Northern Illinois University
Ph.D. Degree in History

CHECKLIST OF REQUIREMENTS

Effective for all doctoral level students who enter the program after May 15, 2012, and all other doctoral level students who choose these new requirements rather than those in force when they entered the program.

Name: _________________________________  Advisor: _________________________________

A. PASS QUALIFYING EXAMINATION. (Applies to students who did their master’s work at another university.) Taken after nine hours of course work at NIU. An oral exam of approximately one hour conducted by three examiners from the student’s major field.

B. COURSE REQUIREMENTS.

___ 1. At least 54 hours of approved course work, including M.A. work where applicable.

___ 2. Six hours of research seminars in which a student can begin to define a dissertation topic. Additional “independent doctoral research” hours may be necessary to work on a dissertation prospectus.

___ 3. Not more than 18 hours of the graduate course work can be in 500-level courses (including applicable M.A. credits). For a student applying graduate work from another institution toward the semester-hour requirements of a doctoral degree, the sum of the credit from NIU graduate course work numbered 500-599, plus one-half the number of hours of transfer credit, may not exceed 18 semester hours.

C. RESEARCH PROFICIENCY REQUIREMENT. (These are minimum requirements.) The options chosen must be consistent with the fields of study and the requirements of dissertation research. They should be fulfilled in their entirety no later than the fifth semester after a full-time student has entered the doctoral program.

___ Satisfy one of the following: Average proficiency in two research skills OR high proficiency in one research skill. The appropriate research skills are approved foreign languages, with average and high proficiency defined by the Graduate School, and quantitative methods, with average proficiency defined by the History Department. Approved proficiencies established for the M.A. degree can, in some instances, be counted in fulfilling this requirement.

D. PH.D. CANDIDACY EXAMINATION. The candidacy examination consists of three papers in appropriate fields and a teaching portfolio in the major field, followed by a single oral exam on all four elements. Please note the following requirements:

___ 1. A provisional list of fields and examiners must be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies no later than the beginning of the student’s second year of full-time Ph.D. study and preferably by the end of the first year. Changes in fields and examiners are possible, but any such revisions must be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies.
2. The provisional list of fields and examiners is prepared by the student in conjunction with the provisional advisor and should to the extent possible meet the guidelines for field distribution adopted by the department. Departures from these guidelines should be justified when the list is submitted.

3. The oral examination is taken 1 month after all three field essays and teaching portfolio have been approved. It should normally have been completed no later than the fifth semester after a full-time graduate student has entered the doctoral program. Please provide the Graduate Office with a copy of the essays and portfolio in both hardcopy and an electronic version. Copies will be made for all examiners.

PH.D. CANDIDACY EXAMINATION GUIDELINES

- The primary field must be a recognized field of study in the profession.

- The two secondary fields must represent recognized fields of study in the profession – one may be closely related geographically, chronologically, theoretically, and/or thematically to the primary field. One must be distant from the primary field, either geographically or chronologically. Either (but not both) of the secondary fields may be outside the field of history, but that is not a requirement.

E. WRITING OF DISSERTATION.

1. Identify a prospective dissertation director and an appropriate dissertation topic. This process should already be far advanced by the time of the candidacy exam because the student will have had at least 6 hours of research seminars and 756 (Directed Research) to pin down a field of inquiry and to confirm that adequate source material exists for the purposes of writing a doctoral dissertation.

2. Draw up a formal dissertation proposal with the aid of the prospective dissertation director.

3. No later than the end of the semester following the one in which the oral candidacy examination was successfully completed, the doctoral student must obtain the approval of dissertation topic by a dissertation committee of the prospective director and two other graduate faculty members. A meeting is arranged, and the topic is discussed. The committee often requires revisions before granting final approval.

4. The dissertation director is formally nominated by the department and approved by the Graduate School, along with the dissertation topic.

5. Candidates are responsible for checking the AHA list of Doctoral Dissertations in History (www.historians.org/pubs/dissertations/index.cfm) to see that their topics do not duplicate others and that their title has been properly registered.

6. Register continuously in HIST 799 (Doctoral Research and Dissertation) until graduation. It takes 72 hours to graduate, of which a minimum of 54 are approved course work. The other 18 are normally taken in 799, although fewer hours are acceptable if there are more than 54 hours of
course work. No more than 18 hours of 799 can be counted towards the 72 hours for graduation. Nevertheless, students have to enroll in at least one hour of 799 each fall and spring semester, as well as during each summer session, until they graduate, regardless of how many total hours they may accumulate.

7. Within three years of approval of their dissertation topics doctoral students must give a public presentation on the dissertation in progress. The colloquium will be evaluated by a faculty committee and must be found satisfactory before the candidate may continue his or her progress towards completion of the doctoral degree requirements. A conference paper at a regional or national meeting may be substituted for the colloquium.

8. Write the dissertation. The student should consult frequently with the dissertation director and keep the other two members of the topic committee apprised of its progress. At an appropriate time the department will help the student identify a full dissertation reading and defense committee, which will consist of four or five faculty members.

9. When the dissertation is nearing completion and has been approved in principle by the director and several other members of the committee, the department will formally nominate the dissertation reading and defense committee to the Graduate School, which must approve it. The committee must include one faculty member from another department (the External Examiner) and a representative of the Dean of the Graduate School (the Dean’s Designee) who will sit on the defense committee along with the four or five other members.


F. GRADUATION.

1. Must have 72 hours credit, including the 54 hours described above under “course requirements” and the hours of HIST 799 in E.6.

2. Must fulfill residence requirement: See Graduate Catalog.

3. Must comply with the limitation of time on course work discussed in the Graduate Catalog (usually nine years from the time the first course was taken for Ph.D. credit.)

4. All doctoral students must complete and successfully defend their dissertations within six years of being admitted to candidacy.

5. Must submit final copies of the dissertation to the Graduate School and obtain their approval. This process can begin before the defense: See appropriate instructions.

6. Apply for graduation by the appropriate deadline.

http://catalog.niu.edu/content.php?catoid=16&navoid=472