

## A GUIDE TO THE PROGRAM OF MASTER OF ARTS IN HISTORY AT OAKLAND UNIVERSITY

The policies outlined in this guide are effective for students entering the program in the fall of 2008 and after. Students should also read the Oakland University Graduate Catalog for university policies.

### **ADMISSION TO THE PROGRAM**

Students may be admitted at four different times: fall semester, winter semester, spring or summer session.

Admission to the Master of Arts program in history is selective. The department will consider applicants who hold the degree of bachelor's degree in history from a regionally accredited institution, although the department reserves the right to waive the requirement of a history degree for students with outstanding undergraduate records. In addition, the applicant's credentials, including transcripts and letters of recommendation, must give evidence of academic distinction. Of the letters of recommendation, at least one should be from the applicant's current or former professor. The application materials must also include a detailed statement of purpose or justification for entering the program, and an academic writing sample (preferably a history research paper). A grade-point average of 3.50 (on a 4.00) scale in undergraduate history courses and a GPA of 3.20 in all undergraduate work will ordinarily be considered the minimum standards for admission.

Students of superior promise but with deficient preparation in history may be admitted on condition of completing additional undergraduate history courses. The department reserves the right to waive any of its requirements in exceptional circumstances with the concurrence of Graduate Study and Lifelong Learning.

### **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

This program offers training in the discipline of history beyond the bachelor of arts degree. Students are expected to develop advanced skills in historical research, a solid familiarity with historiography and theories of history, and competence in their chosen fields of specialty.

Each student has a faculty adviser, who is the department's graduate coordinator. Upon admission to the program, and before registering for classes, the student must submit to

the adviser a plan of study, which also designates the student's major field. Upon successful completion of three or four graduate courses (12–16 credits), the student must select a mentor and co-mentor, who are faculty members who supervise the student's work in his or her major field. The student's selection of the mentor and co-mentor is subject to those faculty members' consent (explained further below).

The program requires that the student complete a total of 38 graduate credits in history, at least 20 of which must be in the student's major field. In special cases, a student may petition the department to substitute up to 12 graduate credits in related fields for history credit. All students must complete at least one colloquium (HST 610) in addition to two research seminars (HST 680), or two research tutorials (HST 681), or one each of HST 680 and 681. Any of these history courses may count towards the required 20 credits in the student's major field. The program culminates in either (1) written and oral field examinations or (2) a thesis and an oral examination.

After the completion of at least 12 credits, but not more than 16, the student must schedule a meeting with the adviser. (See the section, "Meetings with the Faculty Adviser, Mentor, and Co-Mentor," below.) To continue in the program, the student must have an *overall* grade point average of at least 3.4. A satisfactory course grade for a graduate student is a 3.6 or above; a grade of 3.5 (B+) is considered marginal. (See also the section "Dismissal from the Program and Academic Probation" below.)

A student who meets the minimum GPA requirement will indicate to the adviser whether he or she intends to complete the thesis requirement or the field examination, and the student will be permitted to submit to the adviser the names of his or her mentor and co-mentor. Faculty members are not obliged to serve as mentors and co-mentors. Thus students should regard their first courses in the program as opportunities to demonstrate their academic skills to their prospective mentors and co-mentors, and to develop working relationships with them. Upon the completion of 24 credits, the student will meet with the mentor, co-mentor, and adviser to assess the student's progress in the program.

A student who elects to write a thesis will provide, preferably upon completion of 24 credits, a detailed thesis prospectus to the mentor, co-mentor, and adviser. The student will take research seminars and/or tutorials in his or her major field as thesis-writing courses. Upon the completion of the thesis draft, the student will arrange an oral thesis examination with the mentor and co-mentor in the last semester of the student's program. In that semester, the student must register for HST 600, Field or Thesis Examination (2 credits), for which permission from the graduate adviser is required.

A student who does not elect to write a thesis will instead take written and oral examinations in his or her major field. In preparation for the examination, the student will take the required research seminars or tutorials (HST 680 and 681), and may also take directed readings courses (HST 591). In consultation with the mentor and co-mentor, the student will schedule the examinations for the last semester of the student's program.

In that semester, the student must register for HST 600, Field or Thesis Examination (2 credits), after receiving permission to do so from the graduate adviser.

## **PROGRAM COMPONENTS AND OPTIONS**

### **The Plan of Study**

Upon admission to the program, each student will meet with the faculty adviser and complete the Graduate Plan of Study form (on file in the office of the Department of History). This identifies the student's major field, which can be African, Asian, European, Latin American, or United States history. The plan of study also indicates courses that the student intends to take and expresses the student's intention of either writing a thesis or taking field examinations. Aspects of the plan of study can be modified as the student progresses through the program. The adviser will place the completed Graduate Plan of Study form in the student's file and send a copy of it to the office of Graduate Study and Lifelong Learning.

### **Courses in the Major Field**

The student is required to take at least 20 credits of course work in the major field that he or she designates in the plan of study. Any history course in the major field that is numbered 500 or above will be counted toward the 20 credits. Some courses have both 300-level and 500-level designations (so-called "slash courses:" 3xx/5xx). This designation indicates that the course has both undergraduate and graduate versions, and typically undergraduates and graduates will attend the same lecture classes. The requirements for graduate students in slash courses appear in the instructors' syllabi. Students may also receive credit for coursework in the major field by taking HST 591, Directed Readings. HST 591 requires the consent of the professor. As indicated above, credits in HST 610, HST 680, and 681 may also be applied toward the required 20 credits in the major field.

### **Colloquium in History, HST 610**

All candidates for the MA are required to take HST 610, and only graduate students are permitted to take the course. As a colloquium, the course requires intensive reading and discussion of a significant period or topic in history. Students present to the class the results of their study for group discussion. The topic of each HST 610 class differs from semester to semester. "The Department of History Advising Memo" for each semester indicates whether HST 610 will be taught in that semester and what the colloquium's topic will be.

Note that HST 610 might never be taught in some major fields. Therefore, students should anticipate the possibility that they will have to take a course outside their specific areas of interest and that credit for HST 610 *might* not be applied toward the required 20 credits in the major field. Students are allowed to take HST 610 more than once, provided that the content of each 610 is different from the other.

### **HST 680 and 681**

All candidates for the master's degree must complete two research tutorials (HST 681) or two research seminars (HST 680), or one of each. HST 680/681 may be taken as a sequence of two courses to provide students with the opportunity to research and write their theses, or alternatively to prepare for their written and oral field examinations.

In past practice, the student has been awarded a grade of P (progress) upon successful completion of each of two semesters of HST 680/681. On completing either the second HST 680/681 or the written and oral exams, the student has been awarded numerical grades for the two HST 680/681 courses. To do so, the instructor has submitted a Change of Grade form; however, there is no standard departmental procedure for determining when to assign the grades for HST 680/681. Professors may submit numerical grades at the end of the semester if they so wish. All grades of P or I (incomplete) must be replaced with numerical grades before a student is allowed to graduate.

HST 680, Research Seminar, is taught when the department perceives that there is a sufficient number of students interested in the same topic to merit offering a seminar. Consequently, HST 680 is not taught every semester, and students typically complete their research requirements by taking HST 681 twice. To take HST 681, the student approaches a professor and asks him or her to supervise the course. The professor's consent is required for the student to register for the course.

### **The Thesis Option**

The thesis is a research paper, substantially based on primary sources, that demonstrates the student's solid knowledge of the historiography of the paper's topic in addition to well-developed research and writing skills. The length of the thesis will be determined in consultations between the student, the mentor and co-mentor. It will be documented according to *The Chicago Manual of Style* and must conform to the university's formatting standards, which are found in "Guide to the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations" (available on line at [www.oakland.edu/grad](http://www.oakland.edu/grad)).

A student who elects to write a thesis in partial fulfillment of the program's requirements will produce the thesis under the supervision of his or her mentor, who serves as primary reader, supervisor, and examiner for the thesis and oral examination. In addition, the student will designate a co-mentor, also subject to that faculty member's consent. The co-mentor will be the secondary reader, supervisor, and examiner for the thesis and oral thesis examination. The student must submit a detailed thesis prospectus to the mentor, co-mentor, and graduate adviser, preferably upon completing 24 credits of course work.

HST 680/681 courses provide opportunities to the student to work on his or her thesis in a two-semester project. The requirements for the courses will be determined by the supervising professor, who typically is the student's mentor or co-mentor. (See the section on HST 680/681 above for grading procedures.) It is not necessarily the case that the thesis will be completed by the end of the second HST 680/681. It is also not uncommon for students to continue to work on their theses while they are not registered for classes.

When the thesis is complete or nearly complete, as assessed by the mentor and co-mentor, the student may request permission from the graduate adviser to register for HST 600, Thesis Examination. (See the section on HST 600 below). The university requires that the thesis exam be completed at least 6 weeks prior to the end of the semester.

The student must deliver three copies of the completed thesis to the office of Graduate Study and Lifelong Learning in O'Dowd 520 and receive approval of the format by the date stated in the "Schedule of Classes" and at [www.oakland.edu/grad](http://www.oakland.edu/grad) for the term in which the student expects to graduate.

### **Field Examination Option**

A student who does not elect to write a thesis will take oral and written field examinations. In preparation, the student must take at least one of the two 680/681 courses within his or her major field. He or she must register for HST 600 Field or Thesis Examination in the last semester of the program to take the examinations.

### **HST 600, Field or Thesis Examination**

A student who does not elect to write a thesis will take oral and written field examinations within the framework of HST 600, for which he or she will register in the last semester of the program. Registration in HST 600 requires the consent of the graduate adviser. The mentor and co-mentor, in consultation with the student, will compile a list of readings constituting the material on which the student will be tested. The student will be allowed one week to write take-home questions in response to the mentor's and co-mentor's questions about the assigned readings; if the essays are acceptable, the mentor and co-mentor will test the student in a one-hour oral examination. The student will schedule the oral and written examinations in consultation with the mentor and co-mentor. Other faculty members may attend these exams if they wish. The examining professor will complete the Field Examination/Thesis Report form (on file in the office of the Department of History) and place it in the student's file.

Satisfactory performance in both the written and oral examinations is required for graduation. In the case of the field examinations and the thesis examination, the mentor and co-mentor will determine whether the student receives a grade of S (satisfactory) or U (unsatisfactory). No numerical grade is submitted for HST 600. A student who fails (receives a grade of U) may retake the field examinations or thesis examination in any succeeding semester.

A student who elects to write a thesis will take an oral thesis examination, for which he or she must register in HST 600 in the last semester of the program. Registration in HST 600 requires the consent of the graduate adviser, and the student will schedule the examination in consultation with the mentor and co-mentor. The university requires that the thesis exam be completed at least 6 weeks prior to the end of the semester.

Before the thesis defense, the student must make an appointment with the Thesis/Dissertation Coordinator of the Office of Graduate Study and Lifelong Learning (O'Dowd 520) for a review of the format of his or her dissertation. The student must

bring to the meeting the materials listed in *Guidelines for the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations*. It is available as a pdf file at <http://www.oakland.edu/grad>.

During the thesis defense, the mentor and co-mentor will orally examine the student on the thesis and historical problems related to it for up to one hour.

After the thesis defense...

(1) the student must correct or revise his or her thesis as directed by the examining committee (the mentor and co-mentor). After the student makes the required revisions, the examining professors will complete the Field Examination//Thesis Report (on file in the office of the Department of History) and place it in the student's file.

(2) the student must request an approval memo from his or her adviser, who is also the graduate coordinator in the Department of History. The approval memo documents the student's successful defense of the thesis and the completion of any changes determined by the student's committee. The student's adviser will send the approval memo to the Office of Graduate Study and Lifelong Learning.

(3) students must make a second appointment with the Thesis/Dissertation Coordinator in the Office of Graduate Study and Lifelong Learning to present a clean, unbound copy of the thesis for final review and approval of the format. Refer to *Guidelines for the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations* for a list of materials that the student must bring to this meeting. Following the approval by the Thesis/Dissertation Coordinator...

(4) the student must make a third appointment with that coordinator to present the approved thesis for binding. Refer to *Guidelines for the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations* for a list of materials that the student must to bring to this meeting.

(5) the student must complete the Anonymous Exit Evaluation (available in the office of the History Department) and submit it to the departmental secretary.

### **Application for Graduation**

Students must submit an online Application for Graduation for the term in which they expect to graduate by the deadline stated in "Schedule of Classes" or at: [www.oakland.edu/grad](http://www.oakland.edu/grad). Early submission is strongly encouraged. The application is found at: [https://www2.oakland.edu/grad/web/secure/app4deg/app\\_grad.cfm](https://www2.oakland.edu/grad/web/secure/app4deg/app_grad.cfm)

After all graduation requirements have been completed by their deadlines, the Office of Graduate Study and Lifelong Study will conduct an audit of each student's record to assure that all requirements have been completed. In order for the student to graduate, professors must change all grades of P or I to numerical grades by the deadline specified by the Office of Graduate Study. The graduate coordinator in the Department of History receives the audits at the end of each semester and is responsible for contacting professors who have assigned grade of P or I to assure that the change of grade forms are submitted by the specified deadline.

Graduate Study and Lifelong Learning will produce a final list of graduates about eight to ten weeks after the last day of final exams each semester or session.

## **ABOUT OTHER REQUIREMENTS AND CONDITIONS**

### **Minimum Enrollment Policy**

In order to maintain active student status, master's students must enroll in a minimum of one course in either the fall, winter, or summer semester of each academic year starting the first semester in which a student is enrolled at Oakland University. The course must be one that is required by their academic program and count toward the degree. This includes semesters in which a thesis or graduate project is completed and will apply until all degree requirements are met.

Should circumstances arise that require an interruption in graduate study, the student must apply for a Leave of Absence. A student on Leave of Absence is not required to register for a course during the fall, winter, or summer semesters. The benefits of applying for a leave of absence are (1) the student's time-to-degree is extended while the student is covered by the leave of absence; (2) the student's status as a cohort member is maintained during a leave of absence; (3) the student will not be required to reapply for admission when the leave of absence is concluded.

There are some negative effects of a leave of absence also: (1) the student is not entitled to any services from the university during the leave, including demands upon faculty or adviser time; (2) email and library privileges are suspended; (3) and receipt of fellowship, assistantship, or financial aid is suspended during a Leave of Absence.

### **Grading**

With the exception of HST 600, students will ultimately receive numeric grades for all courses. Students may receive interim grades of P (progress) or I (incomplete), but these must be changed to numeric grades before the student can graduate.

### **Foreign Languages**

There is no foreign language requirement for the M. A. in history, but to study certain fields the student might need a reading knowledge of the appropriate foreign language. Students must consult their professors for the language requirements of specific courses and major fields. The department strongly encourages students to gain proficiency in a foreign language, especially those students who aspire to enter doctoral programs.

### **Provisional Admission**

A student who has been provisionally accepted into the program must meet the terms of his or her acceptance as indicated in the letter of admission to the program from Graduate Admissions. Students will not be permitted to register for graduate courses after completion of 8 credits if they have not met all provisional requirements.

### **Meetings With the Faculty Adviser, Mentor, and Co-Mentor**

Every student is required to meet with the departmental graduate adviser at least once per academic year after admission to the program, whether or not the student is registered for classes. After the completion of at least 12 credits, but not more than 16, the student must schedule a meeting with the graduate adviser to assess the student's progress in the program and to designate the student's mentor and co-mentor. That meeting may be considered one of the student's required annual meetings with the adviser.

Upon the completion of 24 credits, the student will meet with the adviser, mentor, and co-mentor to assess the student's progress in the program. The meeting with the adviser, mentor, and co-mentor may be considered one of the student's required annual meetings with the adviser. The student is responsible for initiating the meetings.

### **University Rules on Expiration of Course Credit and Incomplete Grades**

Course credits become invalid after more than six years if students have not completed the program. Students may petition the history department, Graduate Studies and Lifelong Learning, and the academic dean to keep credits on their records after the six-year deadline. The university permits a 2-year extension for a maximum of 8 years.

In the event that a student receives a grade of I (incomplete), he or she has until the end of the eighth week of the next semester (fall or winter) for which the student registers to complete the remaining course work and to replace the I with a numerical grade. If the student does not complete the required work for the course within one year and the student does not register for class during that period, the grade of I will become permanent. (See also the section below on academic probation and dismissal from the program.)

### **Dismissal From the Program and Academic Probation**

#### Dismissal From the Program

A student who has been provisionally accepted into the program and who fails to meet the terms of acceptance as set out in the letter of admission from Graduate Admissions will be dismissed from the program. The student may re-apply to the program, but may not petition for an exception from the terms expressed in the letter of admission.

A student who receives a grade of less than 3.0 in any course will be dismissed from the program. The student may petition the departmental graduate committee *one time* for a *one-time* exception from this condition.

A student who does not have a *cumulative* GPA of at least 3.4 after completing 12 credits will be dismissed from the program. The student may petition the departmental graduate committee for an exception from this condition.

#### Academic Probation

A student may be placed on academic probation if he or she has more than one grade of I on his or her record. Note that university rules require that grades of I be removed from the record by the eighth week of the next semester (fall or winter). If the student does not

complete the required work for the course within one year and the student does not register for class during that period, the grade of I will become permanent.

Academic probation is intended to give students time to correct deficiencies and offer them the opportunity to return to the program in good standing. When a student is placed on academic probation, a hold is placed on his or her account, preventing the student from registering for classes until a deadline, by which the student must rectify the specified problems. A student who does not meet the terms of his or her probation as determined by the chair of the history department and the department's graduate committee will be dismissed from the program.

### **FELLOWSHIP AND THE GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP**

The King/Chavez/Parks Faculty Fellowship Initiative is a joint partnership of the state of Michigan and Oakland University intended to increase the pool of minority candidates pursuing academic careers in colleges in and universities. Information on the fellowship is available through Graduate Study and Lifelong Learning.

The department of history offers one graduate assistantship with a stipend and a tuition remission for two courses per semester. The duties include a 20-hour per week commitment to tutoring, research assistance, assistance in departmental functions, occasional guest lectures and classroom assistance. The assistant will maintain office hours for tutoring, typically ten hours per week.

Applications are accepted annually, usually beginning in November, with a deadline in April of the same academic year. The position is renewable one time. Applicants must be full-time Master of Arts candidates in history (enrolled in eight hours of classes per semester).