RULES FOR GRADUATE STUDY IN THE FIELD OF HISTORY
(2015-16)

List of concentrations in which the Field offers programs of study: African history, American history, American Studies (minor only)*, ancient history, ancient Greek history, ancient Roman history, early modern European history, English history, French history, German history, history of science, Korean history, Latin American history, medieval Chinese history, medieval history, modern Chinese history, modern European history, modern Japanese history, modern Middle Eastern, premodern Islamic history, premodern Japanese history, Renaissance history, Russian history, south Asian history, Southeast Asian history.

*American Studies is available as a minor only for persons not majoring in American history.

Admissions

Applications for admission should include the scores of the GRE aptitude test (take exam no later than December to ensure scores received by Jan 1 deadline). Students whose native language is not English should take the TOEFL examination (take exam no later than December to ensure scores received by Jan 1 deadline). For the TOEFL exam, the minimum required scores for admission into the graduate school are: Writing: 20; Listening: 15; Reading: 20; and Speaking: 22. The deadline for a complete application is January 1st.

The field grants the Ph.D. degree. In some cases, a terminal M.A. degree is granted.
Degree Requirements

1. Required coursework: All first-year students are expected to take at least three courses (including at least one seminar) for credit during each of their first two semesters in residence. Regular letter grades must be received in these courses. Incompletes are strongly discouraged and must be finished by the beginning of the second year. In the fall semester, all new graduate students must enroll in History 7090, Introduction to the Graduate Study of History, and must complete this course satisfactorily to remain in good standing.

All graduate students must complete one research paper by the end of the second year. The paper should be original scholarship of article length, based on the use of primary sources (for intellectual history that means original texts) subjected to professional source criticism, as well as secondary sources. This requirement can be met by completing a joint reading/research seminar or a dedicated research seminar.

All graduate students are required to take a minimum of seven graduate-level (6000-level or above) seminars before taking their “A” exam (see #5 below).

All graduate students must turn in an approved dissertation prospectus no later than three months after the completion of the “A” exam. The prospectus should be article length, situated in the secondary literature, and should identify (where appropriate) the necessary archival sources. The entire special committee must approve the prospectus.

It is recommended, but not required, that graduate students take the 6000-level research seminar in their first or second year. This course will be offered each spring.

2. The Special Committee: Most aspects of a student’s graduate program are organized by the student and the Special Committee. The Special Committee for Ph.D. candidates consists of the committee chairperson (who must be a member of the Field of History and who will represent the major concentration) and two or more other professors representing the student’s minor concentrations. At least one of the two minor concentrations should be in the Field of History; hence, at least two members of the Committee should be members of the Field of History.

A student may have up to two persons representing the same concentration on his or her special committee. M.A. candidates need a two-person Special Committee consisting of one representative of the major concentration (who will act as chairperson) and one for the minor concentration.

According to the graduate school’s Code of Legislation, “not later than three weeks after first registration in the graduate school, a student must submit the name of the special committee chair or temporary advisor to the graduate school. A director of graduate studies may be appointed as a temporary advisor.”

In the period before the chair of your committee is selected, the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) or the Department Chairperson is authorized by the Graduate School to sign all papers that require the signature of the chair of your committee.

By the time of the Pre-Q exam (early in your second semester, at the latest) you should have identified your committee chair, and entered his or her name in your ‘student center’.

The entire special committee should be chosen and assigned in your ‘student center’ by the time of the Q exam, or by the end of your second semester.

Any changes or additions to your special committee before the A Exam can be assigned through your ‘student center.’ If you decide to make a change to your special committee after the A Exam, you must do so with a paper form available from your Graduate Field Assistant (GFA). This change of committee form would need to be signed by your entire committee, the DGS, and the GFA before it can be turned in to the graduate school.
3. **The Qualifying Examination (“Q” exam):**

**Pre-“Q” Exam:** The student must meet with all members of the Special Committee no later than the second week of the second semester. This preliminary meeting, known as the “pre-Q”, with the entire committee is devoted to evaluating the student’s first semester and planning a direction of study for ensuing semesters.

**“Q” Exam:** At the end of the second semester, the student must take a Qualifying Examination. The purpose of this exam is to evaluate the student’s progress. In advance of this meeting, committee members examine written work (at least two substantial papers) produced by the student for first-year courses. At the oral exam, the committee discusses with the student her/his scholarship and future plans and decides if she/he should proceed in the Ph.D. program, should devote the second year to a terminal M.A., or should leave the graduate program after the first year of study.

4. **Foreign Language Requirement:** All entering students, except candidates for the terminal MA degree who intend to satisfy this requirement by demonstrating proficiency in statistics, must take a proficiency examination in an appropriate foreign language at the beginning of the first term in residence. Those who do not pass the examination must enroll in suitable language courses until proficiency is acquired. For students in fields other than African, American, and English/British history, proficiency (as demonstrated by the College Placement test, or an appropriate pass on a proficiency test administered by the various language departments, or a satisfactory pass on a translation test approved by the DGS, together with the student’s advisor) must be demonstrated IN TWO FOREIGN LANGUAGES before a Ph.D. candidate is eligible for the Examination for Admission to Candidacy. Students in African, English/British and American history are required to demonstrate competence in one foreign language. Students pursuing a terminal M.A. degree must demonstrate proficiency in one foreign language or statistics.

5. **The Examination for Admission to Candidacy (“A” exam):** Ph.D. candidates usually take the “A” exam following two years of coursework. This exam must be completed sometime between the end of the second year and the beginning of the fourth year. The “A” exam must cover one major and two minor concentrations, and is partly oral and partly written. The written section shall consist of at least a four-hour examination in the major concentration and two-hour to four-hour examinations in each of the minor concentrations. It is suggested that these be given on separate days, and that the candidate not have access to notes or source books; however, the format of the exam will be determined by the committee. The oral examination is two hours in length (with one hour normally devoted to the major concentration, and one half hour to each of the two minor concentrations). The oral exam should be scheduled at least three days following the last of the written examinations. A dissertation prospectus may be expected by the special committee in order to discuss research plans at this meeting.

Students must have resolved all incompletes before being permitted to take the “A” exam. Fulfillment of the foreign-language and other requirements (including further language requirements in some concentrations) as a student’s committee may set must also be demonstrated before a candidate for the Ph.D. may take the examination admitting to candidacy. The examination is taken after a student has earned at least two residence units of credit.

6. **Teaching (TA-ing):** Candidates for the Ph.D. in history are generally required to do classroom teaching as part of the doctoral program. Most graduate students will serve for at least one year as teaching assistants in undergraduate courses. The field does not usually give teaching assistantships to first-year
students. However, second through fifth-year students are frequently employed as assistants in undergraduate history courses or are asked to teach a Freshman Writing Seminar (FWS) on the topic of their choice. The faculty encourages graduate students to teach their own courses as part of their professional development.

Students should be aware that the field guarantees funding for only five years. They are encouraged to apply for external grants and fellowships to supplement this aid package and facilitate further years of graduate research and writing.

7. **Thesis defense ("B" exam):** Upon completion of the dissertation, each candidate for the Ph.D. must take the “B” exam, or thesis defense. Candidates normally have sixty days following the exam to submit the final version of the thesis to the Graduate School.

8. **Residence:** Ph.D. candidates must have completed at least six residence units. One residence unit is equivalent to one semester of full-time study completed at an acceptable level of performance. M.A. candidates need two residence units. Ph.D. candidates may earn a maximum of two residence units via summer study or research; M.A. candidates may earn a maximum of one residence unit in this manner. Students entering the Ph.D. program may be granted a maximum of two residence credits for a master’s degree earned at another institution if that degree is relevant to the doctoral program. No commitment regarding transfer of residence credit may be made until after the student has matriculated, and the Special Committee has had an opportunity to judge the student’s accomplishments. A candidate for the M.A. degree may not receive residence credit for previous study at other graduate schools.

9. **The terminal M.A.:** Students who seek an M.A. degree in history, but who do not intend to proceed directly to the Ph.D. at Cornell, must write a master’s thesis and complete a final examination, in addition to the other requirements listed above.

   Students receiving an M.A. degree upon passing the Admission to Candidacy Exam (“A” Exam) are not required to write a master’s thesis.