

HISTORY

Department of History

School of Arts and Humanities

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Program Description

Pursuing a graduate degree in history should be enriching both personally and professionally, equipping the individual with a deeper understanding of the past as well as providing an appreciation of the complexities of the present. From a professional perspective, it opens the door to a number of careers. A Master of Arts degree in History is usually a requirement for teaching the subject at community colleges, and it provides an excellent complement for teaching the history/social science framework at the high school level. Students completing the MA program will have developed critical, analytical, and writing skills that are of value in various fields. They will have received what is widely considered an excellent preparation for careers in public relations, journalism, law, politics, and the civil service. For those considering a Ph.D. in history, and eventually teaching at the university level, the MA program gives students a taste of what is involved and prepares them for doctoral work. Although the program does not require knowledge of a foreign language, students are strongly encouraged to develop a reading ability in a language other than English.

The MA program in History at CSUB offers two options: examination or thesis (see “Program Options” below).

Application Process and Admission

Those persons seeking a Master of Arts degree in History must apply for graduate study to both the History Department (the application is available online or from the department) and the university Office of Admissions (the application is available online at www.csumentor.edu). Admission to the university does not constitute acceptance into the History MA Program as a graduate student. All applicants are encouraged to contact the Graduate Program Coordinator when applying.

Admission Requirements

The following criteria must be met for admission as a Classified Graduate Student in History:

1. A baccalaureate degree in history from an accredited college or university; if it is not in history, students may be asked to take up to four upper-division undergraduate courses at CSUB and thereafter be assessed by the History Graduate Committee before being formally admitted as a Classified Graduate Student;

2. Good academic standing at the last college or university attended;
3. Transcripts showing an overall 3.0 GPA in the last 60 semester units (90 quarter units) of the last two years of college or university coursework;
4. A letter of intent;
5. Evidence of historical writing (preferably an upper-division research paper, demonstrating your research and analytical skills);
6. Two letters of recommendation, ideally from university instructors when possible.

The History MA program at CSUB does NOT require the GRE exam.

Classification of Graduate Students

There are three classifications for students in the History graduate program:

Classified Standing

A student who meets all the requirements for admission to the MA program in History will be admitted as a Classified Graduate Student.

Conditionally Classified Standing

Students who have been accepted into the History MA program by the History Department will be conditionally classified when the department admissions committee requires them to take up to four (4) courses for preparatory work (most often in the case of non-history majors).

Advanced to Candidacy

Classified students who have maintained a 3.25 GPA and have satisfied the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) will be advanced to candidacy in the term in which they intend to graduate. Upon admission to the university and graduate-level study in the History Department, students should discuss with the Graduate Program Coordinator their plans to fulfill the requirements of the MA Program. It is the student's responsibility, in consultation with the appropriate faculty members, to choose the examination or thesis option, fields of study, and to organize an examination or thesis committee.

Committee Selection

Each MA student in History must have a committee, either to provide examinations or to read and guide the thesis. The Graduate Program Coordinator can provide assistance in forming an MA committee.

Academic Advising

It is essential that the MA student stay in contact with the Graduate Program Coordinator and the committee chair, so that the department can provide current information to help the student move expeditiously through the program.

Good Academic Standing

To remain in good standing in the program, a student must attain a 3.25 GPA in HIST 5030 and the first three additional 5000-level courses he or she takes. A student who does not do so may not continue in the program.

Transfer Credit

Credit for graduate courses from other institutions, up to a maximum of 9 semester units (13.5 quarter units) will be considered by the Graduate Program Coordinator and the Department Graduate Committee.

Requirements for the Master of Arts in History Program Options

There are two program options leading to an MA degree in History: the examination option and the thesis option. HIST 6970 and 6980 are credit/no-credit courses. Graduate students are encouraged to earn as many units as possible in 5000- or 6000-level courses. A maximum of 12 semester units, however, may be earned in 4000-level courses. Graduate credit in a 4000-level course requires submission of a “Petition for Graduate Credit,” signed by the instructor and Graduate Program Coordinator, indicating what additional work is required for graduate credit to be awarded.

Once students decide on the examination or thesis option, they should secure the appropriate Plan of Study from the Graduate Program Coordinator. This Plan of Study, which will be kept in individual students’ files, will formally indicate committee members, coursework leading to the MA degree, date of classification, and satisfaction of the GVAR (see below).

Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GVAR)

All MA candidates must demonstrate writing competency at the upper-division level. The requirement can be satisfied in one of two ways: take HIST 3000; or take the university’s waiver exam. Details on the GVAR waiver exam are available at: <http://www.csub.edu/testing/tests/test%20description/GVAR/>.

Waiver of GVAR

MA students may be exempted from the GVAR if the following apply:

1. The student has graduated from a CSU or UC since 1980.
2. The student earned the following score on a standardized test taken since 1980: CBEST—41 or higher on the writing portion; GMAT—4.5 or higher on the writing portion; GRE—4.5 or higher on the analytic writing portion of the GRE General Test.
3. The student has had one or more articles published as a first author in a refereed professional journal (student must submit this work to the chair of the university-wide GVAR committee with a formal request to waive the GVAR).

4. The student already holds an MA or MS in any discipline that included a master’s thesis or project (student must submit this work to the chair of the university-wide GVAR committee with a formal request to waive the GVAR).

Requirements for the Examination Option

The examination option path to the MA degree provides an excellent foundation for those who plan to teach at the high school or community college level, as well as those considering the PhD. It generally is completed in less time than the thesis option and provides students with a broad base of knowledge and bibliography that will be of significant value when they are preparing courses in their teaching career.

- A. The Master of Arts in History program with examination option consists of 30 semester units:
 1. HIST 5030: Historical Research Methods and Historiography (3)
 2. Four graduate seminars, at least one in each of the broad areas: The Americas and World History (12)
 3. Preparation for and completion of HIST 6980: Comprehensive Examinations (3)
 4. Additional graduate (5000- or 6000-level) or 4000-level courses (12). Students may take no more than 40% of the program (12 units) in 4000-level courses.
- B. Courses
 1. HIST 5030: Historical Research Methods and Historiography (3)
 2. The Americas
 - a. HIST 5110: Reading Seminar in United States History to 1865 (3)
 - b. HIST 5120: Reading Seminar in United States History since 1860 (3)
 - c. HIST 5130: Reading Seminar in the American West (3)
 - d. HIST 5310: Reading Seminar in Latin American History (3)
 3. World History
 - a. HIST 5610: Reading Seminar in the Ancient Mediterranean World (3)
 - b. HIST 5620: Reading Seminar in the Atlantic World (3)
 - c. HIST 5510: Reading Seminar in European History (3)
 - d. HIST 5410: Reading Seminar in the Asian World (3)
 - e. HIST 5420: Reading Seminar in Africa/Middle Eastern History (3)
 4. HIST 6980: Comprehensive Examinations

Examination Committee

The examination committee will consist of two History Department faculty members who taught two of the student’s four reading seminars. The student shall choose one of the committee members (subject to that member’s consent) to

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chair the committee. The committee will help students prepare for MA exams. The examination results will be forwarded to the Graduate Program Coordinator, using the following grading scale: Honors, Pass, or Fail.

Written Examinations

Students who have maintained at least a 3.25 GPA in their graduate coursework should obtain the signature of their committee chair prior to taking their exams, and must be enrolled in the university in HIST 6980 in the semester in which they take the exams. The exams shall consist of two three-hour written exams, with one exam administered by each member of the committee. The exams are scheduled over a one-week period and are offered once a semester. (*Note: No student shall be permitted to take an examination in a field in which he or she has not had formal course work.*) Any failed examination may be repeated one time within the following 12-month period.

Requirements for the Thesis Option

The thesis option path is designed for those students who expect to continue on for the PhD or an advanced degree through other research and writing-intensive graduate programs. Permission to pursue this option is contingent on departmental approval.

- A. The Master of Arts Degree in History with thesis option consists of 30 semester units.
 1. HIST 5030: Historical Research Methods and Historiography (3)
 2. Three 5000-level graduate seminars in a chosen field related to the thesis topic (see the seminars listed above) (9)
 3. HIST 6970: Thesis research and writing (3-6). The student may take it as a directed (or guided) research course— independent study—each semester of the second year of study to complete the thesis
 4. Additional graduate or 4000-level courses (12-15). Students may take no more than 40% of the program (12 units) in 4000-level courses.

Thesis Proposal

Students are reminded that a good master's thesis is a significant piece of written work, usually requiring research in primary sources. Because primary sources are scarce at CSUB, the choice of thesis topics is severely limited, and students need to assure the Department Graduate Committee that source material necessary to the topic is available. The thesis topic should be selected at the time of achieving Classified Status in order to ensure the maximum amount of time for completion. Research for the master's thesis or project that involves data from or about human subjects may be required to be reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research (IRB/HSR).

Students should meet with their thesis director and discuss in detail their subject, the elements of a thesis, and the sources to be examined before submission of the thesis proposal. The proposal, accompanied by chapter descriptions and a bibliography, shall be submitted to the thesis director and approved by the thesis committee no later than one semester before enrolling in HIST 6970. The names of the thesis committee members should be submitted at the same time.

Thesis Committee

The thesis committee shall consist of three faculty readers: the specialist reader (chair) and two others. If the thesis topic involves expertise in another discipline, one reader may be chosen from that discipline with the approval of the thesis director and the Department Graduate Committee. The thesis committee will judge whether or not the thesis represents sound research and will ensure that it meets the standards of the profession in originality, scholarship, and written English.