The Transitional M.A. Student is defined as a student who wishes to take advantage of the new 2007 program but enrolled in the MA prior to 2007 and is governed by pre-2007 catalog language.

The two changes to the M.A. program are:

1. Evaluating student preparation via field essays that address the major questions, debates, and historiographical traditions in students’ primary field, rather than the current closed-book timed examinations.
2. Introducing research seminars for all MA students.

1. Evaluation

The existing program evaluates students’ preparation in their primary fields via two two-hour exams taken in the final semester of their program. The new program evaluates students via historiographical essays.

For those who wish to write the historiographical essays, the guidelines are as follows:

Field evaluation for Master’s students will take the form of two historiographical essays in their primary field. These essays might ask the student to evaluate how historians have addressed a particular question or ask the student to review a more general body of work. The general topic and reading list for each essay will be determined in consultation between the student and the field examiner during the third semester of the full-time student’s program of study or after 15 hours of coursework for the part-time student. Students can expect to read approximately 20 books and/or articles for each essay. Students can expect to write essays of 15-20 pages each. These are meant to be guidelines only. Individual examiners may assign different work loads in both field preparation and essay length.

These essays are to be submitted no later than week 9 of the student’s final semester in the program. Students will be advised of deadlines at the beginning of each semester. They are to make copies of their papers available to both their examiners and the History Graduate Office. At the discretion of the examiners, the written comprehensive may be followed by an oral examination.

2. Research Seminars

Under the existing program, MA students fulfill the 9 hour research requirement in one of two ways: U.S. fields take History 710, while MA students in all other fields conduct 9 hours of independent research to write their Master’s essay. The new program takes the practices of M.A. students in U.S. history, who satisfy their research requirement through two formal research seminars and one semester of independent research, and applies it to graduate students in all fields. The new program requires two research seminars of all MA students, during which they explore their research topic in the context of the theme of the seminars. It is perfectly acceptable for students to explore different topics in the two formal seminars. Students then use the final three hours of research (as a 756) to expand and revise one or both of the seminar papers to culminate in the Master’s essay. That 756 will be under the supervision of the student’s major adviser (who may not necessarily have been the seminar instructor).