



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

History MA Graduate Program Handbook

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History MA

Together, the [Graduate Student Handbook](#) and your graduate program handbook should serve as your main guide throughout your graduate career. The Graduate Student Handbook includes university information, policies, requirements and guidance for all graduate students. Your program handbook describes the details about graduate study and requirements in your specific program. While both of these handbooks are wonderful resources, know that you are always welcome to talk with faculty and staff in your program and in the Graduate College.

The central activities and missions of a university rest upon the fundamental assumption that all members of the university community conduct themselves in accordance with a strict adherence to academic and scholarly integrity. As a graduate student and member of the university community, you are expected to display the highest standards of academic and personal integrity.

Here are some resources to help you better understand your responsibilities:

- [Academic Honesty](#)
- [Academic Integrity Training](#) - Open to all graduate students at no cost
- [Plagiarism](#)

Introduction

The Master of Arts in History is designed to serve the needs of a variety of students, including those who plan to pursue a PhD, those wishing to improve their proficiency as secondary school teachers, and those who seek to enrich their intellectual lives. In addition to the general MA program, we offer a track in Public History and an Accelerated Undergraduate to Graduate track.

Students are served by departmental members whose areas of research include classical history, early Christianity, African history, American cultural and social history, local history, the South, the American Civil War, the American frontier, women and gender roles, Asian history, Middle-Eastern history, twentieth-century mass movements, Nazism and anti-Semitism in Central Europe, Latin American history, and European history, as well as other areas.

In the Master of Arts Program in History, the department offers an education that is both broad and deep, and that introduces students to the differing analyses of secondary sources and the wealth of primary sources available to them. Specifically, the Program requires 36 semester hours with no graduate credit given for any grade lower than "B-". Each student must display competency in a foreign language by passing an examination. See the Graduate Program Assistant for scheduling.

Curriculum

Please visit the [Graduate Catalog](#) to see the current curriculum for our program.

The History MA program requires a minimum of 36 credit hours beyond the bachelor's degree, including 6 credit hours of core courses, 18 credit hours in an area of specialization, and 6 credit hours of electives outside of the area of specialization. 18 hours of the 36 required must be at the 6000 level.

The MA in History provides students with the opportunity to enhance their knowledge of history, their understanding of the historians' craft and responsibilities, and their recognition of the role history plays in today's society. In addition, since all students must complete and defend a thesis before graduation, this program gives them the opportunity to develop research and writing skills.

The MA in History will prepare students for entrance into a PhD program and it will provide for the academic growth of secondary school teachers. Students interested in the professions of law, education, library sciences, public history, international affairs, and public policy, will find in history a valuable and rewarding learning experience.

More details regarding the History MA program can be found at history.cah.ucf.edu/academics/graduate-programs/.

Timeline for Completion

Coursework

Students should take HIS 6159 Historiography in their first fall semester; otherwise, the student should consult with the Graduate Director and their intended Thesis Advisor to devise a Program of Study suitable to their needs. For full time students, HIS 6095 History Capstone will be taken in the fourth semester, or in the third semester if the student takes a course in a summer session.

Thesis

After completing the Capstone course and successfully defending their thesis proposal, students should expect the research, writing, and defense of the thesis to take a minimum of three semesters.

Examination Requirements

Preliminary Examinations and the Capstone

Each candidate for the Master of Arts in History must pass written and oral examinations in three fields upon conclusion of regular course work and before beginning a thesis. Students complete these requirements by taking HIS6905 Capstone, the final course before embarking on the thesis. During the course, students complete the following:

- A thesis proposal or prospectus and annotated bibliography, completed under the supervision of their Thesis Advisor.
- Two written exams, one in each hemisphere, under the direction of their Examiners.
- An oral defense of the thesis proposal, annotated bibliography, and the written exams.

Students must have met with the Graduate Director or the Director of Public History as appropriate and secured the permission of their Thesis Advisor and Examiners prior to registering for the Capstone course.

Written Examinations

Two of the three fields of the preliminary exam are drawn from colloquia that the student has taken, one in the Eastern the other in the Western Hemisphere. Each exam should demonstrate: a knowledge of historiography in its field, based on the reading list; the ability to make reasoned observations about that historiography and/or about specific works; the ability to craft an argument in response to the question.

Thesis Proposal and Annotated Bibliography

The third field of the preliminary examination is the thesis proposal or prospectus and an accompanying annotated bibliography. The thesis proposal should be a clear and concise outline of the objectives of the thesis and the means by which the goals will be achieved, consistent with Master's level work.

The Thesis Proposal should:

- Be 5-12 pages in length
- Discuss the major problems or questions to be addressed in the thesis
- Explain the relevant historiographical debates
- Explain the available primary sources, and the methods you will use to analyze them
- Include a preliminary Chapter Outline and a tentative timeline for completing the thesis

Expect to submit several drafts of your thesis proposal to your Thesis Advisor.

The Annotated Bibliography:

- Should include both primary and secondary sources, presented in two clearly separate sections; further sub-divisions should be according to preferences within the field, as necessary.
- Give a brief description of the sources. For primary sources, this should explain how they will contribute to your work, while for secondary sources you should describe the fundamental arguments of the work.

The proposal and annotated bibliography are due the day of the written field exams. Please bring four (4) copies of each with you and give them to the Program Assistant.

Oral Defense

Approximately 10-14 days after the field exams, the student will undertake an oral defense of the exams and the thesis proposal before the Thesis Committee.

Upon successful completion of the Capstone, the student may register for thesis hours.

Thesis Requirements

The ultimate requirement of the program is the completion and defense of a Master's thesis. Historians, like other scholars in the humanities and some social sciences, traditionally are measured by their production of written work, in the form of articles and monographs; the training of historians mirrors this in the writing of seminar papers, thesis, and (for PhD programs) the dissertation. A good thesis is a well-written product of critical analysis and should demonstrate the following:

- A command of the scholarly literature in their chosen field, and the ability to locate the student's own contributions within that field.
- The ability to locate, identify, and analyze appropriate historical documents and evidence using the appropriate historical methods (such as qualitative and quantitative analysis, oral history, or visual analysis).
- The ability to provide an interpretation of historical events and change over time, including a convincing explanation of historical cause and effect.
- The relation of events to a broader historical context and the understanding of the significant trends relevant to the topic.

Furthermore, the above need to be communicated effectively both orally and in writing, according to the professional standards of the field.

Given the differences among fields of study, the precise nature and length of an acceptable thesis ranges widely and ultimately must be determined in consultation with the student's thesis adviser. As a rule of thumb, however, MA theses should not be longer than 100 pages. The thesis should be submitted in the form prescribed in the Chicago Manual of Style, latest edition, and in accordance with the guidelines provided by the College of Graduate Studies. The College of Graduate Studies has an electronic gateway for the Thesis and Dissertation process at graduate.ucf.edu/thesis-and-dissertation/ which provides information on proper formatting as well as workshops and deadlines for the entire process. You should consult that site at the beginning of the thesis

process, and revisit as dictated by your progress on the thesis. The History Department prefers the Chicago Manual of Style formatting and has obtained permission for theses to be acceptable in that format.

At the beginning of fall and spring semesters, the Thesis Editor presents workshops to inform graduate students about procedures, deadlines, and requirements associated with preparing a thesis. Attendance is strongly suggested.

Students who wish to complete their degree requirements in a given semester must take their oral defense and submit the final thesis by the dates shown in the Academic Calendar of the UCF Graduate Catalog.

Some helpful websites to visit BEFORE starting your thesis:

How To Write A Dissertation or Bedtime Reading For People Who Do Not Have Time To Sleep, an extensive set of hints and ideas on how to improve your dissertation/thesis writing, cs.purdue.edu/homes/dec/essay.dissertation.html

How to Succeed in Graduate School: A Guide for Students and Advisors, csee.umbc.edu/~mariedj/papers/advice.pdf

How to Organize your Thesis, a step-by-step guide to graduate research, written by Professor John W. Chinneck at Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada, sce.carleton.ca/faculty/chinneck/thesis.html.

Thesis Hours and Progress

Three hours of thesis credit is considered a full-time load for students who have completed the Capstone. Students are expected to be continuously enrolled (fall, spring, summer) in thesis hours.

Thesis Hours are graded Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory. Failure to submit work and/or meet with your Thesis Advisor will result in a grade of 'U' and no credit.

Students are expected to register for three (3) credits of thesis hours in the semester that they plan to defend their thesis.

Thesis Defense

The purpose of the thesis defense is to provide students with the opportunity to show the committee their command of the subject and to ensure that the thesis meets the highest professional standards. The committee's purpose is to help you to identify weaknesses and points of improvement so you will be able to polish your work before final submission and finish your degree requirements. The defense meeting allows the concerns of committee members to surface in an atmosphere where opposing views can be discussed and resolved. It also allows the student to address and respond to these concerns. We believe the thesis defense is an integral part of the learning process and we encourage a seminar atmosphere where the exchange of ideas is valued. Candidates are expected to prepare brief oral presentations after which the committee will ask questions and present comments.

The defense is open to the public and students, faculty, staff, and other interested parties are strongly encouraged to attend thesis defense sessions. Notices providing date, time, and location of such meetings must be distributed. It is the student's responsibility to arrange a date for their thesis defense with committee members. Students must then notify the Graduate Program Assistant of that date and provide an abstract (not more than one page, single spaced) of their thesis. The Graduate Program Assistant will arrange for a location and post the notice university-wide.

Submission of the Thesis

As noted above, the thesis must be written and formatted according to Departmental and University Requirements; failure to properly format the thesis may result in delay of graduation.

Project Option

Not all history takes the form of a book or an article. Museum exhibits, documentary films, and projects that improve the quality of History education are forms of publically-engaged history that require the tools of rigorous scholarship (research, analysis, and argument) but present them in a different format. Furthermore, technological innovations are transforming 'traditional' scholarship with digital tools unthinkable even ten years ago. For these reasons, students may choose to complete a project in lieu of the Master's thesis. Each project is unique, and the student is expected to work closely with the Graduate Director and Director of Public History in addition to the thesis advisor in order to craft a suitable project. While the exact shape of each project will vary, they must include written historiographical and primary source analytic components, and demonstrate the following:

- A command of the scholarly literature in their chosen field, and the ability to locate the student's own contributions within that field.
- The ability to locate, identify, and analyze appropriate historical documents and evidence using the appropriate historical methods (such as qualitative and quantitative analysis, oral history, or visual analysis).
- The ability to provide an interpretation of historical events and change over time, including a convincing explanation of historical cause and effect.
- The relation of events to a broader historical context and the understanding of the significant trends relevant to the topic.

University Dissertation Requirements

The College of Graduate Studies [Thesis and Dissertation page](#) contains information on the university's requirements for dissertation formatting, format review, defenses, final submission, and more. A step-by-step completion guide is also available on [Thesis and Dissertation Services](#) Site.

All university deadlines are listed in the [Academic Calendar](#). Your program or college may have other earlier deadlines; please check with your program and college staff for additional deadlines.

The following requirements must be met by dissertation students in their final term:

- Submit a properly formatted file for initial format review by the format review deadline
- Submit the Thesis and Dissertation Release Option form well before the defense
- Defend by the defense deadline
- Receive format approval (if not granted upon initial review)
- Submit signed approval form by final submission deadline
- Submit final dissertation document by final submission deadline

Students must format their dissertation according to the standards outlined in [Thesis and Dissertation Webcourse](#). Formatting questions or issues can be submitted to the Format Help page in the [Thesis and Dissertation Services](#) site. Format reviews and final submission must be completed in the [Thesis and Dissertation Services](#) site. The Dissertation Approval Form is also available in the Thesis and Dissertation Services site.

The College of Graduate Studies offers several thesis and dissertation [Workshops](#) each term. Students are highly encouraged to attend these workshops early in the dissertation process to fully understand the above policies and procedures.

The College of Graduate Studies thesis and dissertation office is best reached by email at editor@ucf.edu.

Graduate Research

For information on graduate research for the discipline including faculty listing and research interest, visit the faculty and staff page on the History Department website.

Financial Support

For information regarding financial support for graduate students visit the [Financial Assistance for Graduate Students webpage](#) on the History Department website.

Fellowships

For details about graduate fellowships, visit the [College of Graduate Studies website](#).

Assistantships

While pursuing graduate studies, graduate students are sometimes hired on assistantships in the history department to teach, conduct research, or perform other tasks for the university. Graduate students may be employed as Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs), Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs), or Graduate Assistants (GAs). For eligibility, students must be accepted as a graduate student in our program and enroll full-time. To be considered full-time, graduate students must be enrolled for at least 9 hours in fall and spring semesters and 6 hours in summer semester. Applications are due in the spring semester; applications and an information session will be announced in January. Assistants are not faculty and are not able to receive faculty parking privileges or faculty ID cards.

Graduate Teaching Assistants

GTAs may be employed as classroom teachers, co-teachers or classroom assistants, graders, lab assistants, or other roles directly related to classroom instruction.

Graduate Research Assistants

GRAs may be employed to assist professors with research activities, participate in research efforts in university institutes and centers or in off-campus projects affiliated with the university, or perform other research-related duties. GRAs are typically supported by grants and contracts but may also be supported by departmental funds.

Tuition Waivers

Graduate students who are employed as a graduate assistant or receiving a fellowship may also receive tuition support as part of their financial package. Usually, tuition support pays only matriculation and nonresident fees (charges for course hours) and does not pay local fees (health fee, etc.). Students should contact the history department if they have questions about the tuition support that will be provided.

Graduate Student Associations

Phi Alpha Theta Founded in 1921, Phi Alpha Theta is the international history honors society. The mission of Phi Alpha Theta is to promote the study of history through encouragement of research, good teaching, publication, and the exchange of learning and ideas among historians.

Organized in 1921, it now has several hundred chapters throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, and the Philippine Islands. Its objective is to promote the study of history by encouraging research, good teaching, publication, and the exchange of learning and thought among historians. It seeks to bring students, teachers, and

writers of history together both intellectually and socially, and it encourages and assists historical research and publication by its members.

The membership of Phi Alpha Theta is composed of students and professors who have been elected on the basis of excellence in the study and writing of history. Incoming UCF graduate students who are already members are urged to acquaint themselves with the UCF Alpha Gamma Chi Chapter officers and participate in the chapter's activities. Non-members are encouraged to join the society.

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) is UCF's graduate organization committed to enrich graduate students' personal, educational and professional experience. To learn more or get involved, please visit [facebook.com/groups/UCFgsa/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/UCFgsa/).

Professional Development

A Style Guide is available on the [Resources](#) webpage of the History Department. Also on this webpage are writing resources including how to write a book review, peer review, historiography paper and how to publish.

Pathways to Success Workshops

Coordinated by the College of Graduate Studies, the Pathways to Success program offers the following free development opportunities for graduate students including workshops in Academic Integrity, Graduate Grantsmanship, Graduate Teaching, Personal Development, Professional Development, and Research. For more information and how to register, please visit graduate.ucf.edu/pathways-to-success/.

Preparing Tomorrow's Faculty Program

This certificate program (12-weeks) consists of group and individualized instruction by Faculty Center staff and experienced UCF professors. Textbooks and materials are provided.

Professional Partnerships

Florida Historical Society

The Florida Historical Society is the only statewide historical society in the Sunshine State. Originally founded in St. Augustine, Florida in 1856, the Society was reorganized in 1902 and began holding an annual meeting for the purpose of providing a forum for professional historians and laypersons interested in Florida history. In 2002, the Society celebrated its 100th annual meeting in historic Mt. Dora, Florida.

Orange County Regional History Center

The Orange County Regional History Center provides a museum experience that brings to life the best of the Sunshine State while highlighting history and culture from around the country. Located in the heart of downtown Orlando in the beautifully restored five-story 1927 Orange County Courthouse, The History Center is home to the extensive collections of the Historical Society of Central Florida, Inc. With an exciting roster of ever-changing exhibits on display and traveling exhibits on loan from other facilities, The History Center is one of Central Florida's premier attractions. From guided tours and evening lectures to camps and interactive children's programs, learning is fun for all ages. History Center members can take advantage of a number of special value-added benefits, including unlimited admission, discounts and exclusive event opportunities. The stately facility is also available for event rentals, ranging from unparalleled conferences to unforgettable weddings. For more information, please visit thehistorycenter.org.

Internship Opportunities

Contact the department's Internship Coordinator for current opportunities and to apply for an internship.

Job Search

Opportunities in the Field

Why should I go to a graduate program in history?

First of all, teaching young adults either in college or in community schools requires a graduate degree. In some fields, a graduate degree is a basic standard. The standard requirement for managerial positions in museums, historical associations and archives is a graduate degree in history or other relevant fields. Many organizations provide a better salary to an employee who has a graduate degree. If you are considering continuing towards a doctorate, the master's program will prepare you to meet the standards of major research universities.

What kinds of skills will I obtain from studying history?

History provides you with all the benefits of a liberal arts degree. Liberal arts education emphasizes critical thinking and builds skills which can be applied to a multitude of careers. First, a degree in history will show to a potential employer that you have the confidence, skills, and maturity to earn a graduate college degree. It will suggest that you have studied and adapted to a variety of topics rather than focusing on a narrow skills area. It will also show that you are able to think more globally than many other job applicants.

But, what practical skills can I gain with a history degree that I can apply to a job and that I can mention in my resume?

You can enhance the applicability of history for your career preparation if you take advantage of many opportunities offered at UCF. Building on your graduate teaching and research assistantship, you may gain experience in formal and non-classroom education. Talking to your teachers about your areas of interest can help you focus on topics relevant to your future career. Depending on your concentration, you can obtain knowledge in areas such as women's studies, Russian studies, and public presentation. You will develop awareness on issues of ethics, copyright laws and freedom of information. Having completed your degree will show that you can:

- work independently
- research, evaluate, and synthesize large amounts of information
- write convincing reports
- make oral presentations

You will also have knowledge of a second language. History is about making connections. It requires analysis, perceptiveness, and accuracy. All of these skills are appreciated in the professional job market.

What are some specific examples of occupations pursued by history graduates?

Most history graduates are teachers in public and private schools, in universities, and in training programs. Other historians work as interpreters or educators in museums, libraries, national parks and historical sites. These roles require an understanding of history and culture, making public presentations, and a strong ability to communicate academic knowledge in an engaging way. Teachers also need to adapt material to different levels of student ability. They need to be able to assist others in developing critical thinking skills.

Other opportunities exist as interviewers, surveyors, and research assistants in businesses, documentary projects, film and TV productions, education and public policy programs. Some historians might work for not-for-profit organizations in advocacy roles.

Historians are a majority among curators, collection managers and archivists. They collect, study, and interpret unpublished documents, photographs and three-dimensional objects. This occupation requires an understanding of the historical context in which the records were created, the uses for which they were intended, their relationships to other sources, and their possible research use. They work in museums, archives, libraries and historical associations.

Forms

- [College of Graduate Studies Forms and References](#)
A complete listing of general forms and references for graduate students, with direct links, may be found here.
- [Graduate Petition Form](#)
When unusual situations arise, petitions for exceptions to policy may be requested by the student. Depending on the type of appeal, the student should contact his/her program adviser to begin the petition process.
- [Traveling Scholar Form](#)
If a student would like to take advantage of special resources available on another campus but not available on the home campus; for example, special course offerings, research opportunities, unique laboratories and library collections, this form must be completed and approved.

Useful Links

- [History Website](#)
- [College of Arts and Humanities Website](#)
- [College of Graduate Studies](#)
- [Academic Calendar](#)
- [Bookstore](#)
- [Campus Map](#)
- [Counseling Center](#)
- [Financial Assistance](#)
- [Golden Rule Student Handbook](#)
- [Graduate Catalog](#)
- [Graduate Student Association](#)
- [Graduate Student Center](#)
- [History Department Useful Links](#)
- [Housing and Residence Life](#)
- [Housing, off campus](#)
- [Knights Email](#)
- [Library](#)
- [NID Help](#)
- [Pathways to Success](#)
- [Recreation and Wellness Center](#)
- [Shuttles Parking Services](#)
- [Student Health Services](#)
- [Thesis and Dissertation \(ETD\)](#)
- [UCF Global](#)
- [University Writing Center](#)

Grad Faculty

Asterisk = has previous committee experience, which qualifies the person to serve as vice chair

Barton, Simon *

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Research interests: History of U.S. South, history of the gilded age and progressive era, agricultural and rural history, environmental history, economic history

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Research interests: Latin America, Caribbean, Cuba, Hispanics in the US.

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Research interests: Early American history, Native American history, North American borderlands Florida history

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