

# **GRADUATE STUDENTS' MANUAL**

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### **History MA Program Mission Statement**

The mission of History Department's Graduate Program is to serve the needs of students who intend to pursue doctoral studies at other institutions, teachers who wish to deepen their content knowledge, and those who simply seek a more advanced and specialized study of the past. Going substantially beyond upper-division undergraduate coursework, the graduate program will provide students with in-depth knowledge about the origins and development of peoples in the past and perfect their ability to conduct advanced research and writing. Graduates of the MA program will be equipped to make significant and independent contributions to the field of history and will be prepared for successful professional careers as secondary teachers, college or university professors, journalists, lawyers, and historians in government and private agencies.

### **History Graduate Program Student Learning Outcomes**

1. Student's work demonstrates the ability to communicate historical knowledge, interpretations, and arguments, clearly in writing and in formal oral presentations.
2. Student's work demonstrates research and information literacy skills using scholarly resources, including the critical use of both print and electronic research tools, as well as the proper citation of both primary and secondary sources.
3. Student's work reflects the ability to identify arguments in historical scholarship and to evaluate them critically.
4. Student's work reflects an understanding of intellectual, political, economic, social, and cultural history.
5. Student's work reflects an understanding of the constructions of race, color, gender, or ethnicity in history.

## 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](#). 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 during the mandatory advising period** 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. The department offers both a Master of Arts degree and a Certificate in Advanced Study in History.

### **Requirements for Admission into the Certificate in Advanced Study in History**

There are no course prerequisites for admission to this certificate program and the GRE is not required. Applicants for admission must, however, meet all relevant University and departmental standards, policies, and procedures, including:

1. A bachelor's degree in History from an accredited institution or an acceptable bachelor's degree in another discipline with advance approval of the History Department's Graduate Coordinator.
2. An acceptable undergraduate grade point average, as specified in "Admission to Master's Degree Program" in the University Catalog.
3. An application on file with the Office of Graduate Studies.
4. Approval by the History Department Graduate Committee.

### **Requirements for the Certificate in Advanced Study in History**

The program consists of 12 units of advanced lecture coursework and seminars. The 12 units must be earned in a minimum of 9 units of 600-level courses and a maximum of 3 units of 400- or 500-level courses taken for graduate credit. A grade-point average of 3.0

is required for the entire program with at least a B- in each course and no more than 3 semester units of transfer and/or extension credit. All 12 units earned as part of the Certificate may be transferred into the History Department MA Degree Program.

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

1. A bachelor's degree in History from an accredited institution or an acceptable bachelor's degree in another discipline with advance approval of the History Department's Graduate Coordinator.
2. An acceptable undergraduate grade point average, as specified in "Admission to Master's Degree Program" in the University Catalog.
3. An application on file with the Office of Graduate Studies.
4. Completion of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) with minimum scores of 153 on the verbal portion (500 on the old scale) and 3.5 on the analytical writing section.
5. A Statement of Purpose of approximately 250-500 words, i.e., 1-2 typed, double-spaced pages in length.
6. A sample of the applicant's academic writing, e.g., a term paper, essay, etc.
7. Two letters of recommendation (including the Letter of Recommendation Access Waiver Form, available on the History Department or Office of Graduate Studies website)
8. Approval by the History Department and the Office of Graduate Studies.

### **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; 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 and a maximum of 12 units of 400 or 500-level courses 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 Coordinator.

### ***Comprehensive Oral Examination (Exam Plan)***

Students not writing a thesis will take a Comprehensive Examination as the culmination of their work towards the M.A. This will consist of three, three-hour written examinations, handwritten or typed on an internet-disabled computer (provided), completed within a two-week period, followed by a one-hour oral examination with the Graduate Advisory Committee. In the Comprehensive Examination candidates for the M.A. will present themselves for examination in three of the following sub-fields of History: Ancient; Medieval and Early Modern; Modern Europe; Africa; East Asia; Latin America; Middle East;

U.S. to 1877; U.S. 1877 to present; or another sub-field approved by the Department Graduate Committee.

On the History Department M.A. Program website, students will find lists of thirty books/articles for each subfield. Students, in consultation with their committee chair, can choose the two-week examination period. For each subfield, students will be given a written examination synthesizing the arguments and evidence from at least fifteen of the thirty books/articles on the subfield list. Students can expect to read some of the books/articles for each sub-field in the readings seminars (HIST 610-680) but will be responsible for reading the remaining books/articles. During mandatory advising in the third semester in the program, students must enroll in the Comprehensive Examination track by submitting a Comprehensive Examination Plan Form (see appendix). The form requires that students identify (in consultation with the Graduate Coordinator) one faculty member from each of the sub-fields to serve on their Graduate Advisory Committee. Students preparing for the examinations may consider asking one member of their committee to supervise an Independent Study (HIST 697) on one relevant sub-field.

At the end of the written examination period, the Graduate Advisory Committee members will read each of the exams prior to the oral examination. After the oral examination, the committee will confer with one another as to whether each of the three exams is of sufficient quality to be accepted as fulfilling the requirement for graduation. A candidate who fails one or more of the exams can re-take the exam(s) only one additional time. The entire committee will grade the second attempt(s). A candidate will qualify for an M.A. in History if all three members of the Graduate Advisory Committee agree that the candidate has demonstrated competency in the sub-fields of History which the candidate has selected.

### ***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.

**Before the end of the first academic year**, 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 (listed separately) 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, an 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).

### **Mandatory Advising**

All graduate students must meet with the Graduate Coordinator every semester during the mandatory advising period (usually during the two-week period before preregistration). At the meeting, students will discuss progress towards the certificate or degree, including the composition of the Graduate Advisory Committee. During the second semester, students should bring a completed [Master's Degree Program Plan](#) to their meeting with the Graduate Coordinator, along with a completed Exam Plan or Thesis Track enrollment form. Failure to attend a mandatory advising session will result in the department placing a hold on a student's ability to enroll in classes.

### **Categories of Standing for Graduate Students**

#### **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 Exam 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 (697)*: 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 697 towards the M.A. degree.

*Thesis and Supporting Research (699T)*: 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 697 and 699T projects dealing with the same subject.

To enroll in 697 and 699T courses, students must complete and submit special Supervision Course Proposal forms available from the History Department. These forms require the signature of the Graduate Coordinator.

**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:

**Approved MA Program: Comprehensive Oral Examination (Exam Plan)**: 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. (Available on the History Department website)

**Approved MA Program: Thesis Plan**: 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. (Available on the History Department website)

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

**Master's Degree Program Plan**: This should be completed by the end of your first year in the M.A. program and brought to mandatory advising in your second semester.

**Approved Master's Degree Program--Graduation Clearance**: This must be completed during the first half of your final semester in the MA program.

### **Graduation Application Form**:

**Request for Final Progress Sheet**: You must request that this form be sent to the chair of your Graduate Advisory Committee. Your committee members must complete it at the end of your oral examination, and your chair must then deliver it to the Graduate School.