

History, Ph.D.

The Doctoral Program in History is designed to provide students with advanced historical research skills and a solid grounding in the theory and methodology of history. This combination reflects the Department's conviction that scholars should approach significant questions about the past with rigor and sophistication. The Department requires that students develop critical abilities in dealing with primary sources, secondary syntheses, and the interrelationship of history and theory. Candidates for the Ph.D. in History are expected to gain teaching experience as an integral part of their graduate training. This is accomplished through work as a teaching assistant.

Coursework

Doctoral students take a minimum of 15 formal courses to be completed during the first two years of the program. Ten courses must be taken within the History Department.

History and Theory

Required coursework for doctoral students includes two courses in History and Theory. These courses explore a variety of theoretical issues and methodological concerns that have sparked debate in the humanities and social sciences in the past decades and which remain pertinent to 21st century historical writing. Topics may include the relationship between materialist approaches and cultural analysis; subjectivity and governance; gender and sexuality; ethnicity and racial formation; the politics of religion; "the archive" and archival practice; nationalism and postcolonialism; world history and transnational studies.

History Methods

Required coursework for doctoral students includes one course in History Methods. This course introduces graduate students to some of the most foundational ideas and debates that have shaped historiographical practice over the past half century. This course explores fundamental questions about how historians imagine the past as they try to write about it, how they constitute it as a domain of study, and how (and why) they argue about it.

Field Emphases

Doctoral students are required to take a total of five courses satisfying requirements for specialization in two historical fields, in either area studies or thematic fields. Students take three courses in the first field and two courses in the second field. The Department offers area studies fields in Asian History, European History, Latin American History, Middle East and African History, U.S. History, and World History. Thematic fields vary depending on demand. Students may take courses satisfying field requirements in any order.

Research Seminars

Doctoral students are required to take a two-quarter course sequence in research and writing both their first and second year in the graduate program. In the first year, students take a proseminar on historical methodology (HISTORY 202A) followed by a second quarter (HISTORY 202B) in which they write a research paper that engages the methodologies and questions explored in the previous quarter. Students who enter the doctoral program with a master's may petition to be exempt from the first-year research sequence, pending acceptance of the M.A. thesis as an equivalent to the final research paper of the sequence.

In the second year of study, Ph.D. students take a two-course sequence (HISTORY 204A and HISTORY 204B) in which they research and write a paper on a topic of their choice. The second year research paper is required of all doctoral students.

Professional Development Colloquium

Doctoral students are required to take a three quarter long colloquium (HISTORY 210A-HISTORY 210B-HISTORY 210C) on professional development during their first year in the graduate program. The Professional Development Colloquium introduces graduate students in history to career diversity and life as a professional historian both within and outside academia. It addresses topics including finding support for successful and intellectually rewarding on time degree completion, preparing for different kinds of employment searches, and applying skills learned from academic training to a variety of professional settings.

Language Requirement

All students must demonstrate a proficiency in one language other than English prior to taking the Ph.D. candidacy qualifying exam. Competency in a language may be established either by passing a departmental examination (proctored in the department office) or through extensive language use in one of the research seminars. The language used to satisfy this requirement is subject to their advisors' approval.

Summary of Required Course of Study:

- a. History and Theory - one course
- b. History Methods – one course
- c. Research Seminars - four courses
- d. Professional Development Colloquium – three courses
- e. First Field - three courses
- f. Second Field - two courses

- g. Electives - three courses
- h. Foreign Language Proficiency

First-Year Review and M.A. Conferral

To continue in the doctoral program, students must satisfactorily pass a departmental evaluation at the end of their first year of study; this includes students who entered with a M.A. from another institution.

Doctoral students can be awarded an M.A. from UCI after fulfilling requirements for residence, one language, and successfully completing 36 units, including 28 units in required courses and one of the following: submitting an approved M.A. thesis, passing a one-hour exam in the primary field, or completing an additional 24 units of approved coursework.

The Candidacy Qualifying Exam and Dissertation Prospectus

In the third year of the doctoral program, students prepare for their candidacy qualifying exam and write the dissertation prospectus. Most third year students enroll in the intensive readings course (HISTORY 298) or directed readings (HISTORY 291) to work closely with faculty in preparing for exams and writing their prospectus.

The candidacy qualifying exam is an oral, two-hour meeting during which a student is examined in their first and second field by a committee of four faculty members, plus an additional faculty referee. Upon successful completion of the exam, the student is officially advanced to doctoral candidacy (all but dissertation) and presents the dissertation prospectus in a colloquium including all members of the dissertation committee for formal approval. Both the exam and prospectus colloquium should be completed by the end of the third year.

Dissertation Research and Writing

The dissertation is the most important part of the Department's doctoral program. The dissertation is an original piece of historical scholarship, involving extensive primary research and original analysis of secondary source material. Students spend a year or more engaged in intensive research, and another year or more writing the dissertation. Throughout this period, students work closely with the advisor and the dissertation committee members. The finished dissertation must be approved by all members of the dissertation committee.

Teaching

Most graduate students begin work as a teaching assistant for the Department or School courses during their second year and continue throughout their tenure in the program, except when dissertation research or writing require their residency away from the university. Students have the opportunity to apply to teach their own courses during summer session once they have advanced to doctoral candidacy. Students beyond their second year are required to also apply for teaching positions outside the department, e.g. in Composition or Humanities Core.

Time to Degree for the Ph.D.

Normative time to degree for the doctoral program is seven years. Maximum time to degree permitted is nine years.

Requirements for Admission to the Ph.D. Program

It is desirable that an applicant have the equivalent of an undergraduate major in History; however, the Department also considers students who have previously specialized in other subject areas and who have strong analytical and writing skills. Many students entering the program hold a Masters degree in History, or an associated field. The Department's required grade-point minimums and English Language Proficiency requirements for international student admission are consistent with university policy. A GRE score is not required for admission. Students are accepted for fall admission only.