

HISTORY GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

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Overview of Program

This Graduate Student Handbook (GSH) is a supplement to the University Graduate Catalogue (UGC). Students should consult the UGC for University graduate program regulations.

The History Graduate Program offers a Master of Arts (MA) degree in History and a Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies (MAIS) with a concentration in History, and also provides a minor field for other Master's and Ph.D. programs supported by the University. The program serves students who: seek to improve their knowledge of the discipline; to provide an introduction to graduate work in History for students studying for terminal degrees; and to provide a means for students desiring to study history as an avocation. The program offers students an opportunity to learn and understand the materials, methods, and nature of the discipline.

The History Graduate Program offers both an MA degree and an MAIS degree. With both degrees, students may chose either a thesis or non-thesis option. The requirements for these degrees are explained in the section of this handbook "Degree Plan Requirements."

Admission Requirements

In addition to the application materials submitted to the University, the student should fill out and submit the application online and send (to the Graduate School) three letters of recommendation, official transcripts sent directly from all schools attended to UTPA Graduate School, a statement of purpose, and a writing sample of a minimum of five pages on a historical topic which demonstrates the applicant's reasoning and communication skills, writing skills, and follows proper historical methods. All papers must include citations and a bibliography. Students may be granted Clear or Conditional admission status.

Clear Admission: For "Clear Admission" to the History graduate program, the student must: Obtain "Clear Admission" according to the University's Graduate Admissions criteria (see current catalog for further details; note catalogs are reviewed periodically and all applicants must be aware of new policies). All applicants must meet the program's requirements as well. See the History department website for updated information on the requirements. Minimum gpa requirements are as follows for clear admission: overall GPA. of 2.75 or higher. "Conditional Admission": A student may be granted conditional status when the student has an overall GPA of 2.5 or higher, or a 2.5 in advanced history coursework (3000 or 4000 level). All applicants must meet all of the program's requirements as well. See the History department website for updated information on the requirements. A student admitted under Conditional Status may not enroll for more than 12 graduate hours. During the period of Probationary Status the student may earn no grade less than "B", or the student will be denied further admission to graduate school until such time that the requirements for Clear Admission are met. At the end of the semester in which a student's total earned graduate hours at UT-PA are 9 or more, and the student's GPA is 3.0 or better with no grade less than a B, the student will be granted Clear Admission status. Graduate students must meet with the DGC for mandatory advisement before they begin their

first semester in the program to review class selection and discuss specific track (thesis or non-thesis) that the student will choose. It is the responsibility of the student to be familiar with all of the requirements for the degree sought, that the proper forms have been submitted to and approved by Admissions and Records, that deadlines established by the Department and the University have been met, and that their records are kept up to date. Students are strongly encouraged to work closely with the Department Graduate Coordinator (DGC) to insure that they meet all requirements for continuing enrollment, and for graduation.

Degree Requirements

Students working on an MA degree will select a minor field, outside of the History Program, as part of their requirement for the degree. Courses taken for the minor field must be graduate level courses (5000 or 6000-level courses). Graduate students must consult the DGC before choosing their minor field. There are no language requirements for the department's MA and MAIS degrees, although a student may choose a language for a minor field.

MA in History

Departmental Requirements

The choice of courses in the history core and history elective field will be determined through consultation between the student and the Department of History graduate advisor.

Option I: Thesis Option

Students enrolled in Option I will be required to take 18 hours of 5000/6000-level history coursework, including HIST 6300, six hours of non-history coursework in a **single** discipline (Anthropology, Spanish, Sociology, Computer science, etc.), and six hours of thesis preparation (7300 & 7301). The thesis will be evaluated using current departmental guidelines.

Total: 30 hours

Option II: Non-Thesis Option

Students enrolled in Option II will be required to take 30 hours of 5000/6000-level history coursework, including HIST 6300, and six hours of non-history coursework in a single discipline (Anthropology, Spanish, Sociology, Computer science, etc.) The student will choose two reading areas in consultation with the graduate advisor and will be expected to take comprehensive written examinations in both. The questions for the comprehensive examinations will be based on readings contained in department-approved lists of works in those particular areas. Students should set up examinations at least a semester in advance.

Total: 36 hours

Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies (MAIS) with a Concentration in History

Departmental Requirements

The choice of courses in the history core and history elective field will be determined through consultation between the student and the Department of History graduate advisor.

Option I: Thesis Option

Thirty hours with 18 hours in history, no more than half at the 5,000 level, including HIST 6300 and six hours of thesis (7300 & 7301), which are required. Candidates must select the remaining 12 hours from two or more related fields such as Political Science, Sociology, English, Economics, Spanish, Education or Business.

Total: 30 hours

Option II: Non-Thesis Option

Thirty six hours with 12-18 hours in history, including HIST 6300, with no more than half at the 5000-level. Candidates must select the remaining 18-24 hours from two or more related fields, with not more than 12 hours from one discipline. Candidates must also pass a written comprehensive examination in two reading fields administered by the department. The questions for the comprehensive examinations will be based on readings contained in department-approved lists of works in those particular areas. Students should set up examinations at least one semester in advance.

Total: 36 hours

Degree Plans

The DGC will keep an up-to-date worksheet for each graduate student beginning in the students' first semester showing the requirements for the degree that the student has chosen, and the student's progress toward completing the chosen degree. A template of the degree plan can be accessed from the department website.

Graduate Courses

The Department schedules all of its graduate classes in the evening (the 4:30 and 7:10 PM slots), in order to accommodate part-time students. Students working on a thesis must register for at least 3 hours. Students may enroll part-time in the History Graduate Program. Students receive credit toward their graduate degree only from graduate courses, those with

5000, 6000, or 7000 numbers. 5000-level courses are graduate readings classes. These classes are designed to provide the student with a firm grasp of the major works of historical literature in the field the class covers. While the structure of these readings courses may vary from instructor to instructor, they generally require extensive readings and both oral and written reports and group discussions. 5000-level courses may be taught in conjunction with advanced undergraduate courses. Students may take a maximum of 18 hours in 5000-level coursework. No more than 6 hours of 5000-level coursework may be taken in classes that are taught in conjunction with an advanced undergraduate course. See the History Department website for more information on courses.

6000-level courses are graduate seminars. These courses stress research and writing. The primary requirement of a seminar is the preparation of a major research paper, the presentation of that paper to the class, and the criticism of the work of other students in the seminar. There is no limit on how many hours of 6000-level seminars students may count toward their degrees. 6000-level courses may not be taught in conjunction with undergraduate courses. Undergraduate students may not enroll in 6000-level seminars. See the History Department website for more information on courses.

7000-level courses are "thesis preparation" classes specifically designed for thesis students, and may not be counted as part of the 18 hours (thesis option) or 30 hours (non-thesis option) of the required "history course work". See Section on Theses, for additional information on History 7300 and 7301. Graduate students may be enrolled either full-time or part-time each semester. Full-time graduate enrollment consists of nine or more graduate-level hours during the fall or spring terms and six graduate-level hours during the summer term.. For teaching assistants (TAs), 9 hours is considered full-time enrollment. TAs must be enrolled full-time, and may not drop a course if it leaves them with too few hours to qualify for full-time status, unless they are in their final semester of thesis completion and graduation. Graduate students must maintain a graduate GPA of 3.0 or higher. For more information, see the section on "Scholastic Probation and Suspension - Graduate", in the Current Graduate Catalog Graduate students, who do not maintain at least part-time enrollment, may be required to reapply to the graduate program. See Current Graduate Catalog website for more information. An "S" (Satisfactory) or "U" (Unsatisfactory) may be given to a student who is enrolled in thesis courses. These grades should only be used when the student will be enrolling in the same thesis course again. The last time that a student enrolls in thesis hours a grade of A, B, C, or F must be given for the thesis hours. The chair of the committee will forward the grade to the department chair. Should a graduate student choose to switch to the non-thesis option after taking one or more sections of 7301, the grade for 7301 will be changed to "Drop Pass." A TA cannot drop 7301 if the TA will have completed less than nine hours in any semester of their assistantship. Under these circumstances, the student needs to take additional coursework to meet 36 hour requirement for the non-thesis track.

Students who register for thesis credit (History 7300 and 7301) must continue to register each Fall and Spring semester until the thesis is completed. Students who do not register for a semester may not again register for thesis credit without the written consent of the Department Chair and the DGC. Students may request a leave of absence for a semester or academic year. The request must be submitted to the DGC and then will be forwarded to the Graduate Office.

Theses

Choosing a Topic

A student's Masters thesis should demonstrate both the student's familiarity with the appropriate secondary literature and the student's ability to utilize primary resources effectively. The student's research should be drawn together in a carefully structured, well-written thesis that makes a contribution to the scholarly literature on the chosen topic. The length of the thesis may vary according to the nature of the topic, but should be approximately 100 pages. The Department requires that theses should adhere to The Chicago Manual of Style or the Turabian Handbook, and to the University's Guidelines for Masters Theses. Students are encouraged to take coursework in a wide variety of topics to broaden their historical awareness. The student will then choose a historical topic for the thesis.

Thesis Proposal

The student must present the committee with a thesis proposal before the writing of the thesis begins. Once the chair and the committee has reviewed and approved the proposal the student may proceed with the research and writing phase of the thesis. A Thesis proposal template can be accessed from the department website. Please familiarize yourself with the structure of the thesis proposal and consult with your thesis chair before you begin to work on the proposal.

Once the student has chosen the committee and the committee members have agreed to serve, the student should formally notify the DGC of the thesis topic and the committee's composition. If there are any subsequent changes either with the topic or to the membership of the committee, the DGC should be promptly informed. The student will then submit the thesis committee form with committee members' signatures. (this is available via the Graduate School website)

Students working on a thesis must take History 7300 and 7301. These classes are "thesis preparation" classes specifically designed for thesis students, and may not be counted as part of the 18 hours (thesis option) or 30 hours (non-thesis option) of the required "history course work." Only students who have completed coursework may sign up for thesis hours. Students may be concurrently enrolled in the last hours of course work and in 7300. Students may receive credit for 7300 only once, but 7301 may be repeated as necessary. Note that students must be enrolled at the university in the semester(s) in which they defend their theses, take their comprehensive examinations, and graduate. If the student has already selected a thesis committee chair when enrolling in 7300, then the committee chair shall serve as the professor of record for that student's 7300 class. If the student enrolling in 7300 has not selected a committee chair, then the Department Chair shall serve as the professor of record. If the student has not already done so, then during the course of the term in which the student takes 7300, the student needs to determine the thesis topic as well as the chair and members of the thesis committee.

Additionally, all students enrolled in 7300 must submit to their thesis committee a formal thesis proposal, and the committee will assign a grade based on the strength of the proposal. The Thesis Committee Chair must provide a copy of the thesis proposal to the DGC. If the professor of record for the class is the Department Chair, then the thesis committee chair will inform the

Department Chair of the grade assigned, and this grade becomes the grade of record for 7300. No incompletes will be assigned for 7300. When a student enrolls in 7301, the professor of record will be that student's committee chair. Only grades of "S" or "U" may be assigned.

Forming a Committee

After selecting a topic, the student needs to select a thesis committee, consisting of a chair and at least two additional members from the graduate faculty. The committee chair and the majority of the committee members must be History faculty. The committee chair must have full graduate faculty status. Committee members should hold associate or special graduate faculty status at the minimum. When deciding upon a committee, students should consult with the Department Graduate Coordinator and the faculty member whose research interests best coincide with the student's chosen topic. The student is responsible for approaching the chosen faculty and asking them to serve on the Committee.

Thesis Defense

The semester before the student intends to defend the thesis, the student must schedule a defense date at least two weeks before graduation. The student will consult with his/her committee to determine date of the defense. The committee will then inform the DGC of the scheduled defense date. When the student and the thesis committee chair feel that the thesis is ready for defense, the student should provide the other committee members with a final draft of the thesis. The student should provide committee members with the defense draft of the thesis before the scheduled defense date. Committee members should have at least a month to review final draft. The student, in consultation with the thesis chair, is responsible for arranging a defense date at a time when all thesis committee members can be present. When the student has arranged a defense time, the DGC will post this information for the University community.

On the given defense date, the student will meet with the members of the thesis committee for an oral examination on the thesis, usually lasting from one to two hours. It is the committee's responsibility to insure that the thesis and the oral examination are of passing quality. After the committee has finished examining the student on the thesis, the committee will send the student and any observers from the room and then discuss the thesis and the examination, and retire for confidential deliberations. The Committee will decide whether to assign a grade and/or to ask for further revisions. When the committee has reached an agreement, it will inform the student, the DGC and the Department Chair. If a student fails the oral defense and the committee has reason to believe the student can make the necessary revisions within a semester, the student may redo a defense.

Submitting the Thesis to the University

Once the student has made all requested revisions to the thesis, the student should follow the guidelines set by the Graduate Office regarding online submission of the final thesis.

To graduate the student must pay all fees for binding the thesis copies, copywriting the thesis, microfilming the thesis, and for publication of the thesis abstract in Masters Abstracts.

A student may have additional copies of the thesis bound for personal use, at additional cost.

Non-Thesis Track, Comprehensive Examinations

Choosing Areas

In the non-thesis option, the student will choose two reading areas and will be expected to take comprehensive examinations in both areas. The reading list for a reading area will be drawn up by the person designated to read the exam. Each reading list will consist of a minimum of 30 books. Only Full and Associate members of the Graduate Faculty may serve as examination readers. The exam will be written, administered and graded by the faculty member who developed the reading list at the student's request. There will be two readers for each exam. The student will choose the first and the DGC will appoint second reader. If there is disagreement, the DGC may arrange a conference with the committee to reach an agreement. As explained below, the student may retake the exam only once.

Once the student has completed the required coursework, the student, in consultation with his/her reader or examination chair, will schedule the comprehensive examinations. The scheduling of such examinations will be coordinated by the reader or examination chair and the graduate coordinator. It is the student's responsibility to sign up for comprehensive examinations. Students do this by formally asking a professor in person or via email and handing them Form A.

Generally, an in-house exam will last for about four hours for each reading area. It is up to the faculty member if he/she wants to offer a take-home exam. In consultation with the faculty member who will administer the exam, the student has the option of an in-house exam or take-home. The faculty member will determine the specifics for the take-home exam in consultation with the DGC. Students will take the first exam and may not take the second exam until they have passed the first exam. Students need to schedule the first exam at least one semester in advance (or take first exam early in the semester) and pass exam before he/she can take the second exam. The last exam should be scheduled at least three weeks before graduation. The exams will receive a pass or a fail. If student fails exam, he/she may retake the exam. The student will only be allowed to retake the exam once; both exams must be taken within one semester.

Evaluation Process and Forms

Once the student has completed the required coursework, the student, in consultation with his/her reader or examination chair, will schedule the comprehensive examinations. The scheduling of such examinations will be coordinated by the reader or examination chair and the graduate coordinator. It is the student's responsibility to sign up for comprehensive examination.

Generally, an in-house exam will last for about four hours for each reading area. It is up to the faculty member if he/she wants to offer a take-home exam. In consultation with the faculty member who will administer the exam, the student has the option of an in-house exam or take-home. The faculty member will determine the specifics for the take-home exam in consultation with the DGC. Students will take the first exam and may not take the second exam until they have passed the first exam. Students need to schedule the first exam at least one semester in advance (or take first exam early in the semester) and pass exam before he/she can take the second exam. The last exam should be scheduled at least three weeks before graduation.

The exams will receive a pass or a fail. If student fails exam, he/she may retake the exam. The student will only be allowed to retake the exam once; both exams must be taken within one semester. All students have to print and fill out Form A comprehensive exams for each exam and hand to the faculty administering the exam. The faculty administering the exam will complete the required sections and turn in to the Graduate Advisor. (accessible via department website).

Graduation

It is the responsibility of the student to be familiar with all the requirements for the degree sought. Graduate students should be familiar with the requirements listed both in the UTPA Catalogue and in the Graduate Handbook. Students should work closely with the DGC to insure that they meet all of the requirements for graduation. In preparation for graduation, students should submit an Application for Degree form to the Office of Admissions and Records. The deadlines for each semester are published in the UTPA Calendar (and in the department website). It is the student's responsibility to apply for graduation on time. Students must also pay a non-refundable fee to Payments and Collections at the same time the Application for Degree is submitted. Students may later "transfer" the graduation date if necessary, for an additional fee.