

**University of Pittsburgh
Department of History**

**Handbook of the
Graduate Program in History**

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Introduction

The Department of History is committed to training students who are regional specialists who also understand the transregional and global interdependence of all human interaction. Our students learn to explore and understand processes of continuity and change over extended periods of time and in various regions of the world. They learn to appreciate the nature of social, economic, political, and cultural change, and they develop the ability to identify and understand long-term trends. The focus of our graduate training is to prepare students for serious research, to help them design innovative research projects, and to develop the methodological, linguistic, and analytical skills to bring these projects to fruition. They thus participate in the production of new knowledge and are prepared to contribute to a better understanding of our world.

The skills students learn in our program are relevant to careers in academia as well as other professions. These include the ability to communicate to various audiences, to make complex information accessible, and to help others develop their intellectual strengths by providing constructive criticism and guidance. Whatever direction our students pursue after graduation, they will have the ability to conduct independent research in various parts of the world, to understand and navigate cultural difference, and to effectively transmit knowledge as writers and public speakers.

The department values professional development through careful mentoring, and supports graduate students with teaching and research fellowships as well as departmental seminars and the three-year pedagogy program. Students benefit from the department's World History Center, the University Center of International Studies, and our department's international collaborations.

The department emphasizes graduate student self-governance and consultation in almost all departmental activities.

The M.A. and Ph.D. programs in the Department of History are situated within the more general regulations established by the University of Pittsburgh's Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences.

This handbook describes the structure and requirements of the graduate program, the responsibilities and obligations of graduate students and faculty, and other issues relevant to graduate education in the Department of History at the University of Pittsburgh.

Milestones

For students entering with a B.A.:

Semester	General courses	Courses	Credits	Pedagogy	Research tools	Exams
1	Professionalization Seminar	2 graduate seminars or directed studies in a transregional/global topic	Minimum of 9 credits per term	Pedagogy Badge	Pass language requirement before MA defense	
2	Historical Methods and Approaches	2 graduate seminars or directed studies in regional field		Department pedagogy seminar (discussion, observation) for 1 credit		
3	Writing seminar (for MA essay)	1 non-history course		Department pedagogy (discussion, observation) for 1 credit		
4		2 graduate history courses after passing the MA		Department pedagogy practicum (readings, portfolio) for 1 credit; create teaching portfolio	Breadth requirement by end of 5 th year	MA exam
5						
6						Comprehensive exam (by Feb. 1) Dissertation overview
7	Dissertation research					
8						
9	Writing seminar (for dissertation)					
10						
11	Writing seminar (for dissertation)					
12						Dissertation defense

For students entering with an M.A.:

Semester	General courses	Courses	Credits	Pedagogy	Research tools	Exams
1	Professionalization Seminar	3 graduate seminars or directed studies (one in a transregional/global topic; and one in regional field)	Minimum of 9 credits per term	Pedagogy Badge	Pass language requirement before comps	Preliminary exam
2	Historical Methods and Approaches			Department pedagogy seminar (discussion, observation) for 1 credit		
3	Writing seminar (for dissertation overview)			Department pedagogy seminar (discussion, observation) for 1 credit; create teaching portfolio		
4						Comprehensive exam (by Feb. 1) Dissertation overview
5	Dissertation research					Dissertation defense
6						
7	Writing seminar (for dissertation)				Breadth requirement by end of 4 th year	
8						
9	Writing seminar (for dissertation)					
10						

Explanation of Milestones:

For students entering with a BA:

1st year: Students must be registered for a minimum of 9 credits per semester; take the professionalization seminar and methods course in the fall and spring semester, respectively; and participate in the pedagogy seminar in both semesters. In addition, they should be working toward fulfilling the M.A. requirements listed in the next paragraph. At the end of the first year, students must meet with their advisor(s) and the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) to both define their comps committee and see whether any coursework completed in the first year could be included in the comps portfolio. They should also discuss the fulfillment of the language and breadth requirements as well as any certificates or credentials that they might want to pursue. In the summer after their first year, students generally conduct research for their M.A. essay.

2nd year: Students must be registered for a minimum of 9 credits per semester. In both semesters, students need to take the pedagogy seminar. In the fall semester, they must take the writing seminar, which is designed to help them produce the M.A. essay. The M.A. essay must be defended by the end of the spring semester. Before defending the M.A. essay, however, students must have passed the foreign language requirement. By the end of their second year, students must have also completed six credits in seminars/directed studies in transregional or global fields; six credits in seminars/directed studies in their regional field; and have taken three credits of graduate-level coursework outside of the discipline of history. At the end of their second year, students must meet with their comps committee to agree on the contents of the portfolio that will form the basis of the comps exam to take place in their third year. Both the student and the committee members will sign a form attesting to this agreement. If they have not yet fulfilled their breadth requirement, students will also have to present a short description of how they plan to do so. In the summer after their second year, students generally conduct preliminary dissertation research.

3rd year: Students must be registered for a minimum of 9 credits per semester. In both semesters, students need to take the pedagogy practicum. After passing the MA, students must take at least two history graduate courses in their third year. They must also pass the comprehensive exam by February 1 and the dissertation overview by the end of the spring semester. During this year, students are expected to apply for relevant fellowships, which are meant to support dissertation research.

4th year: Students are expected to devote this year to dissertation research and apply for relevant fellowships to support dissertation research and writing.

5th year: Students in residence are expected to take the writing seminar. By the end of the fifth year, students must have fulfilled the breadth requirement.

6th year: Students in residence are expected to take the writing seminar and defend their dissertation by the end of the academic year.

For students entering with an MA:

1st year: Students must be registered for a minimum of 9 credits per semester; must take the professionalization seminar and methods course in the fall and spring semester, respectively; and participate in the pedagogy seminar in both semesters. By the end of the first year, students must pass the preliminary examination and have fulfilled the foreign language requirement. If they have not yet fulfilled their breadth requirement, students will also have to present a short description of how they plan to do so. In the summer after their first year, students generally conduct preliminary dissertation research.

2nd year: Students must be registered for a minimum of 9 credits per semester. In both semesters, students need to take the pedagogy seminar. By the end of their second year, students must have taken at least three history graduate seminars/directed readings, with at least one being in a transregional or global field and another one being in their regional field. In the fall semester, students must take the writing seminar, which is designed to help them write the dissertation overview. By October 30, they must have met with their comps committee to discuss the contents of the portfolio that will form the basis of the comprehensive exam; both the student and the committee members will sign a form attesting to this agreement. They must pass the comprehensive exam by February 1; and the dissertation overview by the end of the spring semester. During this year, students are expected to apply for relevant fellowships, which are meant to support dissertation research.

3rd year: Students are expected to devote this year to dissertation research and apply for relevant fellowships to support dissertation research and writing.

4th year: Students in residence are expected to take the writing seminar. By the end of the fourth year, students must have fulfilled the breadth requirement.

5th year: Students are expected to take the writing seminar and defend their dissertation by the end of the academic year.

M.A. Program

Upon entering the M.A. program, students will begin discussing their coursework and plans with their main advisor (or two co-advisors) designated by the Graduate Director. Students may choose to continue with this person as main advisor, but are also free to change advisors (among the Graduate Faculty) at any time; they must inform the Graduate Director and Graduate Administrator of any changes they wish to make.

In the first semester of the program, students should be thinking ahead two years to the point where, in the normal course of events, they would be sitting for the M.A. examination. Students and faculty have to be aware that the M.A. examination and promotion into the Ph.D. program are serious milestones. They are meant to provide an opportunity to assess whether or not the pursuit of a Ph.D. is the right choice for the student in question.

Requirements for the M.A. degree

1. Students must take the **Professionalization Seminar**, HIST 2000, in their first semester
2. Students must take **Historical Methods and Approaches**, HIST 2023, in their second semester.
3. Students must take the **Writing Seminar**, HIST 2011/2012, which is offered every fall semester.
4. Students must take **six credits in seminars or directed studies in transregional or global fields**. The six credits may be in different transregional/global fields.
5. Students must take **six credits in seminars or directed studies in one of the following regional fields**: currently Asia, Europe, Latin America, and United States.
6. Students must take **three credits** of graduate-level coursework **outside of the discipline of history**.
7. A total of 30 credits is needed to complete the M.A. The additional credits beyond the 18 credits listed above may come in the form of seminars and directed studies students choose in consultation with their advisor(s). (see details below).
8. **Students are required to earn a GPA higher than 3.0 in the graduate program to sit for their M.A. exam.**
9. Students must fulfill the **foreign language requirement** before sitting for the M.A. examination (see details below)
10. Students must complete a **research paper** of about 10,000 words (including footnotes). The paper must be based on original research and should be potentially publishable.

Foreign language requirement

Departmental regulations: All candidates for the M.A. degree must fulfill the research tool requirements by demonstrating competency (as defined below) in a foreign language before sitting for the M.A. examination. M.A. students in History will demonstrate a good reading

knowledge of a foreign language relevant to their research, by any of the methods outlined below:

1. **Passing, after entering the graduate program, the fourth semester or equivalent of a college-level language course (for instance, French 0004) with a grade of B or better.** Depending on students' former training in that language, this might require taking one or more lower level courses (for instance, French 0001, French 002, or French 0003) first. Language placement tests will establish on which course level students have to start.
2. **Passing a departmental language examination,** three hours in length, that demonstrates a student's ability to translate passages from a foreign-language text into English. The text will be selected and graded by two faculty examiners (for a list of faculty competent to examine in a given language, students should consult the Graduate Director). The first part of the exam shall consist of close translation of a passage totaling about 600 words, with the aid of a printed dictionary. The second part shall consist of a summary or paraphrase of a passage totaling about 1600 words, also with the aid of a dictionary. Faculty will report back the results within two weeks.
3. **Presenting a research paper that demonstrates ability to read and comprehend historical literature in the foreign language,** to the satisfaction of two faculty members.
4. **Being a native speaker of a relevant language other than English.**

Advice: History departmental requirements emphasize reading comprehension rather than oral facility. If you have three or more years of language study behind you, consider sitting immediately for the language examination and getting this requirement out of the way.

The foreign language requirement must be fulfilled before a student may sit for the M.A. examination. If students enter the program without the foreign language skills necessary to fulfill the research tool requirements, **they should immediately enroll in a language course.**

Credit requirements

Students will need **30 credits to qualify for the M.A. degree.** Independent Study credits do not count toward the 30 credits required for the M.A.; however, six credits of Directed Thesis Research may be counted toward that 30 credits total. Although foreign language courses do not count for the 30 credits needed for the M.A., taking 9 credits a semester enables students to take the appropriate number of History credits and a foreign language course each term. In the four semesters (two years) in which the M.A. should be completed, a full-time student will thus earn 36 credits, more than enough to satisfy the university requirement of 30 credits. **Only six of these credits may be in Arts and Sciences courses numbered 1002 through 1999** –undergraduate courses—subject to the approval of the student's advisor(s) and the

Director of Graduate Studies. **Three credits must be taken outside the History Department** (they may be taken in other disciplines at Pitt or CMU).

Related rules:

A “full-time” course load for graduate students consists of a minimum of nine credits per semester. **Teaching Assistants (TA) must register for at least nine credits each semester. Students seeking to apply for SSDD fellowships must have completed 72 graduate credits** by the time they defend their dissertation prospectus and enter Ph.D. candidacy.

Research paper

Departmental regulations: M.A. students must complete a research paper of about 10,000 words (including footnotes). The paper must be based on original research and should be potentially publishable.

Advice: Because the research paper is usually a project that takes more than a semester to complete, entering M.A. students should work with their main advisor(s) and the instructor of the professionalization seminar on potential research projects in their first term, should complete research over the course of their first spring and summer, and complete drafting while enrolled in the “Graduate Writing Seminar” in their second fall semester (see below). Such research papers typically need to be revised before the student can present them for the M.A. examination; having a completed paper at the end of the third semester of study ensures that there will be time for revision.

M.A. examination

In consultation with their advisor(s), students will create a **three-person committee** for their M.A. examination, usually chaired by their advisor(s). At least two of the committee members must be members of the Graduate Faculty. Before students can sit for their M.A. exam, the chair of the M.A. committee must approve the final version of the research paper. The paper should be distributed to each committee member at least two weeks ahead of the examination date. A copy of the paper should also be given to the Graduate Administrator for inclusion in the student’s file.

Upon the request of the chair of the M.A. committee, the Graduate Administrator will schedule the examination.

The M.A. examination will be a **one-hour oral examination**. Questions will be based on the M.A. research paper. At the conclusion of the examination, the committee will inform the student of its decision as to whether or not it recommends to the Graduate School that the student be awarded the M.A. degree. The criteria to be used are: the student’s command of factual and substantive material acquired in course work and embodied in the paper; and the student’s ability to conceptualize historical problems with clarity and to demonstrate command of research methods.

If the student has expressed **a desire to enter the Ph.D. program**, the committee will decide (based on the same criteria listed above) as to whether or not it recommends admission into the Ph.D. program. Within a week, the committee must submit a written evaluation of the student's performance in the examination. Examiners who dissent from the majority report may also submit a written evaluation. All evaluations will be shown to the main advisor(s) and the M.A. candidate (for procedures to appeal the committee report, see the Appendix on Grievance Procedures).

Departmental approval

At the earliest opportunity, the M.A. committee's written evaluation of the examination must be reported to the department, which must approve admission into the Ph.D. program. The tenure of a student not admitted into the Ph.D. program ends with the term during which the M.A. exam took place. Students receiving this terminal M.A. must apply for graduation and be awarded the degree in the term in which the M.A. exam took place.

Ph.D. Program

Students entering the program with a B.A. should complete their coursework, the pedagogy program, comprehensive exam and dissertation overview within one year after defending their M.A. (within three years after entering the program for those entering with a B.A.). Students entering the program with an M.A. should pass their comprehensive exam, the dissertation overview, and the pedagogy program within two years. Required doctoral coursework beyond the M.A. includes successful completion of two graduate seminars in History and the fulfillment of the breadth requirement and the pedagogy program. While completing coursework and finalizing the comprehensive exam portfolio (see below), students also begin defining and conducting preliminary research for their doctoral dissertation. Full time dissertation research and writing follow. Dissertation projects need to be designed such that it is feasible to complete and defend the dissertation within four years of completing the M.A (or the preliminary exam).

Preliminary examination

Students entering the Ph.D. program with an M.A. from another institution must sit a preliminary examination. This hour-long oral exam will take place **in April at the end of the student's first year**. The exam will cover two areas: coursework done by the student during that first year, and their plans for dissertation research (topic, relevant literatures, and possible sources). As a rule, the student's advisor(s) chairs this committee, which includes two other members of the Graduate Faculty, one of whom may be from outside the department.

Upon the request of the committee's chair, the Graduate Administrator will schedule the examination and prepare the necessary paperwork.

The committee will make a recommendation to the department on whether or not the student should be permitted to continue in the Ph.D. program. Like the M.A. examination, the preliminary examination is a serious milestone to assess whether or not the pursuit of a Ph.D. is the right career track for the student in question, and whether or not this student is likely to meet the department's criteria for being awarded a Ph.D.

The candidate shall be informed of the committee's judgment immediately after the exam, and a written report will be submitted within a week of the examination. That report will be shared with the student and become part of their graduate record. This evaluation will be presented at the earliest opportunity to the department, which will vote on whether to approve or reject the committee's report. The tenure of a student not admitted into the Ph.D. program ends with the term during which the preliminary exam took place. For procedures to appeal the committee report see the Appendix on Grievance Procedures.

Breadth Requirement

Ph.D. students entering the program with a B.A. must fulfill the Breadth Requirement **by the end of their fifth year** (those entering with an M.A. by the end of their fourth year). At the end of their second year (those entering with an M.A. at the end of their first year), students must present to their advisor(s) and the DGS a 2-paragraph explanation of how they plan to fulfill the Breadth Requirement. This requirement is intended to help students think more broadly about their dissertation and intellectual trajectory as well as future career paths. It may be fulfilled as follows:

- a) **Language:** a second foreign language (please read “Foreign Language Requirement” section under the “M.A. Program”);
- b) **Skills:** two skill-based courses agreed-upon with their advisor(s) including but not limited to statistics, digital humanities, oral history/ethnography, and computer programming. To satisfy this requirement, the student must obtain a grade of B+ or better in each of the two courses;
- c) **Interdisciplinarity:** two courses agreed-upon with their advisor(s) that will permit students to enhance their knowledge in an interdisciplinary area including Gender, Sexuality & Women’s Studies, Cultural Studies, or an area of the student’s design. To satisfy this requirement, the student must obtain a grade of B+ or better in each of the two courses;
- d) **Career Diversity:** in consultation with the DGS and their advisor(s), 6 credit hours or the equivalent accrued from internships and/or courses designed to enhance students’ ability to utilize their professional skills in diverse career environments.

Ph.D. comprehensive examination

1. **Timeline:** For students entering with a BA, the comprehensive exam needs to take place by February 1 of their third year (for those entering with an MA, by February 1 of their second year). At the end of their first year, students must meet with their advisor(s) and the DGS to: a) constitute a comps committee consisting of three members; and b) identify any coursework completed in their first year that could be included in the comps portfolio (see below). At the end of their second year, students and their full comps committee will agree upon the contents of the comps portfolio that will form the basis of the oral exam, including bibliographic lists; both the student and the committee members will sign a form attesting to this agreement.
2. **Fields:** Students will work with faculty members who are members of the Graduate Faculty to develop expertise in:
 - a) a regional field (currently Asia, Europe, Latin America, or United States); **and**
 - b) a transregional or global field defined by the student in consultation with their advisor(s). Students may fulfill this requirement in one of the following ways: i) a field in world or global history; ii) a field in a transregional history such as Atlantic history or Eurasian history; or iii) a thematic field with transregional scope such as gender or empire.

3. Committee: The three examiners (each responsible for one of the three components of the portfolio) together constitute the comprehensive exam committee. One of the three examiners – usually the student’s main advisor(s) – chairs the committee. All members of comprehensive exam committees must have Graduate Faculty status.
4. Portfolio: Students will have worked with their examiners to compile a portfolio that will form the basis of the comprehensive exam. At the end of their first year, students must meet with their advisor(s) and the DGS to see whether any coursework could be included in the portfolio. At the end of the second year, students must meet with the comps committee to agree upon the final content of the portfolio. Both the student and the committee members will sign a form attesting to this agreement; after this agreement, faculty may not request additional material.

The portfolio will consist of:

- a) two to three historiographic essays in the regional field; as well as a bibliography of books covered in the essays, supplemented as needed in consultation with the examiner, for a total of 40-50 books (or an equivalent number of books, book chapters, and journal articles). The essays, ideally written in previous courses (including directed studies), should total about 20-30 pages;
- b) two to three historiographic essays in the transregional or global field; as well as a bibliography of books covered in the essays, supplemented as needed in consultation with the examiner, for a total of 30-40 books (or an equivalent number of books, book chapters, and journal articles). The essays, ideally written in previous courses (including directed studies), should total about 20-30 pages; and
- c) a teachable undergraduate course proposal that demonstrates students’ ability to translate their knowledge of the historiography and recent research trends in a given field into the composition of an undergraduate course. The course proposal consists of a rationale, an outline of class sessions including the reading assignments, and annotations to the outline. Students agree with the examiner in question on a course topic, but should choose topics that allow them to demonstrate breadth of knowledge in a given field.

The **course rationale** (about 1,000 words) explains the choice of the course topic, and how the course reflects recent research trends in a given regional or transregional/global field.

The **course outline** details topics and reading assignments week by week, for a typical semester of 14 weeks. The reading assignments should not exceed 50 pages per week, and should consist of research literature rather than textbooks. The syllabus should include primary sources.

The course proposal must include a week-by-week, or section-by-section explanation of the sequence of themes and the choice of reading assignments. The course proposal should include information on course requirements.

5. Oral examination: The oral examination takes place no later than February 1. Upon the request of the chair of the comprehensive exam committee, the Graduate Administrator will schedule the examination and prepare the necessary paperwork.

The oral examination will be a maximum of two hours in duration. The oral exam should focus on the portfolio. Students should be able to discuss the essays, the bibliographies, and the course proposal.

6. Grades: The examiners may award “Distinction,” “Pass,” or “Fail” in evaluating the student’s performance in the oral examination. Students will be informed of the results of the examination immediately after the exam.

Should the student fail the exam the Graduate Committee will decide, after hearing from the examiners and the student, whether or not the exam can be retaken. If so, the failed exam must be retaken prior to the beginning of the fourth year (prior to the beginning of the third year for students entering with an MA). The student has the right to choose new examiners.

The **tenure of students who do not pass the comprehensive exam** will end with the term during which the exam took place, unless the student has the option of retaking the exam. If a student does not pass the retake exam, tenure will end with the term during which this exam took place. **If a student does not graduate with a Ph.D. seven years after passing the comprehensive exam, the comprehensive exam must be retaken.** There are no exceptions to this rule.

For procedures to appeal the results of the comprehensive examination see the Appendix on Grievance Procedures.

Doctoral overview

The doctoral overview is the final stage before entering formal Ph.D. candidacy. To prepare for the doctoral overview, students should work with their main advisor(s) to select a doctoral dissertation committee (see below) and to prepare a written prospectus of their proposed dissertation. This will be **an essay of approximately ten pages**, which describes the purpose, scope, significance, sources, and methods to be employed in the proposed dissertation. The overview is designed to help students improve their research plan.

Doctoral dissertation committees (Ph.D. committees) are composed of at least four members, all of whom must be members of the Graduate Faculty. There must be three graduate faculty members from the department and at least one graduate faculty member outside of the department. A faculty member from another university may serve as the outside

member of a doctoral committee with the approval of the Dean. The members need not be identical to the Ph.D. comprehensive examination committee.

When the chair of the dissertation committee, the student's main advisor(s), agrees that the student's prospectus can be presented for the overview, copies will be distributed to all members of the committee. Upon the request of the committee's chair, the Graduate Administrator will schedule the examination and prepare the necessary paperwork. The thesis committee may approve the prospectus or recommend changes and request a further overview before final approval. Once a student has passed the doctoral overview, he/she is admitted to Ph.D. candidacy.

Annual meetings of the Ph.D. Committee

All Ph.D. candidates **must meet annually with their Ph.D. committees**. During these meetings, the committee should assess the student's progress toward the degree, discuss the evolving research design, and agree with the student on the objectives for the following year. Individual committee members who are unable to physically attend the meeting may participate via video-conferencing. A formal permission from the department or the school is not required

In some cases, a student may be geographically distant from campus and cannot return without hardship. It might then be appropriate to either meet via video-conferencing, or for the student to provide a written progress report with timetable, and for the committee to meet and discuss this report, and provide written feedback to the student.

It is the advisor(s)'s responsibility to write a brief report on the meeting, to be submitted to the Graduate Administrator no later than a week after the committee meeting took place. These **written reports about the annual Ph.D. meetings** are a university requirement and will form part of the student's academic record.

Defense of the dissertation

The doctoral defense will be called when the chair of the student's Ph.D. committee decides that the thesis is ready for a final defense. Students must be enrolled during the semester in which the defense is scheduled. The student is responsible for ensuring that the format of the manuscript conforms to the regulations of the university and the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences, for paying certain fees, and otherwise fulfilling the requirements for graduation. At the beginning of the academic year in which students intend to graduate, they need to familiarize themselves with the graduation procedures and rules, which can be found on the Dietrich School website.

Upon the request of the chair of the Ph.D. committee, the Graduate Administrator will schedule the doctoral defense and publicly announce the date of the defense. All members of the Ph.D. committee are required to physically attend the doctoral defense. Only in

exceptional cases when this is not possible may the Graduate Administrator, on request of the Ph.D. committee chair, ask the Graduate Dean's office for permission to have a committee member participate via video-conferencing. In this case, the defense must take place in the video-conferencing rooms designated for this purpose by the Dietrich School.

At least two weeks prior to the defense, the student will distribute copies of the thesis to the members of the Ph.D. committee. The thesis committee will determine whether or not to approve the thesis and award the Ph.D. The committee members should also advise the candidate on prospects for publication.

Guidelines for Graduate Courses

Professionalization Seminar:

This course introduces incoming graduate students to the discipline of history, our graduate program, and professional issues ranging from the academic and nonacademic job markets to publishing and conference participation. In addition, the course enables students to launch their M.A. essays by requiring them to identify a topic and primary sources. By the end of the course students will have drafted a grant proposal related to their M.A. project.

Historical Methods and Approaches:

The purpose of this course is twofold: First, it offers a broad introduction to the diverse sources and research methods used by historians, and to the range of spatial and temporal scales that shape historical work. Second, with an eye to both the M.A. essay and the eventual dissertation, the course provides students with tools to craft a project, conduct research, and analyze various types of historical sources. Students should be given the opportunity to conduct hands-on work with primary sources. The skills developed in this course will prepare students to do research in archives and other repositories.

Writing Seminar:

This seminar serves three purposes: a) to provide M.A. students with the opportunity to draft a paper based on primary sources that will form the basis for the M.A. essay that is required for the Master's Degree; b) to provide students who entered the program with an M.A. the opportunity to draft their dissertation overview and/or an article for publication; and c) to provide ABD students with the opportunity to produce dissertation chapters and/or a publishable article in a structured setting with feedback from the course instructor and peers. Students will also have the opportunity to explore various forms of communicating about their research with multiple audiences.

Transregional or Global Courses:

These courses introduce students to the scholarly literature, major historical problems, and diverse historical methods in a topic of transregional or global scope. In these courses, individual students will be given the opportunity to write one historiographical essay of at least 8 pages, if such a paper has not already been assigned. For transregional or global courses that recur, a 3-year cycle is optimal.

Regional Courses:

These courses aim to help students build their regional expertise by introducing them to important topics within the historiography of a regional field (currently Asian, European, Latin American, or U.S. history). In these courses, individual students will be given the opportunity to write one historiographical essay of at least 8 pages, if such a paper has not already been assigned. For regional courses that recur, a 3-year cycle is optimal.

Graduate Fellowships

The department offers **teaching assistantships** (TAs, which are fellowships for M.A. students), **teaching fellowships** (TFs, which fellowships for Ph.D. students), **graduate student assistantships** (GSA), and **non-teaching fellowships**, such as the Social Science Doctoral Dissertation (SSDD) and the World History Center fellowships. Students are also eligible to apply for fellowships granted by administrative units within the university, such as the Andrew Mellon Predoctoral Fellowship, the Lillian B. Lawler Fellowship, and the Carolyn Chambers Memorial Fellowship offered by the Dietrich School of Arts & Sciences, as well as fellowships offered through the University Center for International Studies (UCIS) and other university units. For information on these fellowships and the application procedures, please consult departmental and university websites and pay attention to departmental and university announcements.

Numerous institutions outside the university offer academic **fellowship opportunities**. Graduate students are encouraged to show the entrepreneurial spirit necessary to discover these opportunities and apply for outside funding. Being successful on the domestic and international fellowship market not only improves their funding situation, but will also boost their competitiveness on the job market after graduation.

Applications from continuing students

Students who have exhausted the fellowships offered them upon entry into the graduate program, and those who entered the program without fellowship aid, may **apply for TA, TF, or GSA funding by January 15th** for aid beginning in the fall semester of the following academic year. They should submit a letter of application and a reference letter from their main advisor(s) to the Graduate Administrator. These applications will be considered by the Graduate Committee alongside applications from new students who are applying for admission into the graduate program.

Fellowships and tenure

When the Graduate Committee meets to determine applications for admission into the graduate program, it ranks both external and internal applicants for fellowship aid and decides on the duration of the fellowship that will be offered to a student. “Tenure” refers to the number of years, contingent on satisfactory progress through the graduate program, that the department commits to provide funding in the form of TA/TF fellowships.

External applicants are ranked based on the quality of their academic record, writing sample, and letters of recommendation. Applicants who are already enrolled in the department's graduate program are ranked in accordance with their academic performance in the program.

Students who are awarded a TA/TF and simultaneously awarded a FLAS or other non-teaching fellowships are urged to accept the non-teaching fellowships. When their extra-departmental fellowship comes to an end, these students will automatically enter the TA/TF tenure stream and the department will honor the commitments it made in its original offer.

- 1) Students who held a TA/TF before they entered the FLAS stream will be given priority over new applicants into the program.
- 2) Students who are awarded a FLAS or other fellowship from outside the department, but are not awarded a TA/TF at the time they enter the program, will not automatically enter the TA/TF tenure stream when their extra-departmental support comes to an end. These students should re-apply for a departmental TA/TF and will be ranked against other entering and unsupported students.

The department offers incoming students six years of funding if students are admitted to the program without an M.A., and five years of funding for students admitted with an M.A. All funding is contingent on satisfactory progress in the graduate program. This includes passing exams and the stages leading to a successful dissertation in a timely manner. Should the department have more claimants for TA/TFs than it has openings, it will first appeal to the Graduate Dean for temporary additions of teaching fellowships to fill the gap. If additional fellowships are not forthcoming, the Graduate Committee will rank all students in good standing in the tenure stream by their academic performance and will award TA/TFs for the following year by rank order. Claimants who do not receive a TA/TF under these conditions retain their tenured status. They will be granted "deferred" status, in which they have first claim by rank order to the next TA/TF positions that the department awards.

Departmental and Faculty Obligations

Graduate Committee

The Graduate Committee is composed of four faculty representing diverse regional specializations. Members are selected by the chair, in consultation with the Graduate Director. Two graduate student representatives selected by the Graduate Student Organization sit in on all meetings except those deliberating on admissions and fellowships. The committee is chaired by the Graduate Director. Its duties are:

- 1) to read applications, determine admission of students into the graduate program, and rank both external and internal applicants for fellowship aid.
- 2) to coordinate graduate course schedules that will enable students to fulfill the program requirements for the M.A. and Ph.D. degrees. The Graduate Committee endeavors to build course schedules for a two-year period, ensuring that required seminars are offered in a timely fashion and in sufficient variety to meet student needs.
- 3) to provide a forum for discussion of issues affecting graduate students and act as a liaison committee with the Graduate Student Organization.
- 4) to carry out other duties, as defined in this handbook.

Obligations of individual faculty

In addition to their usual professional and pedagogical obligations, the faculty within the department have the following responsibilities and obligations to the Graduate Program:

All faculty are obliged to be conversant with the contents of this handbook and to proceed accordingly.

Faculty should be aware of and adhere to the rules and regulations concerning the conduct of advising, committees, examinations, and the award of the M.A. and Ph.D. degrees as well as to the supervision and evaluation of Teaching Assistants (TAs) and Teaching Fellows (TFs).

Faculty supervising TA/TFs must meet with the TA/TFs before the start of the semester to discuss the plans for the course and the TA/TFs' obligations and responsibilities. Faculty and TA/TFs should meet regularly throughout the term. Normally this entails a weekly meeting to discuss the structuring of the week's recitations and address any problems that may have arisen in the course.

Faculty supervising TA/TFs are obliged to respond to their TA/TFs reports of cheating, plagiarism, or other improprieties by students, and adhere to the procedures outlined in the university's academic integrity policy when investigating such allegations.

Faculty supervising TA/TFs must visit at least one of the TA/TF's recitation sections each term and discuss the TA/TF's performance with the TA/TF shortly afterward. **Faculty must also write an evaluation of the TA/TF's performance at the end of the semester.** A copy of the evaluation must be given to the TA/TF and another copy put into the TA/TF's permanent file.

Faculty advisors must meet at least once every semester with their advisees to review each student's progress, plans, obligations, and outstanding requirements. For students who are writing their dissertation, the main advisor(s) should convene a meeting of the student and the dissertation committee once a year.

Faculty examiners for a foreign language must be aware of and adhere to the regulations regarding these examinations. (See the section entitled Research Tools and Methodology.)

Main advisors and all members of a M.A., preliminary, or doctoral comprehensive examining committee must be aware of and adhere to the rules governing those examinations. (See the sections entitled M.A., Preliminary, or Doctoral Comprehensive Examinations.)

Main advisors and all members of a dissertation overview committee must be aware of and adhere to the rules governing that procedure. (See the section entitled Dissertation Overview.)

Main advisors and all members of a dissertation committee must be aware of and adhere to the rules governing the dissertation and its defense.

Faculty shall award **grades** as follows for the various types of courses listed below:

- 1) In **graduate-level undergraduate courses** (numbered 1005 to 1999), letter grades shall be awarded.
- 2) In **graduate-level classes, seminars, and individual reading or research courses**, letter grades shall be awarded except for HIST 2902 and 2990 (see below). In addition to a letter grade, the faculty member will provide a brief written evaluation of any paper written for a graduate level course.
- 3) At the end of each term's work for HIST 2902 (**Directed Study**) and 2990 (**Independent Study**), the graduate student will submit to the faculty member a list of books and articles read during that term's course. The list will be signed by the student and faculty member and placed in the student's folder. The faculty member will assign a Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory grade and a brief written evaluation of any paper written for the course. Both the list of readings and the evaluation will be included in the student's file.

Guidelines for Teaching Fellows (TFs), Teaching Assistants (TAs), and Graduate Student Assistants (GSAs)

All entering graduate students must participate in the three-year pedagogy program organized by the History Department (for students entering the program with an M.A., this program will be two years in length). Developing strong teaching skills is essential for graduate students' work as Teaching Assistants and Teaching Fellows; it will also be an important element in their training for postgraduate careers inside and outside of academia. The pedagogy program thus prepares students for various job markets by assuring that they have the most complete qualifications possible, including a rich teaching portfolio, the badge in pedagogy offered by the university, and specialty training provided by the History Department.

Course assignment

Late in the semester prior to the one in which they will be teaching, graduate student TA/TFs are asked to indicate their first, second, and third preferences for course assignments. It is understood that when there are conflicts, the TA/TF with seniority gets preference. Seniority is defined as the number of semesters taught at Pitt.

Stand-alone teaching

Only graduate students who have passed their Ph.D. comprehensive examinations are eligible to teach stand-alone courses. The selection of individuals who will teach these courses is based on the principle that everyone who is eligible should have the opportunity to teach such a course at least once. The president of the Graduate Student Organization consults with the Director of Undergraduate Studies to select the person(s) who will teach a summer course. TFs who independently teach a course must meet the professional standards required of faculty teaching at the university. They should have their course syllabus approved by a faculty mentor of their choice, and they must arrange to have their course evaluated by the Office of Measurement and Evaluation of Teaching.

Obligations of TA/TFs

TA/TFs must register for nine credits of course work for the semesters in which they hold the fellowship. They are expected to devote 20 hours a week to their teaching responsibilities.

TA/TFs must attend all of the lectures and class sessions of the course to which they are assigned. They must attend all of their own recitation sections. They must contact the course instructor and arrange for a substitute in case of illness or other emergency. Changes in time/location of recitations must be approved by the instructor and communicated to the departmental staff.

TA/TFs must hold at least two hours of office hours per week and notify students and departmental staff of these hours.

TA/TFs must arrange to have their sections evaluated by the Office of Measurement and Evaluation of Teaching. During the term, the course instructor should observe at least one recitation section and communicate an evaluation of teaching performance to the TA/TF. In addition, the course instructor should provide a written evaluation of the TA/TF's overall performance, which should be made available to the TA/TF and incorporated into the TA/TF's dossier.

TA/TFs who grade examinations but do not preside at recitations are obliged to perform all of the duties outlined for TA/TFs except for the meeting of recitations. The obligations of these TA/TFs towards their students remain as outlined above.

Obligations of GSAs

Graduate Student Assistants must perform the duties assigned to them in a timely and satisfactory manner; they are expected to devote 20 hours a week to these duties.

Conditions for Renewal of Fellowship Aid

All TAs, TFs, and GSAs must register for nine credits of course work during the fall and spring semesters. All fellowship recipients are expected to demonstrate "satisfactory progress" towards their degrees, which will be assessed by the Graduate Committee. "Satisfactory progress" is defined in two ways.

- 1) The first is the fulfillment of degree requirements in a timely fashion, defined as two years from entry for M.A. candidates, or the passage of the Ph.D. preliminary examinations within one year of entry with an M.A. from another institution. Ph.D. candidates who obtained their M.A. from the department should pass their Ph.D. comprehensive examinations and the doctoral overview within two years from entry into the Ph.D. program. Students should note that the M.A. examination requires prior fulfillment of the language requirement; similarly, the breadth requirement must be fulfilled before a student can sit for the Ph.D. comprehensive exams.
- 2) "I" or "G" grades must be removed in a timely fashion. "I" or "G" grades incurred during the spring semester must be removed by March 1st of the following year. "I" or "G" grades incurred during the fall semester must be removed by December 31st of the following year. Failure to remove "I" or "G" grades within the deadlines is grounds for denying renewal of departmental fellowships.

Petitions and Grievances

Petitions

Students have the right to petition the Director of Graduate Studies for reasonable adjustments to any of the above requirements. A petition consists of a brief memo by the student explaining and justifying the proposed adjustment. In evaluating the petition, the Director of Graduate Studies will consult with the student's advisor(s).

Grievances

The department has an established procedure to consider grievances by graduate students about problems concerning courses, written work, exams, advising, evaluation, committee recommendations, and supervision of teaching. The grievance procedure may be initiated at any point in the graduate program. It can begin only after the student has discussed the matter with the instructor(s), advisor(s), or committee chair directly concerned. If the grievance cannot be resolved, the student will pursue the matter as follows. The aggrieved student may request the assistance of the GSO (Graduate Student Organization) and presence of a representative of the GSO at all steps of the procedure in which the student is involved.

1. The student should appeal informally to the Graduate Director, who will confer with both student and faculty member(s) with the aim of resolving the grievance.
2. If the Graduate Director is unable to resolve the matter, the student should file a written statement of grievance with the department Chair. The chair will discuss the grievance with the student and faculty member(s) involved with the aim of resolving the grievance.
3. If the Chair is unable to resolve the matter, the Chair will establish an ad hoc grievance committee composed of one faculty member selected by the student, one faculty member selected by the Chair, and a third chosen by the other two members. This committee will investigate the grievance at its discretion, possibly conducting more discussion with those involved, and then make a written recommendation for resolution of the grievance to the Chair.
4. The Chair will accept or reject the recommendation of the committee. If the Chair rejects the committee's recommendation or if the aggrieved student remains unsatisfied, the matter will be referred to the department as a whole. The student will have the opportunity to explain the grievance and answer questions at a meeting of the faculty but will not be present for the faculty's deliberations.
5. If the department is unable to resolve the matter, the student may make a written appeal to the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies.
6. The Dietrich School Ombudsperson "assists graduate students in the Dietrich School to resolve conflicts and issues that arise in the course of their graduate education that the student believes have not or cannot be addressed within their academic department. The Ombudsperson helps manage conflicts and provides information about institutional policies related to the student's issues, including the university's grievance procedures."

Advice: Pursuing the grievance procedure is excruciating for all involved and should be a last resort. The student should go forward only after consulting the parts of this handbook about student and faculty responsibilities and undertaking a direct and frank discussion with the faculty member(s) concerned. *Open lines of communication are the best way to make it unnecessary to initiate the procedure.* At the same time, students should not hesitate to draw to the attention of the Graduate Director and Chair any serious inequity, exploitation, or abuse.