HANDBOOK FOR HISTORY

GRADUATE STUDENTS

Northern Illinois University

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Introduction

Welcome to the NIU History Graduate Program. This handbook describes the procedures you will follow for your graduate study in history and explains the rules and regulations governing our program. We hope you will consult it frequently and give us your suggestions for its improvement.

Our intention is to provide a useful description of the way the program works. This “common practice” is a combination of formal rules set by the Graduate School and the department, guidelines established by the History Graduate Committee, and choices made by students and advisors. Procedures may change and exceptions may sometimes be necessary. Do not, therefore, take this handbook as a legal document or a binding statement of rights and duties. The Handbook does not supercede the Graduate Catalog but it is the definitive statement of departmental policies. Reading this handbook is no substitute for consulting the Graduate Catalog, the History Department’s Director of Graduate Studies, and appropriate representatives of the Graduate School.
I. GENERAL INFORMATION

The Graduate History Office
The Graduate History Office in Zulauf 615 is the center of communications for history graduate students. The graduate secretary can help you with most routine problems. Three bulletin boards outside the office are kept up to date with announcements of jobs, fellowships, and conferences. The office also has current copies of reference works such as the Guide to Departments of History and Fellowships and Grants of Interest to Historians, and a subscription to Perspectives which contains AHA job listings. There is also a collection of flyers from other graduate and foreign study programs.

You are urged to stay in close touch with the department. Graduate students are assigned mailboxes on the sixth floor of Zulauf. You should check your mailbox and email often because we frequently send out notices about upcoming events and reminders of important obligations and deadlines. If distance or schedule prevent you from coming to campus regularly, talk to the graduate secretary about having information mailed or emailed to you. Please be sure to keep the graduate secretary informed regarding any changes to your mailing and email addresses or phone number.

Advising
The Director of Graduate Studies is responsible for monitoring department and university regulations, keeping official records, maintaining contacts with the Graduate School, and issuing permits for courses. Students newly enrolled in a degree program are required to consult with the Graduate Director before registering for courses. Other students must consult the director regularly to secure course permits and to insure proper construction of a program and timely meeting of requirements.

In addition to consulting with the Director of Graduate Studies, you will also need to seek regular advice from faculty members in your field of study. Advising by specialists in your field is essential to help you determine which courses, areas, and special skills you should be emphasizing and for identifying promising research topics.

Institutional Structure of the Graduate Program
The Director of Graduate Studies serves as chief administrator and advisor for all history graduate programs. S/he is the person you should consult first if you have questions, problems, or complaints. Policy concerning the operation of the Graduate Program is set by the departmental Graduate Committee. This committee consists of the departmental Chair, the Director of Graduate Studies, four other faculty members, and two graduate student members. The faculty members are chosen annually by the Chair, in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies and Executive Committee. The graduate student members are elected by the History Graduate Student Association.
The Responsibilities of the Graduate Committee include questions and interpretation of policy, advising, daily functioning of the program, relations with the Graduate School and the university, recruitment, publicity, assessment, and the graduate curriculum. Each member—student or faculty—has an equal vote, and decision is by majority ballot. However, matters concerning admissions, financial aid, research grants, and individual graduate students are decided by the faculty members alone meeting in separate session. Major changes to the graduate program must be considered and endorsed by the full faculty of the department in accordance with departmental governance policy.

The History Graduate Program functions under the rules established in the Graduate School by the Dean and the Graduate Council, a university-wide body consisting of elected and appointed faculty members from the various colleges, plus one graduate student member from each college. The student member from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is chosen by the College Student Advisory Committee from the nominees of each department. History nominates its candidate upon the recommendation of the History Graduate Student Association.

The History Graduate Student Association is an informal body composed of all graduate students in the department. It meets periodically to choose officers, discuss issues of concern to graduate students, and name or nominate members of departmental and university committees. The association is one of the few graduate student organizations at NIU holding voting membership on a departmental graduate committee. Two students serve on the Graduate Committee and three sit on the Lecture-Colloquium Committee, which schedules lectures by visiting scholars.

II. SOURCES OF FINANCIAL AID FOR MA AND PHD STUDENTS

Most aid for history graduate students is provided in the form of graduate assistantships, described below. Students who do not receive assistantship appointments in the History Department should be alert to the existence of assistantships in other institutional units on campus such as Founders Library, the Graduate School, advising offices, and residence halls. These positions often require particular skills and you apply for them like any job. In addition, History graduate students, depending on their field and expertise, may secure financial support through various affiliated centers such as the Women’s Studies Program, the Center for Latino and Latin American Studies, and the Center for Southeast Asian Studies. Of special interest to graduate students interested in archival work is the availability of paid internships at the Hayter Regional History Center.

The Graduate History Office usually receives prompt notification of suitable openings available elsewhere on campus. Make your needs known to the Director of Graduate Studies, who will keep an eye out for opportunities for you. The Director of Graduate Studies can also advise you about the availability of fellowships, tuition waivers, and other forms of financial assistance, including the following:

Graduate School Fellowships are awarded by the Graduate school to a small number of outstanding students upon nomination by the department. Students interested in being
considered for nomination must submit an application to the Director of Graduate Studies in the History Department by mid-January. The awards have no duties attached. Graduate fellowships are limited to master’s students pursuing their first graduate degree. Awardees must enroll in 9 hours of course work each semester.

**Dissertation Completion Awards** are intended for Ph.D. students during the advanced stages of their dissertation work who expect to complete the Ph.D. degree by the end of the year in which they hold the grant. They provide stipends for one year, plus some additional money to cover dissertation-related expenses. These are appropriate grants for students poised to complete the degree.

The application deadline is early in the spring for the following academic year. Applications should be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies and must be endorsed by the dissertation director and ranked by the Graduate Committee. The Director of Graduate Studies coordinates the applications, collects the necessary letters, and forwards the completed applications to the Graduate School.

**History Graduate Student Research Funds.** Every year the History Department awards a number of grants to graduate students to help cover research expenses. Funds are generated from the contributions of alumni, faculty, and friends of the department. Competitions for these awards (The Hayter-Young and so-called “Large Grant” grants) are announced in late fall and take place during the spring semester. Such internal departmental grants are a good opportunity for students to practice and refine grant-application skills.

**Support for Conference Presentations.** History graduate students are strongly encouraged to present the results of their research at scholarly conferences. To help make this possible, the department uses alumni contributions to offset part of the cost of student travel for such purposes. Requests for such assistance should be directed to the department chair. The Graduate School also has limited funding for graduate student conference travel. For information, see the Director of Graduate Studies.

**Outside Grants.** Ph.D. students should begin exploring possibilities of outside funding at an early stage of their dissertation research. Application deadlines vary and may be set for as much as a year in advance of the beginning of the grant. Listings of available grants can be found in the Graduate History office, in the AHA publication *Fellowships and Grants of Interest to Historians*, and through the Graduate Student Grant and Fellowship Office. In the past, NIU history students have received awards from the Social Science Research Council, the Truman Library, the Fulbright Commission, the Mellon Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the CIEE Summer Russian Language Program, the International Exchange and Research Board, the German Academic Exchange Service, and others.
III. INFORMATION FOR GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

Application
Application for an assistantship can be made at any time by filling out the appropriate form available in the Graduate History Office or online at www.grad.niu.edu. However, most assistantships are awarded for the fall-spring academic year. Occasionally there are openings in January, but these are the exception rather than the rule. The departmental deadline for applying for fall semester is March 1, but it is better to apply by early February. (Other units that employ graduate assistants may have different deadlines.)

If you already hold an assistantship in the department, you will automatically receive an application for renewal in your mailbox early in the second semester. This must be completed by mid-February and submitted to the Graduate History Office along with two letters of recommendation, one from a faculty member who can speak to your academic abilities and one from a faculty member for whom you have performed T.A. duties.

Initial awards are made by the History Graduate Committee on the basis of excellence of academic record, graduate record exam scores, faculty recommendations, and (for students already in the program) successful progress toward the degree. Incumbents are reviewed in terms of successful performance of previously assigned assistantship duties as well as evidence of normal progress to the degree.

Duties and Perquisites
Graduate assistants (G.A.s) are assigned to duties (20 hours/week) that aid the department in fulfilling its mission. G.A.s may be assigned as research assistants. However, the vast majority are teaching assistants (T.A.s) who assist in the department’s general education survey courses. T.A.s are assigned to faculty member teaching a survey course and will be expected to attend lectures, grade papers, lead discussion or review sessions, hold office hours, and/or proctor exams. T.A.s may also be invited to give a guest lecture or two. Duties vary according to the preferences and needs of the faculty member.

Assignments are made each semester by the Director of Graduate Studies in accordance with department guidelines. Most graduate assistants are assigned as graders in sections of History 110, 112, 140, 141, 171, 260, or 261. Priority is given to the professors with the largest classes and to those with the heaviest teaching load. While the fields of study of G.A.s are taken into account when making assignments, it is not always possible to match the assignment with a student’s field. Faculty and T.A.s may register their preferences with the Director of Graduate Studies. However, the dictates of enrollments and other considerations make it impossible to honor all requests.

Assistantship stipends are set by the Graduate Committee within budget constraints and stipend ceilings established by the College and Graduate School. Stipends are differentiated by level: at present there is one rate for M.A. students and one for Ph.D. students. Stipends are for nine months, from August 15 to May 15. In addition to the monetary stipend, G.A.s receive a waiver of tuition. They are, however, required to pay student fees. G.A.s are entitled to a tuition waiver
during the summer session either preceding or following the academic year appointment; G.A.s appointed for only one semester are eligible for tuition waivers for the adjacent summer session.

**Credit Hours.** Graduate assistants in the History Department are required to enroll for credit in nine semester hours in each of the fall and spring semesters. Students with summer appointments must enroll in six hours. Additionally, teaching assistants, during their first semester, are required to enroll for one hour of History 595: Seminar in College Teaching of History. Requests to take less than the required load in a given semester should be submitted in writing to the Director of Graduate Studies. Acceptable rationales for course reductions are few and must be approved not only by the Director of Graduate Studies but also by the History Graduate Committee.

**Summer Assistantships.** In recent years, the department has only on rare occasions been able to offer summer assistantships. Students needing summer support should seek jobs elsewhere on or off campus, or investigate other kinds of summer research grants. Occasionally the department hires an advanced Ph.D. student to teach a summer survey course. If opportunities arise, the Director of Graduate Studies will send out a notice to qualified graduate students inviting applications.

**Policy on Renewal of Graduate Assistantships.** Graduate assistantships are awarded annually, but may be renewed subject to the following criteria: Provided the applicant demonstrates excellence in academic work and in discharging the assigned responsibilities, the Graduate Committee generally approves a maximum of two years of assistantship support at the M.A. level and a maximum of four years of assistantship support at the Ph.D. level (for a total maximum of six years of aid for students completing both their master’s and doctorate at NIU). Continuation of these policies is contingent upon the level of funding for assistantships provided by the state of Illinois and must necessarily be reviewed regularly by the Graduate Committee in the light of current financial resources.

Within these limits of two years (M.A.) and four years (Ph.D.), the Graduate Committee is committed to renewing assistants who make normal progress toward their degree and continue to perform at a high level. However, renewal is not automatic and is contingent on positive evaluation of the student’s performance. Evidence of weak performance may take the form of poor grades, multiple incompletes, negative reports from faculty members, failure to proceed with degree requirements at a satisfactory pace or inadequate performance of T.A. duties.

In determining the maximum periods of assistantship aid outlined above, the Graduate Committee normally counts fellowships and other awards initiated by the department or by members of the department on behalf of students as equivalent to assistantship awards. This policy includes graduate school fellowships, assistantships from other cost centers on campus, assistantships funded by faculty members’ outside grants, IRAD internships, and other awards funded from the general revenue funds of the State of Illinois. It does not include outside fellowships which students apply for independently such as Fulbright awards, Social Science Research Council Fellowships, or grants from private agencies or foreign governments.
The Dissertation Completion Fellowship represents a special case. When the department recommends a student to the Graduate School for this Fellowship, it is with the expectation that the student is in the final stages of finishing his or her dissertation. A student who accepts such a fellowship but does not finish by the anticipated deadline cannot normally expect, at the end of the fellowship year, to receive additional assistantship support from the department, even if the individual would otherwise still have had some eligibility remaining. Exceptions will only be made to meet department staffing needs.
In determining maximum aid, the Graduate Committee considers not only support already received but also the student’s progress in the degree program.

*Examples:* A Ph.D. student who does not receive an assistantship or similar financial aid during the first year but completes 18-24 semester hours can still apply for financial aid for the second year of the program, i.e. for “second-year aid.” Such an applicant, if successful, could anticipate no more than three years of “normal” financial aid—that is, enough to take the applicant through the fourth year of the Ph.D. program.

An M.A. student who accumulate 9 semester hours toward the master’s degree prior to receiving an assistantship would receive no more than 1 ½ years of M.A. aid, since the student is already roughly one-fourth of the way to completing the degree.

Thus when the committee undertakes its annual assistantship deliberations, it groups all renewal applications together into categories such as “second-year M.A. aid” or “second-year Ph.D. aid.” These categories, which determine a student’s maximum period of normal aid, describe the student’s progress in the program, not the number of years of aid the student has actually received. Applicants should be aware of this distinction. Occasionally a student will be “out of phase” with other graduate students and might be applying for, let us say, “first/second year Ph.D. aid”—that is, for the second semester of the student’s first year and the first semester of the second year. (This would happen, for example, if a student begins at mid-year, in the spring semester, and applies for an assistantship for the following academic year.) In cases where the student’s situation is ambiguous, the Director of Graduate Studies may have to make a ruling on where the student is in the program with respect to assistantship renewals. If you have any doubt about how your application will be classified, you should inquire.

**Teaching Independent Sections**

Because teaching experience has become a virtual necessity in seeking an academic job beyond the degree, the department has begun routinely to assign independent sections to advanced Ph.D. students. Such assignments are made only after a student has passed his or her candidacy exams.

Independent sections assigned to ABDs are limited to 55 students and scheduled according to departmental need. As the instructor of such a section, you will be expected to plan your own syllabus, prepare your own lectures and assignments, and perform your own grading. You are required, however, to consult with experienced faculty members.

**Evaluation of Teaching of Independent Sections**

The History Department’s assessment policy requires a minimum of one classroom visitation per semester to each section taught by a graduate student. TAs new to independent teaching should be visited during their first two semesters by two different faculty members. In the following pair of semesters at least one of the two visitors should be a different faculty member than those who visited in the previous two semesters. That way, no matter how many survey sections a graduate student ends up teaching, s/he will have been visited by at least three faculty members.
Students can indicate their preferences for faculty visitors. To arrange the visitation, see the Director of Graduate Studies for approval of your chosen evaluator. The Graduate Committee has stipulated that no one faculty member should be asked to do more than two visitations in a year. As a consequence, you may need to come up with an alternative to your first choice. Once a visitation has been scheduled, present a copy of your syllabus and other course material (such as exams or paper assignments) to the visitor at least one full week prior to the visit.

The Graduate Committee has approved two forms relating to visitations. One form calls for a qualitative assessment of the student who has been observed. This report will be shared with the student, as well as being placed in his or her file. The second form is intended solely for assessment purposes. It serves to generate quantitative data, based on a rating scale. You should obtain copies of these two forms from the graduate secretary and given them to your chosen faculty evaluator at the same time that you provide that individual with a copy of your syllabus.

For TAs, failure to arrange for the requisite number of visitations could result in non-renewal of the assistantship. Visitations are meant to be supportive, not punitive. For purposes of future job searches, it is in your best interest to be able to document the quality of your teaching.

Ph.D. Aid Beyond the Normal Limits
In exceptional cases, the Graduate Committee has granted certain students a fifth year of Ph.D. aid (or seventh year of M.A. + Ph.D. aid) to facilitate completion of their degrees. This additional year is not granted routinely, and the Committee uses separate procedures in considering it. No Graduate Committee is bound by the procedures adopted by its predecessors, but for many years the practice described below has been followed.

Students who might be eligible for a fifth year of Ph.D. aid are set aside in an unranked alternate list until new applicants and incumbents within the normal time limit have accommodated. If money subsequently becomes available, the Committee weighs the relative desirability of funding fifth year Ph.D. aid, other students on the alternate list, or other new applicants. Ph.D. students are granted fifth year aid only after scrutiny of the quality of their work and especially the rate of their progress in the program. To be considered for aid, the Graduate Committee expects fifth year Ph.D. students to have passed their candidacy exams, had their dissertation proposals submitted and approved, and to be in a position to devote the bulk of their time to dissertation research and writing. Contingencies to this effect may be attached to their offers of assistantships.

Later Instructorships
Occasionally the department finds itself in the position of having to hire someone to teach regularly scheduled surveys that cannot be staffed by faculty. In such cases, the department does its best to notify all eligible parties (including recent Ph.D.s and ABDs) and is often able to hire its own students. Only advanced students who are beyond regular assistantship aid would be considered for such appointments, which are not subject to the assistantship policies described in
IV. RULES AND PROCEDURES CONCERNING COURSE WORK

The specific requirements for the master’s and doctoral programs and the rules pertaining to them are discussed below. This section contains general suggestions about course selection and rules regarding courses, grades, and credits.

Planning a Program
In planning your course schedule for the coming semester, consult the listing of course offerings and accompanying descriptions available on the History Department’s web page: http://www.niu.edu/acad/history. Discuss possible choices with faculty in your field and with the Director of Graduate Studies. In selecting your courses, keep the following in mind:

1. **Field Preparation.** The main purpose of course work is to develop substantial knowledge of the areas in which you will be examined on the comprehensive (M.A.) or candidacy (Ph.D.) exams. Aim for good coverage of periods, themes, and faculty approaches. To help in your preparations, most faculty members have deposited old exam questions in a binder in Zulauf 615. You are welcome to consult this material at any time.

2. **Field Examiners.** Each of your fields should be developed in dialogue with your faculty examiner, who is responsible for composing the questions for your individual field exam and participating in your oral examination (see below for details). You will choose your own examiners from among the department’s regular faculty, subject to their willingness to serve and the approval of the department. It is a good idea to identify your examiners well in advance and to discuss with them their expectations regarding the exam and the material under study. Field preparation at the M.A. level, in addition to course work, may require outside reading. Field preparation at the Ph.D. level will require extensive reading above and beyond course work. Therefore, you should consult your prospective examiners as early as possible to find out what they expect. Your choice of faculty examiners is an important part of your program, as is some diversity in your selection of courses. Students should avoid taking too much course work with one or two professors, especially in fields where a number of alternatives is available.

3. **Mixture of Seminars and Lecture Courses.** Your program should be based primarily on graduate seminars. These are intended to be the heart of the graduate program. Reading seminars (500-level) emphasize reading in the professional literature and analytical discussion of interpretive material. Research seminars (600-level) help students develop essential investigative, interpretive, and writing skills. Reading and research seminars are the best place to meet and interact with other graduate students. The 400-level lecture courses are useful to acquire basic knowledge of a field; in some cases they are essential to cover specialties not covered in seminars. However, because these are primarily undergraduate classes, they should be used sparingly in your graduate
program. In the M.A. program, no more than 12 of the 30 hours can be taken at the 400-
level. In the Ph.D. program, no more than 24 hours of course work (including applicable
M.A. credits) may be earned in 400-level courses. Within the 400-level category,
Special Topics courses (Hist 498) are limited to 9 hours for the M.A. program and 9
hours (above applicable M.A. credits) for the Ph.D.

**Policy on Independent Study Courses (History 636 and 656)**
The department limits the use of independent study courses (History 636) to circumstances
where they are necessary for a student’s program and when no reasonable alternative exists. The
reason for this policy is the necessity of maintaining regular course offerings as well as belief in
the importance of encouraging an atmosphere of intellectual exchange among students.

Nevertheless, the department recognizes legitimate uses of 636 work and believes that each case
should be judged on its merits. Students contemplating taking a 636 class should consult with
the Director of Graduate Studies and then obtain the agreement of the faculty member in
question. If both are favorable, a permit will be issued. Guidelines are as follows:

1. Independent study should not be scheduled when a regular class–either in the
   same semester or soon after–can serve as a viable alternative.

2. Independent studies should not be used as a solution to students’ time-scheduling
   problems, nor are they appropriate simply because a given professor is not
   available in a given semester.

3. Within these parameters the following are the most common reasons for
   scheduling independent studies:

   A. The student needs further course work in a field in which no courses are
      being offered or in which he or she has already taken what is offered.

   B. An advanced student needs special work in a sub-field not otherwise
      covered.

History 656 (independent research) is used to fulfill formal research requirements at the M.A. or
Ph.D. levels, in accordance with the procedures discussed below.

**Course Load**
The Graduate School defines a normal full-time load as 9 hours per semester (fall or spring).
Students without assistantships may take course loads between 3 and 15 hours. Because of the
demanding requirements of history graduate courses, we recommend that full-time students in
our program register for 9 credits per semester.

Graduate students on assistantships in the History Department are required to enroll for credit in
9 hours of graduate level course work each fall and spring semester. This requirement is more
stringent than the minimum required by the Graduate School. A summer graduate assistantship
requires registration for 6 hours. In special cases, reductions of up to 3 hours may be requested.
in writing, with accompanying justification. Such requests must be approved, in advance of the start of the term for which the reduction is being sought, by the Director of Graduate Studies and the faculty members of the department’s Graduate Committee.

**Incompletes**

Certain research courses, notably History 599 (master’s thesis) and 699 (doctoral dissertation), receive automatic grades of incomplete every semester until a final grade is received for the entire research project. In all other cases you are expected to complete your course work and receive a final grade by the end of the semester. If special circumstances prevent this completion, the instructor may, at her or his discretion, grant a grade of I (“incomplete”) and file a statement in the Graduate History Office indicating what work still needs to be completed.

You must complete this work by the end of the following term in order to receive a grade in the course. If you fail to complete the work by the designated deadline, the instructor can request a one-term extension, which must be approved by the Graduate School. However, Graduate School approval is given sparingly, especially if the reason is not health-related, that is, involves prolonged illness of the student or the professor. After that, if the grade has not been changed you will receive an IN on your transcript signifying “permanent incomplete.” This means that you can never complete the course and if you need the credit you will have to enroll in it a second time. **Please note the following important rules:**

1. You are expected to remove an incomplete within one term. For this purpose summer counts the same as a semester; thus an incomplete issued in May expires in August. Moreover, whether the work is completed or not, within the period allowed for resolution the instructor may elect to assign a grade based upon work performed by the student thus far.

2. An instructor may request a one-term extension from the Graduate School, but must provide a reason for the request (such as prolonged illness of the student). Only one such extension is permitted. If the instructor does not make such a request, or if the Associate Dean of the Graduate School does not approve the request, the temporary incomplete will become a permanent incomplete instead of being extended.

3. An unresolved incomplete becomes a permanent IN which cannot be changed.

4. The Graduate Committee considers that a student who begins to accumulate incompletes, especially grades of IN, is not making adequate progress toward the degree. For a graduate assistant, such a record will jeopardize assistantship renewal.

5. A temporary incomplete (I) on your record could render you ineligible to graduate.
Student-at-Large and Transfer Credit

If you are enrolled as a student-at-large before being admitted to the History program, you can, with department permission, count up to 15 hours of graduate course work taken as an SAL towards your M.A. and/or Ph.D. degree, provided the courses fit your program. If you transferred from another school you can count up to 15 hours of graduate course work, provided it fits your NIU program. However, the combined total of student-at-large hours and transfer hours may not exceed 15. The same rules apply to Ph.D. students except that they can count 30 applicable hours from their master’s degree towards their Ph.D. degree. Thus for Ph.D. students the 15 allowable transfer or SAL hours are beyond the master’s degree.

Academic Standing

To remain in good academic standing you have to maintain a 3.00 GPA in all graduate course work. This includes courses taken as a student-at-large but not work transferred to NIU from other institutions. Please note that this includes all graduate courses taken at NIU regardless of when they were taken and regardless of whether they were needed for your history program. Thus if you took a graduate course in nursing before you entered the history program and received a grade of C, you would have to earn an A in the same number of hours to maintain your B average.

If you fail to maintain a 3.00 average the Graduate School will send notification that you have been placed on academic probation. You must then bring your GPA back up to 3.00 by the time you have completed 9 additional hours of graduate work. If you fail to do this, you will be academically dismissed. Academic dismissal is also automatic if you receive 6 semester hours of D, F, or U ( Unsatisfactory, for courses graded S/U) or WF (Withdrawal/Failing).

If you are enrolled in a graduate degree program and interrupt your enrollment for two years or more (that is, are not enrolled during 24 consecutive months), you must reapply for admission to the Graduate School and will be subject to the program requirements as they stand at the time of readmission.

Research Skills Options

Both the M.A. and the Ph.D. have research skill requirements that are described in the sections on those degrees. This section explains how the requirements are met.

1. Average Proficiency in a Foreign Language

You can demonstrate average proficiency in a foreign language by passing a translation examination. Arrangements are made through the Office of Testing Services in Adams Hall 128. You should note that a fee (currently $40) is charged for this service. You should anticipate an interval of approximately six weeks between registration and availability of the test and another two weeks between administration of the test and the reporting of results. Exams are available in languages taught by the faculty of the NIU Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures. Some fields of study may require demonstration of proficiency in languages not available through the NIU Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures. In those cases, arrangements must be made with your history faculty advisor.
For the translation examination you select a history book (or a series of articles) of at least 200 pages in the language. Bring it to the Director of Graduate Studies who will issue a form certifying that it is an appropriate selection for your discipline. Then deliver the book and the form to the Office of Testing Services and apply to take the exam. They will submit the book to an anonymous examiner from the Foreign Languages Department, who will copy a passage of approximately 600 words and return the book to you. At the exam, you are asked to translate the passage into acceptable English, using a dictionary, in a period of 90 minutes. The exam is graded pass or fail, and you are notified by mail.

Alternatively, you can satisfy the average proficiency foreign language requirement by successfully completing one of the intensive eight-week summer courses in reading French, German, or Spanish offered by the NIU Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures. They are offered as two consecutive half-session courses of four weeks each, and enrollment is by permit only. Although intended only for graduate students, they carry undergraduate course numbers (e.g., FLFR 381 and 382 Reading Expository French I and II, for the French sequence) and hence cannot be taken for graduate credit for inclusion in a degree program. Their purpose is merely to demonstrate a skill. The grading system is S/U (satisfactory or unsatisfactory). A student achieving a grade of S in the first course is allowed to take the second course, and a student achieving a grade of S at the end of that second part is deemed by the Graduate School to have demonstrated average proficiency in the language.

You cannot fulfill the proficiency requirement simply by having taken an ordinary two or three year sequence of undergraduate language courses. Occasionally a course similar to the summer courses for graduate students offered at NIU—one that is intensive in format and emphasizes the development of reading proficiency—can be substituted. In this case, the History Department, NIU’s Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, and the Graduate School must evaluate the course and agree to the substitution.

2. **High Proficiency in a Foreign Language**

   The procedure for setting up an examination for high proficiency is the same as for an average proficiency translation exam, described above. But the content of a high proficiency exam is different in several respects: The exam (which currently costs $60) is three hours in length instead of 90 minutes, and it consists of two parts. The first part is a short (150-200 word) passage that you are asked to translate rather literally. The second is a much longer extract of perhaps 3-5 pages, for which you are asked to provide a “substantive summary” in English, i.e., the gist of it, rather than a literal translation. The text that serves as the basis for the exam should be more demanding. Whereas a survey text would be appropriate for an average proficiency translation exam, a specialized monograph or scholarly journal (200 pages or more) should be selected for the high
3. Research Proficiency in Quantitative Methods

Currently the Graduate School requires that students pass two graduate-level courses in quantitative methods. For graduate students in History, this would typically include earning a grade of B or better in History 501 Quantitative Methods for Historical Social Analysis (which has as its prerequisite STAT 208 or STAT 301 or consent of department). If you are considering using average proficiency in quantitative methods to meet a skills requirement, consult with the Director of Graduate Studies to determine relevant courses. You will need to ascertain the department’s plans for History 501 in coming semesters and may wish to discuss possible alternatives.

High proficiency in quantitative methods is a theoretical possibility that has never been tried in the History Department. The criteria for meeting such a requirement will be established by the department on an individual basis when and if the need arises. The option is appropriate only for an exceptional student planning extensive use of quantitative methods in research, and it would have to be approved by the student’s advisors and by the Graduate Committee.

V. THE MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE

The master’s program offers broad field preparation for students interested in extending their undergraduate knowledge, seeking jobs in historically-related fields like archival work, museum work, editing, or consulting, and seeking teaching positions at the secondary or community college level. The degree consists of at least 30 hours of course work divided between a primary field (18-24 hours) and a secondary field (6-12 hours). The Graduate History Office will give you a checklist of requirements and a form for recording your course work so that you can monitor your progress as you go along. A copy of this same form will be submitted later by the Director of Graduate Studies to the Graduate School as your official Program of Courses.

Fields

The primary and secondary fields are offered in the histories of Asia, ancient, medieval, and modern Europe (including Britain); Latin America; Russia, and the United States. The secondary field may also be an approved field outside of history; however, not more than 6 hours of the required 30 can be devoted to courses outside the department.

Master’s students devote most of their work to the primary field. This is the field in which you will do your research project and take your comprehensive exams. Choosing it is therefore of central importance because your choice will determine what courses you will take, what research skills you will have to master, and what kind of research sequence you will enter.

The secondary field is defined as 6 to 12 hours of course work in a field other than the primary field, completed with a grade of B or better.
**Research Credits**

The program requires all students to take 9 hours of master’s research, at least 3 of which are in a formal research seminar, and to complete a “master’s essay” which is placed on file in the History Department Graduate Office for public consultation. A formal master’s thesis is not required, but students wanting to undertake a thesis may do so. The difference between a master’s essay and a thesis is that the essay is thought of as comparable to a publishable article in length, whereas a thesis is usually longer and divided into chapters. In addition, the thesis is drawn up in accordance with the monitored guidelines set by the Graduate School, and is bound and placed in the library. The essay, in contrast, is monitored solely by the History Department. Getting a thesis approved is thus a longer, more complicated process comparable to the submission of a doctoral dissertation. Either research project must result in a polished, well-organized statement making an original contribution to knowledge based on rigorous primary research.

The 9 hours of research are scheduled in various ways depending on circumstances. You should discuss the timing of your research with advisors as soon as possible. As a general rule, formal research work should commence as soon as practical, commensurate with the student having demonstrated the necessary special proficiencies.

1. In **United States history** the faculty have developed a “year-long” research seminar (History 610) for master’s students. Three hours of credit are taken in the first semester and 6 hours in the second. The nine hours of credit are awarded when the course is completed. The course, taught in rotation by one faculty member each year, devotes the spring semester to discussion of research methods and to finding a topic: the fall semester concentrates on writing and criticizing the finished product. A grade of “S” or “U” is given in the first semester, and a letter grade (“A,” “B,” etc.) is given for the final paper in the second semester. Full-time students will normally begin this seminar in the second semester of their first year of M.A. work. The U.S. history faculty have agreed that each student should be encouraged to consult with those faculty members who are experts in the subject of the paper and that topics in the year-long seminar will not be limited to the research field of the instructor. It is also their policy that M.A. students should normally take the seminar in their first year of graduate work. However, exceptions may be appropriate if a student’s undergraduate history background is especially weak or if a student is not taking a full load of course work.

Students in the year-long research seminar may not use the research paper for credit for History 599A (M.A. thesis). However, students wishing to combine credits from a year-long seminar with a master’s thesis may do so by enrolling in the year-long research seminar in the second semester for only 3 hours credit and concurrently or subsequently enrolling for 3 hours in M.A. thesis. They would then enroll in at least 1 hour of 599A each semester until the thesis is complete. The Graduate School requires that all theses must have an oral defense.
2. **Students in fields other than U.S. history** do not have a year-long seminar, and consequently must register in a semester-long research seminar (when available) plus 6 more hours of “independent research” (the History 656 series). If no non-U.S. research seminar is available, students in fields outside U.S. history satisfy their research requirement by taking 9 hours of 656. It is highly advisable for the 9 hours to be devoted to a single, major research project. But in special cases the 9 hours may include several research papers or other research-related activities.

Students wishing to write a master’s thesis can do so by enrolling in the formal research seminar and then taking 6 hours of History 599A. It is advisable to register for thesis research (599A) **after** taking the seminar since students enrolling in 599A are required to maintain continuous enrollment until they get their degree.

**Summary of M.A. Credit Hour Requirements**
[See appendix for M.A. Program checklist]

*At least 30 credit hours total
*18-24 credit hours must be in the student’s primary field, with
  - 9-15 hours of coursework
  - 9 hours of research
*6-12 hours must be in student’s secondary field (with a grade of “B” or better)
*0-6 hours may be in approved coursework outside of the primary and secondary fields

**NOTE:** No more than 6 of these hours may be taken outside the department. **At least 9 of the 30 hours must be in History reading seminars (any field).**

**Language and Research Tool Requirement**
M.A. candidates, except those with primary fields in United States or British history who do not intend to apply for admission to the Ph.D. program, are required to demonstrate average proficiency in either an approved foreign language or quantitative methods. The tool selected should be consistent with the student’s research interests and must have the approval of the appropriate advisors. The various ways of fulfilling this requirement are described above on pages 9-10.

This skills requirement should not be taken lightly. Progress toward fulfilling this requirement is one of the major criteria considered by the Graduate Committee in deciding whether a student applying for assistantship renewal is making “normal progress” toward the degree. Admission to the Ph.D. program is contingent on prior demonstration of at least average proficiency in one skill.

**M.A. Comprehensive Examination**
Successful completion of the M.A. comprehensive examination is a requirement of the degree. This exam is typically scheduled only after 1) you have satisfactorily completed a minimum of 24 semester hours of course work, and 2) your research paper (or thesis) is in an advanced state of completion. The director of your major research project may require that your research paper
(or thesis) be approved in principle prior to the scheduling of the comprehensive examination. The student may opt to take the comprehensive examination after s/he has fulfilled all other degree requirements. However, Graduate School regulations specify that a student must be registered for one or more credit hours during the semester in which a comprehensive examination is taken for any graduate degree.

The M.A. examining committee consists of two professors from your primary field of study who will prepare your exam questions and evaluate your essays. It is the student’s responsibility to identify appropriate faculty members and ascertain their willingness to serve on that committee. (Graduate School regulations specify that every master’s degree examining committee consist of three examiners. For the purpose of meeting that requirement, the Director of Graduate Studies typically serves as the third faculty member for the report that is sent to the Graduate School.)

Early in the semester in which you plan to take your comprehensive examinations, and at least two weeks before graduation applications for that semester are due in the Graduate School, inform the Director of Graduate Studies of your intention, indicating which two examiners you would like to have on your committee. The Director of Graduate Studies has the right to approve or modify your choices.

You are encouraged to consult as soon as possible with your prospective committee members on the nature and scope of the examination. You may also find it useful to consult previous exams on file in Zulauf 615 in order to get an idea of the types of questions that have been asked in the past in specific fields. At this time you should also inform your examiners and the Director of Graduate Studies whether you intend to apply to the Ph.D. Program after completing the M.A. degree. You will receive confirmation in writing of the examiners chosen and the date of the exam.

Each of your two examiners will prepare a written exam for which you will write for no longer than two hours. You will thus take two two-hour written examinations. These can be scheduled for anytime during business hours over the course of three consecutive working days. Since the questions will be deposited in advance, you will arrange with the graduate secretary exactly when you will sit for the exams, subject to the availability of an examining room. (Exams are usually taken in 718 or 615 Zulauf.) You may choose to handwrite your essays or use a computer. When you have completed all four hours, the entire exam will be given to each examiner to read. The two examiners will then consult and arrive at a joint assessment of your overall performance. Your examination will be judged as “pass,” “fail,” or “pass with a recommendation for admission to the Ph.D. program.” A candidate who fails the examination may, with the consent of his or her committee, take the examination a second time after an appropriate time interval has elapsed. A second failure is final.

Oral Exam. At the discretion of either the examining committee or the candidate, the written exam may be followed by an oral exam of approximately one hour, to be scheduled about one week after the evaluation of the written exam has been conveyed to the candidate. If held, the oral exam may range over the answers presented on the written exam and may include reference to the research paper or thesis.
Waiver of Ph.D. Qualifying Examination
If an M.A. candidate receives a recommendation from the comprehensive examining committee
for admission to the Ph.D. program and is actually admitted, the M.A. comprehensive exam will,
if the examination committee so stipulates, serve as the Ph.D. qualifying exam.

Program of Courses
When you formally apply for graduation, or at the time you schedule your comprehensive exams,
whichever comes first (usually it is the application to graduate), the Director of Graduate Study
will submit an official program of courses to the Graduate School. It will list the courses you
have completed and those in which you are currently enrolled, indicating how you will have
fulfilled each of the requirements for the degree. Please note that you will not be allowed to
graduate until all the courses listed have been successfully completed. The approved program
must be signed by the student, the academic advisor (usually the chair of the examining
committee), and the Director of Graduate Studies.

Applying to Graduate
Early in the semester you intend to graduate, you have to submit a form applying to graduate
along with a non-refundable graduation fee (currently $35). These go to the Graduate School,
but the form must be signed by the Director of Graduate Studies, so it is best to come first to
the History Graduate Office. Please note that the deadline for applying falls very early in the
semester. It is listed each semester in the Graduate School Calendar. If you fail to graduate that
semester, your application and fee are extended automatically to the next graduation date.

Deposit of Master’s Research Paper
Before graduating, all master’s candidates are required to deposit a clean copy of their master’s
paper or papers in the Graduate History Office. No particular form is required, and the
department will accept copies with professors’ comments on them if they are relatively clean.
However, we would like to have the best and most recent version of the paper. If you revise the
paper after completing your research seminar, you should submit the revised version. Students
completing master’s theses do not have to meet this requirement because Graduate School
procedures provide for a bound copy to be deposited in the library and another to be returned to
the History Department.

Limitation of Time
You must fulfill all requirements for the degree within a period of six consecutive years from the
first course on your graduate program of courses, including transfer courses. (Example, a
student taking the first course in fall 2003 would have to graduate by August 2009.) This time
limit is carefully monitored by the Graduate School. If a course does not fall within the six-year
period you may retake it, with departmental approval; substitute another course of equivalent
semester hours; or discuss with the Director of Graduate Studies the possibility of having the
course “revalidated,” a process by which you demonstrate current knowledge of the material to
the satisfaction of appropriate faculty.
VI. MASTER OF ARTS CONCENTRATION IN HISTORICAL ADMINISTRATION

This concentration is designed to meet the needs of students seeking special preparation for careers in public and private historical agencies, archives, museums and historical societies, and research and consulting firms. A student pursuing this program must complete 24 of the usual 30 semester hours from the traditional M.A. degree, but is not required to complete a 6-hour secondary field. The remaining 12 hours (6 from the secondary field plus 6 hours beyond the 30) shall normally be distributed as follows:

Required courses (6-9 hours):
   HIST 500, Internship in Historical Administration (3-6)
   and either
   HIST 492, Principles of Historical Administration (3)
   or
   ART 465, Introduction to Museum Studies (3)

Elective Courses (3-6)

Recommended Electives
   HIST 497, Principles and Uses of Oral History (3)
   ANTH 462, Museum Methods (3)
   ART 554, Museum Administration (3)
   ART 555, Curatorial Practice (3)
   ART 556, Museum Exhibitions and Interpretation (3)
   ART 557, Museum Education (3)

Other Available Electives:
   ART 493, History of Architecture III: From 1900 (3)
   ART 498, History of Architecture II: 1400-1900 (3)
   ART 496A, History of Decorative Arts: Furniture (3)
   ART 496B, History of Decorative Arts: Minor Arts and Crafts (3)
   ART 596, Studies in American Art (3)
   COMS 450X, Instructional Video I (3)
   COMS 457, The Documentary Tradition (3)
   COMS 559X, Instructional Television II (3)

Students in the M.A. degree program taking the Concentration in Historical Administration must satisfactorily complete a written two-part comprehensive examination in a traditional major field and also complete a report or project related to the internship and have it approved by the department’s Director of the Concentration in Historical Administration.
VII. THE DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN HISTORY

(The following is a description of the revised program in effect for doctoral level students who have entered the program since 15 May 2002. If you are pursuing the Ph.D. under the earlier set of requirements, consult the catalog under which you entered the program and the Director of Graduate Studies to determine what remains to be done to complete your degree.)

The doctorate is the highest degree available to students of history and, ordinarily, their entree into the historical profession. The doctorate is an appropriate degree for students seeking teaching, administrative, or research positions in universities, colleges, and community colleges, foundations, government agencies, and major libraries and archives. It is appropriate for those who want to develop their historical understanding to the fullest in a rigorous professional atmosphere.

Doctoral students complete 90 hours of course work, including applicable hours from the master’s program. A maximum of 36 of these hours may be counted for dissertation writing and research (History 699); the rest are spent in graduate seminars, directed readings courses, and/or applicable 400-level courses.

**Limit on 400-level courses:** For students who take all of their graduate courses (both M.A. and Ph.D.) at NIU, the total of 400-level courses applied toward the Ph.D. cannot exceed 24 hours. For students who apply transfer credit toward the doctoral degree, the sum of credit for NIU 400-level courses plus one half of the number of hours transferred may not exceed 24 semester hours.

It is expected that a substantial part of the students’ training will be autonomous. In addition to formal course work, students are expected to pursue their chosen interests through sustained and systematic reading of relevant literature. Doctoral students will establish their ability to conduct original historical research in their dissertations. They will demonstrate through their candidacy exams that they have acquired the knowledge needed to teach at the college level or to function as a professional historian in other contexts.

**Admission**

Because of the length of time and the high level of knowledge and analytical skill necessary to complete the doctoral program, the Graduate Committee scrutinizes Ph.D. applications very carefully. Students enrolled in the master’s program in History at NIU are not automatically admitted to the Ph.D. program upon completion of their master’s degree. If you are in the master’s program at NIU and wish to be considered for admission to our doctoral program, you will need to complete a new application form and submit it to the Graduate School along with three new letters of recommendation and an application essay. You are not required to submit a new transcript or GRE scores because these are already on file.

It is possible, indeed desirable, to apply to the Ph.D. program while you are still completing your master’s work. A good time to get your application in order is the semester you are taking your comprehensive examinations. Course work taken this last semester beyond the minimum M.A. requirements may be applicable to your Ph.D. program, so make a point of taking appropriate courses. This is also a good time to work on language skills. Students who earn an M.A. at NIU
must satisfy applicable foreign language requirements before being considered for admission to the Ph.D. program.

Your early application will facilitate the earliest possible decision on admission, but the Graduate Committee may not act on your case until the results are in from your master’s work. In addition to the formal requirements listed in our application literature, several factors are important for admission:

- The recommendation of your M.A. comprehensive examination committee regarding your admission to the doctoral program. However, a positive recommendation by the committee does not in itself guarantee admission.

- The success of your M.A. research. Your M.A. research paper will be reviewed by the committee and its quality will be an important factor in admission.

- The state of your language or quantitative methods skills. Students will be expected to have passed at least one skills requirement and provide explanation of how you intend to fulfill the remaining skills requirements. Weakness in this area will jeopardize your chances of admission.

- Your proposed fields of study and the probable area of your dissertation. A crucial consideration will be whether the History Department has faculty expertise in your proposed field of study. Relevant faculty members will be consulted for their appraisal of your application and Master’s level work. Furthermore, your ability to master any additional required research skills (e.g., Russian for Russian history) will be considered.

**Ph.D. Qualifying Examination**

In some cases, students are conditionally admitted to the Ph.D. program. These students may be required to take a qualifying examination before the end of their first semester of coursework at NIU. The purpose of the qualifying examination is to assess a student’s preparation for doctoral-level work, especially dissertation research. Students who received their M.A. degree from NIU will normally be exempt from the qualifying examination unless their M.A. examination committee stipulated that they should be required to take it. The Director of Graduate Studies also frequently waives the qualifying examination requirement for students who earned their M.A. degrees elsewhere. This decision will be based on your previous academic record, your performance in your first semester of doctoral work, and the recommendation of your advisor.

The examination, if required, is normally conducted by a committee of three faculty members representing potential candidacy examination fields. The examination is oral and lasts for approximately an hour. The committee may question you broadly on topics related to these fields and their literature and more closely on topics you have studied or researched in your previous graduate work. The committee may also ask about your plans for a dissertation topic. This is not considered a “field” exam, but rather an assessment of your scholarly aptitude, capacity for critical analysis, and historical knowledge to date. Following the examination, your committee will consult and reach a decision. The committee chair will inform you of the outcome at that time.
**Academic Advisor**
The Graduate Director will appoint a provisional academic advisor for you when you enter the Ph.D. program. This advisor will be a member of the graduate faculty and will be responsible for guiding your selection of courses; Ph.D. fields, and field examiners (see next section) until you are prepared to select a regular advisor.

**Choosing Ph.D. Fields**
Doctoral students admitted since 15 May 2002 choose five fields in which they will gain mastery and be examined. Students must pass written and oral candidacy exams. The selection of fields is crucial because it determines your course of study, the type of historian you will become, and ultimately the kinds of jobs for which you will be able to apply. It will also strongly influence which research skills you will need to acquire.

Students are encouraged to discuss field selection with their provisional advisor and with appropriate faculty members upon entering the program and to make selections early enough to plan a coherent program of coursework. You should make at least a tentative decision regarding fields before the end of your first semester in the Ph.D. program.

In selecting examination fields, you are choosing not a set of courses but rather a subject matter over which you will be examined by a specific faculty member. The choice of a field also involves the choice of an examiner or examiners. Your choices are limited by the availability of appropriate faculty. For some fields there will be only one possible examiner; for others, you may have to choose among several possibilities. At least half of the members of the examination committee must be senior members of the graduate faculty.

A proposed list of fields and examiners should be prepared by the student in conjunction with the provisional advisor according to the guidelines for field distribution listed below. Any departures from these guidelines must be justified when the list is submitted for approval.

The exact character of each field will be determined on an individual basis, following consultation between the student and the proposed examiner. No faculty member is obliged to agree to a field desired by a student. No one faculty member can examine a student in more than two fields. There are no specific courses or hour requirements attached to any of these fields. Students and their examiner will determine the appropriate means of preparing for each examination. [For a list of sample fields by faculty name, see Appendix.]

No later than the beginning of the student’s third semester of full-time Ph.D. study (and preferably by the end of the second semester), students are required to submit a list of their proposed exam fields and examiners *in writing* to the Director of Graduate Studies, who will present them to the Graduate Committee for approval. (A form for this purpose is available from the Graduate Secretary). Once approval is received, any subsequent changes to fields or examiners must be submitted to the Graduate Committee for approval.

A member of the examination committee will become your principal advisor and chair of your examination committee. That faculty member will typically be the prospective dissertation
director and must be a senior member of the graduate faculty. Your provisional advisor may, but
does not have to be, a member of your examination committee.

**Guidelines for Field Selection**

Your five fields should not only make sense intellectually but also be conducive to success in
your chosen career. The pursuit of individual interests should be tempered with practicality. To
discourage students from selecting programs of study that are either too fragmented or
overspecialized, the department has adopted the following guidelines:

1. One field must be outside the candidate’s chronological focus (focus roughly defined as a
century or less).
2. One field must be outside the candidate’s geographical focus (geographical focus defined
as a continent or smaller).
3. One field must have a topical focus. An approved non-history or interdisciplinary field
would satisfy this thematic field requirement.
4. One field must be chronologically pre-1800 OR in terms of geography neither European
nor American.
5. Any one field cannot be used to satisfy more than two of the preceding four criteria.

**Teaching Field**

One of the five fields may be designated as a teaching field. For a teaching field, students are
expected to design and write a proposal for an undergraduate course at the survey or upper-
division level outside the field of the prospective dissertation. The selection of a teaching field
should be done in close consultation with a faculty advisor/examiner. In lieu of a written
examination, and as evidence of mastery of a teaching field, students will prepare a syllabus and
explanatory materials to submit to their faculty examiner(s). Such materials will explain the
basic decisions and approach or methodologies that inform the syllabus: the general topic and its
significance to the undergraduate curriculum, periodization, major themes, weekly readings,
writing assignments, use of audio-visual aids, or other classroom technology. Students will also
be required to submit an annotated bibliography intended to serve as the basis for course lectures
and teaching. It is expected that students should be as familiar with the literature of their
teaching field as they would be for a conventional examination field; they are simply
demonstrating their knowledge in a different way.

Students may want to use the teaching field as an opportunity to broaden the range of their
teaching expertise; in this case, they are encouraged to choose a teaching field significantly
different from their other examination fields.

**Ph.D. Candidacy Examination**

1. **Written Exams**

Ph.D. students must pass written and oral candidacy examinations. These examinations require
you to demonstrate professional competence in the five fields selected. Your examiners will
assess your knowledge of these fields, grasp of interpretive problems, understanding of relevant
historical works, and acquaintance with bibliographic and research sources important to the
scholarship of these fields. In preparing for your exams, you are encouraged to consult the
materials on past exams and exam requirements that many faculty members have filed in the Graduate History Office.

Each of the exams is three hours in length. Students may take each of the five written field examinations whenever they and the examiner agree that the student is adequately prepared. A student who fails a written Ph.D. candidacy field examination will normally be permitted to take the examination a second time after an appropriate interval of time. A second failure will ordinarily be final and result in termination from the Ph.D. program in history. There are a limited number of circumstances in which a student who has failed a field examination twice may substitute a different field. Under no circumstances, however, will any student who has failed two different field examinations be allowed to continue in the doctoral program.

2. Oral Exam
When all five written examinations have been completed, there will be a two-hour oral examination, which should normally be taken no later than the fifth semester after a full-time student has entered the doctoral program. Graduate School regulations specify that a student must be registered for one or more credit hours during the semester in which a comprehensive exam (including the Ph.D. oral candidacy exam and oral defense of dissertation) for a graduate degree is taken. Therefore it may be necessary to register for one hour of History 636 (Independent Study) during the semesters in which you take your exams or have your defense. Because of the complexity involved in scheduling a Ph.D. oral candidacy examination, the department’s policy is to discourage students from taking the exam in the summer, when few faculty members are likely to be available.

At the conclusion of the oral examination the examination committee will decide whether the student has passed the candidacy examination as a whole. Upon satisfactory completion of the candidacy examination, the student will be certified to the Graduate School as a candidate for the Ph.D. degree. Such certification is contingent, however, upon prior completion of all course requirements listed on the student’s program and completion of the research skills proficiency requirement.

Ph.D. Language and Research Tool Requirement
Doctoral students must demonstrate ability in foreign languages or research tools. At minimum, the various options are: (1) average proficiency in two approved foreign languages; (2) high proficiency in one approved foreign language; or (3) average proficiency in one approved foreign language and average proficiency in quantitative methods. The various ways of fulfilling these requirements are described above, pages 9-10. The language and research tool option selected must be relevant to your fields of study and consistent with the requirements of your proposed dissertation research. It should be fulfilled as early as practical during your Ph.D. work, and must be fulfilled in order to be admitted to candidacy.

Goals to Keep in Mind
In planning your program, keep two goals in mind: develop knowledge of historical problems and literature in each examination field sufficient for teaching college-level courses; and develop as early as possible of an interesting, important, and feasible dissertation topic, along with the language, quantitative and other research skills needed to pursue it. Both goals are important. If
your aim is to publish scholarly works and teach in a research-oriented, graduate-level institution, then the attractiveness of your dissertation subject and its ultimate potential for publication will be of great importance in getting a job, although fields and teaching skill will also be very important.

**Ph.D. Research (Hist 656)**
Because of the importance of research and writing to doctoral study in history and because of the importance of identifying and developing a viable dissertation topic as early as possible, students are required to complete a minimum of 6 semester hours in Ph.D.-level research. This is normally accomplished by enrolling in History 656 (Directed Research). The student must sign up with the faculty member identified as the likely dissertation director and must conduct research relating to the proposed dissertation topic.

**Writing a Dissertation**
1. **History 699.** Once you have completed your course work and passed your candidacy exams, you should begin enrolling in History 699 (Doctoral Dissertation). By the time you graduate, you must fulfill two requirements with respect to this enrollment:
   a. complete the number of hours needed to make 90 total hours in your program (including work accepted from your master’s degree), and
   b. enroll continuously in at least one hour of 699 every term following your initial enrollment in Hist 699. Continuous registration is required by the Graduate School in the summer as well as in the fall and spring semesters. Since you can take anywhere from 1 to 15 hours of 699, it is to your advantage, if you are a graduate assistant, to take a heavy load of it while you are still on an assistantship tuition waiver. Otherwise you may want to spread the hours out over several semesters.

Remember, however, that you cannot avoid meeting these two requirements of 90 hours and continuous enrollment. All History 699 hours receive a grade of I (incomplete) until the dissertation is accepted, at which time a grade is substituted for the accumulated incompletes. The incompletes given for 699 are not subject to the regular rules regarding IN (permanent incomplete). When you have taken enough 699 hours to meet your 90 hours, you must still continue to register in it each term, including summer terms, for at least one hour until the dissertation is completed and approved. Beyond 36 hours, History 699 is taken as audit.

2. **Limitation of Time.** Writing a dissertation often takes longer than expected, so it is wise to be aware from the beginning of how much time you have to finish your degree. The Graduate School **requires you to finish all requirements for the Ph.D. degree within a period of nine years** immediately prior to your graduation. The Graduate School takes this limit very seriously. This time limit applies to all 90+ hours of graduate work on your Ph.D. program of courses. Your candidacy examination too must fall within the nine-year limit. However, the department may declare up to the oldest 30 hours exempt from the time limit, which commonly covers the bulk of the master’s degree. Also, coursework taken to complete language or research-tool requirements is typically exempted as well.

In measuring your time, remember that you will need most of your final semester for getting readers’ comments, making corrections, and producing final corrected copies of your
dissertation. The writing on your dissertation will have to be completed considerably earlier than the actual deadline. Extensions of time are granted only by the Dean of the Graduate School upon petition of the department. They are not easy to get (and may involve retaking or revalidating coursework or even, in extreme cases, retaking the candidacy exams). You should not count on having more than the nine years to finish your work.

3. **Dissertation Topic and Director.** You should have been thinking about a possible dissertation topic throughout your Ph.D. course work, and you will have completed a paper during your 6 hours of 656 (Directed Research) that leads you in that direction. As soon as you identify the general area of your topic and a faculty expert in the area willing to serve as your advisor (this will likely be the faculty member with whom you conducted your 656 research), you can consult with her or him to work out the parameters of a viable topic and determine what sources and methods will be needed to complete it. If you are not at this stage, either because previous explorations have not proved fruitful or because your interests have changed, then you should proceed immediately to identify a new topic and talk with the faculty member who can direct it.

In order to complete a dissertation you must have a faculty director qualified in the field in question who is willing to serve as your director. Most faculty members will be pleased to discuss this matter with you. However, a professor may decline to direct your work if he or she does not feel qualified in that area; does not consider the topic viable; does not have confidence in your ability to complete it satisfactorily; or already has so many advisees that s/he does not have sufficient time to provide you with appropriate direction. The department cannot guarantee you a director and cannot necessarily supply the expertise for any topic you may choose, even a viable one. It is your responsibility, therefore, to find a topic which is tenable within the resources available in our program and to convince a director that you have the talents to complete it. The chances are that you will not have any difficulty doing these things, since most faculty members are interested in directing good dissertations. The Director of Graduate Studies will be happy to discuss any problems with you and to put you in touch with appropriate faculty members.

Once you have a potential topic and prospective director, you will need to discuss the proposed topic with other faculty members who might become part of your dissertation committee. You will need to assemble a committee of your director and two additional graduate faculty members to approve your dissertation topic. The prospective director will serve as chair of this committee. The other members should be faculty who will likely serve on the subsequent dissertation defense committee. It is in your interest to enlist the best possible faculty experts—in terms of both methodology and topic -- so that you will have the benefit of well-informed and productive criticism. These same faculty members can provide guidance and advice if you encounter problems in your research.

There are no formulas for finding a good dissertation subject, and in the last analysis the search is up to you. Keep in mind that the dissertation should be based principally on primary sources and must represent a substantial contribution to knowledge based on original scholarship. Remember that your subject should meet your professional needs in terms of job applications and future publications. It should also be something that interests you deeply because you will
be devoting years of your life to its successful completion. The more you discuss possibilities with faculty experts and fellow students, the better. To get ideas and to avoid wasted effort, you should frequently consult the List of Doctoral Dissertations in History published by the American Historical Association (this is also available to AHA members in electronic form at www.theaha.org).

4. **Dissertation Proposal.** Once you have decided upon a topic and acquainted yourself with the relevant secondary literature, you will present a dissertation proposal that will be read and discussed by your committee. There is no prescribed form for the proposal, but it should give a clear and concise description of the scope of the proposed inquiry, its scholarly significance in relation to the existing literature in the field, the kinds of research to be undertaken, and the source materials that you will use. Discuss the form of the proposal with your prospective director. It will necessarily be a general statement, but it should be as precise as your present state of knowledge will permit. It is understood that at this stage you cannot know exactly where the sources will lead you and you will likely make modifications as you pursue the project. Major changes of topic will have to be approved by the committee.

5. **Proposal Defense.** With the help of the Graduate History Office, your director will arrange a meeting of an hour or so at which the committee will discuss the proposal with you. They will offer suggestions and constructive criticism. They may require revisions. When the proposal has been approved, the Director of Graduate Studies will formally nominate your director to the College and Graduate School. Approval by the deans is contingent upon the director’s senior membership on the graduate faculty.

6. **Registration with the AHA.** In an effort to help Ph.D. candidates determine how much overlap or duplication there may be in a proposed title, candidates are asked by the American Historical Association to register their dissertation titles with that organization. These are published in the List mentioned above. You will fill out a form, which the department will submit to the A.H.A. You should be sure to check the A.H.A. List to make sure your topic does not duplicate any other and, later, to make sure your entry has been published.

7. **Researching and Writing the Dissertation.** This, the hardest part of completing the degree requirements, has the fewest instructions. Give free rein to your ingenuity, methodological skill, and imagination. You should remember to keep in touch with your faculty committee and make regular progress reports to your director. Some directors prefer to read chapters as they are written; others do not. The more you consult with appropriate experts, the better off you will be. You should also take time to study the Graduate School’s Manual for Theses and Dissertations, available at the Holmes Student Center Bookstore and on the Dissertation and Thesis Office page of the Graduate School Web Site. Your finished work will have to conform to stringent formal requirements, and you can save a lot of time by being conscious of these as you take notes and write sections. If your research involves human subjects (e.g. depends upon questionnaires or interviews) you are required to receive approval from the Institutional Review Board for the project before data collection begins.
8. **Dissertation Colloquium Requirement.** Within three years of approval of your dissertation topic, you will be required to present a public colloquium on the dissertation in progress. This will typically be scheduled in the “Brown Bag Colloquium Series” held each semester in the department. The colloquium will be evaluated by your advisor and dissertation committee and must be found satisfactory in order for the candidate to continue his or her progress towards completion of the doctoral degree requirements.

9. **Dissertation Defense Committee.** When your work is nearing completion you should consult with your director and the Director of Graduate Studies about setting up a dissertation defense committee. Your committee will consist of four or five members: your director as chair, two or three other history faculty members, and one member from outside the department, chosen for her or his interest or expertise in some aspect of the dissertation topic. In addition, the Dean of the Graduate School or a designate of the Dean will serve as an ex officio, non-voting member. The committee must be approved in advance by the Dean. A majority of members of the committee must be senior members of the graduate faculty; no more than one member may be without NIU graduate faculty status. The history members will probably include those who served on your topic approval committee, although changes may be made as circumstances require. The Department nominates the defense committee and the Dean of the Graduate School approves it. Nomination cannot take place until the proposed members have signed a form indicating that they have read the dissertation and consider it ready to defend. Therefore the formal approval of the committee takes place only shortly before the defense. However, you can and should work out in advance who the members are likely to be.

10. **Deadlines and Application to Graduate.** It cannot be stressed too strongly that completing and defending a dissertation is a long, complicated process that cannot be undertaken only a few weeks before the proposed graduation date. Plan ahead and have a draft completed at least several months in advance because you will need that much time for the revisions. No later than the beginning of the semester during which you plan to defend, ask the Graduate History Office for dissertation-related deadlines of the Graduate School and History Department. Arrange to submit all dissertation versions and related materials in plenty of time to meet those deadlines. On these matters study the Manual for Theses and Dissertations carefully. As you approach the end of your writing, you will have to do a number of things within a short time. First, you will submit copies to your committee members who will determine whether you are ready to defend. Second, you must apply to graduate by a deadline that comes very early in the semester. Fill out the required form available in the Graduate History Office and pay the fee. You must then arrange for and pass the defense of your dissertation. Third, in order to set up the defense you must submit one copy of the defensible version of the dissertation and the “Request for Oral Defense” form to the Graduate School, Office of the Dean, at least two weeks prior to the dissertation defense. This is the version of the dissertation that will be given to the dean’s designee on the oral defense committee and is the version upon which the student will be examined at the oral defense.

11. **Oral Presentation and Defense of Dissertation.** The department requires the candidate to make a brief presentation of the dissertation at the beginning of the defense and to answer questions from the audience at the end. Both presentation and defense are open to the public.
The actual defense is an oral examination of approximately two hours in length. The candidate should be prepared to discuss questions relevant to the dissertation, including its thesis, organization, sources, scholarly contribution, and relationship to other work in the field. The committee may suggest or require changes.


After you have successfully completed your oral defense, you will have to prepare a post-defense version that incorporates any substantive or stylistic changes required by the defense committee. One copy of the post-defense version of the dissertation must be submitted to the Graduate School, Office of the Thesis and Dissertation Advisers. This version reflects all substantive revisions required by the examining committee. No further changes can thereafter be required by the department or initiated by the student. The Graduate School Thesis and Dissertation Advisers will not examine draft copies of dissertations. However, they may be consulted prior to the submission of a dissertation on the interpretation and application of matters in The Graduate School Manual for Thesis and Dissertations.

After the Graduate School has reviewed the post-defense version and all errors identified by the Graduate School have been corrected, you must then submit one copy of the corrected version to the Graduate School, Office of the Thesis and Dissertation Advisers. When that corrected version has been accepted, you will submit three final corrected copies. The Office of the Thesis and Dissertation Advisers will examine these copies and either declare them accepted or return them for correction and resubmission.

Plan to submit your dissertation well in advance of the relevant deadlines since the revision process can be time consuming.
Appendix 1: Sample Ph.D. Fields by Faculty:

**Atkins, Taylor**
- Japan since 1600
- Korea from the Choson Dynasty
- Colonialism
- Global History
- Oral History
- Popular Culture
- Historical Ethnomusicology

**Bowers, J.D.**
- U.S. history: Early National, Religious, Native American
- Public History
- Oceania/Pacific Islands History

**Rachel Cleves**
- Early Republic
- 19th century United States
- History of Childhood
- History of Violence
- Political Culture

**Clymer, Kenton**
- History of American Foreign Relations
- US and Asia
- US and Southeast Asia

**Djata, Sundiata**
- African American history
- West Africa
- U.S. Sport
- Modern U.S. (w/ certain thematic emphases)
- Caribbean history

**Farrell, Sean**
- Modern Britain
- Early Modern Britain
- British Empire

**Fehrenbach, Heide**
- Modern Germany
- Modern European Cultural History
- Race/Ethnicity
Feurer, Rosemary
  Labor and Working Class History
  Gender and Labor
  Race and Labor
  U.S. Protest Movements of the Late 19th thru 20th century
  Radical Left and Radical Right in the U.S.
  U.S. Political Repression of the Late 19th through 20th Century
  20th Century U.S., Especially Political Economy/Capitalist Development

Fogleman, Aaron
  Early America (to early 19th c)
  Atlantic World (1492-1860)
  Topical Fields in Religion, Migration, or Gender (transatlantic 17th –18th c emphasis)

Valerie Garver
  Medieval
  Women’s History
  Social History
  Religion

Gonzales, Michael
  Modern Latin America (c. 1800 to the present)
  Colonial Latin America (1492 to 1824)
  Modern Mexico (1810 to the present)
  Colonial Mexico (1519-1821)
  The Andean Region, modern or colonial
  Latin American Labor History
  Revolution in Modern Latin America

Anne Hanley
  Brazil
  Modern Latin America
  Economic History

Hawke, Jason
  Ancient Greece
  Ancient Rome
  Legal History (Pre-modern West)
  Literacy, Orality, and Textuality

Hoffman, Beatrix
  Modern U.S. (1880 to the present)
  Health and Medicine
  U.S. Women’s History
  Social Policy/Welfare States
  Political History
Jones, Eric
Southeast Asia (and any of its countries)
Colonialism/Imperialism
Slavery
Gender
Early Modern Europe (esp. Netherlands)

Kyvig, David
United States constitutional history (since 1860)
United States history since 1920 (subfields 1920-1945 or since 1960)

Mogren, Eric
Twentieth Century US
US Environmental
Western US

Posadas, Barbara
Immigration and Ethnicity in American history (inc. Immigration policy; Asian American history)
U.S. Social/Urban history (incl. History of Chicago; Ethnicity and Race)
Women and Gender in U.S. history (incl. Ethnicity and Race; Social history of U.S. women)
U.S. 19th and 20th Centuries

Schmidt, Jim
Nineteenth-Century U.S.
U.S. South (19th c)
Law and Society (U.S., 19th c)
U.S. Legal History

Smith, Harvey
France in the age of the French Revolution, 1750-1815
Modern France (19th-20th centuries)
European Social/Labor 19th century through 1939

Worobec, Christine
Imperial Russia/Soviet Union
Peasants
Women and Gender
Popular Orthodoxy
Medicine/Psychiatry
Economic Development
Government reform