

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

REGULATIONS GOVERNING GRADUATE STUDY IN HISTORY

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## DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

### REGULATIONS GOVERNING GRADUATE WORK IN HISTORY

#### I. General Information

##### A. GRADUATE PROGRAMS:

There are three degree programs in History:

- M.A., Plan I (24 hours in History plus 6 hours of thesis)
- M.A., Plan II (30 hours in History plus revised seminar paper) Ph.D. degree

Requirements and other information pertaining to these degree programs may be found in the Graduate School Catalog and in the following pages. Important additional information is available at the Graduate School's Website: <https://graduate.ua.edu/>

##### B. THE GRADUATE COMMITTEE:

The Graduate Committee is a standing departmental committee composed of members of the Graduate Faculty. Its responsibilities include the periodic review of requirements for admission to graduate degree programs and all matters pertaining to those programs. The Graduate Committee recommends students for admission and nominates students for awards, scholarships, fellowships, and teaching assistantships. Requests for any relaxation or departure from the general degree requirements must be addressed to the Director of Graduate Studies, who in turn consults with the Graduate Committee. Requests requiring an exception to Graduate School policy must be approved by the Graduate School.

#### II. Admission Requirements

##### A. DECISION ON WHETHER TO APPLY FOR ADMISSION TO M.A. OR PH.D. PROGRAM:

Applicants who already hold an M.A. in History earned no more than six years before their entry into the graduate program in History would begin are eligible to apply to directly to the Ph.D. program. All other applicants apply to the M.A. Program. Applicants with a Master's degree awarded in the last six years in a closely related discipline (including, but not limited to, American Studies, Latin American Studies, Medieval Studies, etc.) and whose training was primarily historical may petition the departmental Graduate Committee to apply directly to the Ph.D. program. Permission will be granted on a case-by-case basis.

**B. GENERAL ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS FOR THE GRADUATE PROGRAM IN HISTORY:**

Admission decisions to the graduate program in History at The University of Alabama are made by the Graduate School based on a composite of information, including the applicant's statement of purpose, letters of recommendation, writing sample, academic transcripts, experience in college or graduate level history classes and history internships, test scores, and the recommendation of the Graduate Committee of the Department of History. A successful applicant to the Ph.D. program must also be endorsed by a faculty member prepared to serve as chairperson of the student's dissertation committee.

**C. MINIMUM QUANTITATIVE REQUIREMENTS FOR STANDARD ADMISSION TO GRADUATE PROGRAM:**

The applicant must have a grade point average, based on a 4.0 system, of 3.0 overall or 3.0 for the last 60 semester hours in a degree program *and* a score of at least 300 on the combined verbal and quantitative portions and at least 4 on the analytical writing section of the Graduate Record Exam in order to be eligible for standard admission. **Please note that a student who meets these minimum qualifications does not automatically gain admission to the graduate program, as admissions decisions are made on the basis of evaluation of the student's application file as a whole.** Rather, the student, if admitted, would not be subject to the same rules governing academic progress for students awarded a "Permission to Continue Admission" and also admitted to the program. See immediately below, II-D, for a discussion of "Permission to Continue Admission."

**D. REQUIREMENTS FOR "PERMISSION TO CONTINUE ADMISSION" TO GRADUATE PROGRAM:**

An applicant whose quantitative credentials do not meet the requirements for standard admission laid out in II-C above may be considered for "permission to continue admission" if the remaining portions of the application provide substantial evidence of the applicant's suitability for graduate study. Permission to continue admission is rarely offered, and only to students whose other credentials are judged by the departmental Graduate Committee to be exemplary. Students admitted under permission to continue admission must maintain a 3.0 grade point average for the first twelve semester hours attempted. Failure to do so will result in dismissal from the program. In addition, students receiving permission to continue admission to the graduate program are usually not considered for fellowships or assistantships during their probationary period.

**E. ACCELERATED MASTER'S PROGRAM:**

The Department of History participates in the Graduate School's

Accelerated Master's Program initiative designed to allow undergraduate students of exceptional ability and accomplishment to begin working towards a Master's degree while completing their undergraduate degree. History majors who have an overall GPA of at least 3.75 and have completed at least 90 credit hours overall, 27 credit hours in History (including HY430 and the geographic distribution requirement,) and the University's core requirements (with foreign language option) are eligible to apply. Students who may be interested should contact the Director of Graduate Studies in History to arrange an appointment. For general information on the Accelerated Master's Program, see:  
<https://graduate.ua.edu/accelerated-masters-program/>

### III. Advising and Orientation

#### A. ADVISING

The Director of Graduate Studies is the academic advisor for all master's students. Master's students will meet with the Director of Graduate Studies for mandatory advising appointments during the advising period each semester.

Ph.D. students are advised by the professor directing their dissertation or, in his or her absence, the Director of Graduate Studies. Together they draw up a plan of study, course of research, and eventually writing schedule. The student shall meet with his or her advisor at least once during each subsequent semester before registering for courses, and once each year the advisor shall submit an evaluation of the student's progress to the Director of Graduate Studies. A copy of this report will be placed in the student's file in the Department of History's office, and will form part of the information used in consideration for future funding. A change in the student's assigned advisor may be made upon request to the Director of Graduate Studies.

#### B. ORIENTATION:

The Director of Graduate Studies will meet with all incoming graduate students in an orientation meeting held before the beginning of fall classes to explain degree requirements, departmental regulations, and recent policy changes. Each August the Graduate School provides a required workshop for all new Graduate Teaching Assistants during the week before classes begin.

### IV. Scholastic Requirements

#### A. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL:

A graduate student with regular status in a graduate program

whose cumulative GPA drops below a 3.0 average at any time after earning twelve semester hours will be placed on academic warning. Academic warning status must be removed by raising the overall average to at least 3.0 during the next twelve hours of graduate work following the period in which the academic warning was incurred. Failure to do so will result in the student being dropped from the program.

A grade of "I" (incomplete) is evaluated as an F for the purposes of calculating a student's GPA until replaced by the earned grade. "I" grades must be removed within the first four weeks of the next semester of enrollment if the student's overall GPA drops below a 3.0 as a result of the incomplete grade. A student whose GPA remains above 3.0 despite an "I" on his or her transcript must remove the incomplete within four weeks from the beginning of the next semester in which the student is enrolled or else the student will be placed on academic warning.

**B. SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY:**

Any student who received six hours of "C" or three hours of "D" or "F" in history courses shall be dismissed from the program, although the student dismissed may petition the Graduate Committee for reinstatement.

A student on academic warning will ordinarily be ineligible for a teaching assistantship or other departmental financial support.

## V. Transfer of Credit

Courses of full graduate-level credit earned at an accredited institution where a student was enrolled in the graduate school may be submitted for review for inclusion in a History degree program. Evaluation of credit for transfer will not be made until the student has completed one semester of coursework at the Graduate School of The University of Alabama. Acceptance of credit requires the approval of the student's advisor, the Director of Graduate Studies in History (in possible conjunction with the Graduate Committee of the Department of History), and the Dean of the Graduate School. Credit will not be accepted for transfer from any institution at which the student failed to achieve a "B" average on all the graduate work attempted. Only courses in which a student earned a "B" grade or better may be transferred. No credits can be transferred from professional graduate programs such as law school.

A student initiates the request for evaluation of graduate credit obtained at another institution at the Office of the Graduate School. It is also the student's responsibility to ensure that the Office of the

Graduate School receives an official transcript of the credit concerned. All credit toward the M.A. degree must have been earned during the six years immediately preceding the date on which the degree is awarded. All transfer credit to be applied toward the Ph.D. must have been earned in the six years immediately preceding admission to the doctoral program.

The Department of History ordinarily allows the transfer of 6 semester hours of credit toward the M.A. degree, although in exceptional cases up to 12 hours may be accepted. No more than one-half of Ph.D. coursework hours (does not include HY 699) may be transferred from another institution.

## VI. Types of Graduate Courses

- A. LECTURE (HY 500-598)** 3 hours. The Director of Graduate Studies must approve all requests for graduate students in History to enroll in a 500-level course. Permission will be granted in compelling cases only.
- B. THESIS RESEARCH (HY 599)** 1-6 hours. Students working on a master's thesis must enroll for a total of six hours of this course.
- C. HISTORIOGRAPHY (HY 601-605)** 4 hours. Courses designed to acquaint students with some of the major historiographical works in a given field. Open only to a limited number of graduate students (15 maximum) and meeting once a week for two and a half hours. Expect a heavy load of reading and writing. Two courses of this type, in different geographic areas, are required of all graduate students.
- D. GRADUATE READINGS COURSES (PROSEMINARS) (HY 606-650)** 4 hours. Advanced graduate readings courses centered on a particular theme or field. Expect a heavy load of reading and writing. Open only to limited number of graduate students (15 maximum) and meeting once a week for two and a half hours.
- E. HISTORY RESEARCH SEMINARS** 4 hours. Courses in which the student produces an article-length scholarly paper based on substantial original primary-source research and situated in dialogue with the secondary literature in the field. The paper should deal explicitly with the historiographical significance of its claims. Open only to limited numbers of graduate students. Master's students are required to take at least one research seminar; doctoral students are required to complete at least two research seminars. Each student taking a seminar will select a faculty member with expertise relevant to the seminar paper to serve as

the Second Reader of the seminar paper. The choice of the Second Reader is contingent upon the approval of the seminar professor and the consent of the designated faculty member.

- F. HISTORY COLLOQUIUM (HY 665)** 4 hours. Required course for all incoming M.A. and Ph.D. students to be taken in Fall of their first year. Students are introduced to historiographical theory and method and the professional study of history.
- G. DIRECTED STUDY (HY 697-698)** 1-4 hours. Independent study courses that involve either reading (HY 697) or research (HY 698). Students must receive the permission of the instructor to enroll and must in conjunction with the instructor write a directed study contract that must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies.

A student entering earning his or her first graduate degree in history at The University of Alabama may count a maximum of 4 hours of credit in HY 697 toward that degree; an additional 2 hours may be counted toward the second graduate degree in history. Exception to this policy will require the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies.

- H. DISSERTATION RESEARCH (HY 699)** 3-12 hours. Students working on dissertations must enroll continuously in this course for at least three hours per semester until the dissertation is successfully defended. Students must earn at least 24 hours of dissertation research credits to receive their Ph.D.

## VII. General Requirements for all History Degree Programs

### A. COURSE LOAD:

Resident students are expected to register for full loads each semester: at least 9 hours of graduate credit, except in the case of Graduate Teaching Assistants and History Writing Fellows, who must take at least 6 hours. All courses must be numbered 500 or above.

### B. HISTORIOGRAPHY REQUIREMENT:

All incoming graduate students (M.A. or Ph.D.), unless specifically exempted by the Graduate Committee, must take the History Colloquium (HY 665) in the Fall semester of their first year. All students must also take at least two historiography courses in different geographic areas (HY 601 Literature of American History to 1865, HY 602 Literature of American History since 1865, HY 603 Literature of European History, or HY 605 Literature of Latin American History) as part of their degree program. They are encouraged to take these as early as possible in their program.

Doctoral students in U.S. history are strongly encouraged to take both HY 601 and HY 602 (Literature of American History to 1865/Literature of American History Since 1865); however, taking these two U.S. literature courses will not satisfy the historiography requirement.

**C. SEMINAR REQUIREMENT:**

M.A. students must take at least one research seminar. All doctoral students must complete two research seminars. Doctoral students who earned a Master's degree at another institution may count one research seminar or thesis research completed at that institution toward this requirement.

**D. LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT:**

M.A. students in History, as well as Ph.D. students in American History, are required to demonstrate reading proficiency in one foreign language. Ph.D. students in fields other than American History must demonstrate reading proficiency in two foreign languages. Students may fulfill this requirement by passing a translation examination administered by the Department of Modern Languages and Classics, or by passing a translation examination administered by a faculty member in the Department of History with the requisite expertise in the language. Students who wish to test with History faculty should notify the Director of Graduate Studies in History, who will work to facilitate the exam.

## VIII. Requirements for the M.A. Program:

**A. PLAN I:**

**1. COURSEWORK**

Coursework totaling 24 credit hours in History, and a thesis (typically a two-semester project that earns a total of 6 credit hours of HY 599) are required. Graduate students in History who take coursework with a primarily historical focus in other departments at The University of Alabama may in extraordinary circumstances petition the Director of Graduate Studies to have that coursework count towards their required credit hour total.

**2. LANGUAGE**

The student must demonstrate a reading proficiency in one foreign language *before* scheduling his or her final comprehensive examination.

**3. THESIS**

The student, in consultation with his/her advisor, will select the topic of the thesis. After the topic has been agreed on, the student will prepare a prospectus describing the topic



and the proposed plan of approach, including the principal sources to be used. Copies of the prospectus will be distributed to the student's advisory committee, which shall consist of three members, all of whom must signify their acceptance of the topic and prospectus.

#### 4. **PLAN I M.A. EXAM**

Students schedule the Plan I M.A. exam during their final semester of coursework, and usually take the exam in March or early April of that semester. Students must pass their comprehensive exam by the deadline specified by the Graduate School to be eligible to receive their degree. Students may only take their comprehensive exams during the summer in the event of extraordinary extenuating circumstances and with the consent of the entire examining committee.

No student may schedule his/her exams unless:

- The directing professor has approved the thesis.
- The language proficiency exam has been passed.

The Plan I M.A. exam will consist of a ten-page synthetic essay (see below for a description, and Appendix A), the M.A. thesis, and an oral exam. It will be graded pass/fail. The committee will consist of three members with whom the student has taken at least one course, one of whom must be the professor with whom the student has written his/her M.A. thesis. (In the event that the student intends to pursue a Ph.D. at The University of Alabama and the potential dissertation advisor is not included in this group, he or she will be added as a fourth member. For information detailing how currently-enrolled M.A. students become considered for admission to the Ph.D. program at Alabama, see below, VIII E, "REQUIREMENTS FOR THE ADMISSION OF M.A. STUDENTS CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA HISTORY DEPARTMENT TO ITS PH.D. PROGRAM.")

The oral exam should follow within two to three weeks of submission of the written material (final version of M.A. thesis and synthetic essay) to the examination committee. The oral exam will last approximately one hour and will consist of questions evenly divided between those on the student's M.A. thesis and those on the student's broader coursework (for which the synthetic essay will serve as a starting point).

5. **SYNTHETIC ESSAY QUESTION**

In a synthetic essay of approximately ten pages reflecting upon course readings (from multiple classes) and the M.A. thesis process, discuss which methods, historiographical fields, theoretical frameworks, specific works of history, and/or individual scholars have contributed to the development of your understanding of history and the historian's craft.

Consider the following:

- Which works have most influenced your understanding of the discipline of history?
- Of what it is that historians do, and how we go about doing it?
- In what ways have these readings shaped the type of historian you would like to be?
- How have you/will you apply these observations to your own work?

6. **M.A. EXAM EVALUATION**

At the conclusion of the exam, the examining committee will immediately convene privately and decide if the student earned a "Pass" or a "Fail." The committee will then immediately transmit its decision to the student and register it with the department and graduate school. For students who have declared their intention of being considered for continuation to the Ph.D. program (in conjunction with the policy outlined below, IX, "REQUIREMENTS FOR THE ADMISSION OF M.A. STUDENTS CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY TO ITS PH.D. PROGRAM,") the M.A. exam committee will also write a short recommendation to be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies.

7. **SPECIAL NOTE ON ALL M.A. EXAMS:** In all M.A. examinations, two negative votes constitute failure of the examination. History graduate students may repeat failed examinations one time only, after a time interval specified by the examining committee. The use of faculty from outside the department to serve on M.A. examination committees must be approved in advance by the departmental Graduate Committee.

**B. PLAN II:**

1. **COURSEWORK**

Coursework totaling 30 credit hours in History is required. Graduate students in History who take coursework with a primarily historical focus in other departments at The

University of Alabama may in extraordinary circumstances petition the Director of Graduate Studies to have that coursework count towards their required credit hour total.

2. **LANGUAGE**

The student must demonstrate a reading proficiency in one foreign language *before* scheduling his or her final comprehensive examination.

3. **SECOND READER FOR SEMINAR PAPER**

Each student taking a seminar will be assigned a faculty member who will serve as the Second Reader of the seminar paper.

The responsibilities of the Second Reader will include the following:

- The Second Reader will meet with the student early in the seminar semester to discuss the student's project, suggest relevant primary and secondary sources the student might wish to use, and provide advice on conducting research in this field.
- When a rough draft of the seminar paper is ready, the Second Reader will read the draft and provide commentary on its content, its argument, its use of primary sources, and its engagement with the relevant secondary literature in the field, noting especially any places where any of these items need to improve to meet the professional standards of the field. When the complete version of the seminar paper has been submitted, the Second Reader will read the paper and suggest to the seminar professor the grade he/she believes the paper deserves.
- **Official direction of the seminar paper project, and all final decisions regarding grades, rest with the seminar professor alone.**

4. **PLAN II M.A. EXAM**

Students schedule the Plan II M.A. exam during their final semester of coursework, and usually take the exam in March or early April of that semester. Students must pass their comprehensive exam by the deadline specified by the Graduate School to be eligible to receive their degree. Students may only take their comprehensive exams during the summer in the event of extraordinary extenuating circumstances and with the consent of the entire examining committee.

No student may schedule his/her exams unless:

- The final, revised seminar paper has been approved by the directing professor.
- The language proficiency exam has been passed.

The Plan II M.A. exam will consist of a ten-page synthetic essay (see below for a description, and Appendix A), the revised seminar paper, and an oral exam. It will be graded pass/fail. The committee will consist of three members, one of whom must be the professor with whom the student has written his/her seminar paper, and another must be the Second Reader of the seminar paper. The third committee member must be a professor with whom the student has taken at least one course. (In the event that the student intends to pursue a Ph.D. at The University of Alabama and the potential dissertation advisor is not included in this group, he or she will be added as a fourth member. For information detailing how currently-enrolled M.A. students become considered for admission to the Ph.D. program at Alabama, see below, IX, "REQUIREMENTS FOR THE ADMISSION OF M.A. STUDENTS CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY TO ITS PH.D. PROGRAM.")

The oral exam should follow within two to three weeks of submission of the written material (final version of the revised seminar paper and synthetic essay) to the examination committee. The oral exam will last approximately one hour and will consist of questions evenly divided between those on the student's revised seminar paper and those on the student's broader coursework (for which the synthetic essay will serve as a starting point).

**5. SYNTHETIC ESSAY QUESTION**

In a synthetic essay reflecting upon course readings (from multiple classes) and the seminar paper project, discuss which methods, historiographical fields, theoretical frameworks, works of history, and/or individual scholars have contributed to your understanding of history. Consider the follow:

- Which works have most influenced your understanding of the discipline of history?
- In what ways have these readings shaped the type of historian you would like to be?

- How have you/will you apply these observations to your own work?

**6. M.A. EXAM EVALUATION**

At the conclusion of the exam, the examining committee will immediately convene privately and decide if the student earned a "Pass" or a "Fail." The committee will then immediately transmit its decision to the student and register it with the department and graduate school. For students who have declared their intention of being considered for continuation to the Ph.D. program (in conjunction with the policy outlined below, IX, "REQUIREMENTS FOR THE ADMISSION OF M.A. STUDENTS CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY TO ITS PH.D. PROGRAM,") the M.A. exam committee will also write a short recommendation to be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies.

- 7. SPECIAL NOTE ON ALL M.A. EXAMS:** In all M.A. examinations, two negative votes constitute failure of the examination. History graduate students may repeat failed examinations one time only, after a time interval specified by the examining committee. The use of faculty from outside the department to serve on M.A. examination committees must be approved in advance by the departmental Graduate Committee.

**C. OTHER REQUIREMENTS FOR MASTER'S DEGREE STUDENTS**

**1. RESIDENCY**

A student's program at the master's level must provide sufficient association with the resident faculty to permit individual evaluation of the student's capabilities and achievements.

**2. TIME LIMIT**

All requirements for the master's degree must be completed during the six years immediately preceding the date on which the degree is to be awarded.

**3. APPLICATION FOR GRADUATION**

Application for graduation must be done during the registration period for classes during the student's final semester.

**ix. Requirements for the admission of M.A. students currently enrolled in The University of Alabama Department of History to its Ph.D. program.**

- A.** By 1 October for M.A. students taking their comprehensive exam in the Fall Semester, or 1 December for students taking their exam in the Spring Semester, students must file a form with the Director of Graduate Studies declaring whether or not they wish to be considered for continuation into the Ph.D. program, and if so, who they anticipate their Ph.D. dissertation advisor would be. The form will also indicate that the student has discussed this plan with the identified potential advisor. (Note: this does not imply that the identified advisor has committed him-/herself to directing the dissertation – only that the student has explicitly discussed this plan with the faculty member.)
- B.** Members of the M.A. exam committee will be informed in advance of the exam of the student's choice of whether or not to be considered for continuation.
- C.** At the conclusion of the M.A. exam, the examining committee will immediately convene privately and decide if the student earned a "Pass" or a "Fail." The committee will then immediately transmit its decision to the student and register it with the department and graduate school.
- D.** For these students who have expressed interest in continuation, the exam committee will also compile a brief written report and file it with the Graduate Committee. The report should include the exam committee's assessment of the student's suitability and readiness to undertake doctoral work.
- E.** The Graduate Committee, on the basis of a review of the student's full academic record, the input of the faculty member identified by the student as the potential dissertation director, and the M.A. exam committee's written report, will ultimately decide whether to offer the student continuation into the Ph.D. program. The Graduate Committee will be responsible for notifying the student of the decision within two weeks of the completion of his/her M.A. exam.
- F.** Students who are offered continuation to the Ph.D. program but choose not to accept the offer at that time are free to apply to the Ph.D. program at a later date according to the Department's and Graduate School's standard application procedures for graduate applications.

## **X. Requirements for the Ph.D. Program**

### **A. COURSEWORK:**

The Ph.D. requires a total of 54 hours of graduate coursework, not including dissertation research credit (HY 699). All credit hours earned in The University of Alabama's M.A. program, as well as those accepted for transfer from other institutions, are included in this total. Ph.D. students will fulfill three fields of history, earning at least 12 hours of graduate credit in each of the three fields (below, X. B., "HISTORY FIELD REQUIREMENTS").

Forty-eight of the student's required 54 hours of graduate coursework must be earned in History. The remaining 6 required hours may be taken in History or in a different discipline. Ph.D. students in History who take coursework with a primarily historical focus in other departments at The University of Alabama may in extraordinary circumstances petition the Director of Graduate Studies to have that coursework count towards their required 48 credit hours in History.

### **B. HISTORY FIELD REQUIREMENTS:**

The Department of History offers the following Ph.D. fields:

- United States History to 1877
- United States History Since 1877
- European History to 1815
- European History Since 1815
- Latin American History
- History of the U.S. South
- Military and Naval History
- History of Race
- Religious History
- Women's and Gender History

Ph.D. students may also create their own thematic fields, the exact contours of which will be settled in consultation with the student's dissertation director and the Graduate Committee, provided that there are professors in the department who specialize in that area. Thematic fields must include material that crosses both geographic and chronological boundaries.

### **C. LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT:**

Ph.D. students are expected to demonstrate reading proficiency in two foreign languages, with the exception of those whose major field is in American history. Those working primarily in American history must demonstrate reading proficiency in only one foreign language, although any advisor may require his or her student to

continue to fulfill the two-language requirement if it seems necessary to the area of the student's research. The language proficiency requirements must be met *before* the scheduling of the comprehensive examinations. (See also Section VII. D. above).

**D. PH.D. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS:**

Each Ph.D. student, in consultation with his/her dissertation director and the Director of Graduate Studies, will select the three fields he/she will complete. One of these fields, which must be drawn from the traditional geographic fields listed under nrs. 1-5 in Section X. B. above, will be designated as the student's 'base geographic field.' Each student will be tested by two faculty members in History in his/her base geographic field, and by one or two faculty members in History in each of his/her two other fields (the decision on whether to be tested by one or two professors in these fields will be made in consultation with the dissertation director and Director of Graduate Studies.)

The comprehensive examinations for admission to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree consist of separate four-hour written examinations administered by each faculty member on the student's exam committee, and an oral examination taken with the examination committee as a whole where each committee member will have 15 minutes to ask questions of the student. The comprehensive examinations are to be completed in a two-week period, with the written exams given the first week and the oral exam given the following week. The exam schedule must allow at least five days between the last written exam and the date of the oral exam.

The written and oral exams in each field are considered a unit, which the student will pass or fail as a whole. The student must pass all three fields in order to pass the examination. A minimum of six months must elapse before the student may repeat a failed examination, the time being set by the examining committee. In cases where a student passes some but not all fields, the examining committee will determine whether the student must repeat the exam as a whole, or only the field(s) in which the student failed. A student is permitted to repeat a failed examination one time only.

Students who fail their first examination and wish to make changes to their examining committee before retaking the examination must submit a written request to the Director of Graduate Studies detailing the reasons for the proposed change. The Director of Graduate Studies, in consultation with the departmental Graduate Committee and the student's main advisor/dissertation director, will decide on the merits of the case whether or not to grant permission for the changes to be made.



#### **E. DISSERTATION PROSPECTUS DEFENSE**

1. The prospectus defense will be held after the Ph.D. comprehensive examinations but before the end of the semester in which the comprehensive exams are taken.
2. The committee who will evaluate the prospectus will be the student's dissertation committee, not the comprehensive exam committee (in the event that there are differences between the two committees). At this point, the student *does not* need to appoint an outside member to the committee. (For information on the outside member of the committee, see below, Section X. F., Dissertation Committee.)
3. Students will follow the prospectus guidelines provided by the Graduate Committee when preparing their document (see Appendix B.)
4. The dissertation committee members (student's main advisor and three other History faculty members) will receive the prospectus at least one week in advance of the defense date.
5. The prospectus defense will last no longer than one hour. When the committee members have signed off on the prospectus the student will attain ABD status.
6. After passing the comprehensive examinations and successfully defending the prospectus, students should immediately apply for admission to candidacy for the doctorate.

#### **F. DISSERTATION COMMITTEE**

Dissertation committees in History consist of four faculty members from the Department of History plus one additional member from outside the Department of History. The outside member may come from another department at The University of Alabama, or may come from outside of the University altogether. The use of faculty from outside the Department of History or University to serve on Ph.D. comprehensive examinations requires the advance approval of the dissertation director and the Director of Graduate Studies. Students wishing to include more than one outside member on their dissertation committees will need the advance approval of the dissertation director and the Director of Graduate Studies. All dissertation committee members must be members of The University of Alabama Graduate Faculty; when a member is not (as would be the case for some Alabama faculty and for all faculty who come from outside the University), he or she must be given a temporary appointment to The University of Alabama Graduate Faculty. The dissertation director is responsible for securing this temporary appointment and should do so at least two months in advance of the dissertation defense.

#### **G. DISSERTATION CREDIT HOURS:**

The Graduate School requires each student admitted to candidacy

for the Ph.D. degree to pursue completion of the dissertation without interruption by enrolling each semester in HY 699 for at least 3 credit hours. The student must register for a total of at least 24 hours of HY 699 in addition to the required 54 hours of coursework.

**H. EIGHTEEN-MONTH DISSERTATION CHECK-IN:**

Approximately 18 months after the dissertation prospectus defense and achievement of ABD status, each Ph.D. student will meet with his/her entire dissertation committee (external member need not attend) for an eighteen-month check in. The purpose of this review is for the dissertators to discuss with their committees their research progress and the written output they have produced to that point (should be circulated to the committee at least two weeks in advance, along with a document briefly summarizing their progress and laying out a plan/timeline for completion of the remaining research and writing.) While there is no pass/fail vote to be taken at this time, the event should resemble a defense in which committee members are encouraged to interrogate the written product and ask the hard, big-picture questions the dissertator will need to think about while bringing the project to fruition. Dissertators will also have the opportunity at their check-in to ask whatever questions they have in mind and get the advice and encouragement most mid-stream dissertators need. Dissertators should work closely with their dissertation directors to schedule these meetings at the appropriate time.

**I. THE DISSERTATION DEFENSE:**

The candidate must pass an oral examination with the dissertation committee on the dissertation in accordance with the rules of the Graduate School. Two negative votes constitute failure of the examination, after which the student may repeat the defense one time only at a time interval specified by the dissertation committee.

**J. OTHER REQUIREMENTS AND REGULATIONS FOR DOCTORAL STUDENTS:**

**1. RESIDENCY**

The minimum period in which the doctoral degree can be earned is three full academic years of graduate study. The student must spend at least one full academic year in continuous residence as a full-time student in the Graduate School of The University of Alabama (or, if specifically approved by the faculty concerned, one full summer consisting of two terms, preceded by or followed by one regular semester). This requirement can be satisfied only by enrolling in coursework; dissertation or thesis research cannot be used.

**2. TIME LIMIT:**

All requirements for the doctoral degree must be completed

within 27 semesters following admission to the doctoral program.

**3. APPLICATION FOR GRADUATION:**

Application for graduation must be done during the registration period of the student's final semester.

**4. REQUESTS TO MODIFY PROGRAM:**

Any departures from the Ph.D. regulations above can be made only with the recommendation of the student's advisory committee, the permission of the Graduate Committee, and, where required, the permission of the Graduate School.

## **XI. Funding**

### **A. DEPARTMENTAL FUNDING:**

**1. DEPARTMENTAL FIRST-YEAR FELLOWSHIPS:**

The department awards a small number of one-year fellowships each year to incoming students. Each fellowship includes a stipend, full tuition coverage, and student health insurance. Students receiving these fellowships cycle onto the GTA track in subsequent years.

**2. DEPARTMENTAL DISSERTATION FELLOWSHIPS:**

The department awards a limited number of one-year departmental dissertation fellowships each year to students who are writing their dissertations. Each fellowship includes a stipend, full tuition coverage, and student health insurance.

**3. GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS**

Each year the department awards a number of Graduate Teaching Assistantships. Each GTA position includes a stipend, full tuition coverage, and student health insurance. The majority of GTAs assist faculty members teaching the department's introductory survey courses. Graduate Teaching Assistants are expected to attend all of the professor's lectures, meet with the professor and the other GTAs assigned to the course regularly, and conduct four fifty-minute discussion sections each week for up to twenty students per section, for whom the GTA has full grading responsibility. All students serving for the first time as a Graduate Teaching Assistant in the Department of History must register for HY 600: Teaching History in the Fall Semester of the first year of their GTA appointment.

Reappointment to a Graduate Teaching Assistantship position is contingent upon successful performance of GTA duties, maintaining a 3.5 GPA in the student's own coursework, and demonstrating adequate progress in the

degree program. Students who fail to show progress towards their degree will not be renewed. The Director of Graduate Studies may waive these requirements, in consultation with the Graduate Committee, at his or her discretion.

#### **4. HISTORY WRITING FELLOWS**

The Department of History employs two History Ph.D. students each year as History Writing Fellows at the University Writing Center. History Writing Fellows provide writing tutoring to students writing papers (especially History papers) throughout the University. Writing Fellows receive a stipend, full tuition coverage, and student health insurance.

### **B. GRADUATE SCHOOL FELLOWSHIPS**

#### **1. GRADUATE COUNCIL FELLOWSHIPS FOR INCOMING STUDENTS:**

The departmental Graduate Committee is able to nominate a small number of highly-qualified incoming students for consideration for one-year fellowships awarded by the University's Graduate Council. Graduate Council Fellowships are awarded in a University-wide competition and are the most prestigious awards given by the University to incoming graduate students. The fellowships come with a stipend, full tuition coverage, and student health insurance. No service to the University is required. Incoming students receiving Graduate Council Fellowships cycle onto the GTA track in subsequent years.

#### **2. GRADUATE COUNCIL FELLOWSHIPS FOR DISSERTATORS:**

The Graduate Council awards a limited number of one-year fellowships to students in the late stages of their dissertations. The departmental Graduate Committee solicits applications from Ph.D. students for these fellowships and selects a small number to nominate to the Graduate Council. Applicants are selected based on the student's overall academic record, progress toward degree, quality of dissertation research, evidence of professional development and scholarly productivity, as well as overall service to the department and the University. The awards come with a stipend, full tuition coverage, and student health insurance.

#### **3. McNAIR GRADUATE FELLOWSHIPS:**

McNair Graduate Fellowships are awarded by the Graduate School to incoming graduate students of superior ability who are either first-generation college students from low-income families or are members of groups that are traditionally underrepresented in graduate education (Hispanic, African American, Native American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander.) The departmental Graduate Committee is able to

nominate a small number of incoming students for consideration for these fellowships. McNair Graduate Fellowships are awarded for one year for M.A. students and two years for Ph.D. students, and come with a stipend, full tuition coverage, and student health insurance. Students receiving McNair Graduate Fellowships cycle onto the GTA track in subsequent years.

4. **NATIONAL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION GRADUATE FELLOWSHIPS:**  
To be eligible for these awards, the applicant must hold regular admission to the Graduate School, must have an academic record of superior quality and indicative of a high probability of success in graduate school, and be a resident of the State of Alabama. Preference is given to incoming students.
  
5. **GRADUATE CONFERENCE TRAVEL AND RESEARCH FUNDING:**  
The Department of History partners with the University's Graduate School to support student travel to present the results of their research at academic conferences and to conduct academic research. Students are eligible to apply for support for one conference trip and one research trip per academic year. Applications are solicited three times per year for travel in the Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters respectively.

## **XII. Departmental Honors and Awards:**

- A. **THE FRANK LAWRENCE OWSLEY SCHOLARSHIP:**  
Established in 1960 by friends, colleagues and students of the late Professor Owsley, this monetary award is made each year to a graduate student of superior competency in American History. The recipient must be in residence at the time the award is used. The Dean of the Graduate School awards the scholarship at the Honors Day convocation each spring to a student nominated by the History departmental faculty.
  
- B. **THE ALBERT BURTON MOORE SCHOLARSHIP:**  
Established in 1969 by friends and students of the late Dean Moore, this monetary award is made each year to an outstanding graduate student in European, Latin American, or Asian History. The recipient must be in residence at the time the award is used. The faculty of the Department of History chooses the recipient, and the scholarship is awarded at the Honors Day convocation during the spring semester each year.
  
- C. **THE COLONIAL DAMES OF AMERICA ESSAY AWARD:**  
The National Society of Colonial Dames of America in Alabama

annually makes a monetary award to the writer of an outstanding paper dealing with some aspect of the history of the colonial period, which is defined as American history up to and including the War of 1812. The paper must be at least five typed pages and must include footnotes and bibliography.

**D. THE GARY BERNARD MILLS ENDOWED DISSERTATION SUPPORT FUND:**

The Gary Bernard Mills Endowed Dissertation Support Fund was established in 2002 in memory of Gary, who was a long-time professor of the Department of History. Begun with a donation from the Mills family, the fund supports dissertation research for graduate students working in areas to which Gary's own research contributed; the pre-20<sup>th</sup> century South, with an emphasis on African-American, native American and Creole history and family life. The recipient of this award must be nominated by History departmental faculty. This award carries a monetary prize.

**E. THE CHRISTOPHER G. SWINDLE GRADUATE TEACHING AWARD:**

Named in honor of former History graduate student Christopher Swindle, this award is given annually to the most outstanding graduate student teacher in the department. Both M.A. and Ph.D. students are eligible. Nominations are made by History departmental faculty based on the student's record of teaching excellence. Students must have taught for a minimum of two semesters to be considered for the award.

**F. OUTSTANDING TEACHING BY A MASTER'S STUDENT AWARD:**

Similar to the Swindle Award, though limited to students who are currently Master's students.

**G. PHI ALPHA THETA:**

Students who have had at least nine graduate hours in History and have maintained a 3.5 grade point average or better are eligible for election to the Beta Omicron Chapter of Phi Alpha Theta, the national honor society in History.

### **XIII. Graduate Student Office**

- A.** All graduate students in the Department of History have access to the Graduate Student Office (ten Hoor 223.) The office contains each graduate student's official departmental mailbox, desks for student use (NOTE: the desks are there for everybody, and students are *not* to claim a specific desk as their own for the year!) and bookshelves that can accommodate a modest amount of students' books. Cabinets to house Graduate Teaching Assistants' materials for their courses in any given semester are also located in the office (GTAs are asked to clear out all such materials at the end of each semester.) The office also provides computers, a

refrigerator, a microwave oven, and a coffee maker that are all available for student use.

- B.** The office is intended to be a quiet, professional space for graduate students to relax and do academic work. Any conversations or other forms of behaviour that might stretch beyond the expanse of quiet and professional in terms of volume, content matter, or levels of animation should find a more appropriate home elsewhere. Students who consistently abuse this stipulation will no longer be able to use the Graduate Student Office. GTAs should also hold their office hours in the designated location rather than in the Graduate Student Office.

## Appendix A: The M.A. Exam Synthetic Essay

### I. The M.A. exam synthetic essay should respond to the following prompt:

In a synthetic essay of approximately ten pages reflecting upon course readings (from multiple classes) and the M.A. Thesis or seminar paper process, discuss which methods, historiographical fields, theoretical frameworks, specific works of history, and/or individual scholars have contributed to the development of your understanding of history and the historian's craft. Consider the following:

- Which works have most influenced your understanding of the discipline of history?
- Of what it is that historians do, and how we go about doing it?
- In what ways have these readings shaped the type of historian you would like to be?
- How have you/will you apply these observations to your own work?

Please note that while the synthetic essay is most definitely intended to be a *personal* document in the sense of students having considerable discretion in selecting the material that will make its way into the essay and writing (using the first person is just fine!) about how this material has informed their own work and understandings of our field, it is also most definitely intended to be a *professional* document displaying a quality of thought, engagement with material, and care in making (and supporting) claims fully equivalent to that expected in more traditionally formal pieces of academic writing.

Also note what the synthetic essay is NOT supposed to be:

- An intellectual autobiography that spends more than the tiniest amount of time and space telling us about your past before you arrived in our department, the plans you have for the future, or anything unrelated to the professional study of history. We recommend (please) against using the phrase "my journey" or mentioning your grandparents.
- Something that reads like an application essay written after the fact where you tell us how much your time here has meant to you and how much you've learned and grown and how great we all are and so on. We hope all of these things will be true, but this is not the forum to regale us with them.
- A piece of writing that takes the freedom to write in the first person as license to be rambling, sloppy, gratuitously informal, superficial in engagement with material, insufficiently analytical, etc.



# Appendix B: How to Write a Dissertation Prospectus

## I. The Pre-Prospectus Stage

The dissertation prospectus process can be a long one – for many people it is at least a year from the moment when you first start to think about a topic until the defense of the proposal itself.

Here are some things to think about/do to help you get to the proposal writing stage:

1. Talk regularly to your advisor and other committee members about your ideas.
2. Use seminar papers/comprehensive exam readings to help you uncover ideas for the dissertation (review and “state of the field” essays can be especially helpful).
3. Think about scholars whose style/methodological approach you enjoy and might want to use as a model for your work.
4. Read prefaces/acknowledgements/footnotes/bibliographies of books in your field to identify archives of interest and people with whom you will want to talk. Take notes and visit the websites of relevant archives.
5. Keep a weekly record of the notes, ideas, and conversations you’ve had with committee members, classmates, people you’ve met at conferences etc.
6. Share your ideas with scholars in your field in your department to make sure your study won’t be the tenth one on that subject in the last five years.
7. Is the project feasible for you? Know your own working style and design a project that works within those parameters. What constraints (family, health, financial) might limit your ability to access archives etc.?
8. In consultation with your dissertation director, put together a dissertation committee in which each member can make a unique contribution either in terms of topic area expertise, or because of particular skill sets (e.g. ability to help you conceptualize ideas/willingness to read written work carefully/methodological overlap).

## II. Writing the Prospectus

Your dissertation prospectus should be a clear, succinct statement of the problem you propose to investigate in the dissertation and your plans for executing the project. It is **NOT** the place for a comprehensive literature review. Your purpose is not to demonstrate that you know the field; your purpose is to tell your committee and any other interested party what it is you propose to do.

Length – aim for **15 pages**, with a maximum of 20 (**INCLUDING** the bibliography).

The dissertation prospectus is one of a variety of pieces of writing that will require you to make succinct statements about your project. Perhaps its greatest utility comes when writing fellowship and grant proposals, many of which will require you to cover similar ground. Writing a good dissertation prospectus can therefore be the gateway to successful funding applications. **BUT!** Don't tie yourself in knots trying to write the perfect document. Dissertation prospectuses are by definition imperfect documents because they demand that you lay out an argument before you have completed your research. Your dissertation will change as you engage your material and shifts in emphasis are normal and expected as the project develops.

Typical sections of a dissertation prospectus:

1. Introduction which provides basic context/background
2. **SHORT** literature review/historiography
3. Dissertation question/argument you will make
4. Significance of the project (otherwise known as the “so what?”)
5. Methodology/approach (this section can take various forms – describing your approach to your material [e.g. social history, cultural history, intellectual history, political history, etc.]; noting the chief methodological/theoretical influences you intend to draw upon; or offering particular themes and how they might translate into chapter topics).
6. Research Agenda/Plan – this is where you will share the archives you will visit and the documents you wish to see.
7. Chapter breakdown – give you committee a preliminary sense of how your dissertation will be structured and what kinds of topics/sources will inform each portion of the whole.
8. Estimated time-table with completion dates for research and writing each chapter.
9. Bibliography focused on the literature most pertinent to your dissertation topic.

Tips for getting started:

Don't feel obligated to sit down and write the proposal in order from start to finish. Begin with whatever section you feel most ready to complete and put the document together as you go.

Pull out relevant ideas from your notes and cut-and-paste them into each section: pay particular attention to those notes that deal with the big questions in your dissertation, the argument, major historiographical intervention, etc.

Some thought-clarifying exercises:

1. The elevator pitch: imagine you are in an elevator and only have a minute before the doors open to explain your project to everyone in the elevator. This exercise will force you to identify the most salient points about your dissertation and its argument.
2. Subject, Angle, Take: every history dissertation has a subject it addresses, an angle through which the subject is approached, and a take (the author's argument). Identifying these elements will allow you to write the various sections of your proposal.
3. Fill in the blank: Finish the following sentences
  - a. My dissertation argues that...
  - b. My dissertation poses the key question...
  - c. My dissertation innovates by...

### III. The Prospectus Defense

Talk to your committee members about their expectations for your proposal defense.

Share drafts of your proposal with everyone on your committee so you can deal with any major issues **BEFORE** the defense.

Take the opportunity during the defense to absorb as much feedback as possible and follow up on all committee suggestions as you proceed with the dissertation writing process.