

## M.A. PROGRAM

At the University of Colorado at Boulder, history graduate students are trained in the central principles and research methods that characterize the discipline of History through class instruction and professional development seminars. They also gain a thorough grounding in their particular geographical area of study as well as an ability to situate that area of study in a larger global context.

All M.A. students will focus their studies in two equally weighted fields:

- a regional/national field: American/U.S. History, European History, or Asian History.
- a global/thematic field: Students will be required to take a variety of courses that examine global and transnational history through specific thematic lenses. Recent global/thematic courses include: Modern Empires, Global Environmental History, History and Memory in Transnational Perspective, The Family in the Early Modern and Modern World, and Microhistory.

For the purposes of the comprehensive examination (portfolio), students are expected to work with their faculty advisors to craft sub-fields of emphasis within both the regional/national and global/thematic fields.

Master of Arts candidates can choose from two course-of-study options, thesis or non-thesis. See “Course Requirements” for details. There are also opportunities for students to participate in [Dual MA Programs](#) with French, Religious Studies, and Asian Languages & Civilizations.

### **Transfer of Credit**

Once a student is accepted into the M.A. program, up to nine hours of graduate credit may be applied to the degree requirements. Please refer to the University of Colorado (Boulder) Catalogue.

### **Advisory Committee**

M.A. students will have a primary advisor and two secondary committee members, one representing each of their two fields (regional/national and global/thematic). These three faculty members will serve on the comprehensive exam (portfolio) committee. Because the committee plays a decisive role in shaping the student's M.A. program, it should be established as soon as possible.

M.A. students who write a thesis may reconstitute their advisory committee for the thesis process. Ordinarily this would mean replacing the global/thematic representative with another faculty member whose expertise better reflects a student's thesis topic.

## Course Requirements

All courses completed at the University of Colorado must be taken in the Department of History, except for courses recommended by the advisor and approved by the Director of Graduate Studies. Most M.A. coursework will be at the 5000, 6000, and 7000 levels, although Graduate School rules allow M.A. students to count six hours of 4000 level coursework towards the M.A. degree. The History Department requires that any M.A. students interested in taking 4000-level courses for degree credit receive approval from their advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies.

M.A. students must complete a total of 30 hours of coursework. Of those, a minimum of 12 credit hours must come in *each* of a student's two fields – regional/national and global/thematic (for a total of 24 hours).

### Required for all MA students:

- HIST 5000 (Historical Methods) – this course will ordinarily count towards the “global/thematic” field requirement.
- A two-semester regional/national field colloquium sequence:
  - in American/US history, HIST 5106: Colloquium in US History (“To 1865” and “Since 1865”)
  - in European History, HIST 5012: Colloquium in European History (“To 1789” and “Since 1789”)
  - in Asian History, HIST 5129: Colloquium in Asian History (South Asia and East Asia).
- For Thesis track M.A. students, six hours of thesis credit (HIST 6950)
- For Non-Thesis track M.A. students, six hours of 7000-level research seminars are required

## Foreign Language Requirement (M.A.)

For students working in fields of history that require the use of foreign languages, their advisory committees may require a demonstration of language proficiency.

## Satisfactory Progress Toward Degree

All students are expected to make satisfactory progress toward the completion of the degree to remain in good standing. Satisfactory progress is defined by a student's meeting of the following conditions:

- An overall 3.3 grade point average to obtain the M.A. degree. No grade below a B- will count toward fulfilling the minimum degree requirements. If a student's grade point average should fall below 3.0, the student will be placed on probation with one semester to raise the grade point average to at least 3.0. Failure to accomplish this will terminate the student's participation in the program.

- Completion of a minimum of six hours of course work per semester.
- Completion of coursework in a timely manner. Students who take Incompletes in courses are expected to complete the required work quickly, usually within one semester of taking the Incomplete. The Department reserves the right to withdraw funding to any students who carry more than one Incomplete or who do not complete any Incompletes within one semester. Please note that any Incompletes that are not resolved within one year will, by Graduate School rules, convert to an F.
- Each semester, graduate students must meet with their major advisor to choose classes for the following semester. During that meeting, they should discuss progress made toward the degree and any problems that may be slowing progress. If the advisor believes that the student is *not* making adequate progress, s/he should prepare a written report and submit it to the Director of Graduate Studies and for inclusion in the student's file. If the advisor and/or the Director of Graduate Studies have serious concerns about a student's progress, they should call a meeting with the student to discuss the problem and strategize about solutions.

A leave from the program may be approved through the Graduate School's Time Out Program.

### **M.A. Portfolio**

The Department of History uses a portfolio system of comprehensive examination. A portfolio is a collected sampling of a graduate student's best work from the moment s/he enters the program until s/he is ready to move to candidacy. Rather than separating courses from comprehensive exams, the portfolio system is built upon the idea that students are mastering material and skills throughout the period of their coursework. The portfolio thus pulls together the work that the student has completed during coursework, although a student's Advisory Committee may ask students to revise and polish existing work and/or add new items to the portfolio.

After completion of the course work requirements, each candidate for the M.A. degree must assemble and defend an M.A. portfolio. Students must have a 3.3 cumulative grade point average to proceed to the portfolio stage. Students must file an "Application for Admission to Candidacy" with the Graduate Secretary no later than the first week of the semester in which their portfolio is to be defended.

At the end of their coursework, M.A. students will assemble a preliminary list of work produced thus far. Then, in consultation with their Advisory Committee, they will work out Portfolio Field Agreements with each committee member, which will stipulate what existing material needs to be included in the portfolio, what needs revising, and whether anything new needs to be included. Ideally all committee members should be on campus and available to work with the student during their portfolio semester. If a committee member is not on campus during that semester and unable to work with the student remotely, the student should replace that committee member with another suitable faculty member. If the Major Advisor is not on campus and is unable to work with the student remotely, the student and the advisor should work together to identify a replacement advisor for the purposes of managing the portfolio process. This is not ideal and should only be resorted to when an advisor is not in a position to regularly

communicate with a student.

The major advisor will assemble all of the Field Agreements and provide copies to the Director of Graduate Studies, who will review them to make sure they are reasonable and meet the requirements of the policy. Field Agreements may not be amended once they are signed and submitted. Students will then prepare their portfolios to meet these contractual obligations, in frequent consultation with their committee members. Unlike Ph.D. students, M.A. students will not take portfolio credit hours and be expected to devote an entire semester to portfolio production, so Advisory Committee expectations should be adjusted accordingly.

MA portfolios will include the following:

- An intellectual agenda (of no more than 1500 words) that describes the student's major areas of interest, intellectual influences, and accomplishments during M.A. coursework.
- Two reading lists, one for the regional/national field and one for the global/thematic field. These lists will be compiled from the coursework that the student has completed, and committee members may add no more than 10 books to each list at the portfolio stage. The final reading lists will normally be 50-60 books for each field, and under no circumstances may the total of the two reading lists exceed 150 books
- 3-5 historiographical essays
- 1-2 seminar papers (for non-thesis track students only)
- Any other items that the student has produced during coursework that may be appropriate to the portfolio
- The Advisory Committee may ask the student to add **one new item per field** that was not produced during coursework. These items can be historiographical essays, syllabi, or other items useful to the student's professional future

Once each section of the portfolio is complete and committee members are satisfied with the results, individual committee members will write up Portfolio Field Assessments of the material relevant to them and submit those assessments to both the student and the major advisor. Once all of the Field Assessments are completed and the major advisor has reviewed and approved them, the student may then assemble a final portfolio and schedule an oral defense. At this point the student should send the final portfolio to all committee members in either paper or electronic form. The final portfolio must include signed copies of both the original Field Agreements and the final Field Assessments. A paper copy of the final portfolio should also be given to the Director of Graduate Studies, who will then make it available in the History Main Office. Ordinarily there will be **two weeks** between the completion/dissemination of the final portfolio and the oral defense.

If a committee member, after working closely with a student, refuses to approve the section of the portfolio over which that committee member has supervisory control (and thus refuses to complete a Field Assessment), the student should first speak with his/her major advisor for initial mediation of the problem. If the major advisor and the committee member cannot provide the student with clear and expeditious advice about how to achieve approval, the student and/or major advisor may then appeal to the DGS to mediate the dispute. As a last resort, the DGS may bring the dispute to the Graduate Studies Committee, which will assess the portfolio section in dispute and make a final decision about whether it merits approval.

The oral defense of the portfolio will be two hours in length, and anything contained in the portfolio will be fair game in terms of committee questioning. The major advisor, in consultation with the committee members, is responsible for organizing and leading the defense in a way that guarantees each committee member equal time for asking questions. The oral exam is a stand-alone part of the process, and students who have had their portfolios approved can still fail the oral exam.

The student will leave the room at the end of the oral examination, and the committee will decide the results and convey them to the student immediately after the decision is made. If a student does fail the oral exam, s/he has one opportunity to retake it, and the committee members should work closely with the student to improve the student's performance. If a student fails a second oral exam, they may not proceed to candidacy.

For Non-Thesis track students, the portfolio defense will be the final defense for the degree.

For Thesis track students, there will be a separate thesis defense that will follow the successful portfolio defense. The thesis will be supervised by the student's advisor and a second reader from a similar or related field of scholarship. All three members of the student's advisory committee shall have at least two weeks prior to the oral defense to read the thesis. The student will defend the completed thesis before his or her advisory committee.

### **Time Limit**

Students have four years to complete all degree requirements, including the filing of the thesis with the Graduate School if Plan I is followed. If a student has failed to complete his or her MA degree during this period, the department may appeal to the Graduate School for a time extension, but any course work taken more than five years before the master's comprehensive examination (portfolio defense) or the filing of the thesis with the graduate school must be validated by special examination(s).

*The above departmental rules with respect to the Master of Arts degree, supplement, but in no way supersede, the requirements of the Graduate School of the University of Colorado as set forth in the latest University Catalog.*

### **Transferring into the Ph.D. Program**

Students who are in the M.A. program and wish to apply to transfer into the Ph.D. program may do so as part of the annual admissions process. M.A.-to-Ph.D. transfer students do not need to submit a formal application to the Graduate School. Rather, they need to supply the following materials for the Graduate Studies Committee to consider:

- A Statement of Purpose – This outlines where a student is in the graduate program, what one's area of focus is, any notable achievements as an M.A. student here, and, if possible,

a preliminary dissertation topic. Please also identify a proposed major advisor and other potential Ph.D. committee members in this statement.

- A Writing Sample – This should come from coursework completed at CU and should ideally be a research paper.
- Three Letters of Recommendation from departmental faculty – One of these letters must be from the person you have identified as your major advisor.

The GSC will consider these program transfer applications in the process of admitting the following year's Ph.D. class, and program transfer applicants will be competing other Ph.D. applications. Students who apply for such a transfer, and are then accepted, will move their credit hours into the Ph.D. program (except for 4000-level courses, which cannot be counted towards the Ph.D.) and will not complete the M.A. degree. If a student is admitted into the Ph.D. program, any funding offer they may receive will be pro-rated based upon how far into the program and its credit hour requirements they are. The deadline for applying for transfer into the Ph.D. program and submitting all required materials will ordinarily be **the first day of classes during the Spring semester.**

