

PHD PROGRAM HANDBOOK OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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INTRODUCTION

This handbook is designed to acquaint graduate students with the program requirements of the Department of History. It is expected that students will read this handbook in its entirety at the start of their studies at the University of Rochester. Ordinarily, students remain subject to the handbook in use at the time they enter the program. Some matters, such as residency requirements, the mechanics of registration, and the formatting of the dissertation have been omitted or only briefly mentioned. These subjects are treated in the [OFFICIAL BULLETIN: REGULATIONS CONCERNING GRADUATE STUDY](#).

For further questions regarding the program or the contents of this handbook, please contact one of the following:

DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE STUDIES

The director of graduate studies is responsible for the overall management of the graduate program. The director of graduate studies, in consultation with the graduate studies committee, is also the final arbiter of the regulations of the program and has the authority to make exceptions. Although the director of graduate studies does not have the authority to override the rules of the graduate studies office and associated deans, the director of graduate studies can petition on behalf of students for reasonable exceptions when the situation warrants such action. Exceptions such as time to degree extensions and petitions for non-standard committee members are the prerogative of the dean(s) of the graduate school and the graduate studies office.

GRADUATE PLACEMENT OFFICER

The graduate placement officer is responsible for assisting students in identifying and obtaining post-graduation employment. Such assistance may include annual discussions with each cohort of students regarding job market preparation and long-term strategizing, consultations with students currently on the market (e.g. reviewing application materials, organizing mock conference/skype/campus interviews, etc.), responding to individual student questions about job searches, and connecting students to relevant resources to help them with non-academic opportunities.

GRADUATE COORDINATOR

The day-to-day administration of the program is the responsibility of the graduate coordinator. Because the coordinator is the communications center for the department, make sure they have your current mailing address and telephone number(s). Per university regulations, the University email address will be used for all official correspondence. Questions about registration, rules,

deadlines, admissions, and any other program-related issues should be directed to this person. If an issue or problem requires faculty advice or approval, the coordinator will advise the student to speak with the advisor or the director of graduate studies.

DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATOR

The department administrator is responsible for the human resources and financial aspects of the graduate program. Questions regarding appointments, stipends, reimbursements, and any other financial matters should be directed to this person.

PROGRAM FORMULATION

The PhD program of the Department of History offers individually tailored programs with opportunities for transnational and comparative study. Students design their own programs of study in consultation with their advisors in accord with their own intellectual and research interests. Through a mix of directed readings, independent study, and research seminars, students aim to balance understanding of particulars with an enriched sense of contexts.

Together the student and their advisor will use the Advising Worksheet (pp. 3-5) to formulate the student's academic plans. This worksheet will then be used to complete the Program of Study Form (p. 6), which is submitted to the graduate coordinator to obtain approval from the graduate studies office.

In order to complete their Advising Worksheet, the student and their advisor will need to determine 1] two research fields and two teaching fields in which the student will be examined and the identity of the department faculty member who will conduct the examination in each field, 2] a provisional list of twelve courses that the student will take in the first two years of study, and 3] a list of languages, if any, that the student must master in order to complete significant research.

Courses should be selected with an eye to the broadest possible coverage within fields. This is particularly important in the light of current academic employment opportunities; i.e., institutions of higher learning increasingly insist that their junior faculty be equipped to teach general survey courses in American, European, or transnational history, and also in at least one topical field. It is not unusual for individuals hired in an American history position to be asked to teach Western or World Civilization, and vice versa. Hence the dangers of overly narrow specialization are apparent, and students may be encouraged to take a course beyond those required. It is the responsibility of the student and of the student's advisor to arrange the program with these facts in mind.

Students are expected to master the foundational knowledge in their research and teaching fields. Research fields are specialized and concentrated interests that should support dissertation work. Students will be required to read at least 35 books or article equivalents, the titles to be worked out in consultation with their examiner. At least one research field must be transnational or comparative in nature. Teaching fields are understood as those that qualify students to teach basic introductory or survey history courses. These generally will be national, regional, or global fields. Students are expected to master the foundational knowledge in these fields. Faculty will post the teaching fields in which they will examine and provide a list of fifty significant texts to any interested student. Although the department makes every effort to alert students of the courses

available for them during their first two years, leaves, retirements, and other exigencies often intervene. Likewise, students find new interests and develop their own reading courses if relevant courses are not available. When changes occur, students will need to update their advising worksheet and file a new Program of Study Form with the graduate coordinator for approval.

With the approval of the director of graduate studies, students may have two co-advisors from the department who share equally in supervising the dissertation. The development of a dissertation topic should begin early in the student's program. This will enable the student to shape the work in seminars in such a way as to lay the foundation for the dissertation.

Department of History

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

PhD Advising Worksheet

Name: _____

Entering Year: _____

Advisor: _____

Instructions: It is the student's responsibility to update this form each semester in consultation with their advisor. The graduate studies committee will review the students' forms before each semester's evaluation meeting.

First Year Courses - Fall (p. 7):

1. HIS 500 (5 credits)

2.

3.

Audit:

First Year Courses - Spring (p. 7):

1. HIS 501 (5 credits)

2.

3.

Audit:

Second Year Courses - Fall (p. 7):

1.

2.

3.

Audit:

Second Year Courses - Spring (p. 7):

1.

2.

3.

Audit:

Third Year Courses - Fall (p. 8):

1. HIS 592 (5 credits)

2. HIS 592 (5 credits)

3. HIS 592 (5 credits)

Audit:

Third Year Courses - Spring (p. 8):

1. HIS 595 (15 credits)

Audit:

Research Papers (p. 7):

First Year Title:

Date Completed (*due by end of reading period*):

Second Year Title:

Date Completed (*due by end of reading period*):

*A copy of each research paper needs to be submitted to the graduate coordinator for the student's portfolio *

Foreign Language (if required) (p. 8):

Required? Y N

Language 1: Date Completed (*due before registering for 3rd semester*):

Language 2: Date Completed (*due before taking teaching field exams*):

Teaching Experience (p. 10):

Apprentice Teaching Course (if applicable): Date Completed:

TA Assignment I Course: Date Completed (*due first semester of third year*):

TA Assignment II Course: Date Completed (*due second semester of third year*):

Fourth or Fifth Year Teaching Course: Date Completed (*due during fourth or fifth year*):

Qualifying Exams – Research Fields (due by August 31 following the second year) (p. 11):

Field 1: Advisor: Date Completed:

Field 2: Advisor: Date Completed:

Qualifying Exams – Teaching Fields (due in December of the third year) (p. 11):

Field 1: Advisor:

Field 2: Advisor:

Date Written Exams Completed:

Date Oral Exams Completed: Outside Chair:

Advisor Review: Please have your faculty advisor initial and date after each end-year review

Year one: _____ Year three: _____ Year five: _____

Year two: _____ Year four: _____ Year six: _____

Dissertation (pp. 10-11):

Title:

Prospectus Approval Date (*due May 1 in the semester following qualifying exams*):

History Workshop Presentation Date (*due once the student has completed 2 chapters of the dissertation*):

Advisor:

Second Reader:

Outside Reader:

Outside Chair:

Defense Date:

Dissertation Registration Checklist:

- Notify the graduate coordinator of your plans to defend your dissertation (*at least 3 months before you plan to defend*)
- Double check that the final version of the thesis follows all university formatting requirements:
<http://www.rochester.edu/Theses/ThesesManual.pdf>
- Register the dissertation using the SharePoint website: <https://phdprocess.ur.rochester.edu/Pages/default.aspx>
- Complete and sign the Dissertation Checklist with the graduate coordinator
- Notify the graduate coordinator that your dissertation registration is ready to for approval (***needs to be done no later than 5 weeks before defense date***)
- Once the defense is done, make any changes to the thesis that are required by the advisors and/or the graduate studies office
- Upload the final thesis to the ProQuest website using the instructions that will be provided by the graduate studies office
- Provide a digital copy of the final thesis to the graduate coordinator for department records

Additional Notes:

CREDITS AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The PhD degree requires 90 hours of graduate credit beyond the bachelor's degree. Courses in the Department of History normally carry 5 credit hours. Full-time PhD students earn 15 credits each semester for two years, for a total of 60 credit hours. They accrue an additional 30 credit hours by registering in the third year for reading and research courses in connection with the dissertation.

Students also are encouraged to audit appropriate undergraduate courses, including relevant language courses, and in some cases may be required to do so. In the case that no appropriate seminars are offered in the specific field for which the student is preparing an examination, students may register for directed reading courses. Directed reading courses will be included in the Program of Study Form submitted to the graduate studies office for approval. Under no circumstances will a teaching or other work obligation be considered an acceptable reason for substituting directed reading for a seminar. Below are specific expectations for coursework:

A. FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS:

In the fall of the first year of residence, all students take Problems in Historical Analysis (HIS 500) plus two additional 400- or 500- level courses. In the spring, students will take Worlds of Inquiry (HIS 501), and two additional 400- or 500- level courses. Students may meet their requirements through department seminars or individual reading courses. Reading courses must be arranged with faculty and are offered at the faculty member's discretion.

Students are required to complete at least one research paper using primary sources during the first year, and normally do so in a department research seminar (400-level course). The research paper will be submitted no later than the end of the college reading period in the spring semester. A copy of the paper needs to be submitted to the graduate coordinator and will be part of the student portfolio.

At the completion of the first year, the graduate coordinator will submit paperwork to the graduate studies office to process a Plan B master's degree for qualified PhD students. To receive a master's degree a PhD student must complete all MA requirements per the MA handbook.

First-year PhD students may also choose to serve as apprentice teachers (AT) in the spring semester. This is a non-credit bearing opportunity to begin training for a teaching career (see *Teaching*).

B. SECOND-YEAR STUDENTS:

Students will take three courses per semester in their second year of residence. Courses are intended to prepare students for research and teaching field examinations and to hone their research and writing skills. By August 31st following the second year, students are required to pass qualifying examinations in both research fields (see *Qualifying Examinations*).

All students are required to complete at least one research paper during the second year, and normally do so in a department research seminar (400-level course).

C. THIRD-YEAR STUDENTS:

The third year of graduate study will be devoted to the examinations in the teaching field, taken in December, and the writing and defense of the dissertation prospectus, done in the following semester. Students are also required to serve as teaching assistants in both the fall and spring semesters; this does not require registration. Students ordinarily register for three 5 credit sections of Independent Reading Course (HIS 592) in consultation with their advisor in their fall semester (upon completion of 60 credit hours) and one section at 15 credits of PhD research (HIS 595) in their spring semester (upon completion of 75 credit hours).

D. FOURTH-YEAR STUDENTS:

Students in their fourth year will work on their dissertations. They will register for PhD Dissertation (HIS 997). They may also teach a one-semester course of their own devising (see *Teaching*).

E. FIFTH-YEAR STUDENTS AND BEYOND:

Students in their fifth year will work on their dissertations. They will register for PhD Dissertation (HIS 999). They may also teach a one-semester course of their own devising (see *Teaching*).

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT

All students are required to pass examinations in two languages to ensure that they have the necessary linguistic skills to carry out their dissertation research. Students in American history may be exempted from this requirement unless their advisor determines that language skills are essential for their research.

Language examinations are given year-round and, once the student has secured a faculty member willing to supervise the examination, the student should contact the graduate coordinator to schedule it. Students have two hours to complete the examination. They may consult physical dictionaries during the examination, but may not use laptops, phones, or any other electronic device.

Examinations are graded on a scale of fail, low pass, pass, and high pass. Three categories of language use guide language examiners in determining whether or not a student has passed the examination. It is the advisor's responsibility to determine the category to which a particular student belongs.

- a. Primary Research Language—the language of most archival sources and essential secondary literature
- b. Secondary Research Language—the language of some essential archival sources and secondary literature, with English the primary research language
- c. All others—including possible future use

Students must have passed the first language examination or have petitioned the advisor and director of graduate studies for an extension before registering for the third semester of study. Such a petition should include specific plans for improving language skills. Student must pass both language examinations before taking the teaching field qualifying examinations.

Should a student fail a language exam, they will be permitted a second attempt, at a time to be determined by the examiner in consultation with the student and advisor. A second failure may constitute grounds for termination from the graduate program, depending on the relevance of the language for the student's program of study. In fields where additional language proficiency is necessary for adequate professional training, a dissertation advisor may require more than two languages.

GRADING SYSTEM AND EVALUATION

The department accepts all grades of A, A-, B+, B, and S for credit toward the PhD. Students whose performance falls outside the satisfactory range cannot expect to be continued in the program.

At the end of each semester, instructors will provide the graduate coordinator with a written evaluation of the work done in that semester by each graduate student in their courses. This evaluation, which includes a written assessment of the student's work as well as a grade, is designed to inform students of their progress and the instructor's judgment as to the student's ability to complete doctoral work in their program successfully. These evaluations are used by the department in determining which students shall or shall not continue in the program. The evaluations are kept in students' portfolios and are accessible to students, who can use them as a starting point for discussing their work with their instructors. The evaluations are not in any way to be confused with letters of recommendation.

At the beginning of the second semester each year, the graduate studies committee will review the progress of all of the PhD students in the program. In consultation with course instructors and dissertation advisors, the director of graduate studies will notify those students whose work requires improvement.

The department faculty will review the work of all student portfolios as part of the end-of-year evaluation process. By the end of the reading period in the spring semester of each of the first two years, students will turn in to the graduate coordinator at least one research paper from the preceding year of study, which will be placed in their portfolios. The portfolio consists of the research papers, the research field and teaching field essays, and faculty evaluations for course and teaching work. Subsequently, the director of graduate studies will send to each student a letter specifying the student's standing in the program and indicating, if necessary, areas requiring improvement.

TIMELY COMPLETION OF WORK

Students are expected to complete all required course work by the end of each term.

Students receiving a grade of incomplete (I) for the fall semester must complete their work by the following **March 15th**. Students receiving a grade of incomplete (I) for the spring term must complete their work by the following **August 15th**. Failure to complete work by these deadlines, or an accumulation of four incomplete grades, puts the student's funding at risk and may constitute grounds for termination from the graduate program.

EXTENSIONS

University regulations stipulate that all requirements for the PhD must be completed within seven years of initial matriculation. Should the student not be able to meet this deadline, they must petition for an extension using a Petition for Time to Degree Extension Form obtained from the graduate coordinator. The petition must be approved by the faculty advisor, the director of graduate studies, and the associate dean of graduate studies. **By no means should the dean's consent be taken for granted.** Extensions can be requested up to ten years after initial matriculation. If the dissertation is not completed by that time, no further extensions will be granted. If and when the dissertation is completed, however, the student may petition the associate dean of graduate studies for permission to defend it. Again, the dean's approval of the petition should not be taken for granted.

TEACHING

Preparation for college and university teaching forms an integral part of the PhD program.

PhD students are encouraged to be Apprentice Teachers (ATs) during their first two years of residence. Apprentice teachers act as participant-observers in an undergraduate course under the close supervision of a member of the faculty. Ordinarily, students will attend the course; hold weekly meetings with the professor to discuss the progress of the course and to consider strategies for teaching the week's assigned reading; assist the professor in preparing examination questions, paper topics, and other written assignments; gain experience in evaluating undergraduates' work by reading and commenting on (but not grading) exams and essays; and prepare a lecture or lead a class discussion. Students interested in this opportunity should contact the instructor of the relevant course and will register for Apprentice Teaching (HIS 593).

After the second year, students also have the opportunity to teach courses of their own devising during the summer sessions. At the beginning of each fall semester, a call for course proposals will be circulated with further details.

In the third year, students will serve as TAs. It is not unusual for students majoring in American history to serve as TAs in introductory European or global history courses or for students majoring in European history to serve as TAs in the US history courses. These assignments should be viewed less as arbitrary assignments and more as opportunities for students to broaden their teaching experience in preparation for future employment.

In their fourth or fifth year, depending upon individual research plans and departmental need, students will either teach a one-semester undergraduate course or, with the approval of their advisor and of the graduate studies committee, conduct a project involving the interpretation of historical evidence and/or scholarship to non-specialist audiences. Such projects might have a public history, digital, or community-engagement focus.

If teaching, the student must submit a title and course description to the advisor and the Director of Undergraduate Studies by October 15th prior to the year in which they hope to teach. Students will submit a syllabus for the course to their advisor and the DUS no later than the beginning of the registration period for

the semester in which they are teaching. The dissertation advisor or another relevant faculty member should observe at least one class section.

If conducting an independent project, students should submit a proposal to the advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies by October 15th prior to the year in which they hope to do the project and a detailed plan to their advisor and the DGS no later than the beginning of the registration period for the relevant semester. This plan must include provision for supervision by the advisor or another relevant faculty member.

ADDITIONAL TEACHING AND LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Various programs at the University offer additional teaching opportunities. These are for experience only and cannot be used toward PhD program credit. For more information about these programs and instructions on how to apply please visit:

- Writing, Speaking, and Argument Program: <https://writing.rochester.edu/graduate/employment/wrt105.html>
- Susan B. Anthony Institute Teaching fellowship: <http://www.sas.rochester.edu/gsw/graduate/grant-fellow-award/index.html>
- Seward Family Digital Archive Project: <https://sewardproject.org/>
- Smith's Island Archaeology Project: <http://smithsislandarchaeology.blogspot.com/>
- Digital Archaeology of Heritage Buildings of West Africa: https://rochester-sa.terradotta.com/index.cfm?FuseAction=Programs.ViewProgram&Program_ID=10251

WORKSHOPS

Students who have not yet successfully defended their dissertation prospectus must also attend the History Workshop. All graduate students are warmly encouraged to participate. The workshop, which will meet approximately six times a year on Friday afternoons, will include discussion and comment on submitted papers or on topical forums. All students working on their PhD dissertations must present their work at least once as a requirement for the PhD program, typically once they have completed two chapters of their dissertation.

QUALIFYING EXAMINATIONS

All students must pass qualifying examinations in two research fields and two teaching fields.

Research field examinations are generally historiographic and synthetic papers in response to a topic or concern posed by the research field examiner. The questions will draw upon the reading list for the research field as agreed upon by the student and the examining professor. The paper must be at least twenty pages in length and the examiner is the sole arbiter of whether the response is sufficient to demonstrate an understanding of the field and its crucial issues. Examiners will give students a choice of one of two questions. Students will have a month to write the paper. Both fields must be finished and the papers submitted to the graduate coordinator by August 31st of the second year. However, students are encouraged not to wait until this deadline.

Provided they pass the research fields, students are then examined in teaching fields. The student will receive questions for the written portion in early December of their third year. Faculty members will submit questions to the graduate coordinator, who will send the questions out to the students by email at 9 am on the first Monday of December. The exam itself will require students to write one essay of 2000-2500 words for each field. Examiners will give students a choice of one of two questions.

Students will submit the first essay to the graduate coordinator within 24 hours of receiving the questions by e-mail. They will then receive the second set of questions from the graduate coordinator after a 24 hour break period, to whom they will submit their response within 24 hours. They may use any materials they wish (books, notes, etc.) in constructing their answers. The graduate coordinator will inform the student of the outcome once both parts of the written exam have been graded.

Students who pass the written portions of the teaching field examination will progress to the oral examination. The oral examination will be held no less than one week and no more than two weeks following the completion of the written exam. The student must contact the graduate coordinator for assistance in scheduling their oral examination by October 15th. The examination committee consists of the following: the teaching field examiners (one of whom may be the advisor) and an outside examiner (the chair of the committee), who is present to insure the fairness of the exam and who may or may not choose to participate in the questioning. The student's advisor may be present at the exam even if the advisor is not an examiner. The composition of the exam committee is subject to the approval of the associate dean of graduate studies. All committee members must be full-time tenure-track faculty members at the university. Prior to the oral examination, each member of the oral examination committee will receive from the graduate coordinator a copy of the student's responses to the written exams.

The oral examination is not the venue for re-examination of the written portion. Examiners may, however, use written responses as a basis for new lines of questioning. Students are strongly encouraged to talk to each examiner about the examiner's expectations for the exam.

FAILURE AND RETAKING THE EXAM

Students may retake each portion of their exams only one time. Should they fail the research field exam, they may write another essay in response to a new question after two months. Students who fail the written portion of the teaching field exam will not progress to the oral portion. Students who pass the written examination but fail the oral examination need not retake the written portion but must retake the oral portion.

DISSERTATION PROSPECTUS

By March 15th following their qualifying examinations, PhD students must contact the graduate coordinator about scheduling their dissertation prospectus defense. The prospectus must be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies and committee members at least two weeks before the defense.

The dissertation prospectus should explain the significance and originality of the proposed topic. It must include a statement of justification, a working argument, hypothesis, or set of questions to be answered, a preliminary bibliography and primary source list, and a tentative chapter outline.

Prior to the student's submission of the prospectus for approval, the adviser will determine whether the following questions can be answered satisfactorily:

1. Does the proposal show clearly a central theme on which a coherent dissertation can be produced with the length of time allowed?
2. Can we be sure that the subject is not already treated adequately in the literature or that another individual is not working on it in a way that would jeopardize the student's claim to originality?
3. Are there adequate and accessible primary sources for a detailed treatment of the subject?
4. Does the candidate demonstrate competence in handling the subject? Has the candidate successfully mastered the language needed to carry out the process?
5. What will be the main contribution of the dissertation to scholarship in the field?
6. How important will the contribution be and how will it further the academic career of the candidate?
7. Is the interpretive approach (methodology) appropriate to addressing the central issue of the dissertation?

The committee, the Director of Graduate Studies, and the student will then hold a prospectus defense, at which the above questions will also serve as the focus of discussion. If the committee determines these questions have been satisfactorily answered, the student passes the defense. If not, the committee will instruct the student to revise the prospectus and re-submit it within a reasonable time.

Failure to defend the prospectus by May 1st of the third year puts the student's funding at risk and may constitute grounds for termination from the graduate program.

DISSERTATION

As a final requirement for the doctorate, students will be expected to prepare a dissertation. The work will be done under the direction of the dissertation committee, defined by university regulations as two members from the department, one from outside the department, and an outside chair. All committee members must be full-time tenure-track faculty at the university.

At least three months before the student plans to defend their dissertation they must contact the graduate coordinator for further details regarding the submission and defense. For thesis formatting, students must follow the University Manual for PhD Students regulations (<http://www.rochester.edu/Theses/ThesesManual.pdf>). The graduate studies PhD defense date calculator (<http://www.rochester.edu/college/gradstudies/phd-defense/datecalculator/index.html>) may be used to get a feel for the defense registration timeline, but exact dates may vary due to departmental requirements. As a student prepares for the final dissertation defense, they must contact the graduate coordinator for specific dates regarding the timeline of the process.

General statements about the dissertation are difficult to make, therefore, more specific information can be secured from individual faculty advisors or the graduate coordinator once a student has begun to plan the dissertation.