



# University of Idaho

## Department of History

# Graduate Student Handbook



Revised 2024

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## Introduction

The Department of History at the University of Idaho has four graduate degree tracks: a master's with a thesis capstone; a master's with exams as a capstone; a PhD in History; and a PhD in Historical Archaeology. The department currently consists of faculty members covering fields in American History, Pre-Modern and Modern Europe, Asian History, and Latin America. Our faculty offer thematic expertise in visual and material culture, gender and sexuality studies, critical race studies, environmental history, legal history, and cultural history.

Our award-winning faculty members work with students seeking graduate degrees to prepare for careers in public history, teaching, diplomatic service, and academia. Students work closely with their major professors to create a course of study that helps students develop research skills, deepen content knowledge, gain familiarity with diverse historiographies, and communicate their ideas effectively. We offer a limited number of Teaching Assistantships to work with faculty members in teaching and grading, offering crucial experience in working with undergraduate students.

If you are a prospective student interested in applying to our program, you should take the following steps: 1) read this handbook for all the admission and program requirements; 2) reach out to the Director of Graduate Studies; 3) look at the faculty biographies on our department homepage [Faculty and Staff | History Department \(uidaho.edu\)](#) and reach out via email to any professor who you think you would be interested in working with as your major professor. This relationship is the most critical of your graduate experience, and it is essential to ensure that the professor you want to work with is currently accepting graduate students and that they would be interested in supervising your work.

This handbook contains all the specifics on the graduate degrees in History and should be your main source of information on program requirements. All previous versions of the handbook are hereby null and void.

## Welcome Message from Dr. Rebecca Scofield, Department Chair



As Chair of the Department of History, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the Graduate Program of the Department of History.

Our MA and PhD degrees are each designed to develop students' research and analytical skills to deepen their content knowledge through the study and curation of primary sources. We provide students with broad and diverse skills and experiences, training not only researchers and teachers but also thinkers who can take on responsibilities in almost any field, from law to public policy. Research is a primary foundation of the professional development of a historian, but it is not the only one. The ability to construct thoughtful arguments and conduct productive debates is equally important. Our students learn the art of historical narrative, the ability to engage with intellectual concepts, and the necessity of communicating with diverse publics.

We are particularly proud of our graduate students, both current and past. Melissa Courtnage (MA), for example, now teaches at the College of the Redwoods. Jeff Meyer (Ph.D.) is at the University of Alaska, Anchorage, Renae Campbell (Ph.D.) is now tenure-track faculty here at the University of Idaho, and many of our graduates work for the University of Idaho.

They and our current students come from a range of backgrounds. Some have gone directly from earning their BA or BS degree into the MA course of study. Others are returning to school after a few or after many years as teachers, grocery clerks, graphic designers, and even lawyers. Some come from Northern Idaho, others from Georgia or Arizona. Some come to us from cities like Seattle and Missoula, while others come from rural towns like Kellogg. Our graduate students are from diverse social, political, religious, economic, gender, and racial backgrounds and identities. Each brings with them their unique perspective, enriching our conversations, our research, and our students.

Each faces the same challenges from the first day of our program. This handbook represents one resource, but there are others. Among the most important are a student's major professor, the Director of Graduate Studies, and CLASS Administrative and Fiscal Services, who handle all the logistical details ([classsafs@uidaho.edu](mailto:classsafs@uidaho.edu)). But the first stop mandated by the College of Graduate Studies (COGS) is the required training and orientation sessions which open a graduate student's first semester. COGS also points graduate students to valuable professional developments. A student's major professor, the Director of Graduate Studies, and COGS provide information, opportunities, and support that are the foundation of the graduate experience in History at the University of Idaho.

Sincerely,

Dr. Rebecca Scofield  
Associate Professor of American History  
Department Chair  
[rscofield@uidaho.edu](mailto:rscofield@uidaho.edu)

## Welcome Message from Dr. Alyson Roy, Director of Graduate Studies



Welcome both prospective and current graduate students! As the Director of Graduate Studies, it is my job to help the department chair facilitate our graduate programs. I am the first point of contact with prospective students and oversee the admissions process at the departmental level. During the academic year, I am here to answer any questions about the program, from forming committees to creating study plans to tracking your degree audit. I try to meet one-on-one with every graduate student at least once per year, and once per semester for new graduate students. Your major professor will be your primary mentor and advisor, particularly related to research, coursework, advising, and writing, and I am here to help with any clarifications regarding the program requirements in this graduate handbook, COGS forms, degree tracking, etc. You can drop in during office hours (posted outside my door), email me, or set up an appointment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alyson M. Roy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Alyson Roy  
Assistant Professor of Ancient History  
Director of Graduate Studies  
[aroy@uidaho.edu](mailto:aroy@uidaho.edu)

## Program Overview

The Department of History offers an MA and a PhD degree, with two tracks per degree. The MA has a 30-credit minimum requirement and is intended to be completed over four semesters. The PhD has a 78-credit minimum requirement, and the required coursework is intended to be completed over the course of four semesters before the student takes their qualifying exams to achieve candidacy, at which point their remaining credits are fulfilled through dissertation research. These programs are intended to train graduate students in advanced historical research, methodologies, and historiography both broadly and for specific fields. While students pursue specific specializations, all graduate students will receive cross-disciplinary training and are expected to excel in coursework in a variety of subfields.

Beyond mastery of research skills and historiography, successful graduate students are those who show initiative, can work independently, manage their time effectively, and who can approach their graduate program like a full-time job. The department expects students to familiarize themselves with this graduate handbook, which both provides the necessary information about the various degree programs and serves as the student's contract with the department. Graduate programs are difficult and time-consuming, and students should be mentally prepared for a significantly increased workload compared to their undergraduate program; much more independent work; greater responsibility for tracking their progress through their degree and initiating meetings with faculty; and significantly higher expectations for the quality of their research, and oral and written communication. For prospective students, it is critical to consider whether a graduate program is the right fit for them and a commitment they are willing to make before applying.

MA and PhD students each have **one chronological field, one thematic field, and a third field from either category**, with a faculty mentor supervising each field. Students must choose at least one major field and one minor field, with their third their choice from either category.

- The **chronological fields** are US History I (early), US History II (modern), Ancient Mediterranean, Medieval Europe, Modern Europe, Latin America, and Modern Asia.
- The **thematic fields** are gender and sexuality; visual and material culture; environmental history; intellectual and cultural history; public history; empire and colonialism; film history; and race and ethnicity. PhD students are encouraged to limit their major field to US history.
- In addition to the PhD in History, we also offer the doctoral program in Historical Archaeology in collaboration with the Department of Sociology and Anthropology which entails coursework in both history and anthropology and working with faculty in both departments.

The MA program is intended to provide students with research skills and experience, a greater depth of knowledge, and to enhance professional opportunities. It is a steppingstone to the doctorate; it is a qualifying degree for secondary-school teaching; and it prepares students to work in archives, libraries, museums, research institutes, and the public sector. The PhD degrees aim to prepare students for academic careers as scholars and teachers and for professional opportunities in research, policy analysis, public history, and cultural management. The fully prepared PhD candidate demonstrates mastery of historical materials, an ability to coordinate information, a

capacity for critical analysis of issues and data, effectiveness in conducting independent research, and skill in expressing ideas orally and in writing.

For students who are considering the graduate program in history, it is essential to consider who could serve as your major professor, and with their guidance, develop a study plan. While course work will serve to immerse you in broader historical fields and hone your research and writing skills, specific research projects such as the thesis and dissertation need to be focused and contribute significantly to scholarship in the wider field, which requires the supervision of a field expert.

More information about the program, the fields, and selecting major professors can be found in the following pages.



## Admission to the Graduate Programs

Students apply through the College of Graduate Studies (COGS) [Admissions](#) which will send the application to the Department of History for review. For the Historical Archaeology PhD, the application will be sent to both the Department of History and the Department of Culture, Society, and Justice (CSJ). The student should select their degree track and indicate their preferred major professor in their application. The department will review the application and send the decision back to COGS.

A candidate for admission must have a minimum grade point average of 3.0 to be considered for admission to the MA and a minimum 3.5 grade point average to be considered for admission to either PhD program.

Neither COGS nor the History Department offer application fee waivers.

**Applications to the PhD:** Applicants to the PhD program must have an MA in hand by the official start date of the semester for which they are applying for admission. At present, the department does not offer a joint MA/PhD track in which students can enroll directly from a BA into a PhD and get the MA as part of the process.

**Applicants to the Historical Archaeology PhD Program:** Students interested in the Historical Archaeology PhD program are encouraged to reach out to the Director of Graduate Studies for CSJ. Prospective students must have completed an MA in Anthropology or an acceptable related discipline. Additionally, students should have one season of archaeological field work experience, and some demonstrated abilities with historical materials analysis. If students do not have this background, they will be admitted to the Anthropology MA program first to acquire these skills.

**Applications from Current MA Students:** Current students in the MA programs in History or Anthropology who would like to apply for admission to the PhD program do not need to reapply through COGS. Rather, they apply for the PhD program through an internal admissions process in which they submit their application materials to the Director of Graduate Studies. The department will then review the application and, if accepted, the MA student will fill out and submit a Change of Curriculum form to the College of Graduate Studies after they have defended their MA thesis but before they officially graduate from the program.

Additionally, the application packet **for any program** must include the following items to be sent to Graduate Admissions:

- A statement of purpose which outlines the proposed field(s) of study, the faculty member(s) they would like to work with, their goal for working toward a graduate degree, and the applicant's reasons for seeking admission to the program. A successful statement of purpose demonstrates the student's compatibility with the program, a clear research agenda, and a firm awareness of what the degree will provide them in terms of their personal or career goals. It indicates not only who they would like to work with but why their research interests align with that professor's expertise.
- Three recent letters of recommendation.

- A sample of written work, preferably from a prior history course. For MA applicants, if you have a capstone paper or a thesis, those would be ideal submissions. Your written work needs to demonstrate your research, writing, and historiographical skills. For PhD applicants, you should submit a written sample from your MA degree.
- A one to two-page curriculum vita/resume.
- College and/or MA transcripts. The College of Graduate Studies (COGS) requires official transcripts.
- Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL): Applicants whose native language is not English, must achieve a minimum score of 99 on the TOEFL to be considered for admission.

## Degree Requirements

Below you will find an outline of the credit requirements and suggested courses for our four degree-granting programs. For all degrees, the department expects students to maintain a minimum 3.5 GPA in all their coursework. All students must submit an annual review (explained further below) and students who do not meet the minimum GPA requirements may receive probationary warnings that, if not met, can lead to a student's dismissal from the program.

COGS has its own minimum standards for each degree, outlined here, but students should always defer to the departmental requirements listed under their respective degree below.

COGS Requirements for the MA:

<b>Minimum Credits</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Minimum 500-level credits</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Maximum Transfer Credits</b>	<b>12</b>

COGS Requirements for the PhD:

<b>Minimum Credits</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>Minimum Number of UI Credits</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Minimum 500-level or Above Credits</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Maximum Number of Overaged Credits (8+ years)</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Maximum Number of Research Credits for Study Plan</b>	<b>45</b>

## MA Program Requirements

The MA-Thesis degree requires a minimum of 30 credits to complete. Full-time status requires 9 credits per semester, so this program can be completed over the course of four semesters (2 years). The thesis option is ideal for students who desire to pursue an original research project of substantial length. A non-thesis option is available for students if, after consultation with their major professor (MP), the MP considers it the most suitable program. In either option, students deepen their knowledge and skills in historical research, thinking, and writing through their coursework. The Non-Thesis degree track requires a minimum of 36 credits.

### MA Degree Tracking: Thesis Option

Degree Requirement	Credit Requirement	Coursework That Fulfills the Requirement
<b>Methods Courses</b>	min. 9	<p>One methods course is offered each semester, so students are encouraged to take one per semester for their first three semesters.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HIST 501: Seminar</li> <li>• HIST 514: Colloquium in American History</li> <li>• HIST 522: Colloquium in European History</li> <li>• HIST 544: Colloquium in Global History</li> <li>• HIST 590: Issues and Methods in History</li> </ul>
<b>500-level Content Courses</b>	min. 21	<p>Can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HIST 504: Special Topics</li> <li>• HIST 524: American Environmental History</li> <li>• HIST 538: Modern Mexico and the Americas</li> <li>• HIST 540: Social Revolution in Latin America</li> <li>• HIST 542: The Medieval Church</li> <li>• HIST 543: The Medieval State</li> <li>• HIST 545: Medieval English Constitutional and Legal History</li> <li>• HIST 546: Ancient Rome</li> <li>• HIST 548: The Reformation</li> <li>• HIST 550: Topics in Ancient History</li> <li>• HIST 554: Ancient Greece</li> <li>• HIST 567: Russia to 1894</li> <li>• HIST 584: Modern China</li> <li>• HIST 585: Chinese Social and Cultural History</li> <li>• Any additional 500-level History courses (including methods courses)</li> </ul> <p>Can include:</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevant 500-level courses in related fields approved by the major professor.</li> <li>• max of 6 credits of relevant 400-level courses can be counted upon consultation with your MP but 500-level History courses should <i>always</i> be prioritized over 400-level courses.</li> <li>• max of 9 credits of HIST 502</li> <li>• max of 9 credits of HIST 500</li> </ul>
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## MA Degree Tracking: Non-Thesis Option

While the department encourages students to choose the thesis option, the non-thesis track is available if the MP deems it the most appropriate program. Typically, students who utilize the non-thesis track are secondary education teachers fulfilling their graduate requirements. While much of the coursework is the same, the non-thesis track replaces the thesis with three timed written exams (explained further below). To facilitate both the content mastery needed for these exams and to provide the time to prepare for the exams themselves, this degree track requires a minimum of 36 credits.

<b>Degree Requirement</b>	<b>Credit Requirement</b>	<b>Coursework That Fulfills the Requirement</b>
<b>Methods Courses</b>	min. 9	<p>One methods course is offered each semester, so students are encouraged to take one per semester for their first three semesters.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HIST 501: Seminar</li> <li>• HIST 514: Colloquium in American History</li> <li>• HIST 522: Colloquium in European History</li> <li>• HIST 544: Colloquium in Global History</li> <li>• HIST 590: Issues and Methods in History</li> </ul>
<b>500-level Content Courses</b>	min. 27	<p>Can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HIST 504: Special Topics</li> <li>• HIST 524: American Environmental History</li> <li>• HIST 538: Modern Mexico and the Americas</li> <li>• HIST 540: Social Revolution in Latin America</li> <li>• HIST 542: The Medieval Church</li> <li>• HIST 543: The Medieval State</li> <li>• HIST 545: Medieval English Constitutional and Legal History</li> <li>• HIST 546: Ancient Rome</li> <li>• HIST 548: The Reformation</li> <li>• HIST 550: Topics in Ancient History</li> <li>• HIST 554: Ancient Greece</li> <li>• HIST 567: Russia to 1894</li> <li>• HIST 584: Modern China</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HIST 585: Chinese Social and Cultural History</li> <li>• Any additional 500-level History courses</li> </ul> <p>Can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevant 500-level courses in related fields approved by the major professor.</li> <li>• max of 6 credits of relevant 400-level courses can be counted upon consultation with your Major Professor (MP) but 500-level History courses should <i>always</i> be prioritized over 400-level courses.</li> <li>• max of 9 credits of HIST 502.</li> <li>• max of 9 HIST 599 exam prep credits</li> </ul>
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## PhD Requirements: History Track

The PhD degree is divided into two periods: coursework and dissertation research/writing. PhD students take one to two years of full-time coursework depending on the number of credits accepted from their MA. Students are eligible to take qualifying exams once they have completed a minimum of 36 credits of coursework. The additional 42 credits required to meet the minimum COGS requirement to earn a PhD (78 credits) are often completed in the second phase of the PhD as HIST 600 Dissertation credits. In other words, once students have successfully passed their qualifying exams and achieved candidacy, they should no longer take courses, but rather register for dissertation research credits to make timely progress toward completing their dissertation. Students should consult with the DGS and/or department chair to determine which credits from their MA can count toward the coursework credits.

<b>Degree Requirement</b>	<b>Credit Requirement</b>	<b>Coursework That Fulfills the Requirement</b>
<b>Methods Courses</b>	min. 9	<p>One methods course is offered each semester, so students are encouraged to take one per semester for their first three semesters.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HIST 501: Seminar</li> <li>• HIST 514: Colloquium in American History</li> <li>• HIST 522: Colloquium in European History</li> <li>• HIST 544: Colloquium in Global History</li> <li>• HIST 590: Issues and Methods in History</li> </ul>
<b>500-level Content Courses</b>	min. 27	<p>Can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HIST 504: Special Topics</li> <li>• HIST 524: American Environmental History</li> <li>• HIST 538: Modern Mexico and the Americas</li> <li>• HIST 540: Social Revolution in Latin America</li> <li>• HIST 542: The Medieval Church</li> <li>• HIST 543: The Medieval State</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HIST 545: Medieval English Constitutional and Legal History</li> <li>• HIST 546: Ancient Rome</li> <li>• HIST 548: The Reformation</li> <li>• HIST 550: Topics in Ancient History</li> <li>• HIST 554: Ancient Greece</li> <li>• HIST 567: Russia to 1894</li> <li>• HIST 584: Modern China</li> <li>• HIST 585: Chinese Social and Cultural History</li> <li>• Any additional 500-level History courses</li> </ul> <p>Can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevant 500-level courses in related fields approved by the major professor.</li> <li>• max of 6 credits of relevant 400-level courses can be counted upon consultation with your Major Professor (MP) but 500-level History courses should <i>always</i> be prioritized over 400-level courses.</li> <li>• max of 9 credits of HIST 502</li> <li>• max of 9 HIST 599 for exam prep</li> </ul>
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## PhD Requirements: Historical Archaeology Track

The Historical Archaeology PhD is facilitated jointly by the Department of History and the Department of Culture, Society, and Justice (CSJ). Students are encouraged to check in regularly with the Directors of Graduate Studies in both departments as they work toward their degree. Students in the Historical Archaeology PhD program may also choose individualized subfields in which to specialize. Students should consult with their MP to determine if any additional coursework is required to complete their subfield training, for example in Forensic Anthropology.

As with the History PhD, the Historical Archaeology PhD is divided into two phases: coursework and fieldwork/research. For the first two years, students take the requisite coursework. In lieu of qualifying exams, Historical Archaeology students are expected to complete the following two requirements by the conclusion of their fourth semester:

- 1) Prepare, defend, and submit an external grant proposal. Students may choose to apply for a NSF Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant, Wenner-Gren Foundation Dissertation Fieldwork Grant, Ford Foundation Dissertation Fellowship, or equivalent. Students are expected to schedule a one-hour formal prospectus defense with their committee to discuss the grant's details and dissertation fieldwork before final submission to the granting institution. Students must provide a final draft of the grant proposal to their committee members at least 30 days before their meeting. A clear majority of the members (three of four, or three of five) must vote in favor for a student to “pass” the prospectus defense.

2) Present original research at a regional or national anthropology or history conference, followed by submission of the final paper manuscript for publication in an academic journal (a regional-level journal such as JONA would be minimum). Students are expected to consult with their committee chair on a writing and submission schedule.

Upon successful completion of these requirements, the student achieves candidacy and moves into the second phase of their program and begins their dissertation research and any requisite fieldwork.

Degree Requirement	Credit Requirement	Coursework That Fulfills the Requirement
<b>Methods Courses</b>	min. 9	<p>There are two required methods courses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ANTH 570: Materiality and Human Cultures</li> <li>• ANTH 530: Archaeological History, Ethics, and Theory</li> </ul> <p>Additional methods courses may be required for specialized subfields such as Forensic Anthropology.</p> <p>Additionally, students can take any of the following, which can also count toward content course credits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ANTH 509: Anthropological Field Methods</li> <li>• ANTH 516: Qualitative Social Science Methods</li> <li>• ANTH 517: Social Data Analysis</li> <li>• ANTH 521: Contemporary Issues in Anthropological Theory</li> <li>• ANTH 531: Historical Archaeology</li> <li>• ANTH 532: Historical Artifact Analysis</li> <li>• ANTH 533: Applied Cultural Resource Management</li> </ul>
<b>500-level History Courses</b>	min. 12	<p>Can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HIST 501 Seminar</li> <li>• HIST 504: Special Topics</li> <li>• HIST 514: Colloquium in American History</li> <li>• HIST 522: Colloquium in European History</li> <li>• HIST 544: Colloquium in Global History</li> <li>• HIST 590: Issues and Methods in History</li> <li>• HIST 524: American Environmental History</li> <li>• HIST 538: Modern Mexico and the Americas</li> <li>• HIST 540: Social Revolution in Latin America</li> <li>• HIST 542: The Medieval Church</li> <li>• HIST 543: The Medieval State</li> <li>• HIST 545: Medieval English Constitutional and Legal History</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HIST 546: Ancient Rome</li> <li>• HIST 548: The Reformation</li> <li>• HIST 550: Topics in Ancient History</li> <li>• HIST 554: Ancient Greece</li> <li>• HIST 567: Russia to 1894</li> <li>• HIST 584: Modern China</li> <li>• HIST 585: Chinese Social and Cultural History</li> </ul>
<b>500-level Anthropology Content Courses</b>	min. 15	<p>Can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ANTH 504: Special Topics</li> <li>• ANTH 511: Human Evolution</li> <li>• ANTH 522: Contemporary Pacific NW Indians</li> <li>• ANTH 534: Pseudoarcheology</li> <li>• ANTH 540: Forensic Science</li> <li>• ANTH 542: Human Osteology</li> <li>• ANTH 544: Health, Illness, and Society</li> <li>• ANTH 545: Indigenous Ways of Knowing</li> <li>• ANTH 551: Forensic Anthropology</li> <li>• ANTH 552: Bioarcheology</li> <li>• ANTH 556: Anthropology of Modern War and Conflict</li> <li>• Any additional 500-level Anthropology courses</li> </ul> <p>Can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Max 6 credits of 300-level courses <b>only</b> if they are outside the major field and approved by the major professor.</li> </ul>

## Coursework

Graduate courses are defined as those at the 500-level or above. History graduate students cannot take 300-level courses for credit. Historical Archaeology PhD students can take 300-level courses only if they are outside their field and required for the degree. Graduate students may take 400-level courses for credit, but they are limited to 6 credits (two courses) and should prioritize 500-level courses. 600-level courses are only for PhD students who have passed their exams and achieved candidacy.

It is important to note that the number of graduate courses available each semester is limited, and the courses listed in the Course Catalog are not offered every year or even on a regular rotation. The course catalog represents all the classes the department has ever offered, but faculty come and go, university and departmental needs can change, new courses are added to the rotation, and therefore the catalog is not your most up to date resource for available course.

Please check the [Class Schedule](#) to see which courses are offered for a specific semester. While we try to schedule out future semesters, that is not always possible so students should be prepared to adjust their study plans (explained further below) based on available courses.



One of the core tenets of graduate work in History is learning research, writing, and analytical skills by studying an array of different disciplines. That means you should strive to take courses outside your research discipline, as they will foster different methodologies and approaches to history broadly, but also to your own field. At a more practical level, with a smaller faculty, students simply cannot tailor their graduate experience to a narrowly defined subfield. You must and should take courses in other historical disciplines.

Furthermore, since you will need to form your committee for either your MA or your PhD soon after you begin the program, you should try to take courses from a variety of professors so that you can determine with whom you would like to work.

## Registration

Students register for courses online through the Schedule Planner in MyUI. Registration schedules for each semester are posted on the [Registrar's Office Page](#). Students should meet with their MP during the advising period to select their schedule. Any other questions regarding registration can be directed to the DGS.

Graduate students do not have an advising hold, so they may register as soon as their registration window opens. However, most graduate courses require instructor or department permission to enroll, and therefore the student must contact the instructor of record (listed on the class schedule), the DGS, or the department chair to request permission to enroll. Students who do not meet the minimum grade point average requirements may be placed on a probationary hold, in which case they will need to meet with the DGS before they can register for any courses.

Students should be aware that many of our graduate courses are variable credit courses, which means that when registering, a student must input the number of credits they will be taking, otherwise the system will default to one credit. To correctly register for a variable-credit course, students must select the Schedule and Options tab and enter the desired number of credits. The Registrar's Office provides a [PDF guide](#) to using the Schedule Planner system.

## Types of Graduate Courses

The department offers a few different types of graduate courses. First and foremost are our methods courses. These are seminars, colloquia, and our Methods in History course, which is classed as a colloquium. While the design of every graduate course is up to the individual professor teaching the course, most of our courses follow a general format.

### Seminar

Seminars are guided research courses in which graduate students develop individual research projects, either on a particular theme chosen by the professor or on their own research, such as thesis chapters, dissertation chapters, or the proposal/prospectus for their project. The seminar course rotates between faculty, so students can work with different faculty and the course is repeatable. Students meet regularly one-on-one with the supervising faculty member but should also meet with their MP and potentially other committee members during the semester to discuss their work.

## Colloquium

A colloquium is what we call a readings course. Each colloquium will have a broad theme determined by the professor and a reading list designed around that theme. Students read 1-2 books per week and meet weekly as a class to discuss what they have read. These classes provide historiographical grounding in major subfields and give students the opportunity to be introduced to faculty members' expertise. Typically, students write either a series of short review essays or one longer historiographical paper. This provides critical skill-building in what historiography is and how to identify and articulate important historiographical trends both orally and in writing.

## Content Courses

The department regularly offers joint-listed 500-level courses. A joint-listed course is an undergraduate lecture course on a chronological or thematic topic that has a graduate section attached. Graduate students attend undergraduate lectures to deepen their understanding of the history and culture of a particular society but have additional requirements to fulfill to meet the standards of a graduate course. The individual professor determines these additional requirements, but typically mean either an independent research paper or additional colloquium meetings and a reading list outside of the undergraduate course. Students should consult the professor to determine what the additional requirements are. Content courses are also an ideal way to introduce students interested in academic or teaching careers to the content they need to master for developing a course. If a 500-level section is available for a course, graduate students must register for the 500-level section not the 400-level. Graduate students are allowed to take up to 6 credits (2 courses) of 400-level classes in consultation with their MP. Graduate students cannot take 300-level or below, except for Historical Archaeology students, who may be required to take 300-level prerequisites for their technical coursework, such as GIS.

## *Special Topics*

The department also intermittently offers HIST 504: Special Topics courses. These are content courses that are new to the program and have not yet received a formal HIST number in the course catalog. They are often taught by new faculty or by professors interested in incorporating a new topic into the regular curricular rotation.

## Directed Study

Directed Studies (HIST 502) are readings courses that are typically one-on-one with a student's MP or one of their committee members. Much like a colloquium, a directed study is intended to introduce students to critical historiographical trends in a specific field. Directed Studies are intended to build a student's knowledge base in both content and historiography for their major and minor fields. They also prepare you for research, the thesis/dissertation, and/or exams. HIST 502s are not listed on the Class Schedule unless a professor specifically requests to add one, so students must arrange a 502 with their professor, preferably before the start of a semester. Students are encouraged to take a directed study in each of their fields. We also encourage students to save their 502s until their second year once they have established their research project and their committee.

## Research

The department also offers two types of independent research credits, HIST 500 for MA students and HIST 600 for PhD students who have passed their qualifying exams. These courses are intended to provide research and writing time for the thesis and dissertation by giving the student the credit-hours needed to maintain an active registration status and/or full-time student status without the addition of coursework. In other words, a student registered for HIST 500 or 600 will work independently on their own schedule to make significant progress on or to complete their major research project. Students enrolled in these courses should request regular meetings with their MP and/or committee members to receive critical feedback.

HIST 500 and 600 courses are always listed with the DGS as the instructor of record, but students will work with their MP rather than the DGS. This is because they are offered every semester, and COGS does not want to clutter the schedule with multiple sections of the same course. However, 500 and 600 credits require instructor permission for registration, so students need to email the DGS to have a registration override put in to allow them to register.

## Exam Preparation

Lastly, the department offers HIST 599 for exam preparation. This course is only for Non-thesis MA students or pre-candidacy PhD students. Much like the research credits explained above, this course provides credit-hours without the addition of coursework. Ideally, students utilize their 599 credits in their second year, when they are preparing for exams. As the department allows up to 9 credits (3 courses) of HIST 599, students can take one course with each of their committee members to maximize their preparation for exams. Students should work with their committee members to finalize reading lists, do practice exam questions, and generally prepare to take either their non-thesis MA exams or their PhD qualifying exams to move to candidacy (explained further below). Also, as with the HIST 500 and 600 credits, HIST 599 is listed with the DGS as the instructor of record, but students should arrange meetings with their professor. Students will also require a registration overload from the DGS to register, so they need to email the DGS in advance.

## Choosing Courses

Students should prioritize the department's 500-level seminars and colloquia (i.e., methods courses) first, then 500-level History content courses. Courses outside the field should be discussed with the MP first to determine their relevance for research and exam preparation. HIST 502s and HIST 599s have a specific purpose in developing your mastery of a field and preparing PhD students and MA Non-thesis students for exams. 502s and 599s may better serve a student's degree progress if saved for their second year of coursework. Students should ideally do a 502 and/or 599 with each member of their committee.

## Fields and Committees

### Committees

MA and PhD students are expected to choose three fields that will shape their coursework and research. Each field is supervised by a faculty member with expertise in that field. These faculty members constitute a student's committee. Committee members should be History Department faculty. Emeritus faculty and affiliate faculty may be considered for a committee if the MP and the DGS agree it is the best fit for the student's needs. At times, it is best for some committee members to come from complementary disciplines; this decision will be made in consultation between the major professor and the graduate student.

The committee is a crucial element of graduate education. A committee provides both expertise and breadth in helping graduate students move through their degree programs. Along with the major professor, the committee advises students on their work. The committee supervises research and writing, oversees exams, and determines whether students have successfully proven their mastery of content to pass a thesis defense, qualifying exams, or a dissertation defense. Your relationship with your committee members is therefore crucial to your success as a graduate student.

### Major Professor

First and foremost, a student must select a Major Professor (MP). The MP is the most important relationship a student has in their graduate education. MPs support, advise, and supervise graduate students as they move through their coursework and complete their research. They are advisors, field experts, and professional mentors. Prospective students are encouraged to reach out to the faculty member with whom they are most interested in working before they submit their application to the program.

MPs are assigned as part of the admission process, based on both the student's request and the professor's agreement to serve as MP. The professor must have an opening and agree to supervise the student before the student can select them as their MP. If, for some reason, a student has not been assigned an MP, they are required to choose an MP and submit the required form before the end of their first semester. Students may change their MP using the [Appointment of Major Professor Form](#). Any student interested in changing their MP should first consult the DGS, who will help the student find a new MP.

While the MP is a critical mentor and advisor, it is the student's responsibility to utilize that resource. Students should request regular meetings with their MP for advising on courses, choosing fields, determining a research project, etc. This is particularly critical in the first semester, as students are expected to form their committee by the end of that semester. Beyond the first semester, students are encouraged to meet regularly with their MP to consult on research, writing, and professional development. Students should also meet routinely with the other members of their committee, particularly PhD students who need to develop the expected field expertise to pass a qualifying exam in each committee member's field.

## MA Committees

For an MA student, the most important field is the major (i.e., chronological) field, the student's primary area of research. MA students are encouraged to choose secondary fields that complement that research either chronologically or thematically. For example, if a student is interested in studying women's rights movements in Idaho from c.1850-1950, it would make the most sense to choose US I (to c. 1877), US II (post 1877), and gender history as their three fields. Since MA-thesis students do not take comprehensive exams, their fields are about supporting their research agenda. A master's graduate committee—for the thesis or non-thesis option—consists of three faculty members.

## MA Non-Thesis

For MA students on the non-thesis track, your choice of fields will determine what type of content and historiography you will encounter on your exams. You may want to consider choosing fields that support whatever goal you have for pursuing the degree. For example, if you want to teach high school and may teach civics and history, perhaps doing modern US, modern Europe, and a thematic field like gender and sexuality would be the most useful. For a non-thesis option, all three faculty members must be from the Department of History. For the thesis option, at least two must be from the department, but all three may be.

## PhD Committees

For PhD students, there are two phases, or functions, to their committee, correlating to the two phases of the program. First, the student will work toward passing their qualifying exams. PhD students must choose three exam fields (see further below) and the three faculty experts for those fields should be members of the History Department, but Emeritus faculty or affiliate faculty may be considered in consultation with the MP and DGS. Each committee member will supervise one field, providing the student with reading lists and grading their qualifying exams. Once the student has achieved candidacy by passing their qualifying exams, their committee transitions to the dissertation stage.

While the department only requires three fields for the PhD, COGS requires that a PhD committee have four members. Therefore, PhD students in their first semester will need to choose three exam fields (see "Fields" below) and have the agreement of a History faculty member to supervise that field. The list of fields includes the names of the faculty who generally supervise those fields. For their fourth member, the PhD student should select an outside member whose field expertise in some way complements the student's research. This could be faculty from another department or even another university.

Once the student has passed their qualifying exams, they can choose to revise their committee to be more narrowly focused on their research, as long as at least two UI History faculty are on the committee for PhD-History students, and one History faculty and one CSJ faculty for PhD-Historical Archaeology students. For the dissertation stage, students should choose faculty members whose expertise can contribute to the development of a high-quality dissertation.

PhD students may retain some or all the members of their exam committee for their dissertation committee but may also add outside members whose expertise overlaps more effectively with their research agenda. Many PhD students request outside members from other UI departments, such as

Anthropology, Theater, or English. Students are encouraged to consult the list of Affiliate Faculty on the [Department Page](#) to find faculty who frequently work with history students. PhD students may also request to add committee members from outside the university. However, it should be noted that non-UI faculty are typically only involved in the latter stages of the dissertation and students should not expect routine engagement with that faculty member while they conduct research.

## Forming the Committee

Graduate students should use the [Committee Member Appointment or Committee Changes](#) form to create their committee. The committee should be completed by the end of the first year of a master's program and by the third semester of a PhD program. Students are encouraged to work with the DGS and the MP to complete this process and submit the form to COGS. Changes to committees are completed using the same form. Changes can occur at any time and at the discretion of students or faculty, except the period from when exams have been scheduled until they have been completed. All changes should be made in consultation with the MP and the DGS. Conflicts of interests (e.g., funding sources outside the university) need to be avoided in constituting committees.

PhD students will need to update their committee using the same form if they change the composition of their committee after their exams.

## Fields

For both the MA and the PHD, the department expects students to choose three fields. These fields are intended to foster a graduate student's training in the chosen field's history and historiography. Fields help prepare students for research, teaching, and can influence a PhD candidate's marketability on the academic job market. Most importantly, fields encourage intellectual growth and skill development, and consequently students should not aim to construct narrowly defined fields that only touch on their specific research interests, but rather think more broadly about how different methodologies, approaches, and geographical or chronological areas could offer diverse perspectives that can both strengthen and challenge their own research interests.

Students must choose their primary field from the list of chronological fields and then choose one from the list of thematic fields. Their third field may come from either category. COGS stipulates that faculty members may not supervise more than one field for any individual student, so students must be aware of that as they form their committee since every faculty member offers multiple fields and many of those overlap. The current fields are listed below, with the names of faculty who frequently supervise those fields in parentheses. The faculty members may change at any time, so please consult the DGS and/or your MP to make sure the list is current or reach out to a specific faculty member to see if they are willing to supervise the field of interest.

### Chronological Fields

- Ancient Mediterranean World (Roy)
- Medieval European History (Kittell)
- Modern European History (Ruble)
- Latin American History (Graden)
- Modern Asian History (Kyong-McClain)

- United States History I [to 1877] (Amato)
- United States History II [since 1877] (Scofield, Kreikemeier)

#### Thematic Fields

- Gender and Sexuality (Ruble, Kittell, Scofield)
- Environmental History (Kreikemeier)
- Visual and Material Culture (Amato, Roy, Kyong-McClain)
- Race and Ethnicity (Graden, Amato, Scofield, Kreikemeier)
- Public History (Scofield, Ruble, Kreikemeier)
- Intellectual and Cultural History (Quinlan, Kittell, Scofield, Roy)
- Empire and Colonialism (Graden, Kyong-McClain, Roy, Scofield, Kittell, Kreikemeier)
- Film History (Graden, Kyong-McClain)

## Examinations

For non-thesis MA students and PhD students, one of the major functions of the fields listed above is to prepare for their exams. This step does not apply to PhD-Historical Archaeology students. For non-thesis MA students, these are what we call comprehensive exams, intended as a final capstone to the student's MA program and an acknowledgement of their mastery of their fields. PhD students, on the other hand, take qualifying exams—what COGS calls preliminary exams—as a transition from coursework to candidacy. For both programs, a different faculty member must administer each examination. Each exam will consist of two to four questions that are a mixture of content-based and historiographical questions. The student is expected to demonstrate a substantive knowledge of chronology, major issues, interpretations, and bibliography. This section will focus primarily on PhD exams, but Non-Thesis MA students should expect the same requirements unless otherwise noted.

### Specifics of Exams

- Three individual exams each with a different faculty member. PhD students also have a fourth exam, the orals, explained below.
- Three hours each, scheduled at least two weeks before the first date at the full committee's approval. Exams are taken over a two-week period.
- Handwritten responses are allowed but typed responses are preferred.
- Notes are allowed but students should not be attempting to research answers to their questions while taking exams.
- No AI is allowed for any portion of the exam process, including but not limited to: practice questions, summarizing texts, preparing mock answers, or responding to exam questions.
- Exam questions are intended to reflect a student's knowledge of field reading lists which they will have read in advance of the exam.
- All members of a student's committee will participate in preparing questions for the exams and then vote to pass or fail the student's exam.
- A clear majority must vote in favor for the student to pass their examinations.

- PhD students may not proceed to orals unless they have passed all their written exams.
- All committee members must be present, in person or remotely, at the oral examination.

## Exam Preparation and Expectations

As exams are intended to assess a student's mastery of both historical content and historiography, the faculty supervisor for each field will provide a **field reading list** that provides a comprehensive overview of the key trends, interpretations, and approaches in the field. Most fields have a **minimum of 40 books**, but the length of the reading list is determined by the supervising professor. Some faculty will provide a concrete list that they expect the student to learn; other faculty may encourage students to create their own lists or part of a list, which the faculty will then approve or amend. Students should therefore be familiar enough with a field or how to identify key scholarly works to contribute to a list if needed. While MA-thesis students do not take exams, their committee members may provide them with a similar reading list to help them build their historiographical knowledge to facilitate their research.

For any reading list, students should read the books and take extensive notes to help them parse the intellectual contribution of each book to the overarching field and be able to situate any given reading in wider scholarly debates. Students are encouraged to create some form of database to build their notes, such as OneNote. The department also recommends students use some form of citation system to track what they are reading. As the university offers a free Zotero account, that is an ideal choice of system.

When in an exam setting, due to time constraints, students cannot feasibly be checking back through their notes or searching the internet to finish their exams. Students therefore should reach a level of comfort with the reading list so that they can quickly respond, both in writing and orally, to a content or historiography question without needing to rely heavily on notes. To achieve this, students should be conversant enough in the history and historiography that they can quickly identify key events, people, scholars, and specific books that are critical to a holistic response to any question. This is particularly necessary for PhD students, who will also be expected to respond aloud to questions in the oral examination.

One of the goals of HIST 502 and HIST 599 is to provide students with the time to master these field lists. However, students will mostly work independently and must develop the necessary time management, reading, and notetaking skills to be successful in the exam process. Since students are mastering three fields, they are juggling three reading lists of likely 100 or more books in total. Students should therefore expect to work on these lists over academic breaks to have sufficient time to prepare. It is also important to note that the exam's content and the expectations for a passing grade are up to the individual faculty member. Therefore, students should request regular meetings with supervising faculty to make sure that they are meeting the expectations that each individual professor has for their exams. Students are also encouraged to request practice exam questions in the months leading up to their exams and to solicit feedback on their practice responses from their supervisors.

The time needed to prepare for exams varies from student to student. Most need 3-4 semesters of full-time study beyond the MA degree. As there is no strict timeline, students should consult with their MP to determine when they are ready to take their exams.



### *Oral Examinations*

The oral examination is ninety minutes to two hours. The oral examination has two functions. First, it is in part a continuation of the written examinations, and committee members may choose to follow up on any concerns they may have about the student's mastery of the content and historiography of their field. This may mean asking for elaboration on a written examination prompt or asking tangential questions intended to test the student's command of the literature and field. Second, the oral examination is intended to gauge the student's readiness to complete a dissertation in their field. This means showing competency in the subfields the student has pursued.

The student must formally defend their dissertation prospectus no later than 6 months after their oral exam. However, students should have a basic grasp of their proposed topic and be prepared to discuss it in their oral exam. Faculty will evaluate the quality and potential of the student's proposed dissertation topic. A critical component of the oral examination is the student's ability to demonstrate that they understand their field and their chosen research topic well enough to articulate it clearly and succinctly to committee members. Therefore, while notes are allowed, students should prepare in advance to avoid relying on them as much as possible. Oral presentation is an essential skill for academics, and one we encourage students to practice in advance.

### *Failing Exams*

As with the written exams, the final decision as to passing or failing will be made by the committee members. If a student fails all, some, or any one of the preliminary examinations (written or oral), they may repeat the examination(s) only once, with the permission of the department. The second attempt may be made no sooner than three months and no later than one year following the first attempt. The student must secure the consent of their committee to present themselves for reexamination.

Failure to pass all the examinations at the end of the second attempt will result in immediate termination from the doctoral program.

### *Advancement to Candidacy*

Upon successful completion of the preliminary examination and defense of the dissertation prospectus, the student becomes a candidate for the PhD degree. At or after the dissertation prospectus defense, the student will need to get the signatures of their full committee acknowledging that they passed both their exams and their prospectus defense. The student then files the [Advancement to Doctoral Candidacy](#) form. At this stage, the candidate is also commonly known as an ABD ("All but Dissertation").

## **Path to Candidacy for Historical Archaeology PhDs**

In lieu of written preliminary examinations, students in the historical archaeology program are expected to complete the following two requirements by the conclusion of their fourth semester:

- 1) Prepare, defend, and submit an external grant proposal. Students may choose to apply for an NSF Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant, Wenner-Gren Foundation Dissertation Fieldwork Grant, Ford Foundation Dissertation Fellowship, or an equivalent. Students are expected to schedule a one-

hour formal proposal defense with their committee to discuss the grant's details and dissertation fieldwork before final submission to the granting institution. Students must provide a final draft of the grant proposal to their committee members at least 30 days before their meeting. A clear majority of the members (three of four, or three of five) must vote in favor for a student to “pass” the proposal defense.

2) Present original research at a regional or national anthropology or history conference, followed by submission of the final paper manuscript for publication in an academic journal (a regional-level journal such as JONA would be minimum). Students are expected to consult with their committee chair on a writing and submission schedule.

Upon successful completion of the manuscript submission, proposal defense, and grant submission (though receipt of the grant award is not a required constraint), the student becomes a candidate for the PhD degree. The major professor certifies that all requirements have been met and files the [Advancement to Doctoral Candidacy](#) form. At this stage, the candidate is also commonly known as an ABD (“All but Dissertation”).

## Language or Skill Requirement

Depending on the research field, history graduate students may be required to demonstrate sufficient mastery in a relevant foreign language or technical skill through an exam. Examples of technical skills may include GIS, cartography, or competency in a particular research database. The student’s committee will determine whether a language or skill is necessary. If the language is not available at the University of Idaho, the student may need to find an online summer program and is encouraged to seek outside funds to pay for these programs. Students whose committee determines they need to demonstrate facility with a particular language or skill will need to schedule and pass their language competency exam before they can either schedule qualifying/preliminary exams or defend their thesis/dissertation.

## Historical Archaeology GIS Requirement

Historical Archaeology PhD students are required to gain sufficient mastery in the technical skill of GIS. Students are expected to either a) earn a passing grade in GEOG 475 Intermediate GIS (which has a prerequisite of GEOG 385) or b) complete the requirements of the [GIS certificate program](#). Students who enter a program with a class equivalent to GEOG 475 or a GIS certificate from another institution on their transcript will not need to take additional coursework.

## Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines and Expectations

Below students will find information on the MA thesis and PhD dissertation process. In all aspects of the student’s research and coursework, they are expected to adhere to departmental policies. This includes a total ban on plagiarism, including the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for any portion of the student’s graduate program: papers, coursework, exam preparation, mock exam questions, thesis or dissertation revision, etc. All student work must be original and adhere to the University’s [Academic Honesty](#) stipulations. If a student has any questions about whether the use of Assistive

AI, such as programs like Grammarly, constitutes plagiarism, they should consult the DGS or department chair. If, for some reason, the student feels AI-use is a necessary component of their research, they must receive formal approval from the DGS and department chair prior to beginning their research.

## MA Thesis

### Overview

To demonstrate their mastery of their field, the Department asks MA-thesis students to write a thesis. A thesis is an original, well-researched project with a clear argument and analysis supported by historical evidence. It should demonstrate a sufficient mastery of both primary and secondary source material, as well as coherent prose and well-reasoned arguments. It must be written under the direction of a major professor and should reflect feedback from the full committee.

The thesis process begins in the first semester, when the student should work in consultation with their MP to identify a research question of historical significance and begin preliminary research for their thesis. To prepare effectively for the thesis process, students are asked to write a **thesis prospectus** (discussed further below) of approximately 8-10 pages in length (double-spaced), not including the bibliography. Students will need to circulate this proposal among their committee members to receive and implement feedback. The draft should be submitted to the committee early in the student's second semester (recommended deadline of February 1<sup>st</sup>). Students will then formally present their proposal to their committee, the department, and their peers in late April at the department's Thesis Symposium. This formal presentation is intended to help students' oral communication skills and offer them an opportunity to receive diverse feedback from beyond their committee.

In consultation with their major professor, a student may complete a research project that includes artifacts of public-facing or historical preservation work. If a student chooses this path, these artifacts should be accompanied by a seminar-length research paper that accomplishes the following: makes an original argument about key methodologies for the project; articulates why the style and scope of the project best represents the archive/group/event that was the subject of the public-facing or preservation study; explains why the project is an effective tool for public education and seeks to identify potential audiences for and uses of the project.

### Guidelines

An effective master's thesis typically focuses on a small source base – a single archive, a narrowly defined geographical and chronological period, a single individual, etc. – allowing the student to develop a thorough, cohesive argument that attempts to contribute to their scholarly field. The thesis is also an assessment of the student's mastery of research skills and their ability to meet the standards of academic reasoning and communication. One of the critical skills expected of a Master's student is the ability to move beyond secondary research to make an original argument that balances a brief but effective review of relevant scholarly debates on the topic with a strong argument that relies on historical evidence and that distinguishes clearly between the student's scholarly voice and the work of other scholars.

A master's thesis is typically 60-90 pages (approximately 14,000 to 22,000 words) in length, double-spaced, and includes a comprehensive bibliography demonstrating a sufficient depth of research on the chosen topic. Occasionally, exceptions to this expectation exist, but they will need to be justified to the committee. If students have published portions of their research, they may be reused with proper attribution. Co-authored chapters are not standard and will be considered on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the committee.

While students work most closely with their major professor, they must circulate their thesis among their committee members well in advance of their thesis defense. However, it is up to the individual committee members and the student to discuss when each committee member gets involved in the process. Once the thesis is complete and approved by the committee, the student may request to proceed with their thesis defense, which is the final step before graduation. The defense is discussed below.

## Thesis Prospectus

Working with their MP and committee, students will prepare a formal research prospectus (also called a proposal) for their thesis. The prospectus should explain the following: 1) the research question and its significance; 2) the relevant secondary scholarship; 3) the relevant primary source base; 4) the methodology and/or analytical lens the student will employ to evaluate the source base; and 5) an outline of the research agenda, including a schedule and outline of chapters. While ultimately the structure and scope of the thesis proposal should be determined by the student and the MP, the department suggests a structure that includes a narrative context; the research question and its significance; a brief literature/historiographical review; an explanation of the methodology; discussion of the source material and a research plan; a proposed chapter outline; and a thorough bibliography.

The DGS can provide a document on writing effective research prospectuses to the student in their first semester, but ultimately the student should work closely with their MP to determine the most appropriate structure for the prospectuses. It is recommended that the student complete an initial draft of the research prospectus for their MP by December of their first semester, and then provide a revised draft of the prospectus to their committee by February 1<sup>st</sup>. Once the student has received and responded to feedback from the full committee and gotten approval from the committee on a final version, they should submit it to the DGS. Each student will then present their prospectus at a public symposium with other graduate students in late April of their second semester.

## Thesis Defense

To complete an MA-thesis degree, an MA student must defend their thesis in front of their committee. A defense is a formal discussion of the student's completed thesis. This is typically done at the end of the fourth semester; however, the timing is up to the committee. When the MP and committee believe the thesis is ready, the student will request to proceed with their final defense. They do so by filling out the [Request to Proceed with Final Defense](#) form and gathering the necessary signatures to schedule the defense. The student is required to submit the form to COGS with all the required signatures **at least two weeks prior to the proposed date of the defense**. The student should also contact the DGS to schedule a room, date, and time for the defense. All

members of the committee must be present either in-person or on Zoom for a defense. All COGS forms are emailed to [cogs-forms@uidaho.edu](mailto:cogs-forms@uidaho.edu).

A student must be actively enrolled as a student to defend their thesis. Students who are defending after having completed all their required coursework have the option of registering for GRAD 720: Finishing Status, a zero-credit course that will give them active status and allow them to defend. For most students, however, they will defend their thesis during their fourth semester in the MA program and will therefore be registered for at least three credits.

There are two parts to the scheduled defense. First, students will present a short, approximately 10-15-minute overview of their research, emphasizing their contribution to historical knowledge and the central findings of their research. After this presentation, the committee members will question the student's work. This can include anything from discussion of specific passages in the thesis to asking the student to explain historical events and methodologies, to requesting that students defend why they left other sources, methodologies, events, people, etc. out of the thesis. The MA thesis defense is typically an hour in length. At the end of the discussion period, the committee will then ask the student to step out of the room and will determine whether the thesis meets expectations. The committee will choose between the three available options—Pass, Pass with Pending Revisions, and Fail. Regardless of the vote, the committee typically asks the students to make some revisions before submitting the final version to the Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Database (ETD), which is discussed below. The student should bring the Final Defense Report, which they receive from COGS after requesting to proceed with the defense, to their defense for their committee to vote on and sign.

Per COGS' rules, if a student fails, the student may repeat the defense once, with the department's approval. The interval before the second attempt may not be less than three months or longer than one year from the date of the original defense. If the student is not allowed to repeat the defense or fails the second defense, the student is dismissed from the program.

## PhD Dissertation

### Overview

The doctoral dissertation is a cumulative reflection of a student's mastery of historical materials, their ability to coordinate information, their capacity for critical analysis of issues and data, their independent research skills, and their facility in written communication. It is an extensive, original, independent research project that is structured much like an academic book, with a formal introduction and conclusion, and core chapters organized around a key historical question. As the dissertation is the final cap on a student's doctoral program, it is expected to make a critical contribution to the field and represent the student's mastery of the requisite skills of a professional academic. PhD students begin work on their dissertation while still in coursework, working with their MP to identify a strong research question and body of evidence, and developing the beginnings of a dissertation prospectus, discussed below. However, the bulk of the work on the dissertation occurs after the student has achieved candidacy, i.e., passed their comprehensive exams.

## Guidelines

An effective dissertation typically focuses on a small source base – a single archive, a narrowly defined geographical and chronological period, a single individual, etc. – allowing the student to develop a thorough, cohesive argument that attempts to contribute to their scholarly field. A doctoral dissertation is typically 120 to 200 pages (approximately 30,000 to 48,000 words), not including the bibliography. Occasionally, exceptions to these expectations exist, but they will need to be justified to the committee. If students have published portions of their research, they may be reused with proper attribution. Co-authored chapters are not standard and will be considered on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the committee.

The dissertation should demonstrate a mastery of the field, which includes both primary and secondary material. Ideally, a dissertation expands scholarly knowledge in the disciplinary field by delving into archives and identifying critical historical evidence. The dissertation must therefore balance effectively between an evidence-based argument and a thorough engagement with secondary literature.

While PhD students work closely with their MP throughout the research process, the dissertation is an independent research project. PhD students are expected to manage their time and establish and meet deadlines; identify archives; find outside funding to facilitate travel to archives; create and maintain a bibliographic database; make clear, cohesive arguments in each chapter along with an overarching argument that connects each chapter and is both original and cohesive; and maintain timely progress toward completing their dissertation.

While there is not a strict timeline for completing the dissertation, ideally a PhD student will undertake 4-6 semesters (2-3 years) of coursework before achieving candidacy, and then spend 2-4 years completing their research and writing their dissertation. Recent data from the American Academy of Arts & Sciences indicates that the median time Humanities PhD recipients spent in their doctoral programs is 6.8 years or longer.<sup>1</sup> The majority of this time is after candidacy, when students are no longer taking courses. It is therefore critical that a doctoral student develop the ability to maintain progress outside of coursework.

## Prospectus

To facilitate the development of a high-quality, original dissertation, doctoral students will write and formally present a dissertation prospectus (also called a proposal). The prospectus should be between 10 and 20 pages (roughly 3,000 to 6,000 words). The prospectus should explain the following: 1) the research question and its significance; 2) the relevant secondary scholarship; 3) the relevant primary source base; 4) the methodology and/or analytical lens the student will employ to evaluate the source base; and 5) an outline of the research agenda, including a schedule and outline of chapters. While ultimately the structure and scope of the thesis proposal should be determined by the student and the major professor, the department suggests a structure that includes a narrative context; the research question and its significance; a brief literature/historiographical review; an

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<sup>1</sup> The data measured covered the years 2003 to 2020. [Years to Attainment of a Humanities Doctorate | American Academy of Arts and Sciences \(amacad.org\)](https://www.amacad.org/publications/years-to-attainment-of-a-humanities-doctorate)

explanation of the methodology; discussion of the source material and a research plan; a proposed chapter outline; and a thorough bibliography.

The DGS can provide a document on writing effective dissertation prospectus in the student's first semester, but ultimately students should work closely with their MP to determine the most appropriate structure for the prospectus.

The student will also need to defend their prospectus to their committee in a formal presentation. The prospectus defense must be scheduled within 6 months of the qualifying/preliminary exams. Prior to scheduling the defense, the student should be submitted first to the MP for feedback and then to the rest of the committee. After the defense, if the student's prospectus is formally approved, the student will have their committee sign the [Advancement to Doctoral Candidacy](#) form. Once the form is signed, this marks the formal transition from PhD student to PhD candidate, or ABD.

The department also requests that PhD students present their prospectus at the prospectus symposium, held either in the Fall or Spring. The student should send the finalized prospectus to the DGS, who will coordinate the symposium.

## Dissertation Defense

When the MP and committee believe the dissertation is ready, the student will request to proceed with their final defense. They do so by filling out the [Request to Proceed with Final Defense](#) form and gathering the necessary signatures to schedule the defense. A defense is a formal discussion of the student's completed thesis. The student is required to submit the form to COGS with all the required signatures at least two weeks prior to the proposed date of the defense. The student should also contact the DGS to schedule a room, date, and time for the defense. All members of the committee must be present either in-person or on Zoom for a defense. All COGS forms are emailed to [cogs-forms@uidaho.edu](mailto:cogs-forms@uidaho.edu).

A student must be actively enrolled as a student to defend their dissertation. Ideally, a PhD student will be registered for HIST 599 for exam preparation in the semester in which they defend. If they have exceeded the maximum credits on 599 and completed all other requisite coursework, they have the option of registering for GRAD 720: Finishing Status, a zero-credit course that will give them active status and allow them to defend.

A dissertation defense typically takes 1-2 hours. There are two parts to the scheduled defense. First, the student will present an overview of their research in 15-30 minutes, emphasizing their contribution to historical knowledge and the central findings of their research. After this presentation, the committee members will question the student's work. This can include anything from discussion of specific passages in the dissertation to asking the student to explain historical events and methodologies, to requesting that students defend why they left other sources, methodologies, events, people, etc. out of the dissertation.

Dissertation defenses are also open to the wider academic community, but friends and family are not allowed to attend. Once the committee has had the opportunity to ask questions of the student, they may choose to open the floor to questions from the audience. Once that is complete, the committee will then ask the student and audience to step out of the room and will determine whether the thesis meets expectations. The committee will choose between the three available

options—Pass, Pass with Pending Revisions, and Fail. Regardless of the vote, the committee typically asks the students to make some revisions before submitting the final version to the Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Database (ETD), which is discussed below. The student should bring the Final Defense Report, which they will receive from COGS after submitting the request to proceed to defense, to their defense for their committee to vote on and sign.

Per COGS' rules, if a student fails, the student may repeat the defense once, with the department's approval. The interval before the second attempt may not be less than three months or longer than one year. If the student is not allowed to repeat the defense or fails the second defense, the student is dismissed from the program.

## Steps to the Thesis or Dissertation Defense

Before a student can successfully defend their thesis or dissertation and graduate, they need to complete several steps, outlined here.

### *Committee*

A student's first step should be to double check their Student Profile to confirm that their major professor is listed correctly and that the paperwork they filed to form their committee has been processed by the Registrar's Office and is visible on their Student Profile in VandalWeb under the Graduate Student Committee tab. Without the committee in place, the student cannot proceed with any of the subsequent steps.

### *Study Plan*

Before a student can apply to defend, they must submit a [Study Plan](#) in their Degree Audit and have it successfully approved by their MP and the department chair and processed in the system. The Study Plan is organized by semester but must account for all the departmental requirements for the degree and meet the minimum credit requirement. Any subwaivers that are required for specific classes must be completed and approved prior to submitting the Study Plan. The Study Plan is also the moment when any transfer credits from previous institutions are formally included on the Degree Audit. As this process can be complicated, students are encouraged to meet with their MP before submitting their study plan.

### *Applying to Graduate*

Due to university deadlines, students will need to apply to graduate before they can schedule their defense, and the above steps must be completed before applying to graduate. The deadline to apply to graduate is typically the second Friday after the start of a semester. The current fee to apply to graduate is \$25. If a student applies after the deadline, the current fee increases to \$60.

### *Request to Proceed with Defense*

Once the Study Plan is complete and approved, the student can fill out the [Request to Proceed with Final Defense](#) form and gather the necessary signatures to schedule the defense. This form must be submitted to COGS. Once COGS has processed it, the student will be emailed the Final Defense Report, which they must print and bring to their defense for their committee to sign. Each semester has a deadline by which a student must have completed their defense, which is typically about a month before the end of the semester. Students should consult the [COGS Deadlines](#) for the specific deadlines for their semester.



### *Advancement to Candidacy*

PhD students will need to submit their [Preliminary Examination and Advancement to Candidacy](#) form after they successfully complete their oral examination. Students must bring this form to their oral examinations for their committee to sign, and they will also need the signature of the department chair.

### *Preparing the Manuscript*

Once a student has completed their defense, they will need to submit it to the Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD) repository for University of Idaho records. This is a complex process, and the department highly recommends that the student begin the process of formatting their thesis correctly well before their defense. Students should consult the numerous [ETD guidelines](#) and documents that COGS provides for the most up-to-date information. Students will also need to sign and submit the [Repository Form](#) as part of this process and get the signature of their MP.

## Academic Performance and Annual Review

### Standing

Graduate students must remain in good standing throughout their program. Good standing is defined as maintaining an average of 3.5 or above in all coursework. If a student's cumulative GPA drops below 3.0 for any semester or summer session, they will be placed on academic probation. Students on academic probation must meet with the DGS to discuss their performance before they can register for courses.

If a student's GPA remains below 3.0 for two consecutive semesters—including summer session, if registered—they will be disqualified, which means they are not eligible to register for courses for at least one semester. After that semester, a student may petition to be reinstated, but they must receive the approval of the DGS and Department Chair, their MP, and COGS to be reinstated. Once reinstated, students must remain in good standing or they will again go on probation and, if it occurs for two consecutive semesters, they will be disqualified. For doctoral students, failing preliminary exams will result in dismissal from the program.

Students in their first semester are **provisionally admitted**. If they do not meet the minimum GPA requirements in their first semester and make the expected progress toward their degree, they may be dismissed from the program at the discretion of the department.

### Annual Review

Each year, **the student is responsible for initiating the Annual Review process**, in which their MP will formally review their research activity and their academic standing. At the beginning of each Spring semester, the student must complete the COGS Annual Evaluation report (for [master's students](#) or [Ph.D. students](#)). To do so, the students should arrange a meeting with their MP to discuss their progress. Once the MP has signed the report, it will be filed with the DGS. The student may respond to the report and have their response included in their file. Only Annual Reviews that receive a warning or recommendation for dismissal must be filed with COGS. If a student does not initiate

the Annual Review process, the MP, the DGS, or the department chair will initiate the process on the student's behalf.

The Annual Review contains three options: continue in the program; warning; recommendation for dismissal.

Warning: Should a warning be given, the student must be informed in writing of the concern, the current program policy on warnings, the length of the warning period, and expectations that must be met to be removed from a warning status. COGS is notified of this action and may appeal the warning to the dean of COGS.

Dismissal. This process may or may not be preceded by a warning period. To recommend dismissal, the MP must first meet with the student to discuss the reasons for the recommendation, and both the MP and the student must sign the Review. The DGS and department chair then forward the recommendation and documentation to COGS. The dean of COGS will review the recommendation for dismissal and, if appropriate, a review committee will convene. The dean may, however, choose to agree to the dismissal without initiating this process. If a review committee is deemed appropriate, the student, the major professor, and the unit's administrator will be allowed to appear before the committee. The committee will make a recommendation for action to the dean of COGS, who will make the final decision. Dismissal is from both the student's degree program and from the College of Graduate Studies.

Appeals. Students may appeal the dean's decision directly to the Graduate Council. No action will appear on the transcript unless the Council recommends it.

## In-Progress Grades

At the discretion of the department, In-Progress (IP) grades can be assigned for research credits (500 for MA thesis students, 599 for MA non-thesis option students, and 600 for PhD students) in lieu of a standard grade or a pass/fail grade. On the successful defense of the thesis or dissertation, or completion of the non-thesis examinations, the IP grades will be changed to P.

## Incompletes

The University has strict policies on when an [Incomplete Grade](#) may be assigned. On those rare occasions, students have up to one additional semester to complete their work, but the specific deadline is determined by the instructor. If the work is not completed, the Incomplete will revert to the grade the faculty member assigned at the time of entering the Incomplete.

All policies concerning access and release of students' records must follow FERPA and University guidelines.

## Funding, Teaching, and Assistants

### *General Funding Policies*

Students admitted and enrolled full-time in the graduate program are automatically considered for funding; **no separate application is necessary**. Funding is not guaranteed, and prospective students should understand that the admissions process and the funding process are separate. Therefore, a student must first apply and be accepted to the graduate program by the priority deadline of **January 15**. They will not know whether they have received funding until later in the Spring semester.

The History Department policy for financial support for students is consistent with the COGS funding guidelines.

1. If qualified and money is available, MA students should receive up to two years of funding.
2. If qualified and money is available, PhD students should receive up to four years of funding.
3. Only one semester of funding can be provided to part-time students.
4. Exceptions to these guidelines can be made but are rare.

The Department also offers several scholarships, many of which graduate students can receive. Scholarships are typically determined on an annual or semi-annual basis by the Scholarship Committee. These do not have separate applications and are offered based on availability, need, and the specific criteria of the scholarships. If a student receives scholarship money, it will be posted directly to their student accounts.

### *Assistantships*

The availability of funding for graduate assistantships varies year to year, but all full-time graduate students who are interested in receiving funding will be considered on a competitive basis. The department primarily offers teaching assistantships. Occasionally, research assistantships are available, but those are not routine and therefore are not part of the standard assignment of assistantships.

Prospective students interested in being considered must have their application submitted and processed by COGS for review before the **priority application deadline of January 15**.

An assistantship consists of a stipend and a tuition waiver. International and out-of-state students who receive an assistantship will also receive out-of-state tuition waivers. Teaching assistantships are awarded based on students' academic performance and can be renewed annually at the discretion of the department.

Assistantships are only offered on an annual basis, and therefore only available for students beginning in the Fall semester. Students who are admitted in the Spring semester will need to wait until the Fall semester to be considered. Students who choose not to enroll for a semester in which they have been awarded an assistantship must forfeit the entire assistantship. Students who meet the requirements to have their assistantship renewed for an additional year will receive a new

assistantship offer in the Spring semester. They must sign and return the offer letter by **March 15** to receive their assistantship.

### *Teaching Assistants*

The primary responsibility of graduate assistants is to help faculty members to grade assignments in undergraduate courses and manage the classroom. Particular duties will be developed under the guidance of the supervising faculty member, but the typical duties are:

- Grade all or most of the student work for an upper or lower division course
- Hold regular office hours
- Create lecture content or in-class activities
- Teach several lectures
- Track student engagement in and out of class
- Facilitate experiential learning activities
- Lead discussion
- Proctor exams
- Prepare teaching materials for the professor
- Attend the course
- Meet regularly with professor to discuss course and grading
- Receive pedagogical training

The courses to which Teaching Assistants are assigned are determined by the DGS and department chair. Students will be notified of their assigned course no earlier than the end of the prior semester. Once a student has received notification of their course, they should reach out to the professor to whom they are assigned and schedule a meeting to discuss the specific expectations for that course.

Graduate students who are appointed as teaching assistants are expected to work 20 hours per week (.5 FTE and 20 hours/week) while taking at least nine credits to maintain full-time status. Assistantship stipends are paid bi-monthly with a two-week delay at the start of the semester. Funding packages at UI do not cover health care, and students will need to enroll separately in the Student Health Insurance Program (SHIP). First-time recipients of an assistantship must go through an onboarding process to become a student employee. This process has hard deadlines that, if not met, may result in the revocation of the assistantship.

Funded graduate students must attend the TA/RA Training that occurs in both the Fall and Spring semesters by COGS. Additionally, they must complete a set of [mandatory university training](#) units concerning various important issues, most importantly the annual FERPA training. Without completing these required trainings, graduate students will not be able to continue as graduate assistants.

Prior to the Fall semester, students will receive a contract specifying that funding is contingent on fulfilling assistantship duties and maintaining successful academic performance in your classes. Failure in either may result in suspension of funding. Passing the Annual Report of Progress and Performance from COGS is mandatory to receive continued funding. In addition, faculty who have

worked with graduate students will evaluate their performance which will be part of the bases to determine continued funding for the following year.

When working as a Teaching Assistant, graduate students are expected to prioritize their work duties. However, professional opportunities (e.g., attending a conference) are important for graduate students' development. If you plan to miss some of your TA duties, plan ahead with your supervisor at the earliest convenience.

### *Teaching*

On occasion, the department offers doctoral students the opportunity to be the instructor of record for one of our online 100-level courses. MA students are not eligible to teach these courses without special permission from the department. Students assigned these courses are fully responsible for all aspects of the course: design, implementation, content, assignments, grading, communication with students, etc. While the department does maintain basic Canvas templates for each of the 100-level courses, the student is encouraged to tailor the template to their own needs.

For students teaching these courses, it is critical to remember that you are solely responsible for the course. You are the professor. This comes with expectations of professional behavior; timeliness in completing grading; the construction of a coherent course; regular communication with the students; and mediation of any complaints from students regarding the course. You may request a meeting with one of the professors who routinely teaches the course, so that you can get a sense of the expectations, but ultimately the course is your responsibility. You will not have a faculty supervisor.

The option to teach an online course for the department is not guaranteed and will be awarded based on where the student is in their degree program, their qualifications, and their preparedness. The option to teach is also not guaranteed for both semesters but rather is awarded at the discretion of the department.

### *Additional or Outside Funding*

As departmental funding is limited, students are encouraged to seek outside funding. There are many national and international fellowships for doctoral research, travel grants and bursaries for graduate students to travel to conferences, and summer stipends to supplement living expenses during research activities. Students are encouraged to research and track funding opportunities and apply often. COGS offers numerous workshops on applying for funding, and graduate students are automatically enrolled in COGS' Canvas "course" to receive updates on graduate programming. However, it is the student's responsibility to seek out and apply for outside funding, should they want or need it. Occasionally, additional departmental funding may become available for PhD students who need to travel for research or for conference presentations. Calls for applications for this type of funding typically are made in the Fall semester, so PhD students should keep an eye out for emails. MA students cannot qualify for this type of funding.

This handbook serves as the de facto contract of responsibility for graduate students. Graduate students are responsible for reading and adhering to all parts of this handbook.

## Contacts and Resources

### History Department

#### Department of History

Administration Building, Third Floor  
Suite 315

[history@uidaho.edu](mailto:history@uidaho.edu)

#### Department Chair

Dr. Rebecca Scofield  
Admin 315 Suite

[rscofield@uidaho.edu](mailto:rscofield@uidaho.edu)

#### Director of Graduate Studies

Dr. Alyson Roy  
Admin 305-C

[aroy@uidaho.edu](mailto:aroy@uidaho.edu)

#### CLASS Administration and Fiscal Services

Admin 332

[class-afs@uidaho.edu](mailto:class-afs@uidaho.edu)

### University

#### College of Graduate Studies

Dean's Office  
Morrill Hall 104  
(208) 885-6243

[cogs@uidaho.edu](mailto:cogs@uidaho.edu)

#### Graduate Student Support

Amanda Palmer  
Morrill Hall 201A

[acpalmer@uidaho.edu](mailto:acpalmer@uidaho.edu)

#### Thesis and Dissertation Formatting

Molly Patterson  
Morrill Hall 104

[mpatterson@uidaho.edu](mailto:mpatterson@uidaho.edu)

#### Registrar's Office

Bruce Pitman Center Room 119

[registrar@uidaho.edu](mailto:registrar@uidaho.edu)

#### Graduate, Transfer Credits, and Degree Audit

[graduation@uidaho.edu](mailto:graduation@uidaho.edu)

[transferstudents@uidaho.edu](mailto:transferstudents@uidaho.edu)

[degreeaudit@uidaho.edu](mailto:degreeaudit@uidaho.edu)

#### Student Health Services

831 Ash Street, Room 101  
(208) 885-2210

[health@uidaho.edu](mailto:health@uidaho.edu)

#### Student Accounts Office

Bruce Pitman Center, Room 125  
(208) 885-7447

[acctrec@uidaho.edu](mailto:acctrec@uidaho.edu)