

Lamar University

**Department of
History**

Graduate Handbook

Last updated

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Introduction

This manual lists the requirements and guidelines for graduate study in history at Lamar University. It is designed as a department-specific supplement to the information contained in the graduate school catalog. All current and prospective graduate students must be familiar with the graduate catalog and with the requirements of the program in history. It is ultimately the student's responsibility to make sure that all necessary steps have been completed to ensure a timely graduation.

Mission

It is the purpose of the Department of History to impart a knowledge and understanding of the past to the students enrolled in the University. This objective is based upon the belief that such knowledge and understanding improves the quality of life for individuals and contributes to the welfare of our society. The Department seeks to accomplish this objective through a program of continued study and research by its members and students. Research interests of the Department focus on American, European, Asian, and African history.

Programs

The Department of History offers two plans for the master's degree, the Thesis Option and the Non-Thesis Option. The 30-hour Thesis Option is strongly recommended for those who plan to continue graduate study beyond the master's degree. This program requires a reading knowledge of a foreign language. The 36-hour Non-Thesis Option is recommended for students whose interest is primarily in secondary school teaching. No foreign language is required for the Non-Thesis Option.

Admission Requirements

Applicants for the Master of Arts in History must meet all Graduate College entrance requirements.

The history department requires that all applicants have an overall undergraduate GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale and achieve scores of at least 153 on the verbal portion and at least a 3 on the analytical portion of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). Applicants must also submit directly to the graduate advisor two letters of reference and a writing sample. A prospective student who already holds a master's degree or equivalent is not required to retake the GRE.

Background Knowledge

Applicants to the master's program are expected to be familiar with a basic body of historical knowledge and must have taken:

- A. One year survey of United States history (1301/1302). (6 hours)
- B. One year survey of western/world history (3321/3322). (6 hours)
- C. One course in historical research and writing (3390). (3 hours)

If they only lack one or two courses, students without this background *may* be admitted to the program with postbac status and begin taking graduate courses while completing these requirements. All deficiency courses should be taken at the earliest opportunity in a graduate student's academic career. Students may not gain full admission into the program or graduate until all deficiency courses have been completed with a grade no lower than a B.

Scholarships & Financial Aid

College

A College of Graduate Studies Scholarship of \$1000 annually is available to full-time graduate students. "Full-time" is defined as 9 hours of graduate work OR 1 thesis course. Students should familiarize themselves with the Graduate Studies Scholarship Policies form.

Departmental

The history department offers a limited number of graduate assistantships, awarded competitively, in the amount of \$8000. Graduate assistants help history faculty with grading, research, and other tasks. After the completion of 18 graduate hours and the approval of faculty, they may also earn the opportunity to teach a survey course of their own under the guidance of a faculty mentor. Graduate assistantships are available only to full-time graduate students with no coursework deficiencies. Recipients receive \$4000 during the fall semester and \$4000 during the spring semester. No assistantship monies are available during the summer. Although graduate assistantships do not come with a tuition waiver, out-of-state students awarded an assistantship can take advantage of in-state tuition rates.

Graduate assistantships are awarded on an academic year basis, starting in the fall semester. Students may receive a graduate assistantship for a maximum of two academic years, with no student receiving more than \$16,000 in total. Receipt of an assistantship in the second year is contingent upon a first-year student's academic performance and professionalism. Recipients of a graduate assistantship who fail to attend on a full-time basis will lose departmental funding. Under no circumstances will any student receive a graduate assistantship for more than two academic years or more than \$16,000.

The history department offers a number of more modest scholarships as well, for which graduate students are eligible. Graduate students are the preferred recipients of the Dr. Howell H. Gwin, Jr., Endowed Scholarship. Both graduate and undergraduate students are eligible for the Dr. Samuel L. Evans Memorial Scholarship in History, the Walter A.

Sutton Memorial Scholarship, and the Peter Boyd Wells, Jr., Scholarship in History. For more information on these scholarships, see the departmental website.

The Admissions Process

Prospective students should submit an application, found online at ApplyTexas.org. Admissions contacts the department to render a decision on the application. The department may accept a candidate for full admission or as a postbac. Postbac status is for those students who do not have the prerequisite coursework background in history; all other requirements for admission (satisfactory GRE scores, writing sample, and letters of recommendation) must be completed in advance to gain postbac status. Students with postbac status must complete all deficiency coursework requirements and may concurrently take no more than two graduate courses (6 credit hours) prior to full admission into the program. *Postbac status does not guarantee eventual full acceptance into the program*; full admission is contingent on the completion of all requirements as well as student performance in the classroom. No student with postbac status who earns one or more grades of C or lower may be granted full admission into the M.A. program. For that reason, enrolled postbac students will not be advised or allowed to register for a second or subsequent semester until final grades for the current semester are posted. Postbac students granted full admission may apply as many as two graduate courses (6 credit hours) taken as postbacs toward graduation.

As a general rule, the College of Graduate Studies accepts no more than six hours of credit transferred in from another institution toward an M.A. at Lamar. In certain circumstances, with the approval of the history department chair, students may petition the graduate school to accept more than six transferred hours. In all cases, however, a majority of credit hours toward a Lamar M.A. in history must come from Lamar. Consequently, students on the thesis track may transfer in no more than 12 credits; those on the non-thesis track no more than 15. Only courses in history may be transferred in toward an M.A. in history.

In addition to the admission process outlined above, prospective students interested in being considered for a graduate assistantship in the history department must also compose a letter of application describing one's background, career goals and ambitions, and reasons for wanting and deserving the assistantship. They should mail this letter of application, along with two letters of recommendation from professionals qualified to assess them and their work, directly to the graduate advisor:

Jeff Forret, Ph.D.
Lamar University
History Department
P.O. Box 10048
Beaumont, TX 77710

The history department graduate committee will award graduate assistantships based on the strength of the letter of application and the two letters of recommendation as well as

on the applicant's undergraduate record and GRE scores. Renewal for a second year is contingent on the academic performance and professionalism of the graduate assistant.

Application deadlines. Domestic students (U.S. citizens and permanent residents) must submit all application materials at least 30 days before Fall, Spring, or Summer registration. Deadlines for international students are April 15 for Fall semester, September 1 for Spring, and January 15 for Summer terms.

Students wanting to be considered for a graduate assistantship in the history department for the upcoming academic year must submit their letter of application and two letters of recommendation to the graduate advisor with a postmark of no later than **April 15**. The graduate committee will determine recipients of graduate assistantships for the subsequent academic year during the preceding spring semester.

Non-Degree Seeking Students

Prospective graduate students who wish to complete coursework in history without seeking the full M.A. degree, such as those wishing to take 18 hours so that they may teach history, must apply online at ApplyTexas.org. The GRE scores, two letters of recommendation, and writing sample are still required. All non-degree seeking students must have successfully completed a course in historical methods as well. Non-degree seeking students may be accepted with postbac status and will retain postbac status throughout their coursework. Any non-degree seeking student who decides to pursue the M.A. degree may only count 6 credit hours of completed courses toward the degree.

Academic Advisement

All graduate students should meet, phone, or e-mail the graduate advisor during registration to discuss the progress they are making toward their degree and to determine the best courses to take. The graduate advisor will then submit the paperwork to secure from the Graduate School funding for full-time graduate students.

Degree Requirements

Thesis Option (30 hours). The Thesis Option is strongly recommended for those who plan to continue graduate study beyond the master's. It requires completion of 24 semester hours of class work. A minimum of 12 hours must be taken in Seminar, Readings, or Directed Readings courses. The student may take 6 graduate hours (class or seminar) in a supporting (minor) field. Six additional hours credit will be given for completion of the thesis.

Thesis students are also required to demonstrate a reading knowledge of one classical or modern foreign language. This requirement may be satisfied (1) by completing the 2312 course in a language; (2) by passing a nationally recognized standardized language proficiency test; or (3) by completing a reading project administered by faculty members

in the History Department. American Sign Language (ASL) does not satisfy the foreign language requirement.

Non-Thesis Option (36 hours). The Non-Thesis Option is intended to provide a strong foundation in a wide range of historical areas and periods for those who do not wish to pursue a higher degree. Non-thesis students are required to complete 36 hours in history. A minimum of 18 hours must be in Seminar, Readings, or Directed Readings courses. The student may take 6 graduate hours (class or seminar) in an approved minor field. After completing their class work, students must take a comprehensive written examination and complete an oral defense. A foreign language is not required for the non-thesis Master of Arts in History.

Graduate students admitted into the program may switch from the Thesis to Non-Thesis Option or from the Non-Thesis to the Thesis Option. To do so, the graduate advisor completes a G-15 form that the student must sign.

All course work applied toward a master's degree must be completed within a period of six years. This time limit applies to all work at the graduate level, including work transferred from another institution. Time spent in active military service is not included in the six-year limit. Because of Immigration & Naturalization Service regulations, a shorter period may apply to international students.

M.A. students who earned a B.A. or equivalent degree at Lamar may not take 5000-level courses that they took at the 4000-level as undergraduates.

Graduate Coursework in History

HIST 5300 Historiography

Mandatory course for all graduate students.

HIST 5308 Directed Readings in History

Directed readings to be arranged by student in consultation with faculty member in area of mutual interest. Course may be applied to 5000-level course requirements for maximum of 6 hours in the Thesis Option and 9 hours in the Non-Thesis Option.

HIST 5310 Seminar in United States History

HIST 5320 Readings in American History

HIST 5335 Topics in History

HIST 5340 Readings in European History

HIST 5355 Seminar in European History

HIST 5360 Readings in Asian History

HIST 5361 Seminar in Asian History

HIST 5310, 5320, 5335, 5340, 5355, 5360, 5361 may be repeated when topic varies.

HIST 5390-5391 Thesis

Prerequisite: Approval of graduate advisor. Must complete both for required 6 credits.

Directed Readings. Individual agreement between an instructor and a graduate student to pursue a specific detailed program of readings on a subject of mutual interest. Student and instructor meet regularly to discuss the material and its historiographic context and to explore additional avenues of inquiry. May be repeated for up to a maximum of six hours credit when the subject varies.

Readings. An intensive group study of a period or area in history, including its historiography. Class meetings include wide reading, oral and written reports, and group discussion. May be repeated for credit when topic varies.

Seminar. In-depth study of a specific area or person or historical period, featuring group discussion and reading. Results in a specialized formal paper of at least 20 pages including historiography. May be repeated for credit when topic varies.

Faculty expect graduate students to attend ALL class meetings, with exceptions made for only the most dire of circumstances. Absences will have an adverse affect on graduate student grades.

As stated in the graduate school catalog, graduate students must maintain a 3.0 GPA on all courses that receive graduate credit, whether or not they are to be applied toward a graduate degree. The only acceptable grades are A and B; a C is considered failing. The history department imposes stricter standards of academic performance than those outlined in the graduate school catalog. *Any graduate student in history who earns any combination of two grades of C or lower will be automatically expelled from the program and prevented from registering for additional courses. Plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated and will result in prompt expulsion from the program.*

The Path to Graduation

Admission to candidacy. The G-3 is a graduate student's degree plan and is the form for admission to candidacy. The graduate advisor completes and submits to the Graduate Office the G-3 once all courses that will apply toward the degree are known. The G-3

lists the graduate courses completed that apply to the degree, the deficiency courses required (if any), the coursework in progress, and the coursework yet to be completed.

Graduate students may not be admitted to candidacy if they (1) are on probation, (2) are suspended, (3) have not removed all undergraduate deficiencies, and/or (4) have not completed at least 12 hours of recommended graduate courses. International students who are required to pass the Michigan Test to indicate English proficiency must do so before they can be admitted to candidacy.

The committee. The G-3 also identifies the members of a graduate student's committee. The committee typically consists of three members – a supervising professor as well as two other professors from the history department. Usually these professors are those from whom the student has taken the most classes. If the student has a minor field from outside the history department, one faculty member will represent that department on the committee, as either a third or optional fourth reader. Students should ask the faculty politely to serve on their committee before the graduate advisor completes the G-3. The committee identified on the G-3 will be responsible for guiding to completion the thesis for those students on the Thesis Option. For students on the Non-Thesis Option, the committee will create and evaluate a comprehensive exam for the student to pass in order to graduate.

Graduate students on the Thesis Option work closely with their supervising professor to complete a thesis, a work of original research based on primary sources and firmly grounded in the relevant scholarship, or historiography. Once a draft of the thesis is written to the satisfaction of the supervising professor, it goes to the second and third members of the committee for reading. Those professors will offer recommendations and suggestions to improve the thesis. After the student makes revisions, each member of the committee reads the thesis again. If revisions are satisfactory, each committee member indicates approval of the finished product by signing a form. During the student's final semester, as work on the thesis is nearing completion, he or she schedules with the graduate advisor an oral defense of the thesis. The graduate advisor submits a G-5 form indicating the time and date for the defense. The student must successfully answer the questions of committee members in order to graduate. The three-person thesis committee must unanimously agree that a student has successfully completed and defended the thesis for the student to graduate.

Graduate students on the Non-Thesis Option take a comprehensive exam during their final semester in the program. It is the student's responsibility to contact each committee member early in the semester, if not before, for a reading list and/or list of possible questions that may appear on the exam. The usual procedure is for professors to supply three to six study questions for each course the student has had from that individual, then on the comprehensive exam give a choice of two out of three or one out of two questions. Each committee member's question(s) should take two hours to complete, for a total of a six-hour exam, and are answered in separate examination books or on a laptop computer. Committee members submit the questions to the graduate advisor, who sets the time and place for the student to take the exam. Either the committee chair or the graduate advisor

administers the exam. After the exam is completed, the person who administered the exam delivers it to the committee members. Each committee member reads the entire exam and grades his or her portion. Students may pass, pass conditionally, or fail. A “conditional pass” requires a retake of at least one portion of the exam. For retakes, faculty reserve the right to ask the same or a different question from among those previously given the student. As a final step, students must meet with their committee to orally defend their exam. The three-person non-thesis committee must unanimously agree that a student has successfully completed and defended the comprehensive exam for the student to graduate.

Whether the graduate student pursues the Thesis or Non-Thesis Option, a G-7 form notes the outcome of oral and/or written exam. Each committee member’s signature is required.

Application for graduation. Graduate students must apply and pay for graduation by the first Monday in October or March or second Monday in June, for a December, May, or August graduation, respectively.

All graduate students should secure a copy of the graduate calendar that the Office of Graduate Studies makes available each semester.

Survey & exit interview. In the interest of self-assessment and program improvement, graduate students, in the final semester before graduation, after the completion of all program requirements, complete a brief survey regarding their graduate experiences and meet with one or more members of the faculty to discuss the program.

Graduate Forms

- G-1 Office of Graduate Admissions application form
- G-2 student application for admission to candidacy for master’s degree/
student draft of degree plan and request for graduate committee (unofficial)
- G-3 application for admission to candidacy (degree plan)
- G-4 application/recommendation for membership on the graduate faculty
(for faculty only)
- G-5 schedule for oral examination
- G-6 transfer credit
- G-7 written/oral exam results
- G-11 request of undergraduate student to enroll in graduate course
- G-15 request to change graduate student’s program and/or committee
- G-16 change of graduate major
- G-17 graduate assistant classification form
- G-19 request for international students school transfer

Progress Tracking Worksheets

Below are two unofficial worksheets, one for the Thesis Option and one for the Non-Thesis Option, that students and the graduate advisor may use to monitor student progress through the program and prevent any unpleasant surprises.

THESIS OPTION

STUDENT: _____

Date: _____

Deficiencies, if any

Date

_____ HIST 1301 _____

_____ HIST 1302 _____

_____ HIST 3321 _____

_____ HIST 3322 _____

_____ HIST 3390 _____

Coursework

Date

_____ HIST 5300 Historiography _____

_____ HIST 5____ _____

_____ HIST or minor field 5____ _____

_____ HIST or minor field 5____ _____

G-3 (admission to candidacy/degree plan) filed? Y N _____

_____ HIST 5390 Thesis _____

_____ HIST 5391 Thesis _____

Foreign language

_____ 1311 _____ 1312 _____ 2311 _____ 2312

NON-THESIS OPTION

STUDENT: _____

Date: _____

Deficiencies, if any

Date

_____ HIST 1301 _____

_____ HIST 1302 _____

_____ HIST 3321 _____

_____ HIST 3322 _____

_____ HIST 3390 _____

Coursework

Date

_____ HIST 5300 Historiography _____

_____ HIST 5____ _____

G-3 (admission to candidacy/degree plan) filed? Y N _____

_____ HIST 5____ _____

_____ HIST or minor field 5____ _____

_____ HIST or minor field 5____ _____