



**AN  
INTRODUCTION  
TO  
GRADUATE STUDY  
IN  
HISTORY**

**A Handbook of Regulations, Requirements,  
& Advice for Graduate Students**

**Texas Christian University  
Department of History**



## Admission to the Graduate Program in History

To be considered for admission to the graduate program you must submit or arrange to have sent to the TCU history department the following items:

- **A Completed Application Form**

Applications must be completed online at <https://www.applyweb.com/apply/tcug/>.

- **Graduate Record Examination Scores**

TCU requires official score reports for the GRE (Graduate Record Examination) general test. Please request your scores using school code 6820 to have your scores sent directly to the History Department at TCU. For more information on the GRE visit [www.gre.org](http://www.gre.org).

- **Three Letters of Recommendation**

Please submit three letters from people who are familiar with your academic work. You may request that your recommenders submit their letters via the online application system.

- **Current Resume/CV** (you will be able to upload this online)

- **Official Transcripts of Academic Work**

Applicants must supply official transcripts from all undergraduate and graduate institutions attended, sent directly to the History Department by the registrar of the institution. Applicants who are finishing a degree program should submit current transcripts but will be expected to submit final transcripts showing records of all work done and confirming the awarding of the degree.

- **Statement of Purpose**

Applicants must submit a 500-1000 word statement of their academic and professional goals. It should describe your academic background and preparation, indicate what area or areas of history you want to study and outline your career goals.

- **Writing Sample**

Please include in your application package a 1-15 page sample of academic or scholarly writing. A chapter of a Master's thesis or a research paper you have done for a previous course is recommended.

- **\$60 Application Fee**

This may be paid via the online application system and is due at the time the application is submitted.

**Prerequisite:** A bachelor of arts with 24 semester hours of history is a prerequisite for admission to the history graduate program. Applicants lacking this qualification may be admitted conditionally, but must take such preparatory work as may be prescribed by the History Graduate Committee.



## Registration

Before enrolling, new graduate students must consult with the Graduate History Advisor concerning their graduate program. This can be done during the summer or upon arrival on campus for the fall semester. The Graduate Advisor oversees registration for History graduate students, acts as advisor to all new students until they secure Major Professors, generally advises all students regarding procedural matters, maintains departmental records of students' progress, and has on hand most of the forms required by the Department and the Graduate School. Since student registration is through electronic means, the student is responsible for the actual process of registering for class. **New graduate students must consult the Graduate Advisor prior to registering for classes each semester.** Returning graduate students should consult with their major professor at the beginning of each semester.

## Semester Course Load

The usual full time graduate course load is 9 graduate credit hours per semester to be chosen in consultation with your major advisor. Audits do not count in determining load. Your advisor may also require you to audit some undergraduate courses. Students should take courses in their major and minor fields simultaneously. Generally, students should not enroll in more than two classes per semester in which a major research paper is required; students should consult with professors about the content and expectations in courses. The majority of coursework should be in 70000 and 80000-level seminars. A list of seminars offered each semester will be posted on the Department website. The History Graduate Committee must approve nonresident graduate courses, and will normally do so only if the student has spent one year as a full-time student in residence in the History Department. Students receiving financial assistance must be in residence and enrolled full time, which is defined as a course load of 9 graduate hours per semester OR registration for thesis or dissertation credit. Students receiving financial aid **MUST** perform duties as described by the assigned professor or Department Chair and must conform to university rules concerning financial aid.

## Audits

Graduate students may register to audit courses for no credit (for which they must pay). Or they may, with instructor permission, attend lectures without fee. Since there is no fee for attending classes informally, the latter is recommended, and most professors are delighted to have interested visitors. But remember to ask first! Also, discuss an attendance schedule with the professor of the course.

## Events

At the beginning of each academic year the Graduate Advisor meets with all graduate students for an introduction and orientation to the program. The department will also post notices of this and other events (meetings, presentations, announcements, changes in regulations) in the departmental area and on the departmental website. Students should



pay attention to such public announcements as these events are important to the intellectual livelihood of the department and should be attended by all students.

### Phi Alpha Theta

The local chapter (Eta Kappa) of Phi Alpha Theta, the national history honorary society, sponsors functions to which all graduate students are invited. The department urges students who are not yet members of Phi Alpha Theta to affiliate with the TCU chapter. Phi Alpha Theta sponsors colloquia that provide students and faculty an opportunity to present scholarly papers each semester and also serves the department and its graduate students in many other ways. The TCU chapter has a proud tradition and has won recognition for its outstanding work. For more information on Phi Alpha Theta see Dr. Peter Szok.

### Financial Aid and Teaching Assistantships

The Graduate Committee makes financial awards for new and continuing graduate students each spring. To be considered for financial aid, new applicants must submit a financial aid application by February 1. Financial aid comes in the form of tuition hours and/or a monetary stipend. Current recipients of financial aid must express their desire to be reconsidered annually and are evaluated in conjunction with new applicants; **continuation must NOT be taken for granted.**

The History Graduate Committee makes awards on a competitive basis. For incoming students primary consideration is given to grade point averages, Graduate Record Examination scores, and letters of recommendation. For returning students primary consideration is given to record as a graduate student (incomplete grades are detrimental) and performance as a Graduate or Teaching Assistant. Each year one incoming graduate student is awarded the Ida M. Green Fellowship, which carries a stipend and credit for nine tuition hours each semester. The Green Fellow has no work obligations in the initial year of the program. With this exception, graduate students who receive financial assistance from TCU are assigned duties either aiding professors with their courses or teaching their own courses. The number of teaching positions available varies each year and these positions are typically reserved for doctoral students well advanced in their program. The following limits are observed, depending on one's degree program:

- Students pursuing the M.A. are limited to two years of financial aid.
- Ph.D. students who come to TCU with the M.A. in hand are limited to four years of financial aid.
- Students who acquire a MA en route to a PhD, both at TCU, are limited to five years of financial aid.



## Faculty Review of Graduate Students' Work

Before making decisions on financial aid and teaching assistantships in the spring semester, the History Graduate Committee will conduct oral interviews to review the progress of all graduate students. This meeting will help the Committee determine each student's progress and suitability for financial aid. Any student who receives a grade of C in two courses, or the equivalent thereof, may be dismissed from the program. Moreover, any incompletes must be removed no later than 60 days from the start of the next "long" (fall/spring) semester; students are reminded that incompletes have a detrimental effect on their application for aid and their continuation in the graduate program.

## Major Professor

Each student must have an advisory committee, which is headed by a major professor. After deciding on an area of study or thesis or dissertation topic, the student should secure an agreement with a professor in that field to serve as the major advisor. **Full-time students must decide on an area of specialization by the beginning of their third semester.** As soon as the major professor is designated, students should consult with their major professor regarding their specific program, language needs, and research plans. Students must inform the Graduate History Advisor when selecting or changing their major advisor.

Obviously, many considerations should guide your decision regarding a major professor and thesis or dissertation topic. Some of these considerations relate to what brought you to graduate school. Other considerations should include the resources available to the TCU History Graduate Program: library resources and interests of our faculty as revealed in their academic training, publications, and research. Since matching professor to student could well be the most important aspect of your graduate career, you should consider all these factors before asking a professor to serve as a mentor. Keep in mind that no professor is obligated to undertake the direction of a student. A student should not be insulted if a professor declines to accept this responsibility.

After the major professor has agreed to direct your work, you and that professor should decide on the faculty members most appropriate to participate in your program. MA students must form a Thesis Committee, consisting of at least three faculty members. PhD students must decide which faculty members will participate in the qualifying exams and then form a Dissertation Committee, consisting of at least four for faculty members. A majority of the members of the Dissertation Committee must be in the student's major field, and the student must ask the professors to serve. The Graduate History Committee must approve the composition of the student's Dissertation Committee.

The major professor and student prepare a plan of study and agree upon an advisory committee; henceforth, the major professor acts as the student's advisor on academic and professional matters. The Graduate Advisor remains responsible for general matters and maintaining official records.



## Graduate Classes

Graduate classes are numbered from 50000 through 90000. Each type of class fulfills a particular function for graduate study. The 60000 level graduate courses are not seminars, but rather independent studies or courses that combine with undergraduate lecture classes (30000 or 40000 in number) which graduate students may take for graduate credit, with the permission of the instructor and the understanding that the instructor will assign additional or alternative readings and papers. This is done primarily with minor fields. Any student who is deficient in their major field should attend an undergraduate lecture course, but cannot expect 60000 level credit solely from the undergraduate course.

The 70000 and 80000 level courses are Graduate Seminars, a 70000 number indicating a readings seminar and an 80000 number indicating a research seminar. Students in research seminars should strive to produce a paper suitable for an academic meeting or for publication. The department believes that Graduate Seminars are the most important part of a graduate education. Students pursuing the M.A. degree must take courses HIST 70980 and 70990 (Master's Thesis). Each course (70980 or 70990) **MUST** be taken in 3-hour blocks. **A student intending to defend a thesis must be registered for at least 1 hour of 70990 during the semester in which the thesis defense takes place.** Students will receive incompletes in thesis hours until all work is completed.

Students pursuing the Ph.D. degree must take courses HIST 90980 and 90990 (Dissertation). Each course (90980 or 90990) **MUST** be taken in 6-hour blocks. **Once having completed twelve hours of dissertation, a student should register for 1 hour of 90990 for the semester in which the dissertation will be completed.** Students will receive incompletes in dissertation hours until completion and approval by his/her dissertation committee.

## Master of Arts Degree Requirements

The requirements for the M.A. degree are a total of 30 hours of course work, including at least three seminars (70000 or 80000 level), HIST 50960 *Historiography and Bibliography*, and 6 hours of thesis (HIST 70980 and 70990, each taken in a 3-hour block). **Students must take at least one 80000-level research seminar in the first year of their program, unless exempted by the major advisor.** Students must complete all work for the M.A., including the thesis within five years from the date of first enrollment. Students pursuing the M.A. degree must select one of the following plans of course work: [Note: all thesis hours (70980 and 70990) count as part of the major field and *Historiography and Bibliography* (50960) counts as part of the outside field]

- Thirty hours of history, 9 of which must be selected from outside the student's major field. For example, 21 hours of American history, including the thesis, and 9 hours of European history.



- Twenty-one hours of history and 9 hours from an approved discipline outside the history department. For example, 21 hours of American history, including the thesis, and 9 hours of graduate coursework in American literature.
- Twenty-one hours of history and 9 hours from approved courses in a related field or fields outside the history department. For example, 21 hours of American history, including the thesis, and 9 hours of graduate coursework that might include 3 hours in American literature, 3 hours in American religion, and 3 hours in American art.

A graduate student cannot take more than 33 hours of coursework unless that student has completed the M.A. thesis and been accepted to the PhD program in history at TCU or has written permission from the graduate committee.

### The M.A. Thesis

The areas in which a master's candidate may write a thesis are Ancient, Asian, Early Modern Europe, Modern Europe (with an emphasis in France or Britain), Latin American, United States, Military, and Women's History.

The student and the Major Professor must agree on the thesis subject. The student should report the thesis topic to the Graduate Committee. The Major Professor will determine procedure, such as whether the advisor wishes to receive the student's work one chapter at a time or as a complete draft. **The student is responsible** for insuring that the thesis meets all the requirements of the History Department and the AddRan College of Humanities and Social Sciences. DO NOT follow the style of any previous thesis. Theses should also follow the form specified in the AddRan College "Manual for the Preparation of Theses and Dissertation," available from the Graduate Advisor or online at the History Department website ([www.his.tcu.edu/GraduateStudies/Manual.htm](http://www.his.tcu.edu/GraduateStudies/Manual.htm)). Other useful reference works include *The Chicago Manual of Style* or Kate Turabian's *A Manual for the Writing of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. Be advised that using a professional typist or any word-processing program does not release you from responsibility to meet all format and content requirements. Graduate students must write theses in English.

The final requirement in the M.A. program is defense of the M.A. thesis in an oral examination conducted by the student's M.A. committee. This exam tests the student's ability to defend the contents and conclusions of the thesis. Only under exceptional circumstances will the exam be scheduled during the summer, and then only if all members of the thesis committee can be present. Following the examination the Graduate Committee members review the student's entire graduate record. If, in their opinion, the student should not attempt advanced graduate work, they shall recommend in writing that the M.A. be a terminal degree.



Students planning to finish a thesis and complete their M.A. program must file an “Intent to Graduate” form with the AddRan Dean’s office. The Dean’s office posts the deadlines for filing each semester. Students must register for HIST 70980 and HIST 70990 (3 hours each) in the course of the MA program. If the Thesis is not completed and defended in the semester in which the student is registered for 3 hours of HIST 70990, **the student must register for at least one credit hour of thesis (HIST 70990) in the semester in which they defend the thesis.**

The M.A. degree must be completed within five years from initial matriculation. Students pursuing a terminal M.A. degree are limited to two years of financial aid from the History Department.

### The Ph.D. Program

Students entering the Ph.D. program with a bachelor's degree must complete the M.A. in history en route to the Ph.D. For admission to the doctoral program, students must present a strong record at the M.A. level. **Even though a student has earned the M.A. degree at TCU, he or she must apply in order to be admitted to the doctoral program.** New students must submit letters of recommendation and GRE scores, along with all other required materials.

The Ph.D. program requires mastery of history in certain fields (listed below) demonstrated by completing at least 30 credit hours of course work beyond the M.A. (not including thesis or dissertation hours), passing exams in the testable minor fields, meeting the requirements of the non-testable minor field, and passing written and oral major field examinations. A Ph.D. student must take the following courses at TCU if not already completed in previous graduate work: 50960 (*Historiography and Bibliography*) and 80083 (*History as an Academic Profession*). Students who have taken similar courses at other institutions may petition the graduate committee for a waiver. **Ph.D. students must take at least one 80000-level research seminar in the first year of their program, unless exempted by the major advisor.** In total, they must complete at least six 70000 or 80000-level seminars before taking qualifying exams. **This should be regarded as a minimum as the Graduate Committee recommends that students take as many 70000 and 80000-level courses as possible.**

Doctoral students must complete at least one year of full-time study in residence, which is defined as a course load of 9 graduate hours per semester during a regular fall-spring semester sequence. All students receiving financial aid must be in residence. Full-time students receiving full financial aid (tuition waiver and stipend) may hold outside employment only with the written consent of AddRan's Associate Dean for Graduate Studies.

### Areas of Study



Full-time graduate students must decide on an area of specialization by the beginning of their third semester and secure the approval of a faculty member who will serve as their major professor. The student must determine, in consultation with the major professor, three minor fields (two testable and one non-testable) as well as the foreign language necessary for research in this field. The student will form a committee of four to five members, with at least one specialist from each of his or her chosen major and testable minor fields.

### The Major Field

Each student must choose one the following major fields:

- United States to 1877
- United States since 1877
- Latin America to 1821
- Latin America since 1821

Students with a major field in one area of U.S. history **MUST** have a minor field in the other area of U.S. history. Likewise, students with a major field in one area of Latin American history **MUST** have a minor field in the other area of Latin American history.

### Minor or Supporting Fields

The Department recommends that students take a minimum of 9 hours of coursework in each of the testable minor fields, at either the MA or PhD level, in order to prepare adequately for the qualifying examinations. The non-testable minor field must be fulfilled by taking 9 hours of graduate courses in that field. Testable and non-testable minor fields must come from the following list unless the graduate committee gives special permission for a field outside of history. Remember that two minor fields will be testable and the other non-testable.

- United States to 1877 (Required for U.S. Since 1877 majors)
- United States since 1877 (Required for U.S. To 1877 majors)
- Latin America to 1821 (Required for Latin America Since 1821 majors)
- Latin America since 1821 (Required for Latin America To 1821 majors)
- Early Modern Europe, circa 1485-1789
- Modern Europe
- Military History (non-testable only for students enrolling after 2011)
- Women's History (non-testable only effective for students enrolling after 2011)
- World History (non-testable only)
- Other fields by approval of the Graduate Committee

### The Language Requirement



Before taking qualifying exams, PhD students must fulfill the language requirement, which means acquiring a reading knowledge of one approved modern foreign language, usually French, German, or Spanish. With the consultation and approval of the chairman of his/her advisory committee, the student should choose the language most appropriate to his/her research and areas of concentration.

The student may meet the language requirement by earning at least a B average in the undergraduate sophomore year of the language, by earning a B in a graduate-level course in the language, or by achieving an appropriate score on a language exam such as the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), or by satisfactory completion of an exam administered within the department. Exams administered by the Department must be graded by two faculty members with the appropriate language skills. Students may use a dictionary in exams administered by the Department.

As the language requirement is frequently time-consuming, initial steps toward meeting it should be taken at once. Minor/Supporting field exams **MAY NOT BE TAKEN** until the foreign language requirement has been satisfied. Many graduate students find it beneficial to begin work on the foreign language requirement during their M.A. program.

### Qualifying Exams.

Each student will have to pass two written minor field exams as well as written and oral major field exams before being admitted to Ph.D. candidacy. Students will consult with their professors to set dates for the exams and must contact the departmental administrative assistants to reserve a testing room. Qualifying exams generally will not be administered during the summer. The exam for the major field and the two testable minor fields will be held on three separate days, spread out over no more than two calendar weeks. The student has eight hours to complete each exam.

The major professor plays the guiding role in the collection of comprehensive exam questions. In each testable field, questions will be supplied and read by **at least two different faculty members**. The major professor may include more faculty members. In most cases the major professor will choose faculty members whose seminar the student has taken. Faculty members submitting questions may provide multiple questions and ask the student to respond to a designated number. For example, in the major field a faculty member may submit four questions and ask the student to answer two. In a minor field, a faculty member may submit two questions and ask the student to answer one. Students will write three essays in the major field and two essays for each of the testable minor fields. In each case the examination period will not exceed eight hours. Exams will be written in blue books or typed on one of the History Department's laptop computers.

### Summary:

- Major field: Student will write three essays from prompts provided by at least two professors.



- Minor field I: Student will write two essays from prompts provided by at least two professors.
- Minor field II: Student will write two essays from prompts provided by at least two professors.

Comprehensive exams are designed to demonstrate that the student has broad knowledge of the field and a strong foundation for teaching a college or university level course in that field. Comprehensive exams are not intended to demonstrate detailed knowledge or expertise on a specific topic within the field, which is the role of the dissertation. The exams will test knowledge of field content, historiography, and bibliography, not solely courses taken. The well-advised doctoral student will be prepared far beyond the parameters of coursework. Students who fail the minor field exam will not be permitted to take the major field exam. A student who fails one or more minor field written exam will have a second opportunity, but at least one semester must pass between exams. A second failure will result in expulsion from the program.

A student who fails the major field written exam will have a second opportunity, but at least one semester must pass between exams. A second failure of the written major field exam will result in expulsion from the program. You must pass the written exam before taking the oral major field exam.

### Oral Exam

The oral exam constitutes the second part of the major field examination, which members of the student's advisory committee will conduct. The major field oral exam should take place within approximately one week of passing the written portion of the major field exam. At the oral exam the student must present a prospectus of his/her proposed dissertation to the committee. Students should consult with their committee members to schedule the date and time of the oral exam.

A student who fails the major field oral exam will have a second opportunity to retake both the written and oral exam, but at least one semester must elapse between the first and second attempts. A second failure results in automatic exclusion from the program.

Upon passing the major field oral exam, the student advances to candidacy for the doctoral degree. **The candidate must complete the Ph.D. within six years of admission to candidacy.**

### Dissertation

Acceptance of the dissertation is conclusive evidence that the student has become a professional scholar in the discipline of history. No aspect of the student's program is of greater significance than the completion of a thoroughly researched and readable dissertation. Dissertations must be written in English and must concentrate on either the United States or Latin America. Students must register for Dissertation hours, HIST 90980 and 90990, in two 6 hour blocks.



The major professor and the student must agree on the dissertation subject, which the History Graduate Committee must approve. The major advisor will determine procedure, such as receiving the student's work a chapter at a time or as a complete draft. Members of the advisory committee will also read and approve the work.

**The student has the responsibility** to ensure that the dissertation meets all the requirements of the History Department and the AddRan College of Humanities and Social Sciences. DO NOT follow the style of any previous dissertation. Students should obtain a copy of the Graduate School instruction sheet for dissertation. Dissertations should follow the form specified in the AddRan College “Manual for the Preparation of Theses and Dissertation,” available from the Graduate Advisor or online at the History Department website ([www.his.tcu.edu/GraduateStudies/Manual.htm](http://www.his.tcu.edu/GraduateStudies/Manual.htm)). Other useful reference works include *The Chicago Manual of Style* or Kate Turabian's *A Manual for Writing of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. Again, be advised that using a professional typist or any word processing program does not release you from responsibility to meet all format and content requirements.

#### Defense of the Dissertation

The student's advisory committee administers the examination of the dissertation. Only under exceptional circumstances will the exam be scheduled during the summer, and then only if all members of the dissertation committee agree and can be present. This exam tests the student's ability to defend the dissertation's content and conclusions.

Students planning to finish a dissertation and complete their doctoral program must file an “Intent to Graduate” form with the AddRan Dean’s office. The Dean’s office posts the deadlines for filing each semester. If the Dissertation is not completed and defended in the semester in which the student is registered for 6 hours of HIST 90990, **the student must register for at least one credit hour of Dissertation (HIST 90990) in the semester in which they defend the Dissertation.**

Once a student has successfully defended the dissertation, submitted the appropriate number of copies of the dissertation to the Dean's Office, and met all other University requirements, the student has essentially completed the Ph.D. degree.