

Timeline: History M.A. Program

This timeline offers a model for what graduate students in History should be doing each semester of their graduate study, in order to successfully graduate after two years.

Year 1

Fall

- History Program Graduate Orientation events (August).
- Register for 9 credit hours of graduate-level (5000-level) courses.
- Select Main Advisor, notify Graduate Director by October 1.
- Identify a thesis topic. Begin readings in secondary literature and primary sources.
- Content knowledge: sit in on lecture courses in your field(s).
- Meet regularly with your advisor. Submit a thesis proposal to advisor by end of first semester.
- Begin seeking out funding opportunities – for archival research and coursework funding – at UW and beyond. These deadlines come up quickly, so begin this process as soon as possible.

Spring

- Register for 9 credit hours of graduate-level (5000-level) courses.
- Select all Thesis Committee Members in consultation with main advisor. Submit **Committee Assignment Form** to Grad Director by May 1. [Form available online via Office of the Registrar.](#)
- Thesis Proposal Presentations (February).
- Submit application for History Program research funding to Chair of Scholarship Committee in February (deadline will be announced each year).
- Identify your fields of study --- major field and comparative/thematic field. Make this decision in consultation with your main advisor.
- Content knowledge: sit in on lecture courses in your field(s).
- Continue seeking out funding opportunities for archival research and coursework funding.
- Prepare a literature review for your thesis topic, in order to conduct field research with a mastery of the historical content and historiography of your topic.
- Prepare for archival research. Identify archives and collections for your research. Contact archivists and learn archival policies, hours, when archivists will be on vacation, etc. Practice archival document analysis, time management, technology use, etc. at AHC. Plan travel and accommodations.
- Language Exam (complete by August 15).

Summer

- Conduct archival research. Begin analyzing your archival sources and brainstorming a chapter outline for your thesis.
- Be in close touch with your advisor and plan to submit a chapter outline for your thesis by September.
- (Optional) Register for 4 credit hours of HIST 5960, Thesis Research.

Year 2

Fall

- Register for 9 credit hours of graduate-level (5000-level) courses.
- Complete your **Program of Study Form** in consultation with your main advisor. [Form available online via Office of the Registrar.](#)
- Write a full draft of your thesis by January (or by the deadline determined by your advisor). Create a writing schedule with your advisor.

Spring

- Register for 4 credit hours of graduate-level (5000-level) courses such as HIST 5960, Thesis Research, if not already taken.
- By March, revise all thesis chapters, in response to advisor comments.
- This is an ideal revision schedule to graduate on time, assuming an April 30 Thesis Defense date:
 - March 15: send fully revised thesis to advisor. Advisor will either require additional edits or give student permission to send full thesis to committee readers.
 - April 1: send full thesis to all committee readers. Readers require 2 weeks to give feedback.
 - April 15: receive comments from committee readers, make needed revisions.
 - April 20: send “final” draft of thesis to all committee readers to secure “green light” for defense.
 - April 30: Thesis Defense.
- As soon as possible in your final semester, you must submit your **Anticipated Graduation Date** to the Office of the Registrar as soon as possible in your final semester. [Log in to WyoRecords to declare your Graduate Date.](#)
- Pay graduation fee to Cashier’s Office.
- Order MA regalia (early spring)
- Ask faculty member to hood you at graduation.
- Thesis Defense.
- Submit **Report on Final Examination Form** (thesis defense form) to the Office of the Registrar. [Form available online via Office of the Registrar.](#)
- Deposit thesis with UW Libraries.
- Graduate!

M.A. Program Requirements

Graduate students are expected to take 9 credit hours per semester, unless otherwise authorized by the student's main advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies.

Candidates for the Master of Arts degree in History are required to complete a minimum of 31 hours of graduate (5000) level credit. Students must complete 27 hours of coursework, with at least 24 hours in history. This will include:

1. History 5880, History Theory.
2. 12 hours of history course work in 5000-level, non-dual-listed courses (excluding HIST 5880).
3. 4 hours of thesis research (HIST 5960).
4. Students must demonstrate a reading knowledge of a foreign language appropriate to their research. In special cases, other relevant historical tools may substitute for the language requirement upon approval of the thesis adviser and the Graduate Coordinator. Generally, either of the following options may meet the language requirement:
 - a. Passing a language exam administered by the Department of History. This must be completed by the end of the first year with the appropriate faculty.
 - b. Completing the equivalent of the fourth semester of a language as offered at the University of Wyoming. All courses must be passed with a grade of C or better (may be taken pass/fail).
5. In the spring semester of the first year, typically in early February, as scheduled by the Department Chair, the student will publicly defend his/her thesis proposal, which must include a written research prospectus and bibliography.
6. The student will successfully defend the final thesis draft before the Graduate Committee.

Graduate students will identify two "fields" of study, in consultation with their main advisor: one time/place field (such as Modern U.S. History), and one thematic field (such as Environmental History), both of which correspond to the student's thesis research.

Thesis Proposals: In the second semester, students will give presentations on their thesis at the Thesis Proposal Symposium. Thesis Proposals are due to the Graduate Director one week prior to the Symposium.

Thesis Proposal Guidelines:

1. Identify your project. What is your topic? What are your central research questions? Why is this project important? What historical methodologies and schools of thought will you draw on in the thesis?
2. How does your project engage with the existing historiography? Identify the scholarship that shapes your thesis project, and how your thesis will contribute to the field.
3. How will you conduct research for your project? What types of sources will you examine, and what research methodologies will you use to analyze them? Identify the archives and specific collections you plan to use, and outline your plans for summer research.
4. What is your proposed timeline and budget for your research?

Format: Each presenter will have 10 minutes to present, followed by 5 minutes of questions from the audience. Students should make use of appropriate audiovisual aids in their presentation (e.g., a PowerPoint presentation). Student should take notes on audience questions and suggestions, as they will help to strengthen the thesis project.

Thesis: Students will complete an independent thesis in their second year, representing a substantial piece of original scholarship contributing to existing knowledge in the historical field of their choice.

The thesis must engage at a professional level with existing scholarship, employ relevant theoretical frameworks, contain original archival research, and make a compelling and new contribution to the field.

Theses vary considerably in length and format; this should be determined in close consultation with a student's Main Advisor. An average thesis contains an introduction, three main chapters, and a conclusion. An average length is between 90 and 125 pages. Past theses are available through UW Libraries.

Thesis Defense: The student will defend the final thesis draft before their thesis committee in the spring semester of their second year. This will be arranged by the Main Advisor, when they feel the student's thesis is ready to be defended.

Program Structure: the following faculty and staff positions support our M.A. program:

Department Chair: The Department Chair tackles the administrative work of the department, in coordination with staff. These faculty members also represent the Department of History and American Studies to the UW community and administration.

Graduate Director: The Director of Graduate Studies facilitates the structure of the M.A. program. Questions about necessary forms, deadlines, and other program issues are the Director of Graduate Studies' purview.

The Graduate Committee: The Graduate Committee is responsible for Graduate Program policy, admissions, and TA awards.

Graduate Mentoring Coordinator: The Mentoring Coordinator works with the Graduate Peer Mentor to provide training and support for incoming graduate students.

Department Administrators: The staff makes the Department and the Graduate Program work. They perform an enormous range of tasks from student questions to Department budgets.

Main Advisor: A student's Advisor or Committee Chair is the single most important faculty member for each graduate student. A student's main advisor will direct their primary time/place field; help them decide on a thesis topic; and direct their research and writing.

Important Graduate Contacts

Department Chair: [Jeff Means](#)

Director of Graduate Studies: [Adam Blackler](#)

Graduate Committee: [Renee Laegreid](#), [Melissa Morris](#), [Peter Walker](#)

Graduate Committee Chair: [Renee Laegreid](#)

Graduate Mentor: [Alexandra Kelly](#)

Department Administrators: [Leif Cawley](#), [Caroline Bragg](#)