

HISTORY, PHD

With some 130 graduate students and nearly 60 faculty members, the Department of History is home to one of the oldest, most distinguished, and most comprehensive graduate programs in the U.S., renowned for its long and valued tradition of collegiality and openness. We offer separate graduate degrees in History and in the History of Science, Medicine, and Technology. All told, our internationally recognized faculty (<https://history.wisc.edu/people-main/faculty-listed-alphabetically/>) has been mentoring distinguished historians since 1893 (<https://history.wisc.edu/our-graduate-program/doctorates-awarded/>).

Our degree program in History is designed to meet the needs of the PhD candidate, and we offer funding (<https://history.wisc.edu/graduate/prospective-students/funding/>) only to students who intend to pursue the PhD. However, we also welcome applications from students who wish to earn only the MA if they have external funding or are self-funded.

Graduate training in the History degree program is organized by primary fields of study. Although most of our students are trained in a single field of study, students whose research interests span more than one field have the option to craft an individual plan of study (<https://history.wisc.edu/graduate/individual-plan-of-study/>).

We offer the following primary fields of study (<https://history.wisc.edu/fields-programs/>) in the History degree program:

- African History
- East Asian History
- European History—Ancient, Medieval, Early Modern, and Modern
- Latin American and Caribbean History
- Middle East and North African History
- South Asian History
- Southeast Asian History
- U.S./North American History

Within their primary field of study, students also have the opportunity to organize their studies thematically. Our faculty's special thematic strengths (<https://history.wisc.edu/people-main/faculty-by-area-of-specialty/>) are in:

- Borderlands and diasporas
- Environmental history
- Gender and Women's History, Program in (<https://history.wisc.edu/fields-programs-and-working-groups/program-in-gender-and-womens-history/>)
- History of Science, Medicine, and Technology (<https://history.wisc.edu/fields-programs-and-working-groups/history-of-science-medicine-and-technology/faculty-associates-affiliates/>)
- Intellectual and cultural history
- Jewish History, Program in (<https://history.wisc.edu/fields-programs-and-working-groups/program-in-jewish-history/>)
- Labor and political economy
- Race, ethnicity, and indigeneity
- Religion and ritual
- War in Society and Culture Program (<https://history.wisc.edu/fields-programs-and-working-groups/war-in-society-and-culture-program/>)

Our faculty train resourceful researchers, committed teachers, and engaged public intellectuals. We offer a rigorous course of study that combines independent and collaborative work and that emphasizes scholarly and intellectual connectedness. The department strongly supports the Wisconsin Idea (<https://www.wisc.edu/wisconsin-idea/>), the principle that education should influence and improve people's lives beyond the university classroom. For more than 100 years, this idea has guided the university's work. Students pursue a variety of careers, both inside and outside the academy.

OTHER DEGREE OPTIONS INCLUDE:

BRIDGE PROGRAM WITH UW-MADISON'S AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES

This academic partnership designed is to allow students to complete the MA in African American Studies and the PhD in History. It enables the African American Studies student who specializes in the History area to meet the basic requirements of the History MA while completing a degree in African American Studies. Students may apply simultaneously to the two departments or may apply to the Department of History after they begin their program in the Department of African American Studies, usually in the fall of the first or second MA year.

For details, see The Bridge Program (<https://history.wisc.edu/our-graduate-program/bridge-program/>) or contact the graduate program coordinator.

JOINT PHD IN HISTORY AND HISTORY OF SCIENCE

Students who wish to obtain a joint PhD in History and the History of Science, Medicine, and Technology are initially admitted to one of the degree programs, and should indicate interest in the joint PhD program at that time. After completion of a master's degree in History or History of Science, Medicine, and Technology, the student applies for admission to the other degree program and, at the same time, to a standing committee of the two programs for admission to the joint program.

Having been admitted to the other degree program and to the joint PhD program, the student then applies to the Graduate School for approval of the joint PhD (See the Graduate School's academic policy regarding joint degrees (<http://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/>) for more information and deadlines.) The student's application to the standing committee should take the same form as required by the Graduate School and should be prepared in close consultation with department faculty/staff.

Students in the joint PhD program are assigned a home degree program and follow the regulations of that degree program with regard to seminar requirements, language requirements, financial aid, and regulations for satisfactory progress. Since the joint PhD meets the doctoral minor requirement of the Graduate School, no formal minor is required of students receiving a joint PhD. However, students who wish to have a minor field recorded on the transcript may complete a regular Option A or Option B minor, or the internal minor of the department.

The joint PhD student's work is supervised by a committee consisting of three faculty members (two from the home degree program). The preliminary examinations test the student's competence in both history and history of science, medicine, and technology, balancing the material and fields between the two departments (e.g. two in each, or three in one and two in the other). The number of prelim fields must equal the number required of students majoring exclusively in history or in history of science,

medicine, and technology, plus one. Preparation of the PhD dissertation is guided by the student's supervising committee. Satisfactory completion and defense of the dissertation constitute the final requirements for the joint PhD degree.

JOINT PHD WITH OTHER DEGREE PROGRAMS

History degree program students who wish to pursue a joint PhD (one degree, two majors) with another degree program must first be admitted to the other degree program. The proposal for the degree must be approved by the Department of History's Graduate Council before it is submitted to the Graduate School. Students admitted to a joint PhD will satisfy all the normal requirements of their field in History except the minor requirement.

For more information on joint PhD options, please contact the graduate program coordinator.

ADMISSIONS

ADMISSIONS

Please consult the table below for key information about this degree program's admissions requirements. The program may have more detailed admissions requirements, which can be found below the table or on the program's website.

Graduate admissions is a two-step process between academic programs and the Graduate School. **Applicants must meet the minimum requirements (<https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/requirements/>) of the Graduate School as well as the program(s).** Once you have researched the graduate program(s) you are interested in, apply online (<https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/>).

Requirements	Detail
Fall Deadline	December 1
Spring Deadline	This program does not admit in the spring.
Summer Deadline	This program does not admit in the summer.
GRE (Graduate Record Examinations)	Not required.
English Proficiency Test	Every applicant whose native language is not English, or whose undergraduate instruction was not exclusively in English, must provide an English proficiency test score earned within two years of the anticipated term of enrollment. Refer to the Graduate School: Minimum Requirements for Admission policy: https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1241 (https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1241/).
Other Test(s) (e.g., GMAT, MCAT)	n/a
Letters of Recommendation Required	3

APPLICATION MATERIALS

To apply, applicants must submit or declare the following in the online application (<https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/>):

History Supplemental Application

This section of the application asks you to provide information about your research interests, declare your preferred faculty advisors, and outline your prior language preparation (if any).

Writing Sample

Provide a sample that best illustrates the quality of your written work (optimally no more than 50 pages, double-spaced; maximum file size 6 MB).

Transcripts

Upload an unofficial copy of your transcript from all institutions attended, showing any undergraduate and graduate degrees awarded. If accepted, the Graduate School will ask for transcripts from each institution.

CV or Resumé

This should highlight your accomplishments and qualifications including academic honors or distinctions; professional, research, and/or teaching experience; and any publications.

Letters of Recommendation

Provide contact information for the three individuals who will furnish recommendations on your behalf (they will receive an upload link by email). Your letter writers need not be historians, but they should be able to speak to your academic preparation to pursue historical studies at the graduate level.

Statement of Purpose

The statement of purpose (2–3 pages, double-spaced) explains your reasons for graduate study. It may be the hardest part of the application to write, but it is also the most important. While you will likely include some autobiographical information, its primary purpose is to acquaint us with how your mind works. We want to know, for example, what kinds of intellectual problems and issues interest you, whose stories intrigue you, what sorts of analytical or narrative approaches you like to pursue, which historical writings you admire—and your reasons for these various preferences. Please help us understand your decision to enter the historical profession, especially at a time when the academic job market is in decline, and how you see your own role in it. There is no single right way to approach this part of the application, but we suggest that you bear in mind the usual cautions for personal writing: speak straightforwardly, in your own voice, and write as well as you know how.

INTERNATIONAL APPLICANTS

All international applicants must also meet the English proficiency requirements (<https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/requirements/>) set forth by the Graduate School.

For additional detail about the admissions process, please visit the Prospective Student (<https://history.wisc.edu/our-graduate-program/prospective-students/>) pages on our website.

FUNDING

FUNDING

GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

Resources to help you afford graduate study might include assistantships, fellowships, traineeships, and financial aid. Further funding information (<https://grad.wisc.edu/funding/>) is available from the Graduate School. Be sure to check with your program for individual policies and restrictions related to funding.

PROGRAM RESOURCES

We offer funding only to students who intend to pursue the PhD—an application for admission to our PhD program, therefore, is an application for funding. We also welcome applications from students who have external funding or are self-funded, including those pursuing the MA only.*

Multi-Year Funding Package

If you apply to the History PhD degree program without external or self-funding and are accepted, you will be offered a multi-year support package, which begins in your first year. The details of our support guarantees may vary by funding source, field of study, and other circumstances, and the guarantee is, of course, contingent on satisfactory progress and performance. Most of our support packages offer five years of support and begin with a fellowship year from the UW–Madison Graduate School, generously funded by the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation (<http://www.warf.org/stewardship/grants-support/current/current-grant.cmsx>). Our most distinguished packages include two years of fellowships and may also include summer support:

- Graduate Research Scholar fellowships (<http://ls.wisc.edu/current-students/graduate-students/cgrs/>) for underrepresented students or first-generation college students—offered annually
- George L. Mosse fellowships (<https://history.wisc.edu/our-graduate-program/prospective-students/funding/>) in modern Jewish history, European cultural history, or LGBTQ history—offered annually or as endowment income permits
- Julie A. and Peter M. Weil Fellowship (<https://history.wisc.edu/our-graduate-program/prospective-students/julie-a-and-peter-m-weil-distinguished-graduate-fellowship/>) in American Jewish history and select U.S. history fields—offered annually or as endowment income permits
- William J. Courtenay Fellowship in Medieval history—offered as funds permit
- Gerda Lerner Fellowship (<https://history.wisc.edu/our-graduate-program/prospective-students/funding/>) in women’s history—offered as funds permit

Additional years of guaranteed funding will come from employment as teaching assistants or project assistants or additional fellowships.

Competing for Additional Support

All students in good standing can apply for writing prizes, conference travel awards, and supplements to external awards. Once graduate students have passed their preliminary examination and advanced to candidacy, they may apply for various departmental fellowships and research travel funding.

For students who have reached the advanced stages of dissertation writing, further funding opportunities are available. Our advanced dissertators may apply for teaching fellowships that give them the opportunity to design and teach an undergraduate course – the Merle Curti Teaching Fellowship (<https://history.wisc.edu/our-graduate-program/current-students/funding-opportunities/merle-curti-teaching-fellowship/>) (any field of study), the George L. Mosse Teaching Fellowship in European History, and the William J. Courtenay Teaching Fellowship in ancient, medieval, or early modern European history. (These fellowships are offered as often as endowment income permits.) Thanks to funding provided by the Doris G. Quinn Foundation (<https://dorisquinnfoundation.org/>), we are also pleased to offer a dissertator fellowship, which provides financial support for the final year of dissertation writing in any field.

In addition, UW–Madison offers a wealth of other opportunities to compete for funding offered, for example, by the International Division (<http://international.wisc.edu/funding-your-international-experiences/>), the Institute for Research in the Humanities (<http://irh.wisc.edu>), and the UW Graduate School (research and conference travel awards (<https://grad.wisc.edu/studentfunding/grantscomp/>)).

More details on our funding for current/continuing students are available here (<https://history.wisc.edu/our-graduate-program/current-students/funding-opportunities/>).

* If you wish to apply only for the History MA (also known as the terminal MA), please describe your sources of support on the History Supplemental Application. For information on the cost of graduate study at UW–Madison, click here (<https://grad.wisc.edu/admissions/cost/>).

REQUIREMENTS

MINIMUM GRADUATE SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS

Review the Graduate School minimum academic progress and degree requirements (<http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#policiesandrequirements>), in addition to the program requirements listed below.

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS MODE OF INSTRUCTION

Face to Face	Evening/ Weekend	Online	Hybrid	Accelerated
Yes	No	No	No	No

Mode of Instruction Definitions

Accelerated: Accelerated programs are offered at a fast pace that condenses the time to completion. Students typically take enough credits aimed at completing the program in a year or two.

Evening/Weekend: Courses meet on the UW–Madison campus only in evenings and/or on weekends to accommodate typical business schedules. Students have the advantages of face-to-face courses with the flexibility to keep work and other life commitments.

Face-to-Face: Courses typically meet during weekdays on the UW–Madison Campus.

Hybrid: These programs combine face-to-face and online learning formats. Contact the program for more specific information.

Online: These programs are offered 100% online. Some programs may require an on-campus orientation or residency experience, but the courses will be facilitated in an online format.

CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS

Requirement Detail

Minimum 51 credits
Credit
Requirement

Minimum 32 credits
Residence
Credit
Requirement

Minimum Graduate Coursework Requirement	26 credits must be graduate-level coursework. Refer to the Graduate School: Minimum Graduate Coursework (50%) Requirement policy: https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244 (https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244/).
Overall Graduate GPA Requirement	3.25 GPA required.
Other Grade Requirements	n/a
Assessments and Examinations	In order to receive the History PhD, all students must pass the preliminary exam and the PhD dissertation defense. Preliminary Examination: Each field of study has its own exact requirements for prelims, but all include written exams and an oral defense of the student's research proposal and knowledge of the field. PhD Dissertation Defense: Two-hour oral exam focusing on the student's written dissertation.
Language Requirements	The history department requires all students to demonstrate, at a minimum, reading knowledge of at least one language other than English. The fields of study may set additional requirements, and each field determines which languages may be used to satisfy its requirement
Graduate School Breadth Requirement	All doctoral students are required to complete a doctoral minor or graduate/professional certificate. Refer to the Graduate School: Breadth Requirement in Doctoral Training policy: https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1200 (https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1200/).

REQUIRED COURSES

Code	Title	Credits
Core		
HISTORY 701	History in a Global Perspective	1
HISTORY 800	Research Seminar in History (or an equivalent research seminar in the student's field of study) ¹	3
Electives		
Work with advisor to complete 26 credits of graduate-level courses.		26
HISTORY courses		
Breadth		
Language Requirement		
Students must complete any additional language requirements specific to their field of study prior to taking the preliminary examination.		
Research		
After passing the preliminary examination, students register for the following course each semester until they deposit their dissertation.		
HISTORY 990	Research and Thesis	1-9
Total Credits		51

¹ Alternative course options: HISTORY 855 Seminar in Japanese History for students studying East Asian History, HISTORY 861 Seminar-The History of Africa for students studying African History.

Students are also recommended to take HISTORY 999 Independent Work and HISTORY 710 Professional Development Seminar.

Recommendations for Doctoral Minor Study African History

The minor field requirement is normally met by interdisciplinary training in African Studies, comprising three courses (9 credits) in two fields other than History. Students already grounded in African studies may, in close consultation with their major professor, choose an alternative minor.

Gender & Women's History

Students must follow the minor requirements of their primary field of study and are encouraged to include courses emphasizing women, gender, or sexuality, bearing in mind that no course in the students' major area of study may be used to meet the minor requirement.

Latin American and Caribbean History

The minor field requirement consists of at least nine credits of interdisciplinary training in Latin American and Iberian Studies divided between two fields other than History.

POLICIES

GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICIES

The Graduate School's Academic Policies and Procedures (<https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/>) provide essential information regarding general university policies. Program authority to set degree policies beyond the minimum required by the Graduate School lies with the degree program faculty. Policies set by the academic degree program can be found below.

MAJOR-SPECIFIC POLICIES

PRIOR COURSEWORK

Graduate Credits Earned at Other Institutions

With program approval, students are allowed to transfer up to 12 credits of graduate coursework from other institutions.

Undergraduate Credits Earned at Other Institutions or UW-Madison

On a case-by-case basis, refer to the Graduate School: Transfer Credits for Prior Coursework (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1216/>) policy.

Credits Earned as a Professional Student at UW-Madison (Law, Medicine, Pharmacy, and Veterinary careers)

On a case-by-case basis, refer to the Graduate School: Transfer Credits for Prior Coursework (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1216/>) policy.

Credits Earned as a University Special Student at UW-Madison

On a case-by-case basis, refer to the Graduate School: Transfer Credits for Prior Coursework (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1216/>) policy.

PROBATION

Refer to the Graduate School: Probation (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1217/>) policy.

ADVISOR / COMMITTEE

Refer to the Graduate School: Advisor (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1232/>) and Graduate School: Committees (Doctoral/Master's/MFA) (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1201/>) policies.

CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED

15 credits

TIME LIMITS

Refer to the Graduate School: Time Limits (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1221/>) policy.

GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS

These resources may be helpful in addressing your concerns:

- Bias or Hate Reporting (<https://doso.students.wisc.edu/bias-or-hate-reporting/>)
- Graduate Assistantship Policies and Procedures (<https://hr.wisc.edu/policies/gapp/#grievance-procedure>)
- Hostile and Intimidating Behavior Policies and Procedures (<https://hr.wisc.edu/hib/>)
 - Office of the Provost for Faculty and Staff Affairs (<https://facstaff.provost.wisc.edu/>)
- Employee Assistance (<http://www.eao.wisc.edu/>) (for personal counseling and workplace consultation around communication and conflict involving graduate assistants and other employees, post-doctoral students, faculty and staff)
- Employee Disability Resource Office (<https://employeedisabilities.wisc.edu/>) (for qualified employees or applicants with disabilities to have equal employment opportunities)
- Graduate School (<https://grad.wisc.edu/>) (for informal advice at any level of review and for official appeals of program/departmental or school/college grievance decisions)
- Office of Compliance (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/>) (for class harassment and discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence)
- Office Student Assistance and Support (OSAS) (<https://osas.wisc.edu/>) (for all students to seek grievance assistance and support)
- Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards (<https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/>) (for conflicts involving students)
- Ombuds Office for Faculty and Staff (<http://www.ombuds.wisc.edu/>) (for employed graduate students and post-docs, as well as faculty and staff)
- Title IX (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/titleix/>) (for concerns about discrimination)

Students should contact the department chair or program director with questions about grievances. They may also contact the L&S Academic Divisional Associate Deans, the L&S Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning Administration, or the L&S Director of Human Resources.

OTHER

n/a

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

Take advantage of the Graduate School's professional development resources (<https://grad.wisc.edu/pd/>) to build skills, thrive academically, and launch your career.

PROGRAM RESOURCES

The Department of History is committed to training our students to develop skills required for a variety of careers both in and outside the academy. Although a large network of our alumni teach at colleges and universities in the U.S. and across the world, a number of our PhDs have enjoyed considerable success outside the academy. They include recent graduates who are currently a museum curator, teachers at prestigious preparatory academies, a historian with the U.S. Secretary of Defense's POW/Missing Persons Agency, a CEO of an investment firm, an analyst for a defense contractor, an editor at a small press, and consultants working with non-profits in the human services, education, and public policy fields. In recent years we have undertaken a number of initiatives, detailed below, to broaden the training of our students for a wide array of careers.

Much of the preparation for the job market occurs informally and over the course of the student's graduate career—in the mentoring relationship between faculty advisor and student, in the presentation of student research in department venues, in the student's participation in professional conferences, and in early forms of professional publication. Coursework, such as for the minor requirement or certificates, can be an avenue to expanded competencies. The Center for Humanities, for example, offers a Public Humanities certificate (<http://humanities.wisc.edu/public-humanities/graduate-certificate/>). Be sure to explore the Graduate School's resources such as "The Versatile PhD" (<https://grad.wisc.edu/pd/versatilephd/>) and its Professional Development pages (<http://grad.wisc.edu/pd/>).

Whatever career paths interest you, we encourage you to plan ahead and discuss your options—early and often—with your faculty advisor(s), with the Director of Graduate Studies, or with the Graduate Coordinator.

Professional Development Seminars (HISTORY 710)

This topics seminar is offered every semester. It emphasizes building skills that are valuable both inside and outside the academy, such as managing the writing process, teaching college history, or communicating historical research to a broad, non-specialist audience. Since it is a topics course, more than one may be offered in a given semester. Recent topics include "Writing for Academy and Beyond," "Digital History," and "On the Job Market."

Professional Development Events

Throughout the year, the Graduate Program sponsors various workshops intended to help students negotiate specific milestones of graduate study and to assist them in preparing for and going on the job market as they near completion of the PhD. Our programming currently includes:

Preliminary Examination Workshop

This offers a discussion of the various requirements for preliminary examinations: how to assemble committees, compiling reading lists, Graduate School requirements, and more.

Curriculum Vitae Workshops

These workshops are designed for students at all levels, ranging from first-year students writing CVs for campus positions to advanced dissertators on the job market.

Mock Interviews

The Graduate Program offers a series of opportunities to practice with a committee of our faculty for AHA interviews and on-campus job talks. They are open to a limited number of students who expect to be actively on the job market in the fall.

Careers in History Workshops

Our program is committed to helping its graduates seek and secure employment following the completion of their PhDs. Since the financial crisis in 2008, the academic job market has softened markedly. While the Graduate Program continues to provide outstanding preparation for academic jobs, we also encourage our students to think more broadly about their career prospects and the transferability of their skills. As funds permit, we occasionally bring to campus History graduates who are working in the non-profit, private, or public sector to meet with current graduate students and share their experiences. We also offer opportunities to learn best practices for post-doctoral fellowship applications.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

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1. Articulates research problems clearly and understands the limits of current theories, knowledge, or practices in the discipline of history.
2. Pushes the boundaries of current historical knowledge in formulating research questions, in the selection or use of primary sources, or in interpreting evidence.
3. Demonstrates breadth of historical and cultural knowledge.
4. Is able to articulate the broader significance of their work to scholars in other fields or disciplines and to the broader public.
5. Is able to design and teach courses at the undergraduate or graduate level.
6. Fosters ethical and professional conduct.

PEOPLE

PEOPLE

See the History department webpage for a full directory of faculty (<https://history.wisc.edu/people-main/faculty-listed-alphabetically/>).

Also see our faculty affiliate (<https://history.wisc.edu/people-main/faculty-affiliates/>) and teaching associate (<https://history.wisc.edu/people-main/teaching-associates/>) profiles.