

**MASTER
Of
ARTS
In
HISTORY**

Guide for Graduate Study

December 2007

Thank you for your interest in the M.A. Program at Cal Poly. We hope that this Guide for Graduate Study in History will answer the questions of both prospective and current graduate students.

I. A Few Words about the Program.

The M.A. Program in History began in Winter, 2006. It is designed to meet the needs of various constituencies - current History and/or Social Studies teachers at all levels of K-12 education, students interested in eventually pursuing a Ph.D. in History, and members of the community interested in continuing to study the discipline of History.

We strive to achieve the following: develop specialized historical competencies and an enhanced awareness of human diversity, develop critical thinking/problem solving skills, develop facility in oral and written communication, and develop independent thought and research methods. At the same time, the program will help K-12 teachers to hone their skills and to deepen their knowledge of History. Finally, the program seeks to support the ideal of lifelong learning.

II. Applying for the M.A. Program in History.

Deadlines for applying to the History M.A. Program:

- 1 May for Fall Quarter
- 1 November for Winter Quarter
- 15 January for Spring Quarter

To begin the process of applying for admittance to the M.A. Program in History, students should first log-on to the Cal Poly website: <http://www.calpoly.edu/>
Navigate the site to gain information and to access the Cal Poly catalog.

To Apply to the Program, go to:
http://www.csumentor.edu/AdmissionApp/grad_apply.asp

A. Materials Required for Application.

1. Complete, as per instructions, parts A and B

2. Transcript of all Undergraduate and Post-Graduate Work
3. Statement of Purpose
4. Sample of Scholarly Writing (10 pages or more). Send the sample directly to the Graduate Coordinator in the Department of History, Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, CA. 93407

Prospective Students should have a B.A. in History or in a related discipline (e.g. English, Social Sciences, Philosophy), and have earned a 3.0 GPA (on a 4.0 scale) for the last 90 units as an undergraduate.

Students who fall below these criteria may still apply, but they must, in their Statement of Purpose, explain the reasons for not meeting the minimum requirements: for instance, why the lack of a sufficiently high GPA or background in History will not disadvantage them as a History graduate student.

Students without the requisite GPA or sufficient undergraduate coursework in appropriate disciplines may be accepted on a Provisional basis. That means that they will be evaluated after they have taken two graduate level courses. They must have maintained a 3.0 average in these two courses.

Students without a background in historical research and writing will need to pick up the requisite skills. History 304 is most useful for learning how to do historical research (the class cannot be taken for graduate credit). Students should familiarize themselves with how historians cite works and organize papers. This can be done by perusing carefully articles in The American Historical Review and The Journal of American History. For information on how to think and write about history, see Richard Marius, A Short Guide to Writing about History (any edition). On how to do proper footnotes and bibliographies, see Kate Turabian, Chicago Manual of Style. It is your responsibility to become familiar with historical research and writing before you enter the program.

III. M.A. in History: OPTIONS:

There are two tracks that a student may follow for the M.A. in History. At a point no later than the end of your second quarter enrolled as a graduate student, you must fill out, in consultation with the Graduate Coordinator, the FORMAL STUDY PLAN (to be filled out after completion of 12 units). At this point, you will choose either Option One or Two for your M.A.

Option One will be least useful for students who are contemplating going to pursue a Ph.D. in History. Option Two is open to all students.

M.A. DEGREE IN HISTORY.

OPTION ONE: (See also part. IV, p. 6)

M.A. Comprehensive Exam Option (48 Units)

- A. History 504 Graduate Study in History. 4 units.
- B. History Seminars (5 courses required, 4 units each). Each is repeatable up to 12 units. Total of 20 units. Any five can be chosen from:
 - HIST 505: Seminar in American History (4-12 units)
 - HIST 506: Seminar in European History (4-12 units)
 - HIST 507: Seminar in East Asian History (4-12 units)
 - HIST 508: Seminar in Latin American History (4-12 units)
 - HIST 509: Seminar in African History (4-12 units)
- C. Graduate History Electives. Five courses at the 400 or 500 level. Courses at 400 level will include extra work for graduate students. (All courses in this group must be taken after student has been awarded an undergraduate degree and may not repeat undergraduate courses or their equivalent, unless approved by the Graduate Coordinator.) Total of 20 units.
- D. Supervised Reading for Comprehensive Exams, History 512 (Course is to be taken twice, once in each Field of Study for comprehensive examination, 2 units each.) Total 4 units.

OPTION TWO: (See also part. V, p. 9)

M.A. Thesis Option (49 Units)

- A. History 504 Graduate Study in History. 4 units.
- B. History Seminars (5 courses required, 4 units each). Each is repeatable up to 12 units. Total of 20 units. Any five can be chosen from:
HIST 505: Seminar in American History (4-12 units)
HIST 506: Seminar in European History (4-12 units)
HIST 507: Seminar in East Asian History (4-12 units)
HIST 508: Seminar in Latin American History (4-12 units)
HIST 509: Seminar in African History (4-12 units)
- C. Graduate History Electives.

Four courses at the 400 or 500 level. Courses at 400 level will include extra work for graduate students. (All courses in this group must be taken after student has been awarded an undergraduate degree and may not repeat undergraduate courses or their equivalent.) Total of 16 units.

D. M.A. Thesis Supervision, History 599

Course is to be taken over three separate quarters. 3 units each). Total 9 units.

The catalog descriptions of the graduate courses for this program appear below:

HIST 504: Graduate Study in History. Weekly reading and discussion course on practical methods and theoretical approaches to the study and writing of history. Seminar format. Prerequisite: Graduate standing in History or consent of instructor. 4 units.

HIST 505: Seminar in United States History. Intensive study of selected topics in United States history. Class Schedule will list topic selected. Total credit limited to 12 units. Prerequisite: Graduate standing in History or consent of instructor. 4 units.

HIST 506: Seminar in Modern European History. Intensive study of selected topics in Modern European history. Class Schedule will list topic selected. Total credit limited to

12 units. Prerequisite: Graduate standing in History or consent of instructor. 4 units.

HIST 507: Seminar in East Asian History. Intensive study of selected topics in East Asian history. Class Schedule will list topic selected. Total credit limited to 12 units. Prerequisite: Graduate standing in History or consent of instructor. 4 units.

HIST 508: Seminar in Latin American History. Intensive study of selected topics in Latin American history. Class Schedule will list topic selected. Total credit limited to 12 units. Prerequisite: Graduate standing in History or consent of instructor. 4 units.

HIST 509: Seminar in African History. Intensive study of selected topics in African history. Class Schedule will list topic selected. Total credit limited to 12 units. Prerequisite: Graduate standing in History or consent of instructor. 4 units.

HIST 512: Supervised Reading for M.A. Comprehensive Exams. Directed supervision of M.A. reading for comprehensive exams. Regular consultation between advisor and student. Prerequisite: HIST 504 and 12 units of graduate study. Variable course content. 2 units each, has to be taken two times. Total of 4 units.

HIST 599: M.A. Thesis Supervision. Directed supervision of M.A. thesis. Regular consultation between advisor and student. Prerequisite: HIST 504 and 12 units of graduate study. 3 units each, to be taken three times. Total of 9 units.

IV. OPTION ONE EXPLAINED: COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS:

Students choosing Option One for their M.A. Degree will be examined in two topics, chosen from two different fields of study. This will ensure that they acquire a wide expanse of knowledge. Comprehensive exams may be taken from topics within the five general (geographically-defined) Fields of Study: American History, European History, East Asian History, Central and Latin American History, and African History.

Students taking the Comprehensive Examinations must first complete two sections of History 512. Professors in these courses (each one focusing on a different geographical field of history) will give to students a reading list of works to be mastered. Students may also be expected to read additional works in concentrated topics within their chosen Fields of Study.

Each comprehensive examination will consist of essay questions dealing both with the specific topic and more generally with the larger geographical area. (These broader area-wide reading lists will consist mainly of books on the other subtopics in that area. For example, the student studying Modern Africa would also be expected to have some knowledge of Pre-Colonial Africa, etc.)

The Fields of Study and topics for Comprehensive Examinations are as follows:

1. AMERICAN HISTORY
 - a. Colonial Period
 - b. Middle Period
 - c. Modern Period
 - d. Intellectual
 - e. Women
 - f. African-American
 - g. California and the West

2. EUROPEAN HISTORY
 - a. Early Modern
 - b. Modern

3. EAST ASIAN HISTORY
 - a. Modern China
 - b. Modern Japan

4. LATIN AMERICAN HISTORY
 - a. Religion and Politics
 - b. Revolutionary Movements

5. AFRICAN HISTORY
 - a. Pre-Colonial
 - b. Modern
 - c. South Africa

NOTE FOR K-12 TEACHERS:

Present and prospective teachers are urged to take HIST 424 Organizing and Teaching History and EDUC 505 Seminar in Social Studies Curriculum and Methods. Students should also consider the following courses: EDUC 587 Educational Foundations and Current Issues and EDUC 589 Educational Research Methods. Courses outside of History can serve as electives (up to 8 units), as approved by the Graduate Coordinator.

If any students accepted into the History MA program wish to pursue the teaching credential, then they must file a Post baccalaureate Change of Objective form. The application process goes through the Graduate Programs Office (not through Admissions).

A. Procedures for Comprehensive Examinations in Subject Areas.

You must, a quarter before you plan to take either of your topic exams in two different geographical areas, do the following:

1. Be sure your FORMAL STUDY PLAN has been approved by the Graduate Coordinator.
2. Complete the form, ADVANCEMENT TO CANDIDACY. Before advancement can be approved, you must have at least a 3.0 GPA, passed the Graduate Writing Examination, filed a Formal Study Plan, and met any additional requirements. Forms are available from the History Department or the Graduate Programs Office.
3. Complete the form, REQUEST FOR GRADUATE EVALUATION. (You may get this form from the Graduate Coordinator or the Graduate Programs Office).
4. You must demonstrate to the Graduate Coordinator, after review of your two forms, that you are within one or two quarters of graduating. Hence, your Comprehensive Exams should be taken no earlier than your last or next-to-last quarters of graduate study.

After the Graduate Coordinator approves your FORMAL STUDY PLAN, ADVANCEMENT TO CANDIDACY and REQUEST FOR FORMAL EVALUATION, the forms, will be sent by the Graduate Coordinator to the Dean of Liberal Arts Office, Graduate

Programs Office, and the Evaluations Office for final approvals. The Evaluation's Office will then send you a SUMMARY OF REMAINING MASTER'S DEGREE REQUIREMENTS.

B. Scheduling the Comprehensive Written Exam.

You must meet with the Faculty Member who has directed your work in each of your History 512 (Supervised Reading for Comprehensive Exams). That Professor will set up a time and place, and procedures, for you to take your Comprehensive Exam. After you have completed the examination, it will be read by the Supervisor for that topic, as well as by the Graduate Coordinator. After they have read the examination and consulted with one another, a Grade will be assigned to the examination. Any grade below a "B" is failing. Students who fail, with the approval of the Area/Topic supervisor, may retake the examination, no later than one-quarter after the failed exam. Students who fail a second comprehensive examination, will be removed from the Graduate Program.

C. What is Involved in the Comprehensive Written Exam.

Each Professor within a given area for the Comprehensive examination will draw up their own exam. In general, at least two quarters before the examination, the student should ask the Professor for the exam area for a READING LIST FOR COMPREHENSIVE EXAM in that area. This list will include those books and articles that the Professor expects the student to have mastered prior to the examination. In addition, the student should complete a Section of History 512 with the Professor prior to the Comprehensive Exam. And, if at all possible, the student should have taken 400 and 500 level courses in the area of the Comprehensive Exam.

The examination will stress both understanding of the material and familiarity with central questions of interpretation, both within the geographical area and the specific topic. Students will have three hours to complete their Comprehensive examination.

V. OPTION TWO EXPLAINED: WRITTEN M.A.:

Students choosing Option Two will, instead of comprehensive examinations in two areas, be required to write a thesis, in addition to completing all of the courses required under the Option Two Plan.

You must, the quarter that you take your second section of History 599, do the following:

1. Be sure your FORMAL STUDY PLAN has been approved by the Graduate Coordinator.
2. Complete the form, ADVANCEMENT TO CANDIDACY. Before advancement can be approved, you must have at least a 3.0 GPA, passed the Graduate Writing Examination, filed a FORMAL STUDY PLAN, and met any additional requirements. Forms are available from the History Department or the Graduate Programs Office.
3. Complete the form, REQUEST FOR GRADUATE EVALUATION. (You may get this form from the Graduate Coordinator or the Graduate Programs Office.)

After the Graduate Coordinator approves your FORMAL STUDY PLAN, ADVANCEMENT TO CANDIDACY, and REQUEST FOR GRADUATE EVALUATION, the forms will be sent by the graduate coordinator to the Dean of Liberal Arts Office, Graduate Programs Office and the Evaluations Office for final approvals. The Evaluations Office will then send you a Summary of Remaining Master's Degree Requirements.

A.: Deciding on a Thesis Topic and Course Work.

Students should, after a year of coursework, decide what area of history they want to write about. The student should, in consultation with the professor with expertise in that area, decide upon an acceptable M.A. thesis topic. Once the student and professor have agreed upon the topic, the student should sign up, for each of the next three quarters (they need not be continuous) for HISTORY 599 (3 units) of M.A. Thesis Supervision. In this course, the student will research and write the thesis, with the Professor assigning a grade each quarter defined by the quality of the work that the student has completed for that quarter.

B.: What is a M.A. Thesis?

The M.A. Thesis is an extended research paper, based upon the use of primary sources and comprehension of the existing historiography on the subject. Student theses should have an original interpretation or raise new questions about a subject. The M.A. should be written in an accessible and compelling manner. M.A. theses will generally run between 50 and 100 pages, typed, double-spaced.

C.: Thesis Defense and Final Copy

The finished M.A. Thesis will be read by the student's M.A. advisor, by the Graduate Coordinator and by a third faculty member. The third faculty member may be a professor in the department or outside, so long as the student has done course work with that individual. The student will then meet with both of these individuals to discuss the thesis. This oral discussion will last up to 1 hour. After the completion of the oral defense, the student will be told if s/he must make any changes to the thesis. These changes, if required, will then be reviewed by the student's advisor. If everything is then found to be in order, the advisor will assign a final grade for the M.A. Thesis.

The student should be certain that the Thesis is typed and formatted in accordance with the GUIDELINES FOR COMPLETING GRADUATE THESES AND REPORTS, available from the Graduate Programs Website. Students, after they have successfully defended their Thesis must then take one copy, unbound, to the Graduate Programs Office for review by the Thesis Editor. You will, in a reasonable period of time, be contacted by the Thesis Editor if any changes in the Thesis are required.

After the thesis has been approved by the Graduate Programs Office, the student will be required to print a final copy for placement in the Cal Poly Library. Details of this process will be provided by the Thesis Editor. The M.A. degree will not be granted until the Thesis Editor delivers the approved thesis to the library.

VI. ADDITIONAL ISSUES TO KEEP IN MIND.

1. CONTINUOUS ENROLLMENT IN THE GRADUATE PROGRAM

Students are considered enrolled in the program so long as they do not cease taking classes for two consecutive quarters. If, for some reason, you must miss classes for more than two quarters, then you should first advise the Graduate Coordinator, and then contact the Records Office for policies regarding Leaves of Absence.

2. COURSE LOAD FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

There is no easily defined optimal course load, especially since many students in the M.A. Program have full-time jobs and family responsibilities. Obviously, to remain in the program, as noted in the previous paragraph, you should take 1 course each quarter. Eight units per quarter (at the 400 or 500) level is considered Full-Time, and will help you complete your course work in an optimal fashion.

3. FOREIGN LANGUAGES

All students are encouraged to gain facility with a foreign language. Students working in a geographic area where English is not the language of the primary sources, should have sufficient proficiency to read sources in their original language. The decision as to whether this is a requirement, rather than a desire, will be made by the student's M.A. Thesis Advisor and/or Graduate Coordinator.

4. GRADUATE GRADE POINT AVERAGE

Students in the graduate program must maintain a GPA of 3.0. If they fall below this figure, they will have two quarters to raise it to the acceptable level. You will be expected to meet with the Graduate Advisor and to sign a contract designating the courses you must take and the grades that you must receive in order to remain enrolled in the graduate program. If the student fails to meet with the graduate coordinator or fails to adhere to the provisions of the contract, then s/he will be dismissed from the program. The M.A. will not be awarded to any student with a

final grade point average for graduate level courses listed on the Formal Study Plan below 3.0.

5. GRADUATION WITH DISTINCTION

Students in either concentration, may graduate with distinction if they have a GPA of 3.75 or higher. In addition, students in Option One, M.A. Comprehensive Exams, must also be graded as distinguished on those examinations. Students in Option Two, M.A. Thesis, must be deemed to have written a distinguished thesis. If both requirements are met, then the student will graduate with distinction.

6. GRADUATION WRITING PROFICIENCY EXAM

Many of you will have passed the Graduation Writing Proficiency Requirement as undergraduates at Cal Poly. If you have not passed such an examination at Cal Poly or elsewhere, then you must sign up, within the time frame of your first year in the M.A. Program, to take the Writing Proficiency Examination. You can get details about this exam from the Writing Skills Program, or through the English Department. Students from another Cal State University or University of California campus may receive a waiver if they can demonstrate that they have passed a Writing Proficiency Examination on one of their campuses.

7. INCOMPLETES

Students will, as per university policy, have up to one year to remove an "RP" (Report in Progress) grade. However, a graduate professor may ask the student to sign a contract stipulating when the work must be turned in.

Students may not have more than two I's on their record at any time. If they do, then they will be required to see the Graduate Coordinator to draw up a contract for the completion of the work in question.

8. DEADLINES/TERMS FOR COMPLETION OF WORK

Students have 7 years to complete the MA program. The clock begins once they have taken their first class counting towards the graduate degree.

Students may receive up to 8 units for work completed as an undergraduate in courses that are included in the Graduate Study Plan. However, these courses can only count if the units were not used as courses required for graduation, either in the major or in the school. Also note, if course work taken as an undergraduate is included among the student's courses for the MA, then the 7 year limit for when the degree must be completed begins at that moment.

Students who were in a MA program elsewhere, without receiving a degree, may transfer 13 quarter units of coursework into the program at Cal Poly. Their clock for completion of the degree will begin from the time the first of those courses was taken.

Students must complete at least 32 units at Cal Poly to be eligible for their MA degree.

Students doing a written thesis, have up to three years to complete it. The clock on the thesis begins when they take their first section of History 599, Thesis Supervision.

VII. GRADUATE SEMINARS EXPLAINED:

The precise nature of graduate seminars is decided by individual professors. In general, there are two types of seminars offered. In Reading Seminars, the students will be assigned a host of works on a particular subject. The works may be secondary or primary, or a combination of both. Students will in these classes meet to discuss the works, and to reach a deeper understanding of the historiographical and interpretive issues involved with them. In these courses, in general, students will be expected to write regular papers on some of these works, as well as a comprehensive paper at the end of the quarter.

In Research Seminars, the students will read some materials in common, as well as work on a research project, decided upon through consultation with the professor. In general, these papers will be based upon both primary and secondary research. Students will probably present their findings to

the other students in class and receive comments on their work from their fellow students. These papers will be in the range of 15-25 pages, typed double-spaced.

Grades in these seminars will be determined on the basis of a student's written work and exams. In addition, students will be graded on the quality of their participation in the class. Students must have their written and reading assignments done on time. Students should come to class prepared with notes to help them discuss whatever reading or subject is assigned for that day. At the graduate level, shyness is no longer an excuse. Students are expected to participate with enthusiasm and to demonstrate their knowledge of the subject in both oral and written form. Repeating what other students have already said does not constitute useful participation.

VIII. 400 LEVEL COURSES FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS.

Graduate students may take 400 level courses for their graduate requirements. Students may not take as graduate students the same 400 level course that they had as an undergraduate at Cal Poly. However, under certain circumstances, they may, if the course is taught by someone different or if they can demonstrate that the same professor has changed, in a major fashion, the content of the course.

Professors in 400 level courses will, generally, expect higher quality work from graduate than from undergraduate students. In addition, they may require more intensive research papers from graduate students or assign additional readings for graduate students. In any case, the graduate student should, before or immediately after the first class meeting, inform the professor that s/he has graduate status. The professor will then elucidate for that student the particular requirements.

If you have other questions about the Graduate Program at Cal Poly, then please contact the Graduate Coordinator. We welcome your interest and presence in this new and exciting endeavor.