



# **Graduate Student Handbook**

**Department of History  
Texas State University**

---

**Mary Brennan, Ph.D.**  
Graduate Advisor

Phone: 512-245-2142  
Fax: 512-245-3043

Department of History  
Texas State University  
Taylor-Murphy Hall 202  
601 University Drive  
San Marcos, TX 78666

**Graduate Student Handbook**  
**Department of History**  
**Texas State University—San Marcos**  
**2007-2008**

**Application Deadlines:**

- March 1 -- for fall admission with application for a graduate assistantship
- July 15 -- for fall admission (general)
- October 15 -- for spring admission
- April 15 -- for first term summer school admission
- June 15 -- for second term summer school admission

**Degree Requirements: Programs and Degrees:**

**Master of Arts (with thesis)**

- 33 hours of graduate level history, or
- 27 hours of graduate level history with an optional 6 hour cognate in a discipline outside of history approved by the director of graduate studies
  - 3 hours—general or United States historiography
  - 3 hours—general research seminar
  - 6 hours thesis credit
  - 9-15 hours in major field of history
  - 6-9 hours history electives
  - 6 hours (optional) outside cognate
  - Master's thesis
  - University comprehensive exam (thesis defense)

**Master of Arts (non-thesis)**

- 36 hours of graduate history, or
- 30 hours of graduate history with an optional 6 hour cognate in a discipline outside of history approved by the director of graduate studies
  - 3 hours--general or United States historiography
  - 3 hours--general research seminar
  - 15-18 hours in major field of history\*
  - 6-9 hours history electives\*
  - 6 hours (optional) outside cognate
  - Comprehensive examination [combination of written and oral exams]

\*Note: at least 6 hours of graduate history must be taken in "research" seminars in which a formal paper based on research into "primary" sources constitutes a significant portion of the course grade.

## Master of Arts Degree with specialization in Public History

- 36 hours of graduate history, or
- 30 hours of graduate history with an optional 6 hour cognate in a discipline approved by the director of graduate studies **and** the director of the Public History program
  - 3 hours United States historiography [5360]
  - 3 hours The Practice of Public History [5371]
  - 3 hours Internship [5374]
  - 3 hours Public History Project [5377] (if possible)
  - 9-12 hours of Elective Public History courses
  - 9-15 hours of United States history seminars
  - 6 hours (optional, on approval, as indicated above) outside cognate
- Comprehensive examination [combination of written and oral exams]

## Master of Education (non-thesis)

- 21 hours of graduate level history and 15 graduate hours from a discipline outside of history **or** 21 hours of graduate level history, 9 graduate hours in one discipline outside of history, and 6 hours in a second outside discipline
  - 3 hours—general or United States historiography
  - 9–12 hours in major field of history
  - 6–9 hours history electives
  - 15 hours outside minor(s) in one or two academic disciplines, **or**
  - 15 hours Education (which, with student teaching hours and experience, would qualify the student for certification)
- Comprehensive examination [combination of written and oral exams]

## Fields of Study:

In addition to Public History, the Department offers three broadly defined areas of concentration for graduate study: the United States, Latin America, and Europe. Students in Public History will complete 18 hours in that field and 18 hours in graduate courses in US history (including Historiography). Other students will complete 9–21 hours (in addition to Historiography and the Research Seminar) in one of the three major fields of historical study listed above. The remainder of their courses in history must be in an area of concentration outside of the major field. Students must register their major area of study with the director of graduate studies.

### **Graduate Advisor:**

All students should choose an advisor in their major field of study in their first or early in their second semester. Students must obtain the consent of the faculty member they would like to have serve as their advisor and, **by the end of the second semester**, inform the director of graduate studies of the name of their advisor once that consent has been granted. The advisor will assist the student in designing research projects for the general research seminar and in choosing the courses which make up the student's program. The advisor will also supervise the thesis for students selecting that option. Students may change advisors upon notifying the director of graduate studies and obtaining the consent of another faculty member to serve as advisor.

### **Historiography:**

The History Department believes that its graduate students are best prepared to undertake serious graduate study by a general introduction to the discipline of history. This introduction will be provided in the historiography classes taught each fall semester. The department offers American Historiography for students choosing U.S. History as their major area of concentration, and General Historiography for students with major fields in Europe or Latin America. All new graduate students are expected to enroll in one of these offerings. Both courses contain a methodological component and a formal paper designed to help the student prepare for future reading and research projects in other courses. The formal paper required in this course may serve as the introductory analysis of an area of history to be pursued in the student's master's thesis or major field.

### **Thesis Credit:**

Thesis students enroll for thesis credit, History 5399A and 5399B, usually after completing at least 15 graduate hours in history. These are required courses for students writing theses. To be eligible to register for Thesis A, a student must have completed an application for permission to write a thesis and secured the signatures of the proposed members of his/her committee. To register for Thesis B, a student must have a completed thesis proposal. **Necessary forms are available online through the departmental web page.**

### **General Research Seminar:**

The general research seminar meets each spring semester. M.A. students not participating in the Public History program (MEd. candidates are also exempted) are required to take the General Seminar after accumulating 15-18 or more

graduate hours. Thesis students participating in the General Seminar normally enroll in History 5399A or 5399B simultaneously. The seminar convenes early in the spring for one or more class sessions to establish the ground rules for the seminar or to attend to other matters the seminar director considers useful. The principal purpose of the seminar is to provide students the opportunity to compose a thesis chapter or a research project of thesis chapter quality and to have that work read and critiqued by fellow students, the seminar director, and, in some cases, their advisors. Students choose their topics or chapters in consultation with their advisors and the seminar director. The early part of the semester will be devoted to individual research and writing, and the latter part of the semester to the critiques of student papers. The papers produced in the seminar are expected to be based on substantial research in primary source materials and to be of thesis quality. A grade of incomplete will not be issued in the general research seminar.

### **Courses:**

Other than historiography and the general research seminar, all graduate level courses are classified as either colloquia or research seminars. Colloquia emphasize broad reading in a particular area and do not require a research paper. Research seminars combine topical readings with a research project.

### **Optional outside minor or cognate:**

Students may take all of their graduate work in history or include up to 6 hours (15 hours for MEd. students) of work in an optional minor in another department, with the approval of the director of graduate studies, and, when appropriate, the director of the public history program. Keep in mind that most departments require more than 6 hours to complete a minor. The History Department would only count 6 hours toward your degree, but you would have to take whatever number the minor department required. Your other option would be to get a cognate in an outside field. This would only require taking the 6 hours. This must be noted on your degree outline and so must go through the director of graduate studies and the Graduate College.

### **Comprehensive Examinations:**

#### **M.A. Candidates Writing a Thesis:**

For students completing a thesis, the comprehensive exam required by the Graduate College of Texas State University—San Marcos will consist essentially but not exclusively of a defense of the thesis presented. Students should check with each faculty member involved in such an exam in order to determine the scope of

the issues to be covered. If the examination is to cover matters beyond the student's defense of the thesis, the student must take care to discover exactly what aspects of previous course work will or will not be considered fair game for each examiner. The student's thesis supervisor and the second and third readers will administer this examination.

### **M.A. Candidates Opting for the Non-Thesis Degree:**

**Purpose:** For students not writing a thesis, comprehensive examinations are intended to provide an opportunity to synthesize data pertaining to themes contained within their fields of study from a variety of materials covered in their regular courses. Comprehensive exams will **not** cover matters already addressed in exams offered within individual courses, but students will be expected to incorporate material and insights from their readings into a conceptual framework that includes readings from more than one course.

**Format:** Students, in consultation with their graduate advisors, will designate three faculty members to examine them in their respective areas of concentration. Except in the most unusual circumstances, one of these faculty will be the student's graduate advisor. Student will complete and submit to the Graduate Director a copy of the Comprehensive Exam form, listing the members of his/her committee.

**Necessary forms are available online through the departmental web page.**

During the first week of the semester during which the exam is to be completed, each of the designated faculty will submit to the student no more than 2 questions to be answered in essay form. These questions would serve as preparation for the oral exam. The student will complete the essays and return them to the professor by October 15<sup>th</sup> [for the Fall semester], March 15<sup>th</sup> [for the Spring semester] or June 30<sup>th</sup> [for the summer term]. If the essays meet with the approval of the faculty member, the oral exam may proceed on schedule. If there are serious problems with the essays, the professor should inform the student as soon as possible to give the student an opportunity to improve the essay. Or, the professor may choose to discuss the issues during the oral exam. If the committee finds the student's performance less than adequate, the student may retake the exam later in the semester or the following semester.

### **Master's Thesis:**

Students seeking an M.A. in History with thesis will complete an essay of appropriate length and depth, divided into appropriate chapters based on

substantial research in primary source materials. The topic of the thesis, the research to be undertaken, and the nature of the final product will be determined through consultations between the student and the graduate advisor. The final paper will be read and critiqued by a thesis committee composed of the advisor, a second reader from the History Department, and a third reader who may be either a historian or a faculty member from another discipline (if the student took a minor outside of history). The student must successfully defend the thesis before the committee in order to receive the M.A. degree.

### **Foreign Language:**

Students working in areas outside of U.S. or British history **may** be required to pass a foreign language reading examination. All students planning to pursue a Ph.D. are encouraged to pass a foreign language reading examination as this competency will be required of them in their doctoral programs.

### **Incompletes:**

Students with two or more incomplete grades in history will not be allowed to enroll in any graduate course in history.

### **Assistantships:**

The History Department offers a limited number of assistantships to graduate students to help fund their graduate education. These assistantships normally require the recipient to serve as a classroom assistant to faculty members teaching large sections of the introductory courses. Duties include—but are not necessarily limited to—attending all classes, taking attendance, holding office hours, meeting with students, preparing class materials, and grading papers. Assistantships will normally be awarded for one full academic year assuming **competent performance of assigned duties and acceptable progress toward completion of the degree**. Assistantships, which may be renewed for one additional year on the same basis, will be awarded by the graduate faculty, with the chair's approval, on the basis of the recommendation of the Graduate Committee.

**To maintain an assistantship:**

- a. Beginning in the Fall semester 2006, students must enroll in History 5301, Instructional Methods Practicum for History Assistants, during the first semester in which they hold an assistantship. Although this course will count toward the 9 hour load, it will not count as credit toward the degree. The university will subsidize this course.
- b. The student must enroll in **at least 9 hours of graduate course work during each long semester** until all course work is completed; at least three of those hours must be in history. Students may **not** take more than 9 hours of graduate work in any long semester without the approval of the director of graduate studies and the department chair.
- c. Students on assistantships must **maintain** at least a 9 hour load for the entire semester. Failure to do so will result in the loss of the assistantship the following semester.
- d. Students wishing to receive an assistantship for their second year must submit a form to the director of graduate studies requesting a renewal by March 31. In addition such students must have **completed satisfactorily 15 graduate hours** by the beginning of their third long semester.
- e. No student with **more than one incomplete grade** at the beginning of the spring semester will be eligible to retain their assistantship for that semester.
- f. No second year student with **an incomplete grade at the beginning of the fall semester** will be eligible for an assistantship for that semester.

**In extraordinary individual circumstances the student may request from the graduate committee specific variances to any of the History Department's internal policies relating to the graduate program. Such requests should be addressed to the director of graduate studies, who will convene the Graduate Committee to rule on such requests.**

**Necessary forms are available online through the departmental web page.**