I Statement of pedagogy

A Ph.D. in history at Notre Dame certifies the recipient as commanding a body of knowledge to which s/he has made a contribution through the dissertation; the degree recognizes skills in research, writing, and teaching. Academic historians at research universities publish and teach; they also serve a variety of roles as reviewers; consultants; citizens of their university, field, and profession; and colleagues. Historians apply their skills in a variety of settings, working as museum curators, in libraries, for government agencies, as administrators, in public or private archives, and at historical sites. With this in mind, the graduate program in history at the University of Notre Dame emphasizes training in research, writing, and teaching, and addresses the ethics, values, obligations, traditions, philosophies, and skills of responsible professionals.

Researching and writing publishable articles and books are core skills for academic historians, which is why the department requires a major research paper in each of the first two years of study, and why success in fulfilling this requirement is a major factor in the evaluation of students at the end of the first and second years. Students should aspire eventually to produce scholarship that makes major contributions to historical knowledge, and to share their contributions in public settings and/or as published work.

Students should aim to revise and submit at least one of their required research papers to a major journal in their field before they seek employment. Students should also aspire to submit for publication a research paper based on a chapter of their dissertation. Articles accepted for publication are a major advantage for candidates seeking positions as faculty members at research universities and the best liberal-arts colleges.

II Language requirements

Command of foreign languages is essential in some fields, and highly desirable in all areas of historical study. The level of competence in reading one or more modern languages is,
therefore, a significant concern for all our students. The foreign language requirements are
determined by the major area of focus—Medievalists normally command at least three
languages, Modern Europeanists and Latin Americanists two, and one or more for
Americanists in addition to English. Courses in language skills do not count towards the
program’s twelve-course minimum, although they are encouraged where necessary and
supported by tuition credit. Students are expected to have fulfilled language requirements by
the beginning of their third year (in the case of students needing one language), or by midway
through their third year (in the case of students requiring two or more languages

III Fields of Study

There are four major areas of concentration in the Department of History (Modern Europe,
Medieval Europe, Latin America, and U.S [including its colonial antecedents]). While most
students work in one of these four areas, other students concentrate on areas beyond or
between them. A range of course work, together with qualifying examinations in four fields
ensures both mastery of a student’s area of specialization, and breadth which will be helpful in
both teaching and research. In selecting courses during the first two years of study students
should keep in mind the four fields upon which they will be examined. Generally students are
examined in two or three fields within one of our traditional Areas of Concentration—Modern
Europe, Medieval Europe, Latin America, and US— but some choose fields of specialization
that cross these traditional areas. Students also select one “outside” field. The “outside field”
should be in a separate Area of Concentration or on a relevant methodology. Students are also
couraged to develop at least one topical comparative field—e.g., the Atlantic or Pacific,
borderlands, colonialism, empire, the environment, exploration, frontiers, law, gender, religion,
or slavery.

IV Course work

Students normally register for twelve courses (thirty-six credits) during their first two years of
study.

Students in the history program normally do not register for more than six credits with any one
faculty member over the course of their studies; the exceptions are generally with faculty
members who have taught one or more of the required courses.

Students normally do not register for more than six credits outside the Department of History
over the course of their studies, the exceptions normally being for languages.

Course credit for independent study and directed readings is not a major part of our curriculum
and is normally limited to three credits in the second year of study. Registration for
independent work must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies. We believe that
students in the first two years of study are better educated in a course setting, where they
benefit from exchanging ideas with their peers, which in turn contributes to the creation of
intellectual community. This can be accomplished either in graduate courses or in
undergraduate courses that reserve seats for graduate students and make special allowance
for their needs. We also believe that independent work is a professional expectation above
specific requirements and encourage students and faculty also to work together informally
outside the classroom.
FOR DETAILED LISTING OF COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND A TYPICAL SCHEDULE SEE APPENDIX 3

IVa First year of study

The goals of the first year of study are to provide an introduction to the shared tradition and contemporary approaches to the study of history, four subject-area colloquia with members of the teaching and research faculty, and the first professional research experience in a class devoted specifically to that endeavor. Students also begin the reading that will coalesce into the four fields in which they will be examined during their third year in the program. The Director of Graduate Studies serves as advisor of record for first year students, acting in conjunction with a specialist adviser in the student’s area.

Full-time first-year students will normally complete eighteen credit-hours of course work (three courses each semester), including “The Historian’s Craft” and “The First-Year Research Seminar.” Students should think of this year as one that provides a wide introduction to philosophy, methods, disciplines, and subject areas of study. In the second year they should begin the narrowing of focus that leads towards a dissertation.

The colloquium on “The Historian’s Craft,” required of all first-year students in the fall semester, provides an introduction to the professional study of history; “The First Year Research Seminar,” which is required for the spring semester, builds on that foundation in a structured classroom environment that addresses both the skills and sensibilities shared by all research historians and the specific knowledge of the student’s major area of study. “The First Year Research Conference” provides students an occasion to share the fruits of their first research project with faculty and fellow students in the celebratory environment of a year-ending departmental intellectual and social gathering. Two members of the Department of History’s teaching and research faculty also examine students orally at the end of the first year. This oral examination, the research paper, and successful completion of all course work by the first week in May is the basis for the graduate committee evaluation of first-year students during the second and third weeks of May and the decision on continuance to the second year of study.

By the end of the first year of study, students should have identified a major advisor though this arrangement may be changed in subsequent semesters.

Students who successfully complete the first year of study are provided summer financial support to read independently in their chosen field or fields of study, and to prepare for language exams prior to the beginning of classes for the fall semester. Students do not normally take courses for credit during the summer; the exception is generally for language study, but occasionally there are opportunities for studying a methodology (e.g., paleography or statistics) or in another field (e.g., archaeology or theology). Students should prepare a summer study plan, possibly with the advice of faculty in their fields; the goal is for students to develop the autonomous discipline necessary for a successful professional career. Revision of the first research paper for submission to a major journal is another goal towards which students may work between semesters.

IVb. Second year of study
Full-time second–year students will normally complete eighteen hours of course work (three courses each semester), including “The Historical Profession,” a three-credit required course, in the fall semester of the second year of study provides support and instruction for beginning teaching assistants, and an introduction to an array of professional issues that both include and transcend teaching. All second-year students should expect to serve each semester as leaders of discussion sections in courses taught by faculty members in history. They should also complete a second major research paper in one of their subject-area colloquia, which makes substantial use of sources and scholarship in relevant languages.

By the end of their second year of study, will have identified the four fields in which they will take qualifying exams, and the faculty who will examine them. Qualifying examinations measure command of all four fields, although one field can be considered a “dissertation field,” and focused accordingly, while others test teaching, research, or teaching and research competence. Students should clarify each examiner’s expectations at the point of commitment to a field. They will also have gained approval of reading lists from these faculty, clarified the examination criteria for each field, made substantial progress towards preparation for the qualifying exams, completed a second major research paper, and have successfully completed language exams and course work. The satisfaction of these expectations will be the basis for the graduate committee’s review of second-year students during early May, and a basis for the committee’s recommendation to the department for continuance to the third year of study.

Importantly, students gain teaching experience in the second and third years of study, and an opportunity to serve as a research assistant in one semester of their third year.

V Third year of study: Qualifying examinations and Dissertation Proposal

Students who successfully complete the second year, and who are approved by the graduate committee for continuance to the third year of study, will generally receive financial support for the summer before their third year.

During this time, they will complete their reading and study for their four qualifying exams and will have an opportunity to work in an archive relevant to their research fields.

Students who are required to pass one foreign-language exam are expected to take their written qualifying exams in the first week of September of their third year. Students who are required to pass two or three foreign-language exams are expected to take their written qualifying exams during the third week of January of their third year.

For Procedures on qualifying examinations and the Dissertation Proposal see Appendices 1 and 2

During the fall semester of the third year, students should write grant proposals for summer support and, if possible, for financial support for their fourth year of study. Those students who secure outside funding for their fourth and/or fifth years will have their university stipends extended for a sixth year of support.

Third-year students are expected to complete and submit a dissertation proposal to four members of the teaching and research faculty by the end of the semester in which they pass their qualifying exams. In the case of those students who retake and pass their oral exams at the end of the fall semester, the dissertation proposal should be approved before the end of
the following spring semester; for those students who re-take and pass their qualifying exams in the spring semester, the proposal should be approved during the first month of the following fall semester.

VI Dissertation

The dissertation is the capstone of the graduate program in history; the model is important books in the research field. The measure of a dissertation's success is high ambition, promisingly fulfilled towards the goal of publication. For Procedures on the Dissertation Proposal and the Dissertation Defense see Appendix 2

“The Dissertation Writers’ Seminar” is a recommended option for third-, fourth-, and fifth-year students in residency, who have moved past the course and exam stages of the program to dissertation proposals, research, and writing. This is a year-long, one-credit, pass-fail course that meets weekly to discuss participants’ dissertation proposals, shared research and writing challenges, time management, drafting of curriculum vitae, application for grants and employment, interviewing, and drafts of dissertation chapters.

The graduate program aspires to students’ completion of dissertations no later than the end of their sixth year of study and to prepare them for success in securing employment as faculty, administrators, museum curators or public historians, or in some aspect of government or private-sector work that utilizes the skills acquired in pursuit of the Ph.D.

VII Transfer of Credit / Credit for undergraduate course work

Students receive credit towards their degree for graduate level courses and undergraduate courses that make accommodations for graduate students. Students who arrive with an M.A. from another program will normally be given credit for one three-credit history course from their previous study.

Students in their first and second years of study normally register for nine graduate-level credits each semester.

Some courses mix graduate and undergraduate students, but those will generally have a graduate course number assigned to them and will have additional work assigned beyond what is expected of undergraduates. Graduate students may also register for undergraduate language and methodology classes outside the department.

VIII Expectations of Satisfactory Progress

Students are expected to have fulfilled language requirements by the beginning of their third year (in the case of students needing one language), or by midway through their third year (in the case of students requiring two or more languages. Students who do not meet these requirements are subject to review by the graduate committee and possible probation, suspension, or dismissal from the program.

Continuation in the graduate program in History after the first year is contingent on successful completion of course work, including a major research paper, by the end of spring term. A committee of two faculty members who have taught the student during the first year will orally examine the student and write a short evaluation for the graduate committee. Short written evaluations of the student’s research paper by the content advisor and the faculty member
supervising the first-year research seminar will also be part of the graduate committee’s evaluation, as will the written evaluations of faculty who have taught the colloquia in which the student was enrolled. The graduate committee will make a determination on the student’s admission to the second year of study based on the evaluations. Incompletes are grounds for serious concern, which may lead the graduate committee to impose a clearly defined deadline. Failure to meet such a deadline can result in probation, suspension, or dismissal from the program.

Continuation in the graduate program in history after the second year is normally contingent on successful completion of course work, including a second major research paper, by the end of the spring term except in those cases where additional course work is dictated by the field requirements or special circumstances. The procedure for evaluation of the research paper and the graduate committee’s decision on continuation is the same as for the first year and the evaluation criteria are the same. Completion of language exams in a timely manner is also a component of the decision about continuation in the program.

The History Department expects its graduate students to maintain a B+ (3.33) grade point average. Grades lower than B are intended to communicate the faculty member’s concern with the quality of a student’s work and some doubt about the student’s potential for completing the program. Advanced students who have completed all course requirements will receive grades of “S” or “U” for examination preparation and dissertation research. A student who receives a grade of “U” (unsatisfactory) will not be funded in the following semester. A student who receives grades of “U” in two semesters will be dismissed from the graduate program. Advanced students must register each semester for one credit of dissertation research with their advisor. Students must complete at least twelve graduate level courses in History and related disciplines for a letter grade.

Students receive the temporary grade of “I” (incomplete) at the discretion of the faculty member teaching the course in question. There are no incompletes for undergraduate-level courses. Incompletes should be rare, subject to a clear and specific agreement about the work remaining and the date by which it will be submitted to the faculty member. More than one incomplete in any one semester is cause for grave concern about the student’s continuation in the program. A pattern of multiple incompletes over two or more semesters is unacceptable and subjects the student to review and possible loss of funding or dismissal from the program. Course work not completed by the end of classes for the semester following the incomplete course will result in an automatic grade change to “F” in all cases.

Students must fulfill all doctoral requirements, including the dissertation and its defense, within eight years from the time of matriculation. Failure to complete any of the Graduate School or History Department requirements within the prescribed period can result in forfeiture of degree eligibility.

For exceptional reasons a student in good academic standing may be granted a leave of absence for a maximum of two consecutive semesters. Such requests must be made before the beginning of classes for the semester in which the leave is requested. Procedures for requesting medical leaves and withdrawing from the University are described in the Graduate School Bulletin.

IX Funding
Students in good standing are eligible for up to six years of stipend funding from within the University, and up to eight years of tuition funding. Students should not expect more than five years of stipend funding from the University. All students are strongly encouraged to seek outside funding for their fifth and sixth years and to aim for completion of their dissertation within six years. All advanced students must show evidence of application for outside funding each year to remain eligible for University funding. In some exceptional cases a seventh year may be necessary as a result of unusual demands, inaccessible archives, or extraordinary foreign-language challenges.

Students do not normally take courses during the summer, except for intensive foreign-language study. Reading for exams, research, and language preparation are the usual focuses of graduate students between semesters. Summer support for students on nine-month stipends is available through the Graduate School, campus institutes, and ISLA. Students may receive a maximum of two years' summer support from the History Department. Normally this is taken in the first and second years.

X Teaching Experience

Close collaboration and modeling on faculty teaching during the second and third years of study, the occasional delivery of lectures by teaching assistants, and possible opportunities to work as research assistants for faculty are important dimensions of professional training. The department seeks to provide these opportunities for all graduate students. The department also recognizes the professional advantages for graduate students who teach their own courses, and attempts to provide such an opportunity for as many graduate students as possible at some point after they become doctoral candidates upon satisfactory completion of candidacy examinations.

XI UGH

The Union of Graduate Historians (UGH), which is composed of the full body of graduate students in History at Notre Dame, elects a president and two vice presidents. The president of the UGH serves ex officio member of the Graduate Committee, but does not participate in meetings where confidential matters about other graduate students are discussed.

XII Terminal master’s degree

A terminal master’s degree may be awarded in cases where a student has completed all course work, passed at least one language exam (Latin in the case of Medievalists), and passed a master’s examination, which is normally the equivalent of two qualifying exam fields in the normal format—a two-hour written examination in each field followed by a sixty-minute to ninety-minute oral exam. For the degree to be awarded, both examiners must pass the student.

XIII Grievances and appeals

Students who wish to file a grievance against the History Department or its faculty or to appeal a departmental decision in respect to them should normally consult with the Director of Graduate Studies, except in those cases where the DGS is the subject of the grievance, in which case the student should consult with the Department Chair. This procedure does not apply to cases of sexual harassment, which should be governed by University policy as described in the Graduate School Bulletin of Information. The DGS or departmental chair may,
in consultation with the student, attempt to resolve the grievance personally. In the event that the problem is not resolved to the student’s satisfaction, the DGS will appoint a departmental grievance committee, which will normally be composed of three members of the Graduate Committee, to address the problem. The student must submit the complaint in writing to the grievance committee. The complaint should be very specific as to the nature of the problem, the date or dates when the problem occurred, the grounds on which the appeal is based, and the specific relief requested. The grievance committee may take testimony from the complainant, DGS, advisor, and any faculty associated with the complaint. The committee will deliberate and submit a written report to the DGS within thirty days of its appointment. The committee’s decision is final within the History Department, but can be appealed by the complainant to the Graduate School consistent with procedures described in the Graduate School Bulletin.

Appendix I Procedures for Qualifying Examinations:

Qualifying examinations are based on reading lists approved by the administering faculty member in the particular field of study.

Qualifying examinations will normally be scheduled by the Department of History twice each year—the first full week of September (orals to follow one week to ten days after written examinations) and the third week of January. Examinations will normally not be conducted outside of this schedule, although special accommodations may be made for those re-taking exams.

Qualifying exams test the student’s preparation for teaching and research. Passage reflects the faculty’s judgment that the student has adequate knowledge of the reading list, problems, and methods of the field, and a basic ability to synthesize readings and analyze past the content of any one book or historiographic problem. Examiners will be members of the Notre Dame History Department’s teaching and research faculty or, in the case of a field outside of the discipline of history, a member of the teaching and research faculty in another department at Notre Dame. Exceptions to these requirements are rare, and require approval by the Director of Graduate Studies.

It is the student’s responsibility to schedule the examination, upon consultation with the examiners. The examination is in two parts, written and oral, with the oral occurring within ten days of successful passage of the written. The student should schedule both sections of the examination with the Departmental Administrative Assistant, who in turn will notify the Graduate School. The Graduate School will need at least ten business days prior to the oral exam to appoint an outside chairperson for the oral portion of the examination.

The written examination in each of the four exams, one set by each examiner. Each exam must be completed in two hours, and will normally consist of two essays in response to questions asked by the examiner. The four written exams are taken over a period of one week; the examiners will read the exam in their field and report the grade within five days after completion of the exam. The examiners' options are pass or fail; passes are provisional on the student’s performance in oral exams. Failure in two or more of the written exams will necessitate retaking them, based on new questions but the same body of reading, at the next scheduled examination period. One or no failures will lead to scheduling of oral exams within a period of five days to two weeks after the written exams are graded.
Upon approval of the written examination performance by at least three of their four examiners, students move on to their oral exams within ten days of completing their written qualifying exams. At least three of the four examining faculty must grade the oral and written exams a “pass” for the student to move forward to the dissertation proposal stage. A student who does not receive the requisite three passes may, upon approval of the examining faculty, retake the written exams by the end of the semester in which s/he first took the exam. A second failure is grounds for dismissal from the program.

The oral examination consists of questioning by the same committee of four (or five) faculty members for a period of not less than ninety minutes and not more than two hours. On an examining board of four members, at least three must agree on passage for the student to move forward to candidacy for the Ph.D. Students who fail two or more fields may petition the Director of Graduate Studies to retake them one time, at the next scheduled examination period. The student will retake only the failed portions of the exam with new questions on the same body of literature and only the committee members who graded the first examination a failure. The dissertation director will serve as convener of the second oral examination. A second failure is grounds for dismissal from the program.

Appendix 2 Procedures for Dissertation Proposals and Dissertation Defense

Doctoral dissertation proposals are normally submitted to a committee of four faculty members (at least three of whom are History Department teaching and research [T & R] faculty) by the end of the semester in which the student passes qualifying exams. Exceptions will generally be for those students who retake exams. Completion and defense of the dissertation will meet the regulations of the graduate school, which can be found in the Graduate and Professional Student Handbook.

Dissertation proposals and their defense before the dissertation committee must be successfully completed during the spring semester of the third year. Those students who have passed their qualifying exams in September must submit and successfully defend their dissertation proposals before spring break; those who pass their exams in January have until the end of the spring semester to submit and successfully defend their dissertation proposals. Dissertation proposals should aim for a length of ten pages plus bibliography and should include a clear statement of the historical problem engaged by the dissertation, a summary of the dissertation’s relationship to the literature in the field, a description of sources and their location and availability, a discussion of methodology and theory informing the project, a preliminary outline of chapters, and a bibliography. Upon passage of the qualifying exams and dissertation proposal defense does a student advance to Ph.D. candidacy (ABD) and earn a Master’s Degree.

Ph.D. candidates are strongly encouraged to consult with their committee members over the course of research and writing. Candidates should submit draft chapters to all members of the committee as early as possible. Copies of the completed dissertation (including notes and bibliography must be submitted to all four (five if there are co-directors) committee members at least six weeks prior to the expected date of defense. Copies for the committee members should be submitted to the Department’s administrative assistant for graduate studies. S/he will insure that copies reach the faculty members and alert each of them to the time-line and requisite written evaluation that must be signed and received two weeks before a defense can take place. At the same time, the candidate should submit an additional copy to the Graduate School for a preliminary check of formatting. Committee members must read the dissertation and approve or disapprove it within four weeks of receiving the final copy of the dissertation.
Approval means that committee members agree to move forward to the defense; it does not mean that they are giving their final approval for award of the degree based on the dissertation. Approval endorses the dissertation as academically sound and defensible. Formal and final approval can come only after the defense. Committee members may approve the dissertation conditional on revision. In those cases where the defense reveals areas for necessary revision, the candidate must complete those to the satisfaction of the advisor. Only after the advisor signs the title page can the dissertation be submitted to the graduate school. Candidates should keep this process in mind and allow sufficient time to meet deadlines for graduation. Committee members should not feel obliged to speed up the process to accommodate such deadlines. It is the candidate’s responsibility to meet deadlines.

At the dissertation defense, the candidate supports claims, methods, and conclusions drawn in the text. He or she explores with the committee the dissertation's contributions and limitations, and any recommendations for further work either before or after award of the degree. The candidate, advisor, and committee members must attend the defense, which is a public event. Normally, the candidate opens the defense by delivering a brief (15-20 minute) statement on the content and significance of the dissertation. After this lecture and a period of questions and discussion with the committee (normally in two rounds of ten minutes by each committee member or one round of ten minutes and another of five minutes with each committee member), others in attendance may be given the opportunity to ask questions and engage in discussion with the candidate. This public session normally lasts no more than fifteen minutes. The candidate and non-committee members will then be asked to leave the room, at which time the committee will discuss the dissertation and defense, and decide whether or not to accept the dissertation. At least three of the four (or four, when there are five) members must vote to accept the dissertation for that recommendation to be forwarded to the graduate school, which will be done in writing by the chair of the defense.

An ABD is normally expected to complete the dissertation in two or three years after defense of the dissertation proposal. Students must enroll for one research credit (either resident or non-resident) during each semester until defense of the dissertation. An ABD student receiving a grade of “U” (unsatisfactory) from his or her advisor will normally not receive funding (tuition or stipend) for subsequent semesters. An ABD student receiving a grade of “U” in two semesters will be dismissed from the program.

Appendix 3 Course of study*

Year one:

Fall semester:
The Historian’s Craft (3 credits)
Colloquium (3)
Colloquium (3)

Spring semester:
First-Year Research Seminar (3)
Colloquium (3)
Colloquium (3)
Oral exam (last week in April)
Presentation of research at Spring First-Year
Graduate Conference
Graduate Committee evaluation (by end of second week of May)

Summer following first year of study: (supported with summer stipend)
Preparation for language exam(s) in fall semester
Reading and preparation for field exams the following year

Year two:

Fall semester:
The Historical Profession (3 credits)
Colloquium (3)
Colloquium (3)
Teaching Assistant
Pass at least one foreign-language exam by end of semester

Spring semester:
Colloquium (3)
Colloquium (3)
Colloquium (3) [or directed readings subject to approval of director of graduate studies]
Teaching Assistant
Pass all foreign-language exams by end of semester
Graduate committee evaluation (by end of second week of May)
Summer following second year of study: (supported with summer stipend)

Reading and preparation for qualifying exams in September
Possible opportunity for revision of research paper for eventual publication

Year three:

Fall semester:
Successful completion of qualifying exams by students required to pass one foreign-language exam (written during first week of September; orals by end of third week of September) or re-take during last week of the semester

Completion and submission of research proposal by end of fall semester for those students passing their qualifying exams in September
Serve as teaching assistant leading discussion sections and grading or research assistant

Possible additional colloquium for students who have not completed course work

Applications for outside grants for summer support and research travel

Dissertation writers’ seminar (optional)

Identification of sources and inter-library loan requests for dissertation research

Spring semester:
Successful completion of qualifying exams by students required to pass two or three foreign-language exams (written during third week of January to be followed by orals within ten days of completion of written exams) or re-take during last week of semester

Dissertation proposal submission and defense before spring break for students who passed their qualifying exams during the fall and by the end of the spring semester for those who pass qualifying exams in January

Dissertation research

Teaching or Research Assistant

Year four:
Application for outside pre-doctoral fellowship support
Dissertation research
Possible opportunity to teach own course

Year five:
Application for outside post-doctoral fellowship support
Dissertation research and writing
Application for employment
Dissertation completion and defense
Possible opportunity to teach own course

Year six:
Goal to complete and defend Dissertation
Application for employment
Application for post-doctoral fellowships

Appendix 4 Required courses

4.1 The Historian’s Craft (HIST 83000)

This is the program’s foundational course, which all students regardless of field of study take during the fall semester of their first year of study. It provides a shared experience for the class, and an introduction to the philosophy, methods, and traditions of historical study.
Chronologically, it covers works from the classical histories of such writers as Herodotus, Thucydides, and Tacitus through the division of historiography into chronicles and analytical approaches, and exposes students to some of the classic practitioners of the field. Finally, in a chronological sense, the course readings approach modern methods, including possibly the Annales school, micro-history, quantitative, intellectual, social, and cultural history. Readings and topics will vary from year to year, but the core purpose of the course is to expose students to the historical roots and traditions of our profession, the influences of the past on present approaches, some exemplary practitioners, and the modern variety, tools, and theoretical underpinnings of our scholarship.

4.2 The First-Year Research Seminar

This course provides all first-year students with a structured environment and shared research experience during their second semester of study. The goal is to build on the historiographical foundation of the Historian’s Craft as students explore their own place within the craft and their chosen fields of study. The course begins with an introduction to ambitions, exposing students to models of research published by graduate students and several exemplary practitioners over a number of fields. Students should get a feel for the standards, fashions, focuses, and expectations of major journals, and the gaps between their own ambitions and skills and those required of professional historians. The course then provides a structure that assists students to make progress towards the models. In addition to the course director, who is a member of the History Department’s research and teaching faculty, students will have a content advisor—a faculty member in their specific field of study who can advise them on sources, debates, and plausible ambitions, and who can give them content criticism of the draft and final paper. The course director will set deadlines for paper proposals, bibliographies, outlines, drafts of introductions, and first and final drafts of the essays. Class members will discuss each other’s work at each stage in an environment of constructive criticism and support. The content advisor will provide the student and the course director with written comments on the first and final drafts. The course director and content advisor will each provide a grade (the content advisor for the paper; the course director for the course and paper); the final grade will average the two.

The goal of the course includes progress towards eventual publication, which will, of course, not be achieved by every student. The course is intended, though, to help all students think of themselves as professionals, to provide a structure that assists students to transcend undergraduate work habits, to elevate students’ ambitions, and to help students gain the discipline and skills necessary for scholarship.

The capstone experience of the research seminar and the first year of study is the annual First-Year Research Conference. This is a formal intellectual-social gathering of faculty and graduate students at the end of the spring semester. The first year students will each present a five-minute oral summary of their research and findings to the gathering, which will be followed by a departmental reception for faculty and graduate students. The mix of social and intellectual agendas, and faculty and students, represents a statement about shared professional and departmental culture that welcomes the first-year students as colleagues.

4.3 The Historical Profession

This course for students in the first semester of their second year provides support for first-time teaching assistants and an introduction to some of the professional commitments that engage academic historians. It addresses topics ranging from leading classroom discussions to
lecturing, ethics, technology in the classroom, evaluating and grading essays, counseling services and dealing with students’ personal problems, teaching theory and innovations, managing time, relationships between research and teaching, applying and interviewing for jobs, writing for publication, and the array of career choices available to those with a Ph.D. in history. The class provides a forum for sharing experiences and addressing problems, and builds on the collective identity developed by the group during their two required first-year courses. The course is pass-fail and does not require extensive out-of-class reading and preparation, thereby also presenting a softer start for first-year teaching assistants who are learning to balance course work, research, exam preparation, and teaching.

4.4 Dissertation Writers’ Seminar
Optional course

This is a year-long one-credit pass-fail seminar available for students in their third through fifth years of study. It provides students who are past the course and exam stages of the program with a supportive atmosphere for sharing dissertation, grant, and fellowship proposals; early drafts of dissertation chapters; and essays under revision for publication. It also creates a community experience to combat feelings of isolation and to help with the adjustment to the absence of structure that sometimes contributes to attrition at the ABD stage of Ph.D. programs. Discussion of research and writing plans, problems, job applications, distractions, balancing time and professional and personal demands are all possible focuses for sessions. The only requirement is commitment to attendance and participation.