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Graduate Student Handbook

Master of Arts in History

firstchoice
GRADUATEPROGRAM
EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Graduate programs achieving the distinction of “First Choice” have applied and been subjected to rigorous review from EIU’s Council on Graduate Studies, with oversight from the Graduate School, to ensure they meet the highest standards of scholarly excellence as evidenced through sustained achievement of criteria developed and adopted by the Council in 2006.

This handbook aims to provide basic information for graduate students entering the Eastern Illinois University history graduate program. Our master's degree program in History offers students an accessible yet intense and challenging graduate education experience. We put a premium on flexibility (with concentrations offered in U.S., Premodern and Modern World History), small seminar classes, close faculty-student interaction, and numerous opportunities to develop and practice the skills of independent research, writing, and critical analysis. The curriculum combines traditional approaches with innovative, thematic courses in social, cultural, gender, and global history.

Our faculty are PhDs from top ranking universities and all engaged in research, having produced dozens of books and articles in the past several years. Simultaneously our faculty has earned reputations as dedicated teachers, committed to their work both in and outside the classroom. A 2007 review conducted by EIU's Council on Graduate Studies and Graduate School awarded the History graduate program the distinction of "first choice"—the first graduate program to be so honored.

Every year between nine to twelve students enter our program. Roughly ten percent pursue our thesis option, the remainder complete their degree through coursework. While the program and curriculum is challenging—our students have thrived. Almost universally, graduates praise our program as an important stage in their professional and personal lives.

Research Facilities and Scholarly Resources

The History Department has collaborated closely with EIU's Booth Library to build research collections—both traditional resources (books and periodicals) and non-traditional (electronic databases). Special collections at Booth include the University Archives and the Illinois Regional Archives Depository, containing state government records of historical and genealogical significance.

Through Booth Library, history graduate students have access to a plethora of both primary and secondary materials. Just a decade ago the quantity and quality of such online resources would have been unimaginable. These sources include *JStor*, *Project Muse*, *Congressional Universe*, *Early English Books Online*, *British Periodicals*, and *Making of America*. Online newspaper collections include the historical *New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *The Times* (London), *African American Newspapers: the 19th Century*, *The Chicago Defender*, *The Civil War: A Newspaper Perspective*, and the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. Virtually all of these resources are accessible through our off-campus proxy. Students also enjoy access to other regional libraries including the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign libraries (located roughly one hour north of Charleston).

Publishing and Presenting Your Research

One of the hallmarks of our graduate history program at EIU is the myriad of opportunities we provide to publish and showcase graduate research and writing. All students should consider presenting a scholarly paper at an academic conference as a sort of capstone of their graduate careers. Our graduate students have presented award-winning papers at regional Phi Alpha Theta conferences and graduate student conferences such as the Northern Illinois University Graduate Association Annual Conference. Additionally, our students have given papers at conferences as far away as Virginia and Minnesota. Supplemental funding for travel can be secured through the Graduate School's Williams Travel Awards and through the History Department. Each year the Graduate School also sponsors Grad Expo Week, during which history graduate students have put together panels and prepared posters.

The History Department's award-winning annual journal *Historia* [<http://www.eiu.edu/historia/>], featuring the best of both undergraduate and graduate research, offers a venue for students to publish their work in a more traditional format. To provide our students with first-hand experience in the world of publishing and historical editing, the department offers *HIS 4900: Historical Publishing*, a course in which graduate and undergraduate students together work to produce *Historia* (as well as other projects, such as producing our department's annual newsletter). The department's *Localités/Localities* website [www.eiu.edu/~localite/], dedicated to local history and its global connections, offers a nontraditional format to present student research. Other opportunities to publish, especially book reviews, increasingly are available on the Internet. We encourage students to explore all these options and view—from the very beginning of their graduate careers—their research and writing as something worthy of sharing with the public.

Advising and Mentoring

The graduate coordinator is official advisor for all students in the M.A. program. All questions and concerns, especially about technical programmatic issues, should be directed to the coordinator. All students are also required to select a graduate mentor from the history graduate faculty whose research specialty matches the student's main area of scholarly focus. The faculty mentor helps the student select an appropriate course of study, serves as the major professor of the written and oral examinations, and, if applicable, directs the student's M.A. thesis project. Ideally, students select a mentor in their first semester. The coordinator will supply students with a "faculty mentor selection form" to be completed and signed by both mentor and student and returned to the coordinator. Students are encouraged to meet regularly with both their mentor and the coordinator. At least a semester beforehand, student and mentor should begin preparing for exams, including compiling a bibliography and organizing an exam committee. Students must keep the coordinator fully apprised of their exam plans and schedules.

Face-to-Face Option: Required Courses

HIS 5000—Historiography. Ideally taken in the first semester of graduate study, the course introduces students to the methodologies and theoretical frameworks that historians employ and serves as the foundation for subsequent course work, independent research and/ or thesis preparation. The course involves reading and discussion of key historiographical, theoretical and methodological issues, organized and led by a number of guest professors (although one primary instructor oversees the seminar).

Proseminars: HIS 5800, HIS 5810, HIS 5820. These proseminars in US, premodern world, and modern world history provide introductions to the major themes and scholarly debates within these three broad fields of concentration. Students in the tradition, face-to-face program take two of these, each corresponding to their major and minor fields of concentration. Students in the online option take all three.

HIS 5001 and HIS 5999. Students in the online option take these 1-credit courses. HIS 5001: Summer Institute in Graduate History is a one-week, on-campus course that introduces students to the discipline, its methods and approaches to the past. Students also learn about university resources, including research databases in Booth library. HIS 5999: Capstone in Graduate History represents the comprehensive examination experience. Students write synthetic response essays, construct syllabi, and sit for an interview with a committee.

Courses outside the History Department/Transfer Credits

A limited number of courses taken in other departments can be credited toward the graduate degree in history. Interested students may petition the graduate coordinator by submitting a course syllabus. Courses must be numbered above 4775 to receive graduate credit. Likewise up to 11 hours of credit may be transferred from other universities. Again students must petition the graduate coordinator in order to transfer credits. If a student can demonstrate that graduate courses in other disciplines are necessary to his or her goals, the coordinator may approve a limited number of hours outside of History.

Time Limit on Graduate Work

According to the rules and regulations of the EIU Graduate School, only courses taken within the past six years may count toward a degree. Students who exceed this limitation may petition the Graduate School for an extension.

Independent Study and Thesis Credit

Under some circumstances students may enroll in independent studies (HIS 5990) with interested faculty members when available courses do

not move them toward degree. Students should approach a faculty member, who then must prepare an independent study proposal outlining work to be completed and grading rubric. The independent study form must be approved by the coordinator and departmental chair. Only six credits of independent study may count toward a degree.

After successful passage of the thesis proposal, a student pursuing the thesis option may enroll for thesis credit (HIS 5950), usually six credits. As with an independent study, the student's mentor must complete a form to enroll in 5950, generally establishing firm dates by which a bibliography, and completed draft chapters are to be submitted. The form must be signed by both the coordinator and departmental chair. No more than six credits of 5950 or nine credits of independent study combined with thesis credit may count toward a degree.

Program and Degree Requirements

Thesis Track

Students on the M.A. with thesis track complete 30 semester hours, up to six of which may be completed as HIS 5950 (thesis credit). Students on the thesis track work closely with their thesis advisor to prepare a "thesis proposal," normally submitted in the second semester of course work. The proposal must outline an original research project and the methodology to be employed. Additionally it must include a substantial bibliography of relevant primary and secondary sources and a schedule for completing the project. The proposal must be approved by the Graduate Studies Committee before a student is permitted to enroll in thesis credit HIS 5950 (students may take between 3-6 hours of thesis credit). Once approved, students writing a thesis should obtain a Thesis Manual from the Graduate School [http://www.eiu.edu/graduate/students_thesisresearch.php]. The thesis must conform to the rules and mechanics of the most recent edition of Kate Turabian's *A Manual for Writers* and the Graduate School's Thesis Manual. The thesis director and two other readers with professional knowledge in the topic area (one of whom may be outside the History Department) must approve the completed work. The thesis director and at least one of the final readers shall also sit on the individual's oral examination committee. Thesis writers are still required to write exams, although oral exams are devoted primarily to a discussion or defense of the thesis.

Students complete at least 18 semester hours (including HIS 5950) in their field of concentration, and 9 semester hours in the student's minor field. *No more than 10 credit-hour courses numbered 4750-4999 may be applied to the degree.

Recent theses include:

Monica Burney, "The Meaning of a Woman's Work: Refugees, Statelessness, Nationality, and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 1918-1931" (M.A. 2018)

Moses Allor Awinsong, "The Power of the Periphery: Aid, Mutuality and Cold War in US-Ghana Relations, 1957-1966" (M.A. 2018)

Michael I. Bradley, "Incarcerated, Transported and Bound: Constructing Community among Transported Convicts from Britain to the Chesapeake, 1739-1776" (M.A. 2017)

Kimberly Jones, "Favorite of Heaven:' The Impact of Skin color on Atlantic Ethnic Africans in the Eighteenth Century" (M.A. 2016)

Alyssa Peterson, "'We live in the midst of death:' Medical theory, public health, and the 1793 Yellow Fever epidemic" (M.A. 2016)

Shawn Hale, "Butchered Bones, Carved Stones: Hunting and Social Change in Late Saxon England" (M.A. 2016)

Emily Scarbrough, "'Fine Dignity, Picturesque Beauty, and Serious Purpose:' The Reorientation of Suffrage Media in the Twentieth Century" (M.A. 2015)

Non-thesis Option

Students complete a total of 32 credit hours. Students complete at least 18 semester hours (including HIS 5990) in their field of concentration, and 9 semester hours in the student's minor field.

*No more than 12 credit hours in courses numbered 4750-4999 may be applied to the degree. If a student can demonstrate that graduate courses in other disciplines are necessary to his or her goals, the Coordinator may approve a limited number of hours outside of History.

**Students who have completed coursework but have yet to complete exams and thesis are required to register for HIS 5951, a zero credit course at no cost to students, allowing them continued use of Booth Library and other university facilities. Students should contact the departmental secretary to register for HIS 5951.

Online Option for Teachers

Students in the online option complete 32 credits, which include HIS 5001 (1 credit hours), HIS 5000, HIS 5800, HIS 5810, HIS 5820, HIS 5990, and HIS 5991. Students take five elective seminars in US, premodern, and modern history.

Comprehensive Examinations:

All students in the History MA program (excluding the online option) undertake written and oral comprehensive examinations as a requirement for securing the Certificate of Comprehensive Knowledge. For thesis students, the thesis defense is the oral examination.

Committee: The student works with the Graduate Coordinator to identify three examination committee members, two from the major field of concentration and one from the minor field. The two major field examiners formulate and administer the written exams; the minor field examiner sits on the oral examination committee.

Examined material: The student compiles a bibliography that includes 1) all the significant works read for the major field coursework and 2) all works read for the minor field coursework. In both cases, this usually means all of core and supplemental readings assigned for the course, as well as the major works included in research papers and short assignments. Students must consult with their examiners as they prepare their bibliographies. This single, 2-part bibliography is submitted to the examination committee by the 3rd or 13th week of the semester. (For example: if the student intends to take exams in the 3rd week of the semester, the student must submit the bibliography no later than the 13th week the semester before.) The examination committee must approve the bibliography. Non-thesis students must also submit a revised primary source research paper to their committee.

Exam schedule: Written examinations will be administered four times a year, on the Friday of the 3rd and 13th weeks of the Fall and Spring semesters. The exams will be administered by the Graduate Coordinator, Department Chair, or any member of the graduate faculty. Oral examinations must be organized by individual committees on a case-by-case basis. (Faculty must deliver the examination questions to the Graduate Coordinator at least three days prior to the scheduled examinations.) For AY 2018-19, for example, the schedule would look like this:

Written Exam Period 1	Friday, September 7
Exam Workshop	Friday, October 19
Written Exam Period 2	Friday, November 16
Written Exam Period 3	Friday, January 25
Exam Workshop	Friday, March 8
Written Exam Period 4	Friday, April 5

Oral examinations should be administered no less than one week and no more than three weeks after the successful completion of the written examination.

Preparation for exams: ***Students must take the comprehensive examination workshop in the semester prior to their scheduled exams.*** The workshop will be held on the Friday of the 9th week of each semester. (See sample schedule above.) The workshop will be run by the coordinator or, if the coordinator is unavailable, the department chair or any member of the graduate faculty.

Exam format: *Written examinations:* The student has six hours in which to write four essays. The first two are written for one major field examiner, between 9am and 12pm on examination day. The second two are written for the other major field examiner, between 1pm and 4pm on examination day. Each examiner provides prompts and the student composes the essays on department-issued computers. No notes, books, online materials, or other aids may be used.

Oral examination: For non-thesis students, the oral exam focuses exclusively on comprehensive knowledge of their two fields of study. During the one-hour oral exam, each examiner (two major field and one minor field) takes about 20 minutes to ask the student questions regarding interpretation and historiography. For thesis students, the oral exam is their thesis defense, in which members of the committee ask the students questions about their thesis research and interpretation and how the thesis relates to the scholarship in the two fields of concentration; examiners will also the student to demonstrate comprehensive knowledge in the minor field of concentration.

Evaluation: Major field examiners evaluate the written exams; both examiners review both parts of the exam. All three evaluate the performance on the oral exam.

If at first you don't succeed: Students have three opportunities to pass the exam. There is generally a 60-day waiting period before students may retake their exams. Students who receive a failing grade on either portion of the examination in three successive attempts forfeit the right to earn their degree.

The Graduate Lab

The History Graduate Laboratory features seven computers, printer, scanners and other technology—as well as desk space and shelves for students. All graduate students have access to the lab and are encouraged to use it as a base of operations. Keys, to both the lab and Coleman Hall, may be obtained through the departmental office manager, Donna Nichols.

Study Abroad

Without question the opportunity to travel and research abroad enhances graduate education. While our curriculum does not lend itself well to regular semesters abroad, we encourage our students to investigate summer programs. Dr. Newton Key's summer programs in the UK (HIS 5997) draw many graduate students. Likewise, graduate students have participated in Dr. Bailey Young's Walhain-Saint-Paul archaeology program and Sace Elder's summer in Germany. Both programs offer graduate students exceptional opportunities to conduct primary research in international libraries and archives. Professor Key, for instance, personally escorts graduate students to the British Library and Institute of Historical Research. The History Department supports these programs with an annual study abroad scholarship. Additionally students may investigate graduate study abroad programs offered by other universities (which would require the same approval process as other transfer credits).

Tuition and Fees

For current in-state and out-of-state cost of attendance, see: <http://www.eiu.edu/finaid/cost.php>. Note that fees include a textbook rental charge, which covers some of the cost of textbooks for graduate students.

Financial Aid

The History Department offers several graduate assistantships, fellowships, and awards to support promising graduate students. Departmental stipends are currently above or at par with nearly all other graduate programs in the region. The cost of living in Charleston is low—allowing our students to stretch their dollars. Additional employment opportunities also exist within the university and at local community colleges.

Note: The deadline for consideration for Graduate Assistantships, departmental fellowships, and the IRAD Internship is February 1st for the succeeding academic year. Continuing graduate students should contact the graduate coordinator if they wish to be considered for funding and should request two letters of recommendation from EIU history graduate faculty, to be sent by the deadline to the coordinator. Most year-long awards are granted in the spring to begin the following fall semester. Spring graduate assistantships and summer research awards occasionally are also available.

Graduate Assistantships

The history department awards a number of graduate assistantships. Awarded on a competitive basis, graduate assistantships are normally for the nine-month academic year and include a stipend and tuition waiver (graduate assistants are responsible for student fees). Departmental stipends are currently \$980 per month. Graduate assistants must be enrolled as full-time students in courses approved by the graduate coordinator. They are required to work an average of 15-19 hours a week under the direction of the coordinator or department chair.

Graduate assistant duties provide a substantive introduction to the academic world—mirroring the teaching, research, and service-oriented work expected of department faculty members. Graduate assistants may be expected to act as research assistants, proctor exams, serve as tutors, give occasional guest lectures, and provide other services for the department.

Currently we offer five full (nine-month) graduate assistantships and one half (four-month) assistantships. Full graduate assistantships come with fall, spring, and summer tuition remission. Four-month assistantships carry tuition remission for fall only.

The IRAD Internship

In conjunction with EIU's Booth Library, the History Department offers graduate students the opportunity to gain library and archival experience through the Illinois Regional Archives Depository (IRAD) Internship Program. Interns work approximately 20 hours per week in the University Archives. In return they receive a monthly stipend of roughly \$950, a tuition waiver, and reimbursement of fees. IRAD interns are appointed for the academic year (nine months), and often those appointments run into the summer.

The Coleman Scholarship

The Coleman Scholarship was created through the generous contribution of Charles H. and Dorothee Coleman, the former a longtime Professor of History at EIU. The scholarship is meant to recognize the fundamental importance of history teaching in our society and is normally awarded to one outstanding full-time graduate student pursuing a teaching career at the secondary education level. The award provides for a four-month graduate assistantship.

Other Sources of Funding

In addition to the above graduate awards, history students can compete for several university-wide graduate fellowships. These include the Francis Meyer Hampton Scholarship (up to \$20,000 for two years). Scholarships are also available through campus ROTC. Through the state of Illinois, minority candidates may apply for the Diversifying Higher Education Faculty in Illinois Fellowship. Occasionally graduate assistantships are also available through other departments and university agencies. The coordinator will keep students informed of such opportunities.

The History Department yearly offers a number of monetary awards for outstanding work in the M.A. program, including the Warner and Syndergaard Scholarships. Each year graduate students may also submit essays or thesis chapters for the Hamand Graduate Writing Award (a cash award). A study abroad scholarship and thesis research scholarships are also awarded each year.

Both the Department and the Graduate School (Williams Travel Grants) offer competitive grants for students presenting papers at conferences (offered in both the spring and fall).

The University offers an easy-to-use search engine for locating grants and awards on campus: <http://www.eiu.edu/history/scholarships.php>

Faculty:

An up-to-date list of faculty and their areas of specialization can be found on the department's website:
<https://www.eiu.edu/history/faculty.php?type=&subcat=369>

After Graduation

History M.A. students typically have chosen three paths following the completion of their degrees: teaching at the secondary school or community college level, PhD programs in History, publishing, or law school. Recent graduates, for instance, have found teaching jobs at Omar D. Blair Charter School in Denver, Colorado, Gibault Catholic High School, Purdue University Westville, and Lake Land Community College. Others have enrolled in PhD programs such as Rice University, Louisiana State University, and University of Illinois, Chicago. Additionally, recent graduates have secured positions in diverse fields such as museum collections, academic publishing, journalism, and small business operations. Students looking to learn more about taking their skills on the job market participate in our department's annual History Careers Day events [<http://www.eiu.edu/history/careers.php>] and are encouraged to visit EIU's excellent Career Services Center [<http://www.eiu.edu/careers/>]. Our graduate program, by all indications, enhances both the lives and careers of all its graduates.

Our website hosts a page devoted to alumni [www.eiu.edu/~history/grad/alumni.htm], featuring email links. Feel free to contact alumni with questions about their career choices and advice about yours. Likewise, the History faculty stands ready to help as you investigate career options. Our faculty is more than happy to provide letters of recommendations and general advice. Your relationship with Eastern Illinois University, we hope, will be life long.

All information contained in this handbook valid as of summer 2018

