

**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 specialists who know how to research, teach, and interpret the histories and historiographies of particular places from comparative, cross-cultural, transnational and global perspectives. Area specialists have organized themselves into four thematic groups to offer graduate students seminars on Atlantic History, Power and Inequality, Texts and Contexts, and World History. Professional development of graduate students is encouraged through careful mentoring and supported with teaching and research fellowships as well as departmental research seminars.

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

Students specialize in a regional area (Asia, Europe, Latin America, United States) and a transnational theme (Atlantic History, Power and Inequality, Texts and Contexts, World History). Yearly seminars are offered in each of these regional and thematic specializations. Each of the regional and thematic groups maintain "core" reading lists that are available to students and taught in some of the seminars.

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.

## **M.A. Program**

Upon entering the M.A. program, students will be 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 should inform the Graduate Director and Graduate Administrator of any changes they wish to make, though.

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. M.A. students must take a **graduate course on historiography/methodology**. Normally this course will be offered once a year; therefore, students should enroll in the course when it is offered.
2. Students must take the **Writing Seminar**, HIST 2011/2012, which is offered every fall semester.
3. Students must take **six credits in seminars on transnational/thematic history** (Atlantic History; Power and Inequality; Texts and Contexts; World History). A graduate seminar on each theme will be offered once a year. The six credits may be in different transnational themes.
4. Students must take **six credits in one of the following regional fields**: Europe, United States, Asia, or Latin America.
5. 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 advisors. (see details below).
6. **Students are required to earn a GPA higher than 3.0. in the graduate program to sit for their M.A. exam.**
7. Students must fulfill the **research tool (foreign language) requirement** before sitting for the M.A. examination (see details below)
8. Students must complete a **research paper** of about 10,000 words (not counting footnotes). The paper must be based on original research and should be potentially publishable.

### **Research tool: 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, by any of the methods outlined below:

1. **Passing a third-level language course (for instance, French0003) with a grade of B or better.** Depending on students' former training in that language, this might require taking one or both lower level courses (for instance, French0001 and French0002) first. Language placement tests will establish on which course level students have to start. Students with no training in the language in question need to take three consecutive language courses to eventually pass the departmental language requirement.
2. **Scoring in the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile or higher in the SAT II test of the Educational Testing Service.** The ETS currently tests in French Reading, German Reading, Spanish Reading, Modern Hebrew Reading, Italian Reading, Latin Reading with Listening, Chinese Reading with Listening, Japanese Reading with Listening, and Korean Reading with Listening.
3. **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.
4. **Presenting a research paper that demonstrates ability to read and comprehend historical literature in the foreign language,** to the satisfaction of two faculty members.

*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 first research tool 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.**

*Advice:* As explained below, students must fulfill a second research tool requirement to be eligible to sit for the Ph.D. comprehensive examination, which usually although not always will take the form of a second foreign language. It takes time to develop reading competence in two foreign languages. Failure to fulfill the research tool requirements frequently holds up progress in graduate study and may lead to the termination of graduate studies. Talk to the language department to discover what level of course you need. Look at all the options listed above in the Departmental regulations. Consider applying for FLAS and other fellowships for summer or yearlong intensive language studies. Also, the summer provides an opportunity for taking language courses, either in the US or abroad.

## 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** – these are undergraduate courses—subject to the approval of the student’s advisor 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 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 (not counting 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) 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. 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 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, 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 and dissertation overview within two years. Required doctoral coursework beyond the M.A. includes successful completion of two graduate seminars in History and the fulfillment of a second research tool. While completing coursework and finalizing the comprehensive exam essays (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). If a student takes two years after the M.A. exam to complete the comps exam and dissertation overview, the student can only expect two years of internal funding to research and write the dissertation.

### 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** in the program. The exam will cover two areas: coursework done by the student during that first year, and his/her plans for dissertation research (topic, relevant literatures, and possible sources). As a rule, the student's advisor 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 become part of the student's graduate record after review by the student. 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.



## **Second research tool**

*Departmental regulations:* **Ph.D. students must fulfill the second research tool requirement to be eligible to sit for the Ph.D. comprehensive exam. If students enter the program with an M.A. from another institution, they must fulfill both research tools before they can sit for the Ph.D. comprehensive exam.** Depending on the requirements set by the regional group (Asia, Europe, Latin America, U.S.), the second research tool may be either a second foreign language or two graduate courses, related to the student's research interests, in a department/departments other than History. If selecting the second alternative, the student should, in consultation with the main adviser, write out an explicit rationale and petition the Graduate Committee for approval. To satisfy the second research tool requirement, the student should obtain a grade of B+ or better in each of the two agreed-upon courses.

*Advice:* If you will be using a foreign language as your second research tool, please read the "First research tool: language requirement" section under the "M.A. Program."

## **Ph.D. comprehensive examination**

1. Fields: Students will work with faculty members who are members of the Graduate Faculty to prepare on three subjects: a **thematic field** (Atlantic History; Power and Inequality; Texts and Contexts; World History); a **regional field** (Asia, Europe, Latin America, and United States); and a specialized, **dissertation-related field**. Students are expected to have prepared 40–50 books (or an equivalent number of books, book chapters, and journal articles) for each of the thematic and regional fields and 30–40 books (or their equivalent) for the specialized dissertation-related field.

2. Committee: The three examiners (thematic field, regional field, and dissertation-related field) together constitute the comprehensive exam committee. One of the three examiners – usually the student's main advisor – is chairing the committee. All members of comprehensive exam committees must have Graduate Faculty status.

**A meeting of the full comps committee and the student will take place no later than October 31** of the academic year in which the exam will take place (for spring exams) **or February 28** of the previous academic year (for fall exams). The Graduate Administrator will not lift the spring/fall term advising hold until this meeting has been scheduled. At this meeting the student and the faculty members will confirm: a) the lists for each of the fields; and b) a plan of action to complete the student's preparation for the exam.

3. Written Assignments: Students will work with their examiners to prepare a written, historiographic essay and an annotated undergraduate course proposal. If they choose to write the essay on a thematic field (Atlantic History, Power and Inequality, Texts and Contexts, World History), the course proposal needs to be developed for a regional field (Asia, Europe, Latin America, and United States), and vice versa. In preparation for the specialized, dissertation-related field, students will prepare an annotated bibliography to be discussed during the oral examination.

3a. *Comprehensive exam essay:*

Essays should be no longer than 7500 words. Prior to drafting their comps essay, students agree with the examiner in question on a bibliography of at least 25 books (or their equivalent) to be discussed in the essay. **Ideally, this bibliography corresponds closely to the reading list or core course in a given field.** At least half of the titles in the bibliography have to be tied together in the main text to support the essay's overarching argument, with the other half at least referenced in the footnotes.

3b. *Undergraduate course proposal:*

In this part of the exam students demonstrate the 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 thematic field. To demonstrate the knowledge of the historiography in a given field, students will cite the most relevant titles in the footnotes (at least a dozen books or their equivalent should be cited).

The **course outline** details topics and reading assignments week by week, for a typical semester of 14 weeks. The reading assignments should not exceed 100 pages per week, and should consist of research literature rather than textbooks. The syllabus should include primary sources.

In the **annotations to the course outline**, students explain week by week, or section by section, the sequence of themes and the choice of reading assignments. The course proposal does not need to include information on course requirements or the grading policy. The focus of this assignment is the course content and students' engagement with the historiography of a given thematic or regional field.

3c. *Annotated bibliography:*

Students will prepare for the specialized dissertation-related field an annotated bibliography of 30–40 books (or their equivalent). After a brief description of the dissertation project (one paragraph), the annotations indicate with a sentence for each title its relevance to the envisioned dissertation.

While the core courses in the thematic and regional fields should be tailored to prepare students for their comprehensive exams, all components of the exam **must be the student's individual work**. Students may draw in part on written work drafted for seminars and are encouraged to discuss ideas and interpretations with whomever they wish. However, feedback on the comps essay and course proposal should only be provided by that field examiner. The Writing Seminar or other seminars cannot be used to work on comps essays or course proposals.

The examiner will review **no more than three drafts of the course proposal or the essay**, and will return **comments to the student within two weeks** of submission each time. After the last set of comments has been received, the student should make last revisions and then

must circulate the course proposal or the essay to the committee as the final version for exam.

4. Oral examination: The oral examination takes place no later than April for a spring term and November for a fall term exam. 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 integrating the three fields covered by the students, and give students the opportunity to demonstrate their competence across the breadth of their regional and thematic fields. They should be able to answer questions about the essay, the course proposal, and the annotated bibliography, and explain how the insights they derived from coursework in their regional and thematic fields inform their dissertation projects.

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

Failing one part of the comprehensive exam will be considered a failed exam. In this case, the Graduate Committee will decide after hearing each of the examiners and the student whether or not the exam can be retaken. If so, the failed section must be retaken no later than the following semester. 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 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 candidate's department and at least one graduate faculty member external to the candidate's 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, 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 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. **Graduating students need to inform themselves on the website of Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences (<http://www.asgraduate.pitt.edu/forms-policies>) about the details of the graduation procedures and rules** early during the term of their graduation.

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.

## **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 the Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) fellowships offered by the Asian Studies Center, Latin American Studies Center, the Russian and East European Studies Center, and the European Union Center of Excellence. For information on these fellowships and the application procedures, please consult the departmental website and pay attention to departmental 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, are eligible to **apply for a TA, TF, or GSA by January 15<sup>th</sup>** 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 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, GRE scores, 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. Apart from this, budgetary constraints may affect these funding decisions. Should the department have more claimants for TA/TFs than it has openings, the Department 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 faculty representing the five regional specializations in the Department (Asia, Europe, Latin America, U.S. and World). 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 works with the Director of Undergraduate Studies 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 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 multi-year pedagogy program organized 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 in the summer is based on the principle that everyone who is eligible should have the opportunity to teach 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 research tool requirement; similarly, the second research tool 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 1<sup>st</sup> of the following year. "I" or "G" grades incurred during the fall semester must be removed by December 31<sup>st</sup> of the following year. Failure to remove "I" or "G" grades within the deadlines is grounds for denying renewal of departmental fellowships.

## Grievance Procedure

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, 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; the procedure for grievances that reach that level is published in the University's Graduate Arts and Sciences Bulletin.

*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.