

Department of History and Classics

August 2020

### **Procedures for Coursework, Comprehensive, and Candidacy Examinations**

(for students entering the program in or after September 2020)

\*\*\*This document reproduces the program requirements as found in the University Calendar, followed by detailed guidelines explaining how students move through the program

### **Program Requirements as Found in the University Calendar**

Reproduced from:

[https://calendar.ualberta.ca/preview\\_program.php?catoid=33&poid=37419&hl=%22HIST%22&returnto=search#tt6823](https://calendar.ualberta.ca/preview_program.php?catoid=33&poid=37419&hl=%22HIST%22&returnto=search#tt6823)

Students are required to complete a minimum of ★12 - ★16 in coursework and a thesis.

#### **Coursework (★12 - ★16)**

Course requirements depend to some extent on the student's previous training and the student's anticipated needs for the chosen area of concentration.

The course requirements must normally be completed by the end of the fall semester in the student's second year in the program

- HIST 602 **if not previously taken**
- One of the following **if the student does not hold credit in equivalent courses acceptable to the Department:**
  - HIST 603
  - HIST 604
  - HIST 605
- HIST 606
- HIST 700
- HIST 701
- one ★3 600-level HIST course or other graduate course with Department approval.

## **Thesis**

- Registration in 900-level THES. After completing the candidacy requirement students are required to complete a thesis, the text of which should normally be 250-400 pages in length.

## **Comprehensive examinations**

After completing their coursework, students are required to complete an oral comprehensive examination in their major and minor fields. From the list of geographic and thematic fields available on the Department website, students can select one major and two minor fields, or two major fields. The major field can be geographic or thematic but, in combination, the doctoral fields must include both geographic and thematic fields. A single oral comprehensive examination covers all the fields. If the candidate passes the comprehensive examinations, they will then be permitted to proceed to the candidacy examination.

## **Candidacy examination**

The candidacy examination will be based on a written thesis proposal and will normally be held by May of a student's second year. Requirements and expectations for the comprehensive and candidacy examinations are detailed on the Department website.

## **Ethics Requirement**

Students fulfill three hours of the FGSR Ethics Training Requirement through HIST 602 if it is taken as part of their doctoral program. Students must complete the FGSR Graduate Ethics Training course and any additional required hours.

## **Professional Development Requirement**

Students fulfill four hours of the FGSR Professional Development Requirement through HIST 602 if it is taken as part of their doctoral program. See the Department website for a guideline of Department resources to fulfill PD hours.

## **Language Requirement**

Students must demonstrate competence in a language other than English according to the procedures specified in the Departmental Language Requirement.

The specific language requirement(s) will be determined in consultation with the student's supervisor. In addition, the student may be required to pass a second language examination, but the Department never requires any student in this program to pass examinations in more than two languages other than English.

### **Residence Requirement**

The minimum period of residence is two academic years of full-time attendance at the University of Alberta.

### **Length of Program**

The time required to complete the program will vary according to the previous training of the student and the nature of the research undertaken; however, four to six years are normally required.

The maximum time to complete the PhD program as set by the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research is six years

### **Description of coursework and timeline**

The PhD coursework is designed to prepare students in their chosen fields of study, to familiarize them with important historiographical ideas and debates, to develop their research and writing skills, and to assist them in preparing to sit their oral comprehensive and candidacy examinations.

Note: students must enroll in \*9 credits/term to maintain full-time status

*Year 1 Fall term:*

\*HIST 602: Research Methods and Resources in History

\*HIST 606: Comprehensive Field preparation course [see Appendix A, at bottom]

*Year 1 Winter term:*

\*HIST 700: Graduate Research and Writing

*Either Fall or Winter term of Year 1:*

\*Methods course: HIST 603, 604, or 605 (or equivalent, with Departmental approval)

\*at least one other \*3 course (600-level HIST course or approved course from outside the Department)

\*language course if necessary

\*up to two (\*6) registrations in THES 900 (during which students read for their comprehensive examinations)

*Year 1 Spring and Summer terms:*

Student reads field lists and conducts preliminary thesis research

*Year 2 Fall term:*

Student completes reading of field lists, works on candidacy proposal, and completes HIST 701 portfolio (see below in “Comprehensive Examinations Process”)

\*HIST 701: Comprehensives and Candidacy Colloquium

\*THES 900 (\*6)

*Year 2 Winter term*

Student takes oral comprehensive examination and candidacy examination

### **Structure of Fields**

The supervisor is responsible for guiding the student in all aspects of the program, including ensuring the selection and defining of fields and determining appropriate examiners.

Students may take one of two options:

- 1) 2 major fields (each equivalent to 60 books), one thematic and one geographical
- 2) 1 major field (equivalent to 60 books) and 2 minor fields (each equivalent to 30 books) each. Among the fields, at least one must be geographical and at least one must be thematic.

Thematic fields may be more closely tailored to the student's theoretical, methodological, and research interests, but will include broader comparative materials with a view to teaching and wider field expertise.

Geographical fields will not be narrowly tailored to the student's thesis topic but rather aim to prepare the student to teach in this area (and to see their own research in broader perspective thematically and chronologically).

There will be a first and second reader for each field. The first reader should be an expert in the field. The second reader should have some familiarity with the general issues of the field but need not be an expert.

All fields and examiners will be selected in consultation with the supervisor.

In all cases, the supervisor should be an examiner in the major field, or in one of the major fields if there are two.

### Establishment of Lists

Examiners will prepare lists in conversation with the student and supervisor.

Students' lists should be finalized by **December 15 of the first semester in the program..**

The supervisor and all examiners (first and second readers for each field) will sign the appropriate form to confirm their commitment to participate. The prepared lists accompany this file.

## **Comprehensive Examination Process**

### Year 2 Fall term

Students will enroll in HIST 701, as well as \*6 of THES 900. While enrolled in the class, students will complete the reading of their lists and produce their portfolios of written material associated with their fields.

The class will be graded on a pass/fail basis.

Examiners are expected to be available for consultation throughout the term, to generate questions for the take-home essays, and to evaluate students' work in a timely manner. The HIST 701 instructor is a course coordinator, but examiners are responsible for setting and supervising content.

***Option One -- 2 major fields (equivalent of 60 books each)***

The portfolio consists of:

\*One essay-format take-home exam *in each of the two fields* (a total of two). Students will be given a choice of questions that require them to synthesize materials on their reading list. Examiners may require that students respond to one or two questions. The maximum length of all written work will be no more than 30 pages in each field, including footnotes and bibliography (one essay of 25 to 30 pages or two essays 12 to 15 pages each).

\*One set of teaching materials for a survey course drawing on the list (course outline, sample lecture, justification) for one of the two fields; the student selects the field.

***Option Two -- 1 major field (equivalent of 60 books) and 2 minor fields (equivalent of 30 books each)***

\*One essay-format take-home exam in the major field. Students will be given a choice of questions that require them to synthesize materials on their reading list. Examiners may require that students respond to one or two questions. The maximum length of all written work will be no more than 30 pages in each field, including footnotes and bibliography (one essay of 25 to 30 pages or two essays 12 to 15 pages each).

\*one minor field: One set of teaching materials for a survey course drawing on the list (annotated course outline with description of topics, concepts, and themes to be covered each week, analysis of assigned readings, and justification of assignments, as well as a full sample lecture (10 pages double-spaced Times New Roman). The goal is to reveal mastery of the minor field.

\*other minor field: Student may choose **either**:

-One essay-format take-home exam. Students will be given a choice of questions that require them to synthesize materials on their reading list. Examiners may require that students respond to one or two questions. The maximum length of all written work will be no more than 20 pages, including footnotes and bibliography (one essay 18-20 pages or two essays of 9-10 pages each).

**Or**

-One set of teaching materials for a survey course drawing on the list (course outline, sample lecture, justification).

### ***Criteria for Evaluating HIST 701***

Criteria: A portfolio submission passes if it demonstrates a broad and deep knowledge of the scholarly literature for which the student is responsible. Such knowledge is made evident by a comprehensive understanding of the literature's major developments and an in-depth command of studies crucial to the specific question/s that the student is addressing. Submissions that do not robustly convey both a breadth and depth of knowledge will be returned to the student for revisions of the unsatisfactory elements (as specified below), and may receive an F if the work remains unsatisfactory. On the whole, the portfolio must unambiguously show that the student has established a strong foundation of knowledge. In short, the designation of a pass indicates that the submission meets the standards of advanced research in the area/s concerned.

Each component of the portfolio will be evaluated by the first and second readers for each field who individually report their decisions to the instructor of HIST 701 on the Portfolio Approval Form. If all agree on a pass, the HIST 701 instructor and the student's supervisor sign off on the form, the student passes, and proceeds to the oral exam. If all do not agree on a pass, the student receives an "incomplete" and continues to work on materials. If the two examiners of a single field are unable to agree, the HIST 701 instructor may ask the Graduate Chair to appoint a third reader. If examiners agree that a student is consistently not making progress toward being ready for an oral, they may fail the student's work, at which point the student receives an F for the course and may be asked to leave the program.

### ***Examinable Content for the Oral Comprehensive Examination***

A single oral exam will cover all fields. It is to be based on the reading lists the students have completed for HIST 701, and on the written work they have generated in that course, or in previous field-preparation coursework (e.g. HIST 603 for Canadianists or East Europeanists)..

Questioning will focus primarily (though not exclusively) on the students' written work from HIST 701, including on the questions they were given but chose not to answer. Examiners will ask questions about the books on students' lists as necessary to establish the student's familiarity with the assigned material.

### ***Format of Examination***

The examining committee will consist of the first and second readers for each of the student's fields. In all cases the committee includes the supervisor.

An exam date will be set at least three weeks in advance. Normally all examining committee members will be present, unless exceptional circumstances require participation by teleconference. At the time the exam date is set, the student's portfolio developed in HIST 701 will be circulated to the examining committee.

Questioning will take place in a format analogous to existing department examinations: it will occur in a set sequence, in two rounds, one of fifteen minutes per examiner, the second of five minutes per examiner.

### ***Criteria for Evaluating the Oral Exam and Possible Outcomes***

The oral exam is meant to test the student's ability to engage in an informed discussion of the various studies pertaining to the fields. An answer's validity comes from the knowledge it shows of the relevant scholarly literature and a student's ability to engage critically with that literature. Responses that do not draw explicitly on the content of the required readings indicate insufficient knowledge. And if an examiner determines that a student cannot adequately address fundamental questions grounded in the relevant studies--including those studies not treated in the student's written work but included in a bibliographical field list for which the student is responsible--that examiner has grounds to fail the oral exam.

In the event of failure, there are three possible outcomes:

- (i) the student may be asked to repeat the oral on all fields;
- (ii) the student may be asked to repeat the oral on one or more specific fields;
- (iii) the department may recommend that the student be asked to leave the program.

### **Candidacy Examination**



The candidacy examination is normally held within four months following successful completion of the comprehensive examination, the student will advance to the candidacy examination.

The examination will be conducted in accordance with FGSR regulations. They can be found at: <https://calendar.ualberta.ca/content.php?catoid=29&navoid=7272#doctoral-candidacy-examination>

No later than three weeks before the candidacy examination, the student will circulate a proposal of a maximum of 20 pages (double-spaced, Times New Roman), including a bibliography listing primary and secondary source materials to the committee.

The proposal should include: the research question, a review of the relevant literature, the methodology, the sources to be examined, and a working bibliography of key secondary works and primary sources.

## APPENDIX A:

### **Description of: HIST 606 Comprehensive Topic Course**

This course, normally taught in the fall term, is intended to help prepare Ph.D. students for their comprehensive exam in a major or minor field. The course and accompanying reading list will introduce students to the narratives of history, encourage them to think historiographically, and give them examples of a wide range of topics, sub-fields and methods. The readings for each week will be drawn from the full reading list for the field. Writing assignments will assist the students to develop their historiographical understanding of the field. The course will constitute the beginning of the Ph.D. student's reading in this field. Following the completion of the course the student will continue to work on the reading list, writing the required thirty page (if a major

field) essay of synthesis in the fall term of the second year in HIST 701. (M.A. students may also enroll in this course.)