# Master of Arts in History Graduate Student Handbook
## CA State University, Fresno
## Department of History
## 2025-2026

### 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 three different Culminating Experience options: Comprehensive Exams, Teaching Project, or Thesis.
Please familiarize yourself with the Division of Graduate Studies' (DGS) "New and Current Students" webpage.
Per California Title V regulations, the Graduate Program must 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 Teaching Project or Thesis). 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. Usually taken in year two.

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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) or*

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

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

*and*

HIST 290: Independent Study *(1 unit with each of 3 comps professors = 3 units)*

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.  Faculty may require examinations be taken in a computer lab, or as an oral exam.

### 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

<u>Students fulfill the Graduate Writing Requirement in HIST 200B.</u>

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 <u>each</u> 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 <u>no later than the semester prior to enrolling in Culminating Experience units</u>. 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 graduate 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 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 (2025-2026)

**PRESIDENT:**          Kenia Rodriguez Aguilar (@Kenia on Slack)
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:**     Adam Hiett (@Adam Hiett)
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.

**TREASURER:**          Austin Jones (@Austin Jones)
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.

**SECRETARY:**  Alexa Gutierrez (@Alexa Gutierrez)
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:**          Monique Goldblatt (@Monique Goldblatt)
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.

**EVENT COORDINATOR:**          Anmol Bhagal (@Anmol Singh Bhagal)
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.

# HISTORY DEPARTMENT GENERATIVE AI POLICY (approved April 2025)

The use of generative AI models to produce or complete assignments in History Department courses is strictly prohibited, unless an instructor gives explicit written permission in their syllabi and/or assignment instructions that allows students to use generative AI. A violation of this department policy will result in significant grade penalties AND will result, [per university policy](#), in a formal Instructor's Report of Cheating and/or Plagiarism to the Vice President of Student Affairs and the Dean of Students. Students who have received explicit, written permission from the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities to use generative AI for coursework may do so but should consult with their instructor in advance.

Definition of Prohibited Generative AI: For the purposes of this policy, generative AI is any automated application that generates narrative, analysis, summaries, or content by mining existing knowledge/works. Although the university has granted students access to certain generative AI platforms, such as ChatGPT EDU and Grammarly, this policy still prohibits the use of these platforms to produce or complete assignments in the History Department unless explicit written permission has been given in the syllabus or assignment instructions.

Justification for Policy: The study of history offers a unique opportunity to develop high-level critical thinking skills by reading complex texts and writing analytical prose. With these critical thinking skills, we gain the ability not only to analyze and interpret the past but also to analyze and interpret the world in which we live. The use of generative AI, as a substitute for reading, writing, or analysis deprives us of these abilities. The department policy prohibiting the use of generative AI seeks to guard against this intellectual loss.

Beyond the cognitive costs that come with the use of generative AI, there are other problems to consider. Generative AI exacts a significant environmental toll, relies on troubling labor practices, raises privacy concerns, and trains itself on existing works without permission from or compensation to their creators.  AI is also prone to error, making it an unreliable source of knowledge.

# Money Available for History Students (https://academics.fresnostate.edu/dgs/gssc/financial/funding-opportunities.html)

**What:**        Sally Casanova Scholars

**For Whom:**     BA to MA students, MA to PhD students

**When:**        application due each February for following year

**Amount:**      up to $5,000 to support activities that foster doctoral readiness (conferences, research, grad school visits, academic organization memberships/journals, etc.

**More Info:**      make appointment with campus coordinator Dr. Everett Vieira III to begin application


**What:**        Chancellor's Doctoral Incentive Program (CDIP)

**For Whom:**     anyone accepted or in a PhD program and interested in teaching at a CSU (do not need to be a CSU alum)

**When:**        Apply December through February for the following fall

**Amount:**      varies, some one-time money, loan forgiveness (up to 10,000/year for 3 years)

**More Info:**      Contact CDIP campus coordinator Dr. Everett Vieira III


**What:**        Graduate Equity Fellowship Program

**For Whom:**     graduate students at an economic disadvantage

**When:**        apply fall and spring, look for call from Division of Grad Studies

**Amount:**      up to $2,000/year

**More Info:**      Contact Jose Medina III (josemedina@mail.fresnostate.edu)


**What:**        Graduate Student Travel Grant

**For Whom:**     enrolled graduate students conducting research or presenting a paper or poster at a conference

**When:**        rolling, apply at least one month before travel

**Amount:**      varies

**More Info:**      contact the Division of Graduate Studies, 559.278.2448 or gradstudies@mail.fresnostate.edu


**What:**        Graduate Student Research and Creative Activities Support Awards (GRACAS)

**For Whom:**     enrolled graduate students conducting research

**When:**        application due each early November, very competitive

**Amount:**      up to $3,000 in support of the quality scholarship of graduate/doctoral student research

**More Info:**      for help or additional information, please contact Jose Medina III (josemedina@mail.fresnostate.edu)