This guide supersedes all previous handbooks. For Graduate School policies and procedures, see the latest editions of the Graduate School Bulletin of Information and the Graduate and duLac: the Graduate and Professional Student Handbook.
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Appendix: A Typical Course of Study
I. Introduction & Statement of pedagogy

The Department of History at Notre Dame offers PhD degrees in the fields of American, Medieval, European (early modern and modern), and Latin American history. Our students sometimes situate themselves squarely within one of these geographically bounded fields, and sometimes between or beyond, working in the history of the Atlantic world, colonialism, the environment, religion, gender, law, business, and other issues and themes. The department is particularly interested in supporting student interest in global histories, or local histories set within global contexts. We enjoy strong support from the University’s premier international institutes (the Kellogg Institute for International Studies, the Kroc Institute for Peace Studies, the Nanovic Institute for European Studies, and the Keough Institute for Irish Studies). Our students also benefit from departmental programs in Europe, including partnerships with Oxford University and Bielefeld University.

The department also offers PhDs within two joint degree programs, one with the Program in the History and Philosophy of Science, and one with the Kroc Institute’s Peace Studies program. Students in these two joint programs complete all History PhD requirements, with some adjustment in content and pace. For more information, see the HPS graduate handbook (http://reilly.nd.edu/) and the Peace Studies graduate handbook (http://kroc.nd.edu/phd). PhD students may also complete graduate minors in Gender Studies, Irish Studies, and Film Studies.

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, teaching, and leading as well as in negotiating professional challenges, applicable to a wide range of careers. Academic historians publish and teach; they also serve a variety of roles as reviewers; consultants; citizens of their university, field, and profession; and colleagues. Historians can apply their skills in a wide variety of settings, working as museum curators, in libraries, for government agencies, as administrators, for presses, in public or private archives, at historical sites, and beyond. 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.

Research, writing, and teaching lie at the core of our program. Students should aspire to produce original scholarship that makes major contributions to historical knowledge, to share their contributions in public settings and as published work, and to develop their skills as teachers in their field.

Students should aspire to complete their PhD in five-to-six years: roughly two years of coursework, transitioning through exams and the dissertation proposal, and two-to-three years to research and write the dissertation. While each students trajectory may vary, this Graduate Guide lays out the rules, regulations, and normal expectations for the program.
The Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) and the department’s administrative assistant for graduate studies (DGSA) provide advice and administrative support for the program.

II: Candidacy Requirements

Students must complete five major requirements to advance to degree candidacy (or ABD status). These include language requirements in their field, coursework required by the department and their field, the qualifying (or comprehensive) exams, the dissertation proposal, and the department’s professionalization requirement, which includes TA assignments. Notre Dame’s Graduate School requires that all students advance to candidacy no later than the end of year four; however, the History Department expects students to complete these requirements by the end of year three. Students who have not met completed all by that time will not normally be continued to year four. Upon petition of the student and in consultation with their academic advisor, the Graduate Committee may extend this deadline.

A. 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 normally 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 the end of their third year (in the case of students requiring two or more languages).

B. Course work

Students normally register for twelve courses (thirty-six credits at three credits each) during their first two years of study, averaging three courses each semester. Two of these are required for all History PhD students: the “Historian’s Craft” and “Research, Writing, and Publishing” (see appendix).

All students must be registered for 9 credit hours every semester while enrolled in the PhD program. Questions concerning registration should be directed to the Graduate Administrator or DGS. Students should always consult with both their principle academic advisor and the DGS before registering for courses each semester. Students may transfer up to two courses from previous History MA programs toward their Notre Dame coursework with the approval of the DGS and their academic advisor; this is normally done in year two of the program.
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. They may register for courses outside the department of History, though normally not more than two courses.

Incompletes are possible in regular courses but also cause of some concern about student progress; in any case, all work must be completed within one month after the end of the semester, as per Graduate School regulations.

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. We also believe that independent work is a professional expectation above specific requirements and we expect students and faculty to regularly work together outside the classroom.

C. Research Papers

All History PhD students must complete at least one major research paper in each of their first and second years. These projects must be based on original, primary source research and of the scope of a traditional seminar paper. Students may develop these papers within the context of a particular course (some of our graduate courses require research papers, in others they constitute one option, and in still others are not an option), as part of an independent courses (“Directed Reading”), or independent of any course work. Students should always consult their principle advisor when planning research papers; they can provide useful opportunities to explore possible directions for dissertation research. All students will take the required “Research, Writing, and Publishing” course in their third semesters, which provides an opportunity to refine and workshop one of these two research papers. Ideally, all research for the paper work-shopped in RWP would completed before the start of that semester.

Appendix 1 presents a typical yearly schedule of course work and other activities.

D. Qualifying Examinations

Qualifying examinations consist of written and oral examinations with four faculty. By the end of their third semester of study in year two, students should have identified the four fields in which they will take exams and the faculty who will examine them in each. These decisions should be made in consultation with the academic advisor, and approved by the DGS.

One field might be considered a “dissertation field,” and focused accordingly, while others test teaching and/or research competence within a field or area agreed on with the
examiner. Students gain approval of reading lists from the faculty testing in each field, and should be sure to clarify their examiners’ expectations.

Passage reflects the faculty’s judgment that the student has adequate knowledge of the reading list, problems, and methods of the field. 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.

Students normally schedule their examinations during the Fall semester of their third year, although they may do so as soon as the end of their fourth semester. It is the student’s responsibility to schedule the examination through the Graduate Program Administrative Assistant, in consultation with the four examiners. The examination is held 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 written examination consists of four individual exams, one from each examiner. Normally, each examiner presents several questions, asking the student to write on two. Each written exam (of two questions) must be completed in two hours, scheduled with the DGSA. The four written exams are taken over a period of one week; the examiners will read the completed exam in their field and report the grade to the DGSA 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. 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.

The oral examination consists of questioning by the same committee of four 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. The student will retake only the failed portions of the exam with new questions on the same body of literature, with 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.

E. Dissertation Proposal

Doctoral dissertation proposals are submitted to a committee consisting of their advisor and three other faculty members within a semester of the time in which the student passes qualifying exams, and normally no later than the end of the third year. At least three
members of the dissertation committee should be History Department teaching and research faculty, except with the approval of the DGS.

Dissertation proposals should aim for a length of roughly ten-to-fifteen 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, and a bibliography. Models of successful proposals are available, and students should always work in close consultation with their primary advisors.

Students should work with their advisors to schedule a defense of the proposal with their committee. During the defense the student presents a brief overview of the project, followed by a period of questions and discussion by the committee. The advisor is responsible for coordinating paperwork with the DGSA, including the signatures of all committee members.

F. Professionalization, Teaching Assistantships, and the Job Market

The History Department seeks to train students as professional historians in ways beyond course work, exams, and dissertation research.

i) All students must complete the department’s workshop series during their second year. The “Historical Profession” workshops focus on the nature of the historical profession, pedagogical skills, grant writing, career planning, and other topics. Most workshops are also open to all History PhD students.

ii) All students are expected to serve as Teaching Assistants (TAs) during the four semesters of their second and third years. These assignments may include running discussion sessions, grading, collaborating with faculty various ways, and occasional lecturing. There are also occasional opportunities to serve as a research assistant (RA). The department also recognizes the professional advantages for graduate students who teach their own courses, and attempts to provide opportunities for as many graduate students as possible at some point after they advance to candidacy.

iii) The Department supports students on the job market by offering special mentorship, a series of workshops, and some financial support for preliminary job interviews.

iv) Several units on campus provide additional guidance, workshops, and financial support for professionalization activities, especially the Graduate School (http://graduateschool.nd.edu/professional_development/), the Kaneb Center for Teaching and Learning (http://kaneb.nd.edu/), the Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts (http://isla.nd.edu/), and the Career Center (http://careercenter.nd.edu/).

G. Evaluation of Progress
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 (the "first year exam") and write a short evaluation for the graduate committee. Short written evaluations of the student’s research paper by their advisor and/or other faculty will also be part of the graduate committee’s evaluation, as will the written evaluations from faculty teaching courses in which the student was enrolled. The graduate committee will make a determination on the student’s continuation to the second year of study based on these evaluations, and in consultation with the student’s academic advisor. Incompletes are grounds for serious concern, which may lead the graduate committee to impose a warning or probationary period. Failure to meet such a deadline can result in further probation 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 and criteria for evaluation of the research paper and the graduate committee’s decision on continuation is the same as for the first year. Completion of language exams in a timely manner is also relevant to the decision about continuation in the program.

The History Department expects its graduate students to maintain a B+ (3.33) grade point average. Grades of B or lower 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. Students must complete at least twelve graduate level courses in History and related disciplines for a letter grade. 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 likely 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 nine credits of dissertation research with their advisor.

Students may receive the temporary grade of “I” (incomplete) at the discretion of the faculty member teaching the course in question. 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. The Graduate School imposes a one-month deadline before the grade becomes an automatic “F”. 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.

The Notre Dame Graduate School stipulates that all 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 funding and 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 to the DGS and the Graduate School 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.

III: Other Matters

A. Funding

The Department offers financial support to all entering students for five years, plus two summers, unless the student wins a special University fellowship package that exceeds this minimum. The support package includes tuition, a living stipend, and a subsidy for health insurance. All students are strongly encouraged to seek outside funding through dissertation research and write-up grants during years three through six, 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. Students who receive a year-long external fellowship may defer one year of their departmental support to their sixth year, but not beyond. Students in good standing are eligible for up to eight years of tuition funding.

Students do not normally take courses during the summer, except for intensive foreign-language study. Reading for exams, preliminary dissertation research, and language preparation are the usual focuses of graduate students between semesters. Additional 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 after the first and second years.

B. Credit and Transfer of Credit

Students in their first and second years of study must register for nine graduate-level credits each semester. Students receive credit towards their degree for graduate level courses and (exceptionally) 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, with the possibility of credit for a second three-unit history course with the approval of their advisor and the DGS.
Graduate students may register for undergraduate language and methodology classes outside the department, with the approval of the DGS, although these do not normally count toward departmental requirements.

C. The 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.

D. 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.

E. 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 1: A Typical Course of Study

First year of study

First-year students are expected to take the required “Historian’s Craft,” five subject area courses with members of the teaching and research faculty, and research and write at least one major research paper, either in the context of a class or not. Students should work to identify their primary academic advisor before the end of the first semester, and should consult their advisor regularly when considering classes and making decisions about major paper assignments and summer programs. The Director of Graduate Studies serves as program advisor for all first and second year students, advising and approving course choices and other program activities in conjunction with the student’s academic advisor.

First year students are encouraged to begin thinking about the four fields in which they will be examined after finishing course work, and should also begin exploring potential dissertation topics, in close consultation with their advisors.

Full-time first-year students will normally complete eighteen credit-hours of course work (three courses each semester), including “The Historian’s Craft.” 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 department holds a “First Year Research Conference” at the end of each academic year, where all first year students present the fruits of their major research paper from that year in a supportive and celebratory environment.

All students participate in a “first-year examination,” where each meets with and is examined orally by two members of the Department of History’s teaching and research faculty in early May. 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.

Students who successfully complete the first year of study are provided summer financial support, based on their plans to read independently in their chosen field or fields of study, to prepare for language exams, or to pursue preliminary dissertation research. 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 in consultation with their advisor.
All first year students should take primary responsibility for managing and planning their graduate and professional career.

**Second year of study**

Second-year students will normally complete eighteen hours of course work (three courses each semester), including the required “Research, Writing, and Publishing” (RWP). They are also required to attend the “Historical Profession” workshop series, which provides support and instruction for beginning teaching assistants and an introduction to an array of professional issues that include and transcend teaching. All second-year students should expect to serve each semester as Teaching Assistants. 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 third semester of study, students should have identified the four fields in which they will take qualifying exams, and the faculty who will examine them. They will also have gained approval of reading lists from these faculty, clarified the examination criteria for each field, and made substantial progress towards preparation for the qualifying exams.

Second year students also must complete a second major research paper, and should have moved toward completion of language exams and all course work. The satisfaction of these expectations, as well as assessment of promise to complete dissertation work, 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.

**Third year of study**

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.

Students typically spend the second summer completing their reading and study for their four qualifying exams, and are encouraged to continue and deepen exploratory dissertation research, including archival visits and early proposal preparation. Many students apply for additional travel and research support from university centers and institutes during the winter of year two.

Most students will take their qualifying examinations during the Fall semester.

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

Third-year students are expected to complete and submit a dissertation proposal to their advisor and three other members of the teaching and research faculty within a semester from the time of their qualifying exams.

The Graduate Committee reviews all students at the end of the third year; those who have not advanced to candidacy will not be normally continued in the program, though they may petition the Graduate Committee for an extension.

The Dissertation

The dissertation is the capstone of the graduate program in history. Many fields, sub-fields, and affiliated programs sponsor dissertation writers groups or seminars. History PhD students are strongly encouraged to join one, or to discuss with the DGS creating their own with departmental or extra-departmental support.

The graduate program aspires to students’ completion of dissertations by the end of their fifth or sixth year of study.

Ph.D. candidates are strongly encouraged to consult with their committee members over the course of research and writing and should stay in especially close contact with their advisors. 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 (or occasionally five) committee members at least six weeks prior to the expected date of the dissertation 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 timeline 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 anticipate and meet all 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 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 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 nine research credits with their advisor (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.