

Draft Ideas for Graduate Curricular Revisions 2008

Rationale

A canvas of history faculty regarding the state of our graduate program in the Fall of 2005, subsequent follow-up conversations, and the History Department's decennial review in 2006-7 generated a range of critiques and suggestions. Most widely voiced were concerns about program consistency, program coherence, graduate student experience, and faculty compensation. Graduate student funding is also a matter of general consternation but will not be addressed here.

Many colleagues expressed the concern that our expectations and requirements (or how they are fulfilled) varied widely across the program, from advisor to advisor and student to student, and many encouraged greater clarity and consistency. These recommendations attempt to achieve this clarity and consistency through curricular revisions. Advisors' responsibilities should be clearer, enabling more effective advising and a greater sense of the graduate program as a shared departmental responsibility.

Many recommended that we infuse our graduate teaching with a more clearly articulated purpose, coherence, and rigor. The graduate program should be a focal point of intellectual vitality and community in the department. These recommendations are designed to forge such coherence and intellectual life through revised requirements and curriculum. These in turn should improve the quality of graduate student instruction and broaden students' exposure to historical fields, approaches, and methods, while bringing them (and faculty) together more regularly and intensively in the classroom. While pursuing individual research interests in their various fields, students might be trained in a more consistent fashion, fulfilling a more clearly defined set of general expectations we have for advanced students of history.

Many colleagues rightly note that the rewards and burdens of graduate teaching are unequally shared. Virtually all graduate teaching is uncompensated, performed out-of-load. This reality can make graduate teaching unattractive or burdensome to faculty. It can also affect the quality of instruction graduate students receive. These recommendations attempt to provide greater rewards—material as well as intellectual—by expanding the number of graduate courses offered by history faculty on an in-load basis. Of course, **the burdens and rewards of graduate teaching will always be unequal to some extent, but we hope that these revisions can advance equity and promote transparency.** The shift in graduate requirements would bring graduate students into these courses, allowing for greater consistency (and creativity) in course planning as well as greater participation among faculty in graduate teaching.

Finally, we hope that these recommendations, if implemented in some form, might have other beneficial effects, among them assuring graduate students' timely progress toward their degrees, improving the quality of our graduate students and aiding in graduate student recruitment, and enhancing the quality of teaching by our graduate students, in the short term as GTFs, and eventually as teachers in high schools, colleges, and universities.

Note that, if adopted, these new requirements would be mandatory only for newly-admitted graduate students. Current graduate students would have the option of adopting them or fulfilling the requirements in existence when they were admitted.

Objectives of the Graduate Program in History

The graduate program in history is designed to promote advanced historical study of a particular field and the achievement of sufficient mastery to teach and to undertake original research and scholarly writing in that field. Essential to this objective is study and training in historiography and historical research methods (and in many cases additional languages). In addition to (and in support of) work in historical methods and particular fields, students are expected to develop broader understanding of related fields and themes. These provide context and comparisons for major field study and ideally advance long-term professional goals—particularly the ability to teach broadly, beyond one’s research specialty.

The graduate program prepares students for a variety of professional objectives—further advanced historical study; secondary, college, or university teaching; and public history enterprises—by teaching modes of historical thinking, various historical fields and themes, research methods, historical writing, pedagogy, and professional standards.

While individual students define their areas and fields of study with the guidance and approval of advisors, graduate study is a cooperative venture enhanced by collaboration with fellow graduate students, the history faculty, and the university community generally. The history department is a community. Graduate students play a vital role in that community, participating in and promoting its intellectual vitality.

Expanded Graduate Course Offerings

We propose the addition of approximately 4 graduate courses (for a total of 7) per academic year. These would include a combination of courses numbered 607 and 608, with the latter newly defined in ways that serve the needs of graduate students and allow a broader range of faculty to teach them. To maximize the number of colloquia and seminars, which would best serve all our graduate students, we propose eliminating History 613 and transforming History 614 into a 1 or 2 credit, P/NP course for first year graduate students. History 615 (or a History 608 equivalent) would perform many of the functions of History 613 (see description below); in History 614 students would plan and host the History Graduate Student Conference in Spring term. The conference itself could be opened to include papers from any history graduate student, not only those enrolled in HIST 614.

Revision of History Fields

The fields of study would remain unchanged for M.A. students. But we propose revising the major and minor fields for Ph.D. students, substituting the following system:

Ph.D. students would prepare themselves in three fields as follows:

- (1) a major research field: a specific, more narrowly-defined field (typically the area of one’s dissertation, as conventionally understood);
- (2) a major teaching field: a general, more broadly-defined field, which encompasses the research field but is more extensive (typically a teaching field as conventionally understood in the profession); and

- (3) a minor thematic, methodological, or comparative field (typically the theme, method, or comparison to be advanced in the dissertation).

So, for example, a student of modern France might take a major research field in modern France, a major teaching field in modern Europe, and a minor thematic field in, say, gender history, intellectual history, or military history. Or a student in the China field might take a major research field in Republican China, a teaching field in Modern China, and a minor field in Japan.

Ph.D. students would be required to take two courses in their thematic field, but there would be no syllabus or bibliographic essay requirement, as there is currently for a student's Ph.D. minor field. Instead, students would be examined in their three fields in their Ph.D. oral comprehensive exams, ideally with one faculty member of the exam committee responsible for each field.

This revision would rationalize, streamline, and regularize students' completion of their field preparations. Currently there is considerable variation among students by field and confusion in how we evaluate students' preparation in their fields. In some cases, students pass their minor fields solely through their coursework and syllabus or bibliographical essay projects. This is common for U.S. history students, for example, whose Ph.D. oral exams typically concentrate exclusively on their major field. On the other hand, students in other fields (e.g., medieval Europe) typically are not examined exclusively in their major field during their Ph.D. oral exams but are, instead, examined more broadly, often in the areas of their minor field or beyond. Unlike U.S. history students, students in some other fields are unable to assemble oral comprehensive examination committees drawn only from their major field.

The revised fields of study would render Ph.D. students' field preparation and examination more uniform and equitable across fields and better prepare students for the profession. The revision would also hasten students' progress toward their orals and, ultimately, their dissertation work and degrees.

Major Fields

History graduate students can elect to study any of the currently specified fields listed below as M.A. and Ph.D. major fields (these will require some revision, but at a later date):

Ancient History
 Medieval Europe
 Early Modern Europe, 1450-1815¹
 Modern Europe, 1789-present²
 Russia
 China
 Japan
 Southeast Asia
 Latin America
 Africa
 Colonial America and the United States
 Special Field³

¹Students may choose one or two subdivisions of this field: Renaissance and Reformation, 1350-1650, or Early Modern Europe, 1650-1815.

²Students may define this as Britain and Empire since 1450.

³Special field must be approved by the Director of Graduate Study.

Minor fields and special fields must be defined in consultation and with the approval of advisors and the Director of Graduate Study.

Revised M.A. Requirements

612 Historical Methods

614 History Conference (1 or 2 credit, P/NP), taken in Spring of first year.

615 (Field Readings with advisor) or **608** (if in field and equivalent to Field Readings), completed in the first two quarters of the first year

Two seminars (507 or 607), one of which must be completed in the first year

Two colloquia (608; or 508, with permission)

Masters students are required to take 30 graded graduate-level credits in history.

The total credits required for the M.A. remains 45.

Students completing the Thesis Option may enroll in a maximum of 10 Thesis Credits (**503**), usually in the winter and spring of their second year. Students choosing the Two-Paper Option may register for 5 credits of Research (**601**), usually in either winter or spring of their second year.

Language requirements

All M.A. students must demonstrate proficiency in at least one foreign language. Advisors must approve the choice of language. M.A. students whose thesis or research papers require work in foreign language sources are strongly urged to complete this requirement by the end of the first year of study. Advisors may set higher standards and/or include additional languages in which students must demonstrate competence. These standards should be established at the time a faculty accepts a graduate student and written on the Plan of Study form submitted at the end of the first quarter of the program.

Revised Ph.D. Requirements

These proposed requirements assume (and require) that those students admitted on the B.A. to Ph.D. track will complete the program's M.A. requirements as they progress toward their Ph.D. degrees. Generally, all incoming Ph.D. students (who enter with an M.A.) will be expected to have completed the equivalent of our M.A. program. In some case, Ph.D. students might be admitted without having fulfilled some of these prerequisites, for example a course equivalent to History 612. If this is the case, Ph.D. students will be required to take History 612 and 614.

Note: these revisions would eliminate the minor field syllabus or bibliographical essay requirement as well as the major field syllabus requirement.

[**612 and 614**, if an entering Ph.D. student has not completed an equivalent course.]

615 (Field Readings with advisor) or **608** (if in field and equivalent to Field Readings), to be completed in the first year

One seminar (507 or 607), completed in the first year

Two colloquia (608)

Two minor (thematic/comparative) field courses in History (500 or 600-level) (or in a non-History course with approval).

One additional course (500- or 600-level) in History or another field

All Ph.D. students should be required to take two courses focusing on material outside of their country/region of geographic specialization.

Note: There is no total credit requirement for the Ph.D.; rather the Graduate School stipulates both a minimum credit and a residency requirement.

Language requirements

All Ph.D. students must demonstrate proficiency in at least one foreign language. Advisors must approve the choice of language. The language requirements of Ph.D. students, however, will vary according to field. Students admitted into the Ph.D. program should have the language preparation required to enable historical work in their field. Some additional language study might be required by individual advisors as an essential part of a student's Ph.D. work.

Successful passage of **Oral Comprehensive Examination.**

As a general rule, Ph.D. students should take their comprehensive exam in the Winter quarter of their second year, or Spring quarter at the latest. (B.A. to Ph.D. students should take their oral comprehensives in their third year.)

Students may, but are not required, to register for **History 618** to prepare for their comprehensive examinations with the appropriate faculty.

The **Dissertation Prospectus** must be defended no later than the quarter subsequent to successful passage of the Oral Comprehensive Exam.

Students may, but are not required, to register for **History 619** to prepare their dissertation prospectus with the appropriate faculty.

Students should have tentatively identified a dissertation topic by the end of their first year; at that time they must file the Tentative Dissertation Topic Form with the Director of Graduate Studies.

Graduate Course Descriptions

HIST 607 Seminar (5). A graduate-student centered research seminar, sometimes emphasizing training in specific methodologies, in which students write a research paper based on primary sources. This course would be taught in-load.

While the department offers a range of 407/507 courses that should adequately meet graduate students needs and interests, we also see the need for a graduate-only seminar that might offer deeper or more explicit engagement with research methods. A 607 offered annually should be shaped by a particular topic that will draw in a variety of students; History 607 might fruitfully follow on, or be linked to, a 608 offered in the previous term. Given the availability of History 507s, and the limited number of graduate-only course we can offer, for now History 607 might be offered infrequently.

HIST 608 Colloquium (5). We envision History 608 taking one of two forms: (1) A thematic readings colloquium oriented around a specific theme or methodological approach to historical enquiry; or (2) A historiographical readings colloquium emphasizing breadth, designed to introduce students to a range of major monographs in a geographically and chronologically defined field. This course would be taught in-load.

1. Thematic: With several offered annually, these readings courses should engage specific themes, methods, or topics, both through colloquium discussion and in writing. We particularly encourage subjects that are explicitly comparative and thus designed to appeal to graduates students specializing in various geographic and chronological subfields.
2. Historiographical: Taking as a model recent practice among the Europeanists, the basic format might be one-book-per-week (or the equivalent), engaging a range of topics and methodologies, with weekly reaction papers. The interpretation of a “geographically and chronologically defined field” can and should vary a great deal—depending upon the instructor and the potential interest among graduate students. (For instance, one year it might be “China”, another year “Modern China,” another time “modern East Asia,” and so on.)

HIST 614 History Graduate Student Conference (1 or 2 credits, P/NP). Colloquium for first-year graduate students to plan and host the History Graduate Student Conference in the Spring.

This course would meet in the Spring to consolidate the work of first-year students (readings, research, and writing), to inform them about the historical profession’s protocols and standards, and especially to plan, coordinate, and host the History Graduate Student Conference.

HIST 615 Field Readings (5). Graduate readings with the student’s primary/permanent advisor, designed to ground students in the major works and issues of their chosen field. History 608 may be substituted for History 615 (with permission) if the former course is in the student’s major field.

This course is explicitly intended to fulfill the field readings function of History 613, as well as to insure substantive contact of students with their advisors at an early stage of the program; it is designed to give training in a student’s chosen major field.

History 615 should regularly count for five credits. As a 600-level course, the reading should be intensive. A concrete syllabus for the course, including a reading list and requiring some form of written work, should be agreed upon before the start of the quarter and should be filed with the Director of Graduate Study. The length, scope, and purpose of the reading list remains at the discretion of the advisor (although the DGS may make suggestions to insure equity across the program).

Ideally once the syllabus is established, the course might be opened to other graduate students, with the permission of the instructor. Such enrollment might be for fewer

than five credits, as appropriate and at the discretion of the instructor. Note: this course would *not* normally be taught in-load.

HIST 618 Comprehensive Exam Preparation (5). Independent readings with faculty to discuss a predetermined readings list in preparation for Ph.D. comprehensive exams. R (3) with different faculty.

This course is intended to focus students on the reading necessary to pass their comprehensive oral examinations, and give them the opportunity to meet regularly with their faculty examiners to discuss the material. Enrollment and completion of these courses will also enable the Director of Graduate Study to monitor students' progress toward their comprehensive exam. History 618 is not, however, required. Students might prefer the flexibility of building comprehensive lists upon work in other courses, such as History 608 or 615, or through 500-level courses.

Note: the new course number is meant to differentiate this course from HIST 605: Reading and Conference, as conventionally taught. It would be possible, however, to use HIST 605 temporarily to achieve the same purpose.

HIST 619 Dissertation Prospectus (5). Independent research under the direction of the student's advisor with the specific aim of producing a defensible dissertation prospectus.

The aim here is to make clear to graduate students that, having completed all course requirements and comprehensives, it is imperative as well as feasible to write and defend a dissertation within one quarter (or over the summer). Students who need to travel to archives to begin their research will need to do so as soon as possible. Moreover, timely completion of the prospectus—which is, after all, simply a prospectus and not a dissertation in itself—is crucial to timely completion of the Ph.D., especially given current funding limits. Students who have not submitted a prospectus for defense (even in cases where scheduling the defense must be delayed beyond the official end of the quarter) will receive an Incomplete—to be cleared as soon as possible.



Typical Graduate Course Scheduling

Fall	Winter	Spring
History 612 (5 credits)	History 608 (5)	History 608 (5) [or 607 (5)]
History 507s (5)	History 608 (5)	History 608 (5)
History 608 (5)	History 507s (5)	History 507s (5)
History 608 (5)	History 615s (1-5 credits)	History 614: Graduate
History 615s (1-5 credits)		Student Conference (1 or 2)

This schedule would require 7 graduate courses per year (plus a one- or two-credit History 614), a net increase of 4. Note that History 615 is calculated as out-of-load teaching.

Typical Progress through the M.A. Program

First Year

Fall	Winter	Spring
History 612 History 615 or 608 [language]	History 608 or 615 History 507 [language]	History 507 or 607 History 614 Open [language—complete]

Second Year

Fall	Winter	Spring
History 608 Open	History 503 or 601 Open	Papers/Thesis Defense Open

Typical Progress through the Ph.D. Program (entering with M.A.)

First Year

Fall	Winter	Spring
[History 612, if necessary] History 608 History 615 (or 608)	History 608 (or 615) Minor field course	[History 614, if necessary] Minor field course OR additional elective course History 607 or 507

Second Year

Fall	Winter	Spring
Minor field course OR additional elective course History 618	Open History 618 Comprehensive exam	Open History 619 Prospectus Defense

Typical Progress through the Ph.D. Program (B.A. to Ph.D.)

First Year

Fall	Winter	Spring
History 612 History 615 or 608 [language]	History 608 or 615 History 507 [language]	History 614 History 608 History 607 [language—complete]

Second Year

Fall	Winter	Spring
History 608 Minor field course	Open/History 503 or 601 Minor field course	History 607 Additional elective course Papers/Thesis defense

Third Year

Fall	Winter	Spring
History 608 History 618	Open History 619 Comprehensive exam	Open Dissertation work Prospectus Defense

