



# Masters of Art in History Graduate Student Handbook CA State University, Fresno Department of History 2024-2025

Dr. Lori Clune, Graduate Coordinator



# MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE IN HISTORY REQUIREMENTS

California State University, Fresno / Department of History

*Total = 30 units, 10 (3-unit) classes*

Graduate history courses meet once a week from 6-8:50pm and are open only to program students or by instructor's permission. The History Department offers a 30-unit Master of Arts program with a traditional track and a teaching option (credential required). The traditional track offers two different Culminating Experience options, Comprehensive Exams or a Thesis. Please familiarize yourself with the Division of Graduate Studies' (DGS) "New and Current Students" webpage. The entire Graduate Program needs to be completed within five years.

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## Core (18 units)

### **HIST 200A: Introduction to Graduate Writing and Historiography (3 units, Fall only)**

Students will begin the process of coming up with a working Culminating Experience topic (Comprehensive Exams or Thesis or Teaching Project). Your 200A Final Paper will reflect your knowledge of what other historians have written about your topic. Must be taken in the first semester of the program.

### **HIST 200B: Introduction to Graduate Research and Historiography (3 units, Spring only)**

Your 200B Final Paper will represent your first attempt at doing research on your Culminating Experience topic. It will also satisfy your Graduate Writing Requirement. Must be taken in the second semester of the program.

### **HIST 210T: Topics in United States History (3 units)**

### **HIST 220T: Topics in European History (3 units)**

### **HIST 230T: Topics in World History (3 units)**

### **HIST 297: History Practicum (3 units, fall only)**

Students engage in supervised work experience in a history-related field. Includes one of the following: conduct and present original research, engage in archival or museum work, or prepare and present original lectures in a college classroom setting.

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## Electives (6 units)

Students will select 6 additional units from

### **HIST 210T: Topics in United States History (3 units)**

### **HIST 220T: Topics in European History (3 units)**

### **HIST 230T: Topics in World History (3 units)**

*Note: Students may repeat course numbers but may not repeat topics.*

# CULMINATING EXPERIENCE (6 units)

## Thesis Option

HIST 299A: Thesis (3 units) and HIST 299B: Thesis (3 units)

Note: Students will coordinate with their Thesis Chair to determine the best semester(s) to take 299A and 299B. Once a student registers for 299A they are locked into the Thesis Option.

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## Comprehensive Examination Option

3 additional units from

HIST 210T: Topics in United States History (3 units)

HIST 220T: Topics in European History (3 units)

HIST 230T: Topics in World History (3 units)

and 3 units of

HIST 290: Independent Study (3 units) – Fall 2024 cohort only

Note: Students must receive approval from the Graduate Coordinator prior to enrolling in HIST 290.

Written Comprehensive Examination in three fields chosen from among the following. Not all fields are available at all times. No more than two examinations may be taken from any Group.

### Group I:

- (a) Ancient History, (b) Medieval History,
- (c) Early Modern Europe to 1815, (d) Modern Europe since 1815.

### Group II:

- (a) The United States to Reconstruction,
- (b) The United States since Reconstruction.

### Group III:

- (a) Latin America, (b) Asia, (c) Middle East, (d) Africa.
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## Teaching Project Option

HIST 296: Topics in History for Teachers (3 units) and HIST 298: History MA Project (3 units)

Note: Students will coordinate with their Teaching Project Advisors to determine the best semester to take 296 & 298.

# GRADUATE WRITING REQUIREMENT

## Students fulfill the Graduate Writing Requirement in HIST 200B.

The Division of Graduate Studies' policy on the writing requirement states that, "in accordance with requirements of the State of California, students must demonstrate competence in written English before they apply for advancement to candidacy. For pedagogical reasons, they should demonstrate such competence as early in their programs as possible."

Thus, all students in the History M.A. program must submit their HIST 200B paper to count toward fulfillment of the writing requirement. It will be: fifteen to twenty pages in length and formatted according to standard disciplinary (Chicago/Turabian) style.

Faculty members from the History Graduate Committee will judge the papers based on the following criteria, as laid out by the Academic Senate: comprehensibility; clear organization and presentation of ideas; an ability to arrange ideas logically so as to establish a sound scholarly argument; thoroughness and competence in documentation; an ability to express in writing an analysis of existing scholarly/professional literature in the student's area of interest; and an ability to model the discipline's overall style as reflected in representative journals.

Papers must be acceptable in each of the above areas. If a paper fails to meet the requisites, student will be advised to seek assistance and submit a revised version of the paper at a later date. Papers may be re-submitted only once, unless unusual and compelling circumstances arise. Should a student fail to meet the writing requirement, they will not Advance to Candidacy and will be dropped from the program.

## ADVANCEMENT TO CANDIDACY

Advancement to candidacy essentially gives you permission to proceed toward qualifying for the degree and provides an approved plan of completion. An added bonus of achieving candidacy is that only candidates are allowed immediate re-entry to the Division of Graduate Studies if they require a one-semester hiatus; students in earlier stages of the program must re-apply for admission.

Once students have completed at least twelve units of graduate work, it is the student's responsibility to message the Graduate Coordinator to set up an Advancement to Candidacy meeting. This should happen no later than the semester prior to enrolling in Culminating Experience units. There is no need to bring anything, but plan for the meeting taking fifteen to twenty minutes. The Graduate Coordinator will complete the Advancement form with the student and discuss their culminating experience and any additional required paperwork (i.e., Thesis Committee Form, Comprehensive Exam Intention Form).

# CULMINATING EXPERIENCE COMMITTEES

Whether students choose to pursue a Thesis, Comprehensive Exams, or Teaching Project as their culminating experience, they will need a committee of faculty members. It is the student's responsibility to locate faculty members willing to serve on these committees.

## THESIS

A Thesis requires one Thesis Chair who is chosen first, according to the student's area of proposed research/study. The Chair is the main professor with whom the student will do most of the work. With the Chair's assistance, two additional Thesis Committee members, or readers, will be chosen. As per Division of Graduate Studies regulations, at least two committee members must be part of the department of History's Graduate Faculty. Students will submit a Thesis Committee Form (signed by the Thesis Chair, the two Thesis Committee members, and the Graduate Coordinator) during the fall semester of year two.

## TEACHING PROJECT

A Teaching Project requires one Pedagogical Advisor and one Content Advisor, according to the student's area of study. Students will submit a Teaching Project Advisor Form (signed by the Content Advisor, the Pedagogical Advisor, and the Graduate Coordinator) during fall semester of year two.

## COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS

Comprehensive Examination committees are composed of three independent professors, each of whom will guide students as they prepare to take graduate examinations in the three different and agreed upon areas of study. Students will submit a Comprehensive Exam Intentions Form (signed by the three Exam professors and the Graduate Coordinator) during fall semester of year two.

Please note three important points regarding Culminating Experience Committees:

1. Ours is a medium-sized History Department, consisting of approximately a dozen faculty members. Professors are likely already serving on other Culminating Experience Committees and may be unable to accommodate additional students.
2. As our faculty cannot be experts in all fields, students should be prepared to be flexible about their Culminating Experience topic. Acceptance into the program does not guarantee that the student's proposed Culminating Experience topic can be accommodated.
3. Students should remain in close contact with the Graduate Coordinator and their Culminating Experience Committee to ensure timely completion of their degree.

# GRADUATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

The two organization which are most active for history students are Phi Alpha Theta and the History Graduate Student Association.

Phi Alpha Theta National History Honors Society was established at California State University, Fresno in the spring of 2002. Phi Alpha Theta (PAT) is the highest rated departmental honor society, second only to Phi Beta Kappa on a national level. While predominantly an organization for undergraduate History majors, PAT often works with History graduate students on many events. For more information on PAT, consult their web site [www.phialphatheta.org](http://www.phialphatheta.org) or contact Dr. Dan Cady (PAT Faculty Advisor).

The History Graduate Student Association (HGSA) at Fresno State contributes to the scholarly discussion of history in the department and at the university. HGSA sponsors social events, scholarly talks, and the annual Graduate Student Symposium in the spring. Each History graduate student is automatically a member of HGSA. For more information on events, please check the History MA Slack, Dr. Lori Clune (HGSA Faculty Advisor), or any of the following officers.

## HGSA Officers & Job Descriptions (2024-2025)



(back row: Jordan Ferring, Mariah Tellez, Gina Barile,  
front row: Israel Alvarez, Desdamona Bishop, Clarisa Gomez,  
not pictured: Rob Swart)

### **PRESIDENT (Jordan Ferring)**

The President is responsible for big-picture items, including setting the agenda for and running HGSA meetings, overseeing the annual symposium, and communicating with faculty and students about HGSA activities. They are the public face of the organization, and are ultimately responsible for ensuring things are running smoothly.

### **VICE-PRESIDENT (Mariah Tellez)**

The Vice-President assists the President in ensuring that officers are making progress towards stated goals, running meetings when the President cannot, and assisting all other officers in their assigned tasks as needed.

### **PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER (Rob Swart)**

The Public Relations Officer is in charge of advertising and social media for all HGSA activities, both social and scholarly. Clearly communicating with students and faculty is an essential part of this position.

### **TREASURER (Gina Barile)**

The Treasurer handles all monetary transactions for the HGSA, including payment for speakers and food, filling out orders for the symposium, and securing funds for activities with ASI and all other relevant funding sources.

### **EVENT COORDINATOR (Israel Alvarez)**

The Event Coordinator keeps the HGSA Calendar, ensuring that a variety of both social and scholarly events are being scheduled at decent intervals, ideally no more than two events per month.

### **SECRETARY (Desdamona Bishop)**

The Secretary takes notes and records all meeting minutes, HGSA functions and activities, and keeps the other officers apprised of upcoming items and deadlines. Official correspondence, such as thank you letters to speakers, are the responsibility of the Secretary.

### **HISTORIAN (Clarisa Gomez)**

The Historian takes photos of HGSA events and shares them with the Public Relations Officer and with Dr. Danny Kim, who oversees the History Department website. They maintain a Google Drive with these photos.



**Fresno State History Graduate Student Association**  
[linktr.ee/fresnohgsa](https://linktr.ee/fresnohgsa)

# FINANCIAL AID INFORMATION

Financial assistance for graduate students is complicated, complex, and ever-changing. As such, we have accepted the kind service of the following Ambassadors to assist in clarifying this important subject.

## Financial Aid Ambassadors:

Fall 2020 Cohort: Chip Williams (MA, May 2024, but still providing advice!)

Fall 2022 Cohort: Jackson Kiehlmeier

Fall 2023 Cohort: Jordan Ferring

Fall 2024 Cohort: \_\_\_\_\_

As financial opportunities become available, they will be announced on the History MA Slack.

We recommend that students apply for any fellowships, grants, and awards for which they may be qualified. Here are two:

## Graduate Student Research & Creative Activities Support Awards

- Competitive research merit award.
- Awards are up to \$1,000.
- Major consideration: the scholarship of a student's proposed thesis/master's project.
- Eligibility: all graduate students with a GPA of 3.0 or better who have been advanced to candidacy and who have secured their thesis/project committee.
- Available every spring semester through the Division of Research and Graduate Studies Office.

## Travel Grants

- Available throughout the year.
- Students must have been invited to present a paper or poster at a major professional association conference or society meeting.
- All materials must be submitted at least 30 days prior to the conference/meeting.