

History Graduate Student Handbook

Department of History and Philosophy

Welcome to the Master of Arts in History. This handbook is to provide graduate students like yourself with a comprehensive manual about the program. Please refer to it throughout your candidacy in the program to help you make informed decisions about your academic career.

We also encourage all incoming graduate students to read the Policies & Guidelines of the Graduate School of Austin Peay State University.

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Policy 6:003

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Initial Advisement:

Soon after being admitted to the program, please contact graduate program coordinator for programmatic advisement. You should complete your initial advisement to determine your program of study and discuss the formation of your committee. These tasks must be completed before you begin your first semester in the program.

Selecting Plan of Study Options

Students pursuing the Master of Arts in History have a choice between thesis or non-thesis option. Students must also choose their primary field of study and a secondary field of study, otherwise known as guided electives. There are three fields of study to choose from: military history, US history and world history. Students must take 12 or 15 hours in their primary field and 9 or 6 hours, respectively, in their secondary field.

Selecting Your Graduate Committee

After consulting with the graduate program coordinator and selecting a plan of study, you need to construct your graduate committee that includes a chair and two other faculty members. Your committee must consist of professors under whom you have studied. You need to consult with these faculty members and ask them to be on your committee.

If you are unfamiliar with the APSU history professors, you can find a comprehensive list of professors, their contact information, and their academic specialties on the website for the Department of History & Philosophy.

Two members of your committee, including the chair, must be from your primary field of study (your “guided electives”). The third member must be from your secondary field of study. Keep in mind that your committee can be changed, but faculty must agree to serve on it. Once your chosen committee members agree to be on your committee, they must sign your program of study. The chair of your committee will become your graduate adviser. Your committee needs to be completed during your first semester, excluding summer terms.

Updating Your Program of Study

Remember, your program of study must be kept up to date. If you wish to change any courses that you have taken and/or change your graduate committee members, you should complete a new program of study form. If these records are not kept up-to-date, issues will arise when you apply for graduation at the end of your tenure in the program.

Research Plans of Study:

For the Master of Arts in History, you have a choice of two plans of study: non-thesis and thesis.

Non-thesis Option

You must complete a minimum of 30 graduate semester hours in history, including a core group of three required courses that consist of: HIST 5001 Research Methods; HIST 5029 Graduate Seminar; and HIST 5043 Historiography. Students are required to take HIST 5001 in their first semester in the program (or the first semester it is offered) and are strongly encouraged to take HIST 5043 in their first year of graduate study. The courses available in the graduate program are found in the Graduate Bulletin.

Research literacy requirements will be satisfied by the successful completion of your course work and by submitting a research paper to the Departmental Graduate Council for approval of research literacy. You may complete this research-literacy paper in any of your courses. You must submit the paper for approval through the chair of your graduate committee, who will submit it to the Departmental Graduate Council no later than two weeks prior to the last day of scheduled classes before graduation.

Thesis Option – Graduate Student Thesis Procedure

The graduate student must obtain approval from the Graduate Council before undertaking a thesis project. This process should be initiated as early as possible in the student's academic career, and before finishing 18 credit hours.

1. The graduate student should first conference with his or her assigned adviser about the potential of a thesis. If the adviser does not agree to the tentative project or think the student lacks the ability to complete a thesis, then the adviser will notify the student to that effect and refer the student to the graduate coordinator for further conference.
2. If the thesis adviser agrees to the thesis project, the thesis adviser will guide the graduate student in writing a thesis prospectus that needs approval of the Graduate Council. The thesis prospectus needs a one-paragraph introduction, a tentative thesis statement, a brief literary review and a bibliography that includes both primary and secondary sources. Once the prospectus is completed, the thesis adviser will conference with the Graduate Council, which will either accept or reject prospectus.
3. If the prospectus is accepted, then the graduate student will be able to take six credits of thesis research. If the prospectus is rejected, then the graduate student will have to take the non-thesis track.

CHECKLIST FOR THE MA IN HISTORY

Thesis Track (36 hours)

Required Core Courses (9 hours)

HIST 5001 Research Methods
 HIST 5043 Historiography
 HIST 5029 Graduate Seminar

Non-Thesis Track (30 hours)

Required Core Courses (9 hours)

HIST 5001 Research Methods
 HIST 5043 Historiography
 HIST 5029 Graduate Seminar

Required core courses should be taken within the first two semesters, excluding summer terms

Guided Elective Fields:

Primary Field (12 or 15 hours)

HIST _____
 HIST _____
 HIST _____
 HIST _____

Secondary Field (6 or 9 hours)

HIST _____
 HIST _____
 HIST _____

Guided Elective Fields:

Primary Field (12 or 15 hours)

HIST _____
 HIST _____
 HIST _____
 HIST _____

Secondary Field (6 or 9 hours)

HIST _____
 HIST _____
 HIST _____

Guided Elective Fields to choose from: Military History U.S. History World History

Thesis Research (6 hours)

Comprehensive Examinations

Written Examination
 Oral Examination/Thesis Defense

Comprehensive Examinations

Written Examination
 Oral Examination

Security Studies Certificate:

All program candidates have the opportunity to earn an optional Security Studies Certificate. In order to qualify for the certificate, students must complete four of the following security studies courses:

HIST 5011- Cold War Political-Diplomatic Issues

HIST 5017- The Military in Nontraditional Roles

HIST 5019- Unconventional Warfare in History

HIST 5022- American Foreign Policy in the 20th Century

HIST 5028- American Military History since 1919

HIST 5033- History of Airpower

HIST 5034- The Economy and Modern Warfare

HIST 5037- The Vietnam War

HIST 5076 - The Modern Middle East

Comprehensive Exams:

You must pass your comprehensive exams to be granted a Master of Arts in History. Your comprehensive exams are divided into two parts: written and oral exams. These exams are administered by your graduate committee under the supervision of its chair. Once you reach your final semester, begin discussion with your graduate committee chair about the need to complete your comps. The chair will work with you on scheduling both your written and your oral examinations. You are required to wait at least 24 hours between submission of your written exam responses and the oral examinations. However, it is a good idea to allow at least a week between your written exam and your oral examination so that professors have time to review your written answers and provide feedback prior to your oral examination.

Part I – Written Examinations

When your written exam date draws near, the chair will ask you to contact your graduate committee members submit questions for the written exam to your committee chair. Your Graduate Committee Chair supervises your comprehensive exam, and its form is at his/her discretion. The exam may consist of questions from any course you have taken. The written exam is administered via email or conducted on-site at the discretion of your graduate committee. If you are taking the exam via email, you have 24 hours from the time you open and view the questions to complete and return exam answers to your chair. If taken onsite, you will be given a single, three-hour session to complete the exam. If you follow the thesis track,

then your thesis will also need to be submitted to your graduate committee before you take your written exams.

After submitting your written responses, your committee will review your responses and provide feedback. Review this feedback in preparation for your oral examination.

Part II – Oral Examinations

The oral exam will be conducted within a single, two-hour session. During this session, you will be questioned by any faculty member within the department who attends the session. The oral exam tests content mastery, general knowledge and historiography appropriate for a developing scholar. The oral exam may be conducted via telephone/conference call at your request. Your committee may allow you to correct minor portions of the written exam if deemed appropriate. Therefore, it is important that you review the feedback provided about your written exam responses. If you follow the thesis track, then the oral examination will include a defense of your thesis.

The results of the comprehensive written and oral examinations will be recorded on the “Verification of Thesis/Field Study Research and/or Written-Oral Exam Completion Form” provided by the Dean of Graduate Studies. This completed form must be submitted to the Dean of Graduate Studies no later than two weeks prior to the last day of scheduled classes before graduation.

Re-Comping Guidelines

If you fail any part of the comprehensive written and/or oral examinations, you will be required to wait at least one semester before retesting.

Types of Failures and Re-comping Guidelines: Written and Oral Examinations

- Passed all three written questions, but failed orals = Oral exam must be retaken without restrictions on areas of testing by the examiners.
- Failed one written question, but passed the orals = Retake the topic of the written portion that you failed on the exam. The retest will be limited to the subject area for which the student's knowledge was deficient. It is up to the discretion of the student's committee as to whether the student must repeat the oral portion of the exam.
- Failed one written question, failed oral = Must retake the written part of the exam that the student failed, but the written portion of the test will be limited to the subject area for which the student's knowledge was deficient. However, the student must retake the oral examination without restriction on areas of testing by the examiners.
- Failed two written questions (by policy, exam does not proceed to the oral part of the exam) = Must retake the entire exam without restrictions on areas of testing by the examiners.

- Failed three written questions (by policy, exam does not proceed to the oral part of the exam) = Must retake the entire exam without restrictions on areas of testing by the examiners.
- Passed all three written questions, failed orals = Must repeat the oral examination without restrictions on areas of testing by the examiners.

Types of Failures and Re-comping Guidelines: Thesis Defense

- Written thesis accepted, failed oral portion of the exam, but successfully defends thesis = Must repeat the oral portion of the examination, but the oral exam will be limited to course content and mastery of relevant historiography (i.e. the thesis is not subject to further examination).
- Written thesis rejected (By policy, exam does not proceed to the oral part of the exam) = Must repeat the entire exam to include both written and oral portions without restrictions on areas of testing by the examiners. At the discretion of the committee the student may be required to change to the non-thesis track.

Failure after Retesting a Second Time

For both thesis track and non-thesis track, if a student fails the comprehensive written and oral examination a second time, he or she shall be dismissed from the graduate program without a degree as per University

Addenda:

Minimum Grade Requirements

In order to successfully graduate from the program, students must earn at least a 3.0 GPA and pass a comprehensive examination that is both written and oral.

Policy on Incompletes

In certain cases, students may earn an incomplete, or “I,” which temporarily takes the place of a letter grade for a course. The purpose of the “I” is to give good students more time to complete course work. An “I” cannot remain on a student’s record indefinitely, however, and students are expected to complete the necessary assignments in order to remove any incompletes from their records in a timely manner. If a student feels that he or she will need an “I” in a course, they are responsible for communicating their situation effectively with their professors. The issuing of an “I” is up to the discretion of the professor, and professors are not required to allow students to take an “I.”

Students will not be allowed to carry more than two incompletes unless approved in advance by the Graduate Council. Before issuing an incomplete, all graduate faculty must verify that the student is carrying no more than one “I.” If the student already has two incompletes on his/her record, the student must get permission from the Graduate Council before the faculty member can issue the third incomplete.

Directed Independent Readings

Independent readings are offered to students so that they can pursue more detailed study about a topic of interest under the direction of a faculty member. If a student has an idea for an independent study, he or she must discuss this with the faculty member the student would like to work under. If the faculty member agrees to work with the student on an independent study, students must then petition their committee chair and the department chair or graduate coordinator in order to take a section of HIST 5023 - Directed Independent Readings. A student may only take two HIST 5023 Directed Independent Readings, unless they receive written permission from their committee.

Changing from Thesis Track to Non-Thesis Track

A student may choose to switch from thesis track to non-thesis track as late as one month prior to graduation if unable to complete the thesis in a timely manner, provided all other criteria for graduation are met in time for graduation.

Graduate Assistantships:

There are a limited number of 20-hour graduate assistantship positions.

General Description of the Graduate Assistantship

A graduate assistant (GA) assists an assigned graduate faculty member with course preparation and with grading survey and core course exams, quizzes and research papers. Graduate faculty will provide supervision.

Duties of Graduate Assistants

- Attend class and discussion sections and act as the professor's representative before, during and after class.
- Locate and retrieve materials required for teaching and grading students.
- Hold office hours at least three days per week for a total of six hours minimum. Office hours should accommodate students with both MWF and TR schedules.
- Hold review sessions for exams, quizzes and required course projects/assignments.
- Grade exams, quizzes and required course projects/assignments.
- Assist professor with minor clerical work, such as photocopying.

Secondary (Voluntary) GA Duties

- Teach, as a learning opportunity, no more than one survey course class-meeting per semester.
- May be asked on occasion to proctor exams for the department.
- Graduate assistants are not obligated under any circumstances to support the professor's research and scholarly activities.