

# AN INTRODUCTION TO GRADUATE STUDY IN HISTORY

*A Handbook of  
Regulations,  
Requirements,  
And Advice for  
Graduate Students*

## AUBURN UNIVERSITY

Department of History  
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Welcome to the Auburn University Department Of History!

You are joining a community of scholars, both faculty and graduate students, who are dedicated to academic excellence. The department has a proud heritage and, we are convinced, a bright future.

The past reminds us that this department has graduated generations of gifted historians since it began offering graduate work near the turn of this century. Although the doctoral program dates from more recent times, we have maintained the same demanding standards that long have been associated with the departments graduate students.

The future is equally promising. As one of only one hundred thirty history Ph.D. programs in the United States, we feel a keen responsibility to offer a special kind of degree. Building upon Auburn University's legendary friendliness and sense of community, we are committed to maintaining a small, high quality, personalized graduate program.

Finally, let me emphasize my concern for the full development of each graduate student. Toward this end, I try to meet with graduate students several times each year. My office is open to you whenever you have a problem or just to get acquainted. So please consider yourself a part of the Auburn history community.

Anthony Gene Carey  
Chair and Hollifield Associate Professor  
Department of History  
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## THE GRADUATE PROGRAMS IN HISTORY: AN OVERVIEW

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Since the opening of the twentieth century the History Department of Auburn University (then Alabama Polytechnic Institute) has offered advanced degrees to qualified students. Under the guidance of Dr. George Petrie and Dr. Alfred Wade Reynolds, the Department developed a modest but highly respectable Master's program which sent its students on to other graduate schools throughout the United States. Led by Dr. McMillan, the Department expanded its faculty and offerings and since 1967 has trained students for the Doctor of Philosophy degree.

The basic regulations governing all graduate study in History are those of the Graduate School found in the annual [Graduate School Bulletin](#). Every student should become familiar with the current *Bulletin*. Standards and regulations found in the *Bulletin* are minimal, and in several instances those of the History Department are more rigorous. Students should note carefully all differences appearing in this handbook.

The Department of History offers two graduate programs leading to degrees. These are:

**Master of Arts.** The masters program includes a minimum of 27 hours of course work and 4 hours of research and thesis. The department does not offer a non-thesis M.A. No foreign language is required. At least 21 hours of course work must be taken in graduate seminars rather than lecture courses. With academic year 1996-1997, we have restricted admissions to the masters program. See "[Revisions in History Graduate Programs.](#)"

**Doctor of Philosophy.** The doctoral program requires a minimum of 55 hours of course work beyond the baccalaureate degree, reading proficiency in at least one foreign language, and a minimum of 10 hours of research and dissertation. At least 42 hours of course-work taken toward the degree must be in graduate seminars rather than lecture courses. Beginning with academic year 1995-1996, the department implemented a direct-track doctoral program to which applicants for graduate study will normally be admitted following completion of the baccalaureate. See "[Revisions in History Graduate Programs.](#)"

**ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS** ([Back to Table of Contents](#))

General requirements for admission to graduate study at Auburn University are established by the Graduate School and are stated in the [Graduate Bulletin](#). In addition, specific admission standards and requirements are established by the Department of History. Graduate Record Examination verbal and quantitative scores are required for admission to both the masters and doctoral programs. For the masters program, a minimum combined score of 900 with not less than 500 on the verbal component is required. For the Ph.D. program, an applicant must have attained a minimum of 1050 combined score, with at least 550 on the verbal. In addition, applicants for admission to either program who lack sufficient undergraduate course work in history may be required to take more than the minimum program. Students who complete the M.A. at Auburn and wish to continue graduate study in the doctoral program must formally apply for admission and must also be recommended by their examining committee. The History Department requires as well that every application be supported by at least three recommendations, a formal statement of purpose indicating the applicant's specific interests and professional goals, and a writing sample such as an undergraduate or graduate term or research paper.

**GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS** ([Back to Table of Contents](#))

A number of Graduate Teaching Assistantships are available each year (usually granted for nine months beginning in August). Details of these awards are published annually, and applicants should address inquiries to the History Department. Assistants are assigned to professors teaching large undergraduate survey courses; senior doctoral students may be assigned independent teaching according to departmental needs. Teaching assistants must reapply for their positions annually following the student's third semester. Those who do not maintain a GPA of at least 3.2, make satisfactory progress toward preliminary examinations and completion of the dissertation, or perform satisfactorily as assistants will be liable to replacement. "Satisfactory progress" in regard to exams is defined as completion of prelims by the end of the fifth semester in the program for students entering with a bachelor's degree. The graduate committee automatically will review the status of assistants who receive a course grade of C. Teaching assistants who make a second C or an Incomplete in addition to the first C, or an F at any time will be dismissed as assistants. The Graduate Program Officer will be responsible for designing and implementing an effective evaluation system to enforce these policies.

Awards are made on a competitive basis on the recommendation of the Graduate Committee. Primary consideration is given to grade point averages (incomplete grades are detrimental), Graduate Record Examination scores, letters of recommendation, and performance as a GTA (in the case of current appointees). Assistantships require a commitment of approximately 13 hours a week. The total number of assistantships offered by the department varies from year to year in accordance with the availability of funds. Masters students are eligible to hold assistantships for two academic years, or four semesters not including summer terms. For doctoral students, the maximum eligibility for assistantships is four academic years. For students in the direct-track doctoral program, maximum eligibility is five academic years.

A few assistantships may be available in the summer term. Among the considerations that determine eligibility are departmental needs, seniority, academic record and past performance as a GTA. Graduate Research Assistantships may occasionally be available. Detailed summary of policies relating to graduate assistantships is furnished in the [History Department Guidelines for Graduate Teaching Assistants](#).

**THE GRADUATE PROGRAM OFFICER** [\(Back to Table of Contents\)](#)

The Graduate Program Officer acts as advisor to all new students until they secure Major Professors, generally advises all students regarding procedural matters, maintains departmental records of student's progress, and has on hand most of the forms required by the Department and the Graduate School. In addition, the GPO chairs the Graduate Committee and serves as principal liaison between the department and the Graduate School.

**REGISTRATION** [\(Back to Table of Contents\)](#)

Registration at Auburn University is computerized and each student registers by the university web site ("tiger i" Student Information System via [AU Access](#)). Instructions and procedures for registration can be obtained from the [Office of the Registrar](#). Newly admitted students must be cleared for registration and granted appropriate computing privileges for registration by the Graduate School and the Registrar's Office. The GPO can assist.

**CLASS LOADS** [\(Back to Table of Contents\)](#)

A full load for graduate students in history is nine hours. Courses which do not carry graduate credit (e.g., foreign language preparatory courses) and official audits do not count in determining load. Graduate assistants are required to take a minimum of nine hours until they have completed all courses listed on their plan of study.

Students must register in the semester of graduation and in any other semester in which the staff or the facilities of the University are used, in the removal of an "Incomplete" grade, work on thesis or dissertation, or oral examinations. A minimum of one hour is required. This is usually accomplished by registering for one hour of HIST 7990 or HIST 8990. Students must register for GRAD 7000 the semester in which they graduate.

**PLAN OF STUDY** [\(Back to Table of Contents\)](#)

Projected course schedules for the year are available in the Graduate Program Officer's office and should be consulted when a student plans his or her program. By the end of the second semester for masters students and the third semester for doctoral students, a student is required to have filed a Plan of Study with the Graduate School indicating his or her course offerings for the degree, thesis/dissertation topic, major professor and committee. A Plan of Study may be changed if necessary by having the appropriate forms completed and approved by all parties concerned. Forms are available online at the Graduate School web site.

**MAJOR PROFESSOR AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE** [\(Back to Table of Contents\)](#)

Each graduate student is required to have an advisory committee which is headed by a major professor. As soon as a student has decided the general area of interest or topic of thesis or dissertation, he/she should consult with the appropriate professor(s) concerning the feasibility of his/her idea and the willingness of one professor to accept the direction of the project.

Obviously, many considerations should guide decisions regarding a major professor and thesis topic. Some of these considerations relate to an individual student's interests, language facility, and personality. Other considerations are the resources available in the department and the university library and archival collections, the specific areas of competence of our faculty as revealed in their academic training, publications and research, and the formal fields offered as degree fields in the department. Selecting the right major professor may well be the most important decision in a person's professional career. Ideally, it is preferable to work with the most knowledgeable person in your chosen field, as well as one who can provide sound professional advice and guidance. But mutual confidence and respect in the personal relations of professor and student are also very desirable. Clashes in personality or conflicts in values or in historical judgments can impede and sometimes destroy good relations and the ability to collaborate effectively. It is advisable to weigh carefully all relevant considerations.

When a student is certain of the area or topic in which he/she wishes to pursue research toward the degree and the professor most suitable for that area, the student should formally request that professor to serve as major professor and chair of his/her advisory committee. If, because of other responsibilities or departmental commitments, a professor is obliged to turn down the student's request, the student should not regard the refusal as a personal affront.

When the student-professor relationship has been established to the satisfaction of both parties, the major professor advises the student in the preparation of a Plan of Study and in the selection of a committee - usually two additional professors for M.A. students and three for doctoral students, including a second professor in the major field. Henceforth the major professor acts as the student's advisor on academic matters.

**READINGS COURSES** [\(Back to Table of Contents\)](#)

Students in the doctoral program are permitted to take Readings Courses HIST 8000-8600. They are normally expected to have had prior course work in the field in which they are reading. A doctoral student may include three Readings Courses in his/her Plan of Study.

Only one readings course may be taken in a minor field. Readings courses are not open to masters students except under extraordinary circumstances and only with the approval of the Graduate Committee. Students planning readings courses should consult the GPO regarding registration.

**RESEARCH SEMINARS** ([Back to Table of Contents](#))

Research seminars are established for each [major field of study](#) in the doctoral program. These seminars permit students to concentrate exclusively on the research and writing of a seminar paper of publishable quality under the direction of a professor with appropriate specialization. There are no reading or other requirements in these seminars. One research seminar is required in the masters program and not more than two in the doctoral program. Ideally, research seminars should be taken after the student has mastered historiography and content in a field from other seminars and/or readings courses.

**TRANSFER CREDIT** ([Back to Table of Contents](#))

Students having secured course credit in accepted graduate programs elsewhere may, with the approval of their Committees and the Graduate School, apply such credit toward degree programs at Auburn. A limit of six hour transfer credit applies at the Master's level, but there is no restriction upon the transferability of work taken at the doctoral level of study. Hours transferred to a masters program must meet the Graduate School's standard of currency. Please consult the [Graduate School Bulletin](#) for further information.

**GRADES** ([Back to Table of Contents](#))

The Graduate School's regulations stipulate, in general, the maintenance of a 3.0 grade point average for a student to remain in good standing. A student may be dropped from the graduate program if his/her grade point average is below 3.0 for more than two consecutive semesters. The grade of incomplete should be removed as quickly as possible. Graduate School regulations allow six months to clear an incomplete (following the semester in which the incomplete was received). After that point, the incomplete automatically becomes an F and the course must be repeated. Students are reminded that incompletes have a detrimental effect on their application for continuation of assistantships.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### **ORIENTATION** ([Back to Table of Contents](#))

A formal orientation is held at the beginning of each academic year for all graduate students. It is particularly important for new assistants to attend in order to become acquainted with departmental policies, personnel and practices in teaching, as well as their responsibilities as GTA's. All new students will be notified well ahead of the dates and times of orientation activities. All graduate assistants should have a current copy of the [History Department Guidelines for Graduate Teaching Assistants](#), and should familiarize themselves with it.

### **COMMUNICATIONS** ([Back to Table of Contents](#))

Communications regarding departmental and university events, academic affairs and other matters of interest to graduate students are conducted in several formats. All currently enrolled graduate students are assigned mail boxes in the departmental main office. There are, in addition, several bulletin boards on the third floor of Thach Hall where notices are posted. It is expected that in the near future most administrative functions and exchange of needed information within the university will be by electronic mail. All graduate students will be required to subscribe to e-mail (free through the university). Every graduate student should secure a copy of the information sheet on computer services and e-mail that the History Department's Information Technology Committee has prepared. Finally, there is the departmental commons room where information, reliable or otherwise, may be exchanged by word of mouth.

### **SOCIAL AND SERVICE FUNCTIONS** ([Back to Table of Contents](#))

The local chapter (Kappa Pi) of the [Phi Alpha Theta](#), the national History honorary, sponsors get-togethers of a social nature to which all graduate students are invited. Among other events are departmental picnics in October (Fall Frolics) and May (Spring Fling). Students who are not yet members of Phi Alpha Theta, and who qualify, are urged to affiliate with the chapter. Phi Alpha Theta also sponsors colloquia which provide students and faculty an opportunity to present scholarly papers each year. The chapter also brings prominent historians to the campus as lecturers, and serves the department and its graduate students in many ways. The Auburn chapter has a proud history of service and has won national recognition for its outstanding work.

### **THE RALPH B. DRAUGHON LIBRARY** ([Back to Table of Contents](#))

Graduate students should familiarize themselves with the regulations of the University library. They are particularly warned that they do not have extended loan privileges and are subject to fines for overdue books. Library carrels may be available upon application to the Director of Libraries, but, because of the limited number, their use may be restricted to advanced graduate students.

## REVISIONS TO GRADUATE PROGRAMS

### **THE DIRECT TRACK DOCTORAL PROGRAM** [\(Back to Table of Contents\)](#)

Since academic year 1996-1997, applicants accepted for graduate study are normally admitted directly into the doctoral program. Students entering with a baccalaureate degree will have to complete a minimum of 55 hours of course work, including Historical Methods (HIST 7700), Historiography (HIST 8700), the one-hour workshop course in college teaching (HIST 8710), and one (but) not more than two research seminars. Students who enter the doctoral program having already completed a masters degree will receive appropriate credit for graduate hours taken.

Doctoral students will be required to submit a plan of study and to have an advisory committee in place by the end of their third semester of study. During a student's third semester of study, his/her advisory committee will review the student's progress and recommend one of the following courses of action:

1. The student may complete course work for the doctoral program and proceed to his/her Preliminary Qualifying Exams.
2. The student must terminate course work at 27 hours and not continue in the doctoral program.

In this latter contingency, the student may write an acceptable thesis and receive a Master of Arts degree in history. A student in the doctoral program may also voluntarily terminate course work at 27 hours and write a thesis for the M.A. degree.

Foreign language requirements must be satisfactorily completed by the end of the second academic year, or fourth semester.

A student who is approved to continue the doctoral program must normally complete course work by the end of his/her third academic year. The preliminary qualifying examinations must be taken before the end of the fall semester of the fourth academic year.

Upon passing the preliminary qualifying examination, a student will be admitted to candidacy for the Ph.D. Additionally, he/she will be awarded the degree of Master of Arts in history. A student who does not pass the preliminary qualifying examination, and is thus not admitted to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree, may receive the M.A. degree by presenting an acceptable thesis.

### **THE MASTERS PROGRAM** [\(Back to Table of Contents\)](#)

The masters program is no longer a prerequisite for admission to the Ph.D. program. The department expects that the M.A. will be awarded primarily to the following: students specializing in archival training, secondary school teachers seeking to upgrade their professional standing and teaching competence, probationary candidates for admission to doctoral study, and students who switch from the doctoral program. Admissions to the masters program will thus be restricted.

Students admitted to the masters program have the option after one year in the program, with the approval of their major professor and advisory committee, to change to the direct-track doctoral program. A student's choice to remain in the masters program will in no sense prejudice his/her admissibility to the doctor al program once he/she has completed the M.A. degree and has been recommended for doctoral study by his/her committee.

**APPLICATION DEADLINE AND ADMISSION POLICY** [\(Back to Table of Contents\)](#)

Applicants will be admitted to graduate study in the department with the understanding that a student's program will commence in the fall semester. With the goal of regularizing graduate programs on the basis of adherence to the academic year, admissions are made on an annual basis. Applications for fall admissions must be received in the department no later than February 15. Applicants will be notified of their acceptance by April 15. It is especially critical that applicants for graduate assistantships meet this deadline.

Applicants for assistantships are warned that, owing to the frequent uncertainties respecting funding for our programs and delays in the budgeting procedures, it may not be possible to send out notifications of awards until much later than April 15.

## THE MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE (M.A.)

### **GENERAL REQUIREMENTS** [\(Back to Table of Contents\)](#)

The M.A. requires satisfactory completion of at least 27 hours of course work, four hours of HIST 7990 (Research and Thesis), and the presentation of an acceptable completed thesis. No more than 6 hours may be taken in lecture classes. There is no foreign language requirement, but all students are required to take HIST 7700, Historical Methods. Additionally, masters students must take one research seminar. When a student has completed the course work set out in his/her plan of study, he/she may not register for further course work until the thesis has been completed.

The M.A. degree program is usually introductory to graduate study, therefore it is not structured as to fields of concentration except with respect to the area of the thesis. A student is encouraged to pursue his/her interests and academic needs, subject to his/her major professor's advice and advisory committee's approval. As much as 9 hours of graduate course work may be taken outside the History Department. Special requirements apply to students in the Archives Program.

### **PROCEDURES** [\(Back to Table of Contents\)](#)

1. Register for and complete HIST 7990, Historical Methods, at the outset of our program.
2. Decide upon an area of interest for your thesis research, and then secure a major professor who agrees to direct your thesis.
3. Prepare your plan of study with the advice of the major professor and two additional advisory committee members. The department chair must also sign the plan of study. It is advisable to consult the GPO before sending the PS to the Graduate School. Once the GPO has reviewed and approved the PS, and it has been signed by the chair, the original and two copies are then sent to the Graduate School. After a PS is approved by the Dean of the Graduate School, copies are returned to the GPO for his/her file, the major professor and the student.
4. Complete course work outlined in plan of study. The PS is flexible. If changes in courses or committee members are necessary, consult the Graduate Program Officer.
5. File a [Certification of Graduate Residency](#) form with the Graduate School.
6. Write thesis! Major professors differ in their handling of thesis writing. Be sure you understand and follow your major professor's directions! Do not follow the style of any previous thesis. Consult [Guide to Preparation and Submission of Theses and Dissertations](#) (2005 on-line edition). It contains full details regarding the physical preparation and technical requirements for the final copy of the thesis. Where professional practices differ, the Graduate School is reasonable and flexible - if prior consultation is sought by major professors and students.

7. When approved by the major professor, the draft thesis is submitted to the other members of the committee for their review, recommendations for further work, or approval for examination.
8. The major professor will schedule the oral examination, secure the necessary forms from the GPO or departmental website, and post notice of the examination in the History Department office. The examination itself will be of approximately two hours duration. The major professor acts as chair and submits the appropriate reports of examination results. Students approaching the completion of their work must anticipate and plan around the availability or absence of faculty committee members, especially during summer terms.

The decision to pass the student must be unanimous. If the student fails, reexamination may be given on recommendation of the committee and with the approval of the Dean of the Graduate School.

The M.A. or al examination ought to serve as the culmination of the student's work. Rather than being a retesting of material previously covered in course work, the examination will focus on the student's master's thesis and be used to encourage the student to reflect upon the significance of his or her thesis and the ways in which that thesis relates to broader historical questions. It is, therefore, incumbent upon faculty to frame questions that require the student to discuss the thesis in the context of relevant historiography and to draw possible implications from the student's primary research that extend beyond the narrow confines of the particular subject explored in the thesis.

9. Following the oral examination, the major professor files reports with the Graduate School and the History Department. If approved, the thesis may now be finally typed, incorporating all corrections, signed by the advisory committee, and presented by the student to the Graduate School. In its report to the Department of History, the committee also advises whether the student should be allowed to enter the doctoral program. A recommendation against further graduate study means that the student cannot continue beyond the M.A. degree.
10. Theses are bound at the student's expense by the Graduate School, and returned to the History Department. The student is responsible for securing and distributing bound copies. One copy will be retained by the History Department. The major professor should be offered a copy of the bound thesis. Normally, for an M.A. degree, five bound copies are necessary. For the Ph.D., seven. Fees are payable to the Bursar.
11. As completion and approval of the draft thesis, oral examination, and graduation frequently fall in subsequent semesters, students are reminded that they must be registered at the time of the oral examination and at the time of graduation, even if they are not then engaged in further course work or resident in Auburn. For the purpose simply of graduating a student may register for GRAD 7000. Candidates for the M.A. wishing to graduate *in absentia* may do so, but must first inform the Registrar's Office. A student who intends to graduate in a particular semester should be certain that the

Graduate School is aware of this at the beginning of that semester. The GPO can help with sorting things out.

12. The M.A. program must be completed within five calendar years. Requests for extensions may be addressed to the Graduate School through the major professor.

## **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE (Ph.D.)**

### **GENERAL REQUIREMENTS** [\(Back to Table of Contents\)](#)

1. A minimum of 55 hours of course work beyond the B.A. and 10 hours of HIST 8990 (Research and Dissertation). HIST 7700, HIST 8700 and HIST 8710 are required courses. The doctoral program also requires that a student take at least one and not more than two research seminars.
2. Demonstrated reading proficiency in at least one foreign language.
3. Preliminary Qualifying Written and Oral Examinations.
4. Dissertation and Defense.

### **FIELDS** [\(Back to Table of Contents\)](#)

Doctoral students may specialize in one of the following major fields:

- 1) United States to 1865
- 2) United States Since 1865
- 3) Europe 1500-1789
- 4) Europe since 1789
- 5) Technology

In addition to a major field, students will design at two minor fields of study. Students will be required to take a minimum of nine hours of course work (of which at least three must be in seminar) in each of two minor fields. Options for minor fields include any of the fields listed above, plus Latin America, Archival Studies, and World History. It is also possible to create a thematic minor field. It will be expected, however, that students develop an expertise in their minor fields beyond that provided by the minimum requirement of nine hours of course work.

Students will also be required to take one additional breadth field (six hours of course work of which at least three must be in seminar) or a teaching field in World History consisting of twelve hours of course work in a program approved by the student's committee. Reading courses may not be used to satisfy the breadth requirements. A non-History field or a field in Archives may be offered as one of the breadth fields.

### **LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY** [\(Back to Table of Contents\)](#)

Competency in a minimum of one foreign language is required. Students must attempt to meet this requirement during the first year of study. In those cases in which a student is working in a field that necessitates the knowledge of more than one foreign language or of computer skills, a student's committee may expect language competency beyond the minimum requirement. The student's committee will determine which language(s) the student may use to fulfill the

requirement. The requirement is for a working knowledge of the language to be demonstrated by passing a reading proficiency exam on a 600 word passage in a period of two hours.

All new students entering the doctoral program must take the foreign language competency test before the beginning of the third semester of study (not counting the summer term). Any student failing the competency test during the first year of the program must retake the exam before the beginning of his or her fourth semester of study (not counting the summer term). Any student holding a Graduate Teaching Assistantship who fails to pass the language exam by the beginning of his/her fourth semester of study will no longer be eligible for an assistantship until he or she passes the language exam. Any student who fails to pass the language exam by the end of four semesters of study (not counting the summer term) will not be allowed to continue in the program.

### **PLAN OF STUDY AND COMMITTEE** [\(Back to Table of Contents\)](#)

In the doctoral program, the Plan of Study and advisory committee must be established by the end of a student's third semester. The major professor and the GPO should coordinate planning and preferably should hold a meeting of the entire advisory committee with the student. Questions regarding such matters as transferred course work and specific language and course requirements should be clearly settled prior to drawing up and filing the PS. No limit is placed upon transfer of credit from one university to another at the Ph.D. level, but course work transferred to Auburn University must be applicable within the framework of this Department's doctoral program and be approved by the student's advisory committee for inclusion in the Plan of Study.

The PS must be submitted and be approved by the Graduate School not later than the beginning of the student's second year in the program. As doctoral advisory committees must act with unanimity, and as major professors must be members of the Graduate Faculty, students should consider committee composition carefully and maintain contact with all members at all times.

### **THIRD SEMESTER REVIEW** [\(Back to Table of Contents\)](#)

During a student's third semester in the doctoral program (exclusive of summer term), his/her committee will review the student's progress in the program and recommend either that he/she continue course work toward the preliminary qualifying examination, or that he/she be directed to terminate course work at 45 hours. In the latter contingency, a student who presents an acceptable thesis will be awarded the degree of Master of Arts.

### **"PRELIMS"** [\(Back to Table of Contents\)](#)

The preliminary qualifying written and oral examination - sometimes referred to as the General Examination - for admission to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree must be taken no later than six months after a student has completed his/her course work. Normally, students in the doctoral program will take these exams in the fall semester of their fourth academic year. After a student has passed prelims, Graduate School regulations permit four years for completion of the dissertation. Requests for extensions to this limit may be addressed to the Graduate School

through the student's major professor. A student who passes the preliminary qualifying examinations will be awarded the M.A. degree. A student who does not pass may be awarded the M.A. upon presentation of an acceptable thesis.

**PROCEDURES** ([Back to Table of Contents](#))

1. New students should also register for and take a course in Historical Methods (HIST 7700) their first semester in graduate school or as soon thereafter as possible.
2. A major professor and advisory committee must be selected by the end of the second semester. The doctoral committee includes four members: the major professor and an additional specialist in the major field of study, and one professor from each of the minor fields. At least two members of the committee (including the major professor) must be fully qualified members of the Graduate Faculty. Prior to selecting a major professor, the GPO serves as your principal advisor. Feel free to consult him/her.
3. The student and the advisory committee customarily confer with the GPO to agree upon the plan of study. This should be done as early in the program as possible. The plan of study is then signed by the committee and the department chair and submitted to the Graduate School Dean for approval and distribution. Any subsequent change in committee or plan requires formal written application.
4. The reading proficiency examination for foreign languages is usually given once each semester. Each student is responsible for meeting his/her deadline for taking the exam. Consult the GPO regarding date and time of the examination.
5. Read!!! The well-advised and successful doctoral student will prepare far beyond the perimeters of course work. This is an essential part of the preparation for the successful completion of the preliminary qualifying examination.
6. Four fields will be required for the Ph.D. These will be a major field, two minor fields, and a breadth field. Each minor field will consist of a minimum of three courses. One of the minor fields may, by agreement with the GPO and a suitable professor, be thematic (such as War Studies, Women's History, and so forth). The breadth field will require a minimum of two courses.
7. File a [Certification of Graduate Residency](#) form with the Graduate School.
8. Written Preliminary Qualifying Examination: When required course work has been completed and foreign language requirements met, at the student's request the major professor will schedule and administer the general (written) Examination, securing questions from each member of the committee and administering them to the student. The major professor is expected to follow departmental guidelines in administering the written examinations. These examinations must be conducted on campus. This phase of the examination must be completed within a period of ten class days. Six hours may be allowed for the examination in the major field, and four hours may be allowed for each of

the examinations in the two minor fields. Students approaching general and final examinations must anticipate and plan around the availability of faculty committee members, especially during the summer semester. If any portion of the written examination is unsatisfactory, the student who fails the written examination may retake it once after one semester has elapsed.

When the major professor has ascertained that all members of the committee are satisfied with the written examination, he or she will notify the Graduate School which will then schedule the oral examination and notify all parties involved. Arrangements must be made at least one week in advance of the examination. The oral examination must be taken not less than two weeks following the completion of the written exams.

9. The Oral Examination: This customarily lasts three hours and may address all phases of the major and minor fields offered by the student. It is not restricted to the content of any course work. The committee must be unanimous in passing a student. If the oral examination is in whole or part unsatisfactory, the committee will specify short-comings and requirements in writing at the time of the examination and proceed according to regulations set forth in the [Bulletin](#). A student who fails the oral examination may, with the permission of the Dean of the Graduate School, retake it once.
10. Within four months of successful completion of the oral examination, students will present to the assembled dissertation committee a dissertation proposal of approximately twenty pages for discussion and approval. Failure to do so will be considered “unsatisfactory progress” through the program for purposes of funding.
11. Dissertation: When a student has passed the General Examination he/she has four years in which to complete his/her dissertation. At this point the student is referred to as a doctoral candidate (or, colloquially among professionals, as in ABD - All But Dissertation) and should, in conjunction with the major professor, select a dissertation committee consisting of the major professor and two additional professors, both of whom should have some degree of expertise or interest in the student’s dissertation topic. This will require filing a Revision in Plan of Study with the Graduate School. Pay strict attention to Graduate School regulations and procedures as set forth in the [Guide to Preparation and Submission of Theses and Dissertations](#) (2005 on-line edition).
12. Final Examination: The final examination or dissertation defense is an oral examination of two hours duration; it covers the dissertation and matters of related interest. It is administered by the major professor and the Advisory Committee; a unanimous opinion is required for satisfactory passage of the examination.

The final examination is open to all members of the Graduate Faculty who may wish to observe it, and the Graduate School will appoint an outside reader and examiner.

Should the final examination be judged unsatisfactory, the committee will proceed as directed in the [Bulletin](#).

If the final examination is deemed satisfactory, the student will incorporate any final corrections in a final typing of the dissertation and submit it to the Graduate School.

10. Graduation: A student must be registered in order to graduate. He/she is expected to attend commencement and receive the hood symbolizing the doctorate (returnable immediately after the ceremony). The student is still responsible for the distribution of the bound dissertation, copies of which will be returned to the History Department by the Graduate School. One copy is required by the department and it is customary to present a copy to the major professor.