

## Proposal for a History MA Online Option for Teachers

CGS Agenda Item: 16-61 Effective Fall 2017
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History Department  
Eastern Illinois University

### **Rationale for option:**

The History MA program at EIU has historically served high school teachers, in accordance with EIU's tradition of teacher training. In recent years, however, changes in K-12 education, as well as the availability of more accessible online degree programs, such as Educational Administration, have led to a dramatic decline in the number of teachers pursuing the MA in History at EIU.

A survey of 110 current secondary history and social science teachers suggests there is a market for an online MA program in History. Of the respondents who do not have a degree (42%), 60% (63 of 105) indicated they would be interested in an online MA program in History.

The History Department at EIU currently has the resources to offer an online option in-load. Offering an online MA option would allow us to serve that pool of potential students while continuing to offer our First Choice face-to-face program.

### **Option description:**

This online course of study would be an option within our MA program. The option will not lead to teacher licensure, and all publicity material will make that clear. Instead, the option offers traditional training in historiography and research in the areas of American, premodern, and modern world history, with courses scheduled around teachers' annual employment schedules. The option is structured as a cohort program, with required courses offered in specific semesters. Students will need to agree to the cohort model at the beginning—that is, sign a waiver acknowledging that should they deviate from the cohort, they would still be able to complete the option but at a much slower pace. Because of the necessity to offer two courses each summer, we will initially admit students only every other year in order to ease the demand for summer graduate seminars.

Students would begin in the summer with a 1-week, 1 c.h. residency on the EIU campus. The residency portion includes introduction to historical research. In the Fall students would enroll in a required course in historiography. Subsequent semesters include three required proseminars (US, premodern, modern). Students will take one seminar in each field, then at least two further seminars. Each student will also take an independent study with an available instructor. Finally, the option concludes with a 1 c.h. capstone in which the student prepares materials necessary for demonstration of comprehensive knowledge.

**Sample option schedule:**

HIS 5001 Summer Institute in Graduate History (on campus) (1 c.h.)	Su 17
HIS 5000 Historiography (3 c.h.)	Fa 17
HIS 5800 Proseminar in American History (3 c.h.)	Sp 18
US Seminar (3 c.h.) (e.g., HIS 5310	Su 18
Seminar Premodern History (3 c.h.)	Su 18
HIS 5810 Proseminar in Premodern History (3 c.h.)	Fa 18
HIS 5820 Proseminar in Modern History (3 c.h.)	Sp 19
US seminar (3 c.h.)	Su 19
Modern seminar (3 c.h.)	Su 19
US Seminar (3 c.h.)	Fa 19
HIS 5990 Independent Study (3 c.h.)	Sp 20
HIS 5999 Capstone in Grad History(1 c.h.)	Su 20

Courses would be offered by EIU History Department faculty in-load.

**Rationale for option organization:**

The option would be limited to K-12 teachers because this is the student market we intend to serve and because our current traditional option offers preparation for community college teaching (and teachers in community colleges would already have Master's degrees.) Our face-to-face option is geared toward research, publishing, and post-secondary teaching training.

Many online programs are offering low residency components of the option to build a sense of community among the students and to provide the personal training traditional degree options offer. The residency in this case would be one week at the beginning of the option, in which students will be introduced to advanced historical research methods and will also be oriented to the department faculty and Booth resources.

The proseminars will provide curricular consistency as well as the broad overview of the discipline that graduate students need.

The coursework in American and World history reflects the teaching demands of K-12 teachers, but also the broad strengths of the department. It should also be added that the survey suggested a high level of interest in ancient history.

The schedule offered here suggests a cohort model. This is because offering an option with rolling enrollment would require we offer more online courses each term, or else we would not be able to assure students could move toward degree in a timely manner. Rolling enrollment would require that we run what would essentially be two parallel degree programs rather than an online concentration. We

have also decided that, at first, at least, accepting cohorts every other year would make the summer course offerings most manageable.

The schedule also reflects the Fall-Spring work schedules of most teachers. We conducted interviews with teachers, most of whom are currently enrolled in our program, and they suggested strong support for the 15-week Fall-Spring model. This preference was based on their experience with graduate coursework and their experience with the outside-the-classroom commitments teachers often have during the regular school year. Managing two concurrent fifteen-week courses or two consecutive 8-week courses in a single semester was inconceivable to several of the teacher-students with whom we spoke. (For some perspective on how long teachers expect to take to complete a degree: 55% of respondents to the survey conducted last Fall indicated that the maximum time they would expect to complete a degree was 2-3 years; 33% indicated 4-5 years and only 5% indicated 1 year.)

These teachers also suggested that financial aid (in the form of federal aid and/or loans) for which 6 c.h.s would be required was not a primary concern for them; they planned to pay for a degree out of pocket or with tuition waivers from their school district.

## Catalog Format for New Graduate Program Proposal

### Master of Arts Program in History: Online Option for Teachers

- 1) Program Mission: The History MA Online Option for Teachers offers a 32-hour online curriculum for advanced study of U.S. and World history from the ancient period through the modern periods. In addition to expanding their knowledge of these fields, students engage the significant historiography as well as develop their skills in research, writing, and historical thinking. The course of study includes an initial one-week, on-campus summer residency, followed by online seminars that are offered part-time to accommodate full-time teaching schedules. The degree can be completed in three years. This option does not lead to teaching licensure.
- 2) Accreditation: N/A
- 3) Admission Requirements: To be eligible for degree candidacy, applicants must meet all of the requirements for admission to the Graduate School (see “Admission to Graduate Degree and Certificate Programs”) Additional requirements include completing an application from the appropriate History Department Graduate Coordinator, and submitting to the coordinator of the MA Program in History a statement of professional goals, a curriculum vitae (resume), and three confidential letters of recommendation, including one from a current or former supervising principal or department chair. Admission to the graduate program in History requires a minor in history or its equivalent. Students must have written approval of the department prior to counting any graduate-level course (outside Eastern Illinois University’s History Department) toward graduate credit.
- 4) Degree Audit: The graduate plan of study is the EIU Degree Audit, which is generated automatically in the Degree Audit Reporting System (DARS) at the time of degree or certificate candidacy. Modifications of the standard EIU Degree Audit are submitted by the graduate coordinator to the certification officer in the Graduate School at the time modifications are approved. The Degree Audit serves as an unofficial summary of requirements for the program. Degree and certificate candidates are advised to review the comprehensive summary of the Degree Audit process specified on the “Requirements for All Degree and Certificate Candidates” section of the Graduate Catalog. Individual programs may require candidates to submit plans of study in addition to the Degree Audit, candidates should consult with the program coordinator.  
*(Note: This is standard language included in all graduate program listings.)*

5) Degree Requirements: Degree requirements include those outlined for the master's degree by the Graduate School (see "[Requirements for the Master's Degree](#)"). Students must also complete the residential Summer Institute held on EIU's campus, Historiography, three proseminars, and an independent study. Additionally, students must complete all elements of the capstone (HIS 5999) that constitute the final examination process and must submit their revised independent study research project in order to be awarded the certificate of comprehensive knowledge.

a) Required Courses: *Total Credits: 32*

HIS 5001 Summer Institute in Graduate History (1 c.h.)

HIS 5000 Historiography (3 c.h.)

HIS 5800 HIS Proseminar in American History (3 c.h.)

HIS 5810 Proseminar in Premodern History (3 c.h.)

HIS 5820 Proseminar in Modern History (3 c.h.)

HIS 5990 Independent Study (3 c.h.)

HIS 5999 Capstone in Graduate History (1 c.h.)

Students must also take one seminar in each area (premodern, modern, and US) (9 c.h.) plus two further seminars (6 c.h.)

6) Concentrations and Options *if applicable (This language is for a specific option.)*

a) Courses and hours specific to concentrations: N/A

7) Electives: Students may take two seminars (6 c.h.) in US or World (non-US) history.

8) Thesis, Capstone, Internship *(if applicable):*

HIS 5999 Capstone in Graduate History (1 c.h.)

9) Graduate Assistantships *(include any specific requirements to qualify for assistantships in this program, as well as contact info ie: graduate coordinator):* N/A