

Digital Handbook: About the Master of Arts in History

2020-2021

Contact: Michael Meng, Graduate Coordinator

About the Master of Arts

The program offers courses in all areas of historical study, consistent with our faculty's specialties, but the program's strengths are in the history of the United States (particularly the American South) and in British history. The M.A. in history has two objectives that aim to prepare students for history-related careers in teaching, public or government service, law, historical editing, archival management, and business: 1) to increase the student's knowledge of the areas of history in which he/she wishes to specialize; and 2) to provide the student with skills for performing historical research, analyzing the sources and information gathered, and writing results in an acceptable scholarly essay or thesis.

The student entering the graduate program must be advised on his/her coursework by the graduate program coordinator. New students should contact the graduate coordinator by phone or email to discuss this soon after they have been admitted. Consultation with the graduate coordinator should continue for the duration of the program.

Registration for courses must be done according to regulations and procedures set by the office of the Registrar. For information, see the Registrar's website.

Degree Requirements

The M.A. in history requires 30 credits in courses numbered 6000 or above that must be divided as follows:

1. Three credits in Historiography (HIST 8810).
2. Three credits in the Research Workshop (HIST 8900).
3. A minimum of twelve additional credits in courses numbered between 8000 and 8940 (excluding 8900 and 8910).
4. A minimum of six elective credits in graduate courses selected with the approval of the coordinator of the graduate program.
5. A minimum of six credits in graduate thesis research (HIST 8910).

Additionally, the student must write a thesis acceptable to the department and must demonstrate reading knowledge of a foreign language (see VII below). A final examination, which may be written or oral or a combination of the two forms, is required of all candidates.

Full-time graduate students must carry 12 hours each semester. Those holding assistantships must carry 9 hours each semester. The student must maintain a cumulative "B" average in all graduate-level courses (6000 level or above). Students who fail to meet these requirements become ineligible for graduation and are placed on academic probation by the Graduate School. The probationary status remains in effect until 9 additional semester hours of graduate credit have been attempted and the "B" average restored. A student's receiving a grade of incomplete ("I") in any course is discouraged, especially for someone holding a graduate assistantship (see section "X" below). With the approval of the graduate program coordinator, a student may take graduate-level courses outside the history curriculum, but normally not more than two such courses.

Courses

Courses Numbered 8000 and Above

These courses include seminars that are designed to provide training in historical research and writing. Some may be repeated for credit with the approval of the graduate program coordinator. Other courses at

the 8000-level include archival management and historical editing. HIST 8850 ("Independent Study") allows a student to undertake critical study of a historical topic, selected according to the needs of the student and with the approval of the graduate program coordinator. HIST 8850 cannot be repeated more than twice for credit towards graduation. It counts as a 6000-level course and cannot substitute for 8000-level courses.

Courses Numbered 6000 to 7990

Courses numbered 6000–699 are courses in U.S., African, Latin American, ancient, British, early and modern European, diplomatic, social, comparative, and legal history. The 6000-level courses also include studies in the history of ideas and of science and technology. The enrollment of each 6000-level course will not exceed five students. Courses numbered 7000–7990 are designed for candidates for the Master of Education degree.

Assistantships

Applicants for graduate assistantships must demonstrate superior ability on the GRE and in their work for the B.A. degree. Decisions on the awarding of assistantships are made by the department's Graduate Committee. The committee normally makes the awards by March 15 of each year for the subsequent fall semester. During the award cycle, all applicants to the program are assessed for their potential as assistants, as are all students without funding who are currently enrolled in the program.

The graduate coordinator will hold an orientation session for new teaching assistants during the week preceding the first day of fall-semester classes.

Appointments to assistantships are normally made for one year, with renewal based on satisfactory performance. Nevertheless, each assistant's academic performance and work as an assistant shall be reviewed at the end of every semester by the graduate program coordinator. In cases of demonstrated incompetence and/or malfeasance, as judged by the Graduate Committee, the department may discontinue an assistantship after a single semester. Assistantships may also be granted under particular conditions, such as for a single semester due to budgetary limitations. All reappointments are contingent on satisfactory performance as a student and graduate assistant, but other considerations, notably the situation of the budget for graduate assistants and the quality of applicants for first-time appointment, may influence department decisions.

Satisfactory performance as an assistant means appropriately professional performance of the assigned duties noted below. The department strongly discourages assistants from accepting major employment outside the department.

At all times assistants should remember that they are representatives of the department to undergraduate students and others in the university community and therefore should act and present themselves accordingly. Assistants are also expected to participate in the department-sponsored programs and lectures, including the department seminars.

Satisfactory performance as a graduate assistant means maintenance of timely progress toward receiving the degree. This includes continuing registration in accordance with the regulations for seminar, course, and thesis work as noted above in this Handbook. Assistants must enroll for a minimum of 9 credit hours each semester.

Assistants who receive a grade of lower than "B" in any graduate course, or assistants who have been placed by the Graduate School on academic probation, will have their assistantships terminated. The assistant, before taking a grade of incomplete ("I"), must discuss the matter with and receive the permission of the graduate program coordinator. Receiving an "I" is discouraged; the carrying of two simultaneous grades of "I" will normally be construed as unsatisfactory progress toward the degree and may be cause for termination of the assistantship.

Duties of Graduate Assistants

Graduate assistants work 20 hours per week in the department. They mainly grade papers and otherwise assist professors in freshman-level courses; a few of their hours are also given to research and other similar duties for department faculty. The graduate program coordinator assigns the graduate assistants to the supervising professor whereupon the latter is in charge of assigning particular duties within the guidelines noted below. Except in cases where these guidelines have been violated demonstrably, the Graduate Committee will not ordinarily hear grievances which individual assistants may have against the judgment or policies of supervising professors.

The Graduate Committee and department chair have approved the following guidelines for graduate assistants serving solely as graders and for the professors for whom they grade:

1. The assistant shall attend each class for which he or she is grading, taking careful note of the material presented by the professor. (If the assistant is grading for two sections of the same course taught by the same professor, the assistant need attend lecture only once.)
2. The assistant shall also keep roll for such classes, if the professor requests it.
3. Before each examination or quiz to be graded, the professor shall meet with the assistant, briefing him/her on how to grade each question.
4. The professor shall spot check exams or quizzes graded by the assistant and, before returning the exams or quizzes to the student, make necessary corrections.
5. The assistant shall keep at least two office hours per week, the times of which are posted on the assistant's office door, for consultation with students.
6. The professor, and not the assistant, shall assign the final course grade.
7. The professor, during the last week of regular classes in the semester, shall prepare the department graduate program coordinator a one or two page written evaluation of the assistant's performance as a grader.
8. Although it is not required, the assistant may prepare at the semester's end for the department chair a written evaluation of the professor for whom the assistant graded (a copy must also go to the professor evaluated).
9. Additionally, assistants who serve as graders for a large freshman-level section of Western Civilization or American History, shall work two hours per week in the department as general assistants, with such responsibilities as proctoring exams, showing films, and grading objective tests; assistants who serve as graders for the smaller survey sections shall work five hours per week as research assistants. One assistant among the latter will be assigned to help with HIST 1980 and will receive credit for four hours work per week towards his/her research duties.
10. Additionally, assistants shall work two hours per week in the department with such responsibilities as proctoring exams and showing films. One assistant among the latter will be assigned to help with HIST 1980 when it is offered and be relieved of any additional duties.

Other Types of Assistantships

Occasionally the department is able to award assistantships paid for by agencies outside the department or university. Normally, such assistantships require research work done for the agencies or organizations providing the stipend.

Admission to the M.A. Program in History

Students are admitted to the graduate program by the dean of the graduate school upon the recommendation of the department's graduate program coordinator or department chair. All persons applying to the M.A. program in history must submit the following to the Graduate School.

Final transcript(s) for the B.A. sent by the applicant's undergraduate school(s), showing a minimum Grade Point Ratio (GPR) of 3.0 in history courses; and 2.5 in all courses during the last two undergraduate years.

1. Three letters of reference, preferably from undergraduate professors.
2. A sample term paper.
3. A personal statement addressing the applicant's background in history, intended areas of specialization, and reasons for applying.
4. A completed Graduate School application form.

Additionally, if the applicant has 1) a GPR of less than 3.0 in the history major for the B.A. degree and/or 2) a B.A. degree, including the major and minor, in subject(s) other than history, he or she shall take a minimum of four upper-level undergraduate history courses at Clemson or at another accredited university or college and receive a grade of "B" or higher in each course before admission to the program. The only exception to this course requirement shall be persons who demonstrate that, as a part of their B.A. degree, they completed a minimum of four upper-level undergraduate history courses with a grade of "B" or higher. All exceptions to 1 and 2 require the consent of the department's Graduate Committee.

Application Deadline

The Department offers only Fall admission. Applications must be completed and submitted no later than January 20. Please note that consideration for assistantships begins in January and continues until all available slots are filled.

For more admissions information, please visit the graduate school's web site:
<http://www.grad.clemson.edu>

The Thesis

Thesis Advisory Committee

As part of the required research Workshop (HIST 8900), the student will select a thesis advisory committee, comprised of three faculty, a majority of whom must be from the department, and approved by the graduate program coordinator. For advice on assembling a committee, see the graduate coordinator. The thesis advisory committee will approve the student's graduate degree curriculum, supervise the thesis, administer the final examination, and initiate the recommendation for awarding of the degree. One member of the committee is designated as the chair or major advisor and normally directs the student's thesis, with the input of the rest of the committee.

The committee may also include a fourth reader of the thesis from outside Clemson University. Such a person would not be a member of the thesis advisory committee but only read the thesis and act in an advisory role to the student and major advisor directing the study. If the fourth reader wished to do so, he/she could sign the completed thesis along with the committee on a line marked "Reader."

When the thesis advisory committee has been chosen by the student, he/she must complete a graduate degree curriculum (Form GS 2) signed by each committee member. The curriculum is then submitted to the department chair and the college dean for approval and is forwarded to the Graduate School for approval. If a student wishes to change his/her thesis committee before the GS 2 is submitted, it is only a matter of asking a different member of the faculty; afterward a new GS 2 must be filed.

The Thesis

Once the student has selected a thesis topic in his/her field of interest, the student should submit a brief prospectus for approval by the thesis committee and the graduate program coordinator. The prospectus should be typed and double spaced, and should outline the goals of the thesis and list the principal

sources, both original and secondary, to be used for the research. Failure to submit a prospectus and have it approved by the end of the first year of graduate study could result in delay of completion and graduation. The final grade in the initial semester of enrollment in 8910 will be withheld and the GS 2 form will not be signed for any student who does not have a committee and a completed and signed thesis prospectus by the end of the first year, or its equivalent, in the program.

The thesis has no fixed length, although normally topics should be subject to adequate treatment in an essay of 90 to 125 pages. Students must prepare the manuscript in a style acceptable to the department and Graduate School; information on the preparation of theses at Clemson University may be found online at the Graduate School website.

Although one member of the committee plays the role of major advisor, the thesis is a committee-run process. All members will have input in the final draft. To that end, the student will provide each member of his/her committee with a copy of the thesis for initial review well in advance of and not less than four weeks prior to the final examination and defense of the thesis. Committee members should normally complete the initial review in three weeks or less. Failure of a committee member to complete the initial review within six weeks may result in his/her replacement. A second review after revisions should be completed in one week, with provisions being available for additional time. Failure to provide all committee members with a complete and revised draft by November 1 (for fall semester) or April 1 (for spring), at the latest, will mean that the department will not schedule the final examination for the current semester. Special attention must be given by the student to the possibility that one or more of the committee members will not be available during the summer months (May 15-August 15) for the final examination or even for review of the thesis draft. In order to graduate in August and schedule the final examination for the summer months, the student must have submitted a complete draft to all committee members no later than the end of the preceding spring semester.

Graduate Committee and Director of the Graduate Program

The Graduate Committee consists of three faculty members. The coordinator of the graduate program is appointed by the department chair and serves as a member of the committee. Two other members of the committee are elected by the department faculty.

The Graduate Committee generally oversees the graduate program. Specifically, it proposes, reviews, and recommends changes in the graduate program, including curriculum, academic standards, admissions, and degree requirements; chooses candidates for graduate assistantships and recommends them to the department chair; and, in conjunction with the department chair, determines graduate course offerings each year. It also makes a yearly review of admissions standards and procedures.

Foreign Language Requirement

A reading knowledge of one foreign language is required for the M.A. in history. The required reading knowledge is equivalent to that provided by two years of study of the language at the college level. The foreign language requirement may be satisfied by passing a translation test administered by the Department of Languages or by passing a test similar to that given as the final examination of a language course designed for graduate students (currently numbered 1510).

Also on the recommendation of the chair of the Department of Languages, a student may satisfy the requirement by having completed at least four semesters (or the equivalent level of coursework) in an approved foreign language with an average grade of "B" or better. These credit hours must be or have been earned from an accredited undergraduate institution and must have been completed in total within six years prior to the student's finishing the graduate degree. The chair of the Department of Languages may recommend a waiver of the minimum grade and six-year limitation for any student who can substantiate extensive additional training in a foreign language.

Final Exam

The student, after completion of the thesis, and at least three weeks before the degree is to be awarded, must pass a final examination administered by the thesis advisory committee. The examination, which may be oral and/or written, will ascertain the general knowledge of the candidate resulting from his/her thesis and coursework. The examination will consider both the thesis itself and questions arising from the coursework. At least one week prior to the examination the student should contact each committee member to receive a set of questions and/or topics expected to be addressed in the course of the examination. In addition, further questions may arise as the examination proceeds.

The department's graduate program coordinator shall notify the Graduate School of the time and place of the examination at least ten days prior to the time scheduled, and the examination will also be posted for the students and faculty of the department at least one week prior to the exam, so the student and the thesis committee must see to it that the program coordinator is informed of the scheduling of a final examination. Within three days after the examination, the committee, through Form GS7, will notify the graduate dean of the results of the examination. A student who fails a final examination may be allowed a second opportunity only with the recommendation of the thesis advisory committee. Failure of the second examination will result in dismissal from the Graduate School.