepted as fulfilling the requirement for graduation.

Each essay will normally be between 15 and 30 pages. Style and format of essays may vary according to the course and nature of the assignment which the paper was written to satisfy. Papers may vary in type to include historiographic essays, interpretations of historical works or original research.

The purpose of the essays is to demonstrate the candidate's ability to write and to deal with historical analysis in the sub-fields of History which the candidate has selected. A candidate will qualify for an M.A. in History if all three members of his or her Graduate Advisory Committee approve of the essays and the oral performance.

To enroll in the Oral Exam/Essay plan track, students must submit an Essay Plan Program Form (see checklist on back page), available from the Graduate Coordinator, at the time they formally organize their program advisory committees.

### *Thesis Plan*

A student may submit a thesis as the culminating experience leading to the M.A. in History only when he or she has obtained the prior approval of the Department Graduate Committee. This permission will be granted if it can be shown that the proposed thesis will make an original and significant contribution to historical knowledge.

The student must, therefore, consult with his or her individual graduate advisory committee and prepare a thesis prospectus for submission to the Department Graduate Committee, along with a completed Thesis Plan enrollment form available from the Graduate Coordinator (see checklist on back page). The prospectus should describe the student's thesis topic and provide a working list of both secondary and primary sources that will be consulted. The student should seek to demonstrate adequate knowledge of the historiographic literature in his or her field, and that sufficient and accessible primary materials exist so that a genuinely original work can be produced.

Upon completion of the thesis and its acceptance by the student's Graduate Advisory Committee, a one-hour oral examination will be scheduled to which all

members of the Department will be invited. At this oral examination the student will be asked to defend the thesis.

### *Graduate Advisory Committee*

Each student in the History M.A. program will be responsible for selecting an individual Graduate Advisory Committee in consultation with the Department Graduate Coordinator. This committee will consist of three members of the History Department whose areas of specialty are related to the thesis topic or the sub-fields of History that the student chooses for his or her essays and Comprehensive Oral Examination. The student's Graduate Advisory Committee will help design the student's program of study, evaluate the student's three essays and formulate, conduct, and evaluate the student's Comprehensive Oral Examination. In the case of the Thesis Plan, the student's Graduate Advisory Committee will supervise the research and writing of a thesis and have responsibility for granting final approval of a thesis.

A student should form his or her Graduate Advisory Committee as soon after entering the History M.A. program as is feasible, and should have a committee formed no later than the end of the second semester of graduate work. This is done by students contacting prospective committee members from among the department faculty and determining their willingness to serve on the student's committee. Once informal approval has been granted by faculty members, the student should contact the Graduate Coordinator to formalize the committee. This is done by completing and submitting to the Graduate Coordinator either the Essay Plan program form or the Thesis Track program form (see checklist on back page).

### *Categories of Standing for Graduate Students*

#### **Unclassified:**

This is the category for those persons who have been admitted as graduate students of the university but have not been specifically admitted to the M.A. program of any department. Frequently, students in this category are seeking a second Bachelor's degree or are undertaking remedial work to qualify them for admission into an M.A. program.

#### **Conditionally Classified:**

Students who have been granted admission into the Department's M.A. program pending the fulfillment of certain requirements specified by the Graduate Committee.

#### **Classified:**

Students who have formally been admitted to the Department's M.A. Program.

### **Candidacy:**

Students who are cleared for graduation pending the completion of their culminating projects (i.e. their oral exams and either their thesis or three field essays) and any remaining coursework requirements. In order to be eligible for advancement candidacy in the History M.A. Program, a student must have:

1. Previously been granted classified status.
2. Completed at least 9 units of coursework towards the M.A. with a minimum GPA of 3.00.
3. Formed a Graduate Advisory Committee.
4. Secured approval of an Individual Master's Degree Program (either Essay Plan or Thesis Track) from the Department Graduate Coordinator.
5. Submitted their *Master's Degree Program Plan* form to the Graduate School

Students **must be advanced to candidacy before** they may submit their culminating projects or take their oral examinations.

### ***Coursework***

Normally, all coursework to be applied towards an M.A. must be completed within five years. Under special circumstances, a single extension of this five-year time limit may be granted to a maximum of no more than seven years.

*Graduate Historiography course (690):* This is the one course required of all students seeking the M.A. in History. Since the course is not offered every semester the student should take History 690 at the first opportunity. Writing proficiency is a graduation requirement. History M.A. students will normally demonstrate writing competence through their successful completion of History 690.

*Independent Study (698):* Is a course designated for a specific research and/or readings project supervised by a member of the faculty. Independent study projects may be undertaken for 1-3 units of credit. Graduate students can design the project in consultation with their instructors. Normally, students will not be permitted to count more than 3 units of 698 towards the M.A. degree.

*Thesis and Supporting Research (699):* Students permitted to write a thesis may receive 1-6 units of credit for researching and writing the thesis. The thesis must be completed and granted final approval within the time limitations indicated above. A student will not be permitted to receive credit for more than a total of six units of 698 and 699 projects dealing with the same subject.

To enroll in 698 and 699 courses, students must complete and submit special Supervision Course Proposal forms available from the History Department or the Graduate Coordinator. These forms require the signature of the Graduate Coordinator.

### ***Individual Master's Degree Program***

As early as is feasible during their graduate work, students should complete and submit to the Graduate Coordinator an Individual Master's Degree Program Plan form (available from the Graduate School), along with their Essay Plan or Thesis Track enrollment form (see checklist on back page). The Program Plan form provides space to list the courses that have been taken, are being taken, or will be taken to apply towards the M.A. Also, the student should list on this form the sub-fields for the Comprehensive Oral Examination or the title of the thesis project.

### ***Role of the Department Graduate Coordinator***

The function of the Department Graduate Coordinator is to supervise the day-to-day operation of the Department's M.A. program. The Coordinator reviews and makes recommendations on applications for admission to the graduate program, acts as academic adviser to those students admitted into the program, grants approval for their curricula, and makes policy recommendations to the Department Graduate Committee.

### ***Role of the Department Graduate Committee***

The Department Graduate Committee has final authority over the operation of the Department's graduate program. It makes decisions as to admission into the program and on disqualification of those not making satisfactory progress. The Graduate Committee hears petitions from graduate students in regard to decisions made by the Graduate Coordinator and determines the Department's graduate program policies.

## **Graduate Program Forms Checklist**

### **History Department Forms: obtain as needed from the Graduate Advisor**

- 1. Advancement to Classified Status (green form):** If you were originally admitted to the History MA program as a conditionally classified student, you will need to complete this form as soon as you have met and fulfilled all specified conditions.
  
- 2. Approved MA Program: Comprehensive Oral Examination/Essay Plan (white):** If you have determined the faculty membership of your MA committee and wish to enroll in the Comprehensive Oral Examination/Essay Plan track for pursuing the MA, you must complete this form in order to officially enroll and establish your committee. This form should be completed by the end of your first year or near the beginning of your second year in the program.
  
- 3. Approved MA Program: Thesis Track (gold):** If you have determined the faculty membership of your MA committee and wish to enroll in the Thesis track, you must complete this form in order to officially enroll and establish your committee. This form should be completed by the end of your first year or near the beginning of your second year in the program.
  
- 4. History Department Recommendation: Advancement to Candidacy (pink):** You must complete this form as soon as you have fulfilled the 4 requirements for advancement to candidacy (see page 4 of Graduate Student's Manual). This should be done by the end of your third semester in the program.
  
- 5. Completion of Degree Requirements (orange):** You must bring this form with you to your oral exams and give it to the chair of your faculty committee. Your committee members must complete it at the end of your orals, and your chair must then deliver it to the Department Graduate Advisor.

### **Graduate School Forms: obtain as needed from the Graduate School Office**

- 1. Master's Degree Program Plan:** This should be completed by the end of your first year or near the beginning of your second year in the MA program.
  
- 2. Approved Master's Degree Program--Graduation Clearance:** This must be completed during the first half of your final semester in the MA program.

- 3. Graduate School--Final Progress Sheet:** You must bring this form with you to your oral exams and give it to the chair of your faculty committee. Your committee members must complete it at the end of your orals, and your chair must then deliver it to the Graduate School.