History

The Department of History offers the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in History. Although the department offers any historical specialization covered by a tenured faculty member, it specializes in African history; American political culture; the ideas, culture and society of Central Europe; early modern Europe; East Asia; international urban history; the Middle East; religion in the medieval Mediterranean world; slavery and freedom in national and transnational contexts in 17th-through 19th-century America; and human rights and social justice in the modern United States. These core fields draw on the expertise of substantial segments of the faculty and provide significant opportunities for innovative graduate study that bridges conventional historical fields and fosters interdisciplinary research.

The graduate program admits only a small number of graduate students each year to promote a close working relationship between students and faculty. We invite applications from mature and self-directed students with well-defined research interests. Our seminars are small and flexible, and we encourage students to develop creative, self-tailored programs of doctoral study. The history department funds most doctoral candidates for six years at highly competitive levels and is committed to providing additional financial resources to support advanced research.

Our graduates are accomplished professionals in academia, private high schools, nonprofits, business and the public sector.

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Faculty

Chair
Peter J. Kastor (https://history.wustl.edu/people/peter-kastor)
PhD, University of Virginia
(The American Frontier and Early Republic)

Endowed Professors
Daniel Bornstein (https://history.wustl.edu/people/daniel-bornstein)
Stella K. Darrow Professor of Catholic Studies
PhD, University of Chicago
(Medieval and Renaissance Europe)
Hillel J. Kieval (https://history.wustl.edu/people/hillel-j-kieval)
Gloria M. Goldstein Professor of Jewish History and Thought
PhD, Harvard University
(Jewish History)

Kenneth Ludmerer (https://history.wustl.edu/people/kenneth-ludmerer)
Mabel Dorn Reeder Distinguished Professor in the History of Medicine
PhD, MD, Johns Hopkins University
(Medical History)

Professors
Iver Bernstein (https://history.wustl.edu/people/iver-bernstein)
PhD, Yale University
(U.S. History and the Civil War)
Andrea S. Friedman (https://history.wustl.edu/people/andrea-friedman)
PhD, University of Wisconsin
(U.S. Women's History)
Steven B. Miles (https://history.wustl.edu/people/steven-b-miles)
PhD, University of Washington
(Chinese History)
Tim Parsons (https://history.wustl.edu/people/timothy-parsons)
PhD, Johns Hopkins University
(African Military History)
Mark Pegg (https://history.wustl.edu/people/mark-gregory-pegg)
PhD, Princeton University
(Medieval European History)
Corinna Treitel (https://history.wustl.edu/people/corinna-treitel)
PhD, Harvard University
(Modern German History)

Associate Professors
Catherine S. Adcock (https://history.wustl.edu/people/cassie-adcock)
PhD, University of Chicago
(Modern South Asian History)
Monique Bedasse (https://history.wustl.edu/people/monique-bedasse)
PhD, University of Miami
(Caribbean History)
Elizabeth Borgwardt (https://history.wustl.edu/people/elizabeth-borgwardt)
PhD, Stanford University
(U.S. Foreign Relations)
Shefali Chandra (https://history.wustl.edu/people/shefali-chandra)
PhD, University of Pennsylvania
(Modern South Asian History)
Christine R. Johnson (https://history.wustl.edu/people/christine-johnson)
PhD, Johns Hopkins University
(16th-Century German History)
Sowandé Mustakeem (https://history.wustl.edu/people/sowande-mustakeem)
PhD, Michigan State University
(Atlantic Slave Trade and the Middle Passage)

Nancy Y. Reynolds (https://history.wustl.edu/people/nancy-reynolds)
PhD, Stanford University
(Middle Eastern History)

Anika Walke (https://history.wustl.edu/people/anika-walke)
PhD, University of California, Santa Cruz
(Middle Eastern History)

Lori Watt (https://history.wustl.edu/people/lori-watt)
PhD, Columbia University
(Japanese History)

Assistant Professors

Venus Bivar (https://history.wustl.edu/people/venus-bivar)
PhD, University of Chicago
(Modern European History)

Alexandre Dubé (https://history.wustl.edu/people/alexandre-dubé)
PhD, McGill University
(Early Modern Atlantic World)

Douglas Flowe (https://history.wustl.edu/people/douglas-flowe)
PhD, University of Rochester
(American History)

Diana J. Montaño (https://history.wustl.edu/people/diana-montaño)
PhD, University of Arizona
(Latin American History)

Christina Ramos (https://history.wustl.edu/people/christina Ramos)
PhD, Harvard University
(Latin American History)

Senior Lecturer

Krister Knapp (https://history.wustl.edu/people/kristen-knapp)
PhD, Boston University
(U.S. Intellectual History)

Affiliated Faculty

William Bubelis (https://history.wustl.edu/people/william-bubelis)
Associate Professor of Classics
PhD, University of Chicago
(Classics)

Adrienne D. Davis (https://history.wustl.edu/people/adrienne-davis)
William M. Van Cleve Professor of Law
JD, Yale University School of Law

Mary Ann Dzuback (https://history.wustl.edu/people/mary-ann-dzuback)
Associate Professor of Education
PhD, Columbia University
(Education)

Martin Jacobs (https://history.wustl.edu/people/martin-jacobs)
Professor of Rabbinic Studies
PhD and Habilitation, Free University of Berlin
(Jewish, Islamic, and Middle Eastern Studies)

Zhao Ma (http://ealc.wustl.edu/people/ma_zhao)
Assistant Professor of Modern Chinese History and Culture
PhD, Johns Hopkins University
(East Asian Languages and Cultures)

Laurie F. Maffly-Kipp (https://history.wustl.edu/people/laurie-maffly-kipp)
Archer Alexander Distinguished Professor
PhD, Yale University
(Danforth Center on Religion and Politics)

Rebecca Messbarger (https://history.wustl.edu/people/rebecca-messbarger)
Professor of Italian and Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
PhD, University of Chicago
(Romance Languages and Literatures)

Eric P. Mumford (https://history.wustl.edu/people/eric-mumford)
Rebecca and John Voyles Professor of Architecture
PhD, Princeton University
(Architecture)

Leigh E. Schmidt (https://history.wustl.edu/people/leigh-e-schmidt)
Edward C. Mallinckrodt Distinguished University Professor
PhD, Princeton University
(Danforth Center on Religion and Politics)

Mark Valeri (https://history.wustl.edu/people/mark-valeri)
Reverend Priscilla Wood Neaves Distinguished Professor of Religion and Politics
PhD, Princeton University
(Danforth Center on Religion and Politics)

Steven Zwicker (https://history.wustl.edu/people/steven-zwicker)
Stanley Elkin Professor in the Humanities
PhD, Brown University
(English)

Professors Emeriti

Steven Hause (https://history.wustl.edu/people/steven-hause)
PhD, Washington University

Derek M. Hirst (https://history.wustl.edu/people/derek-hirst)
William Eliot Smith Professor Emeritus of History
PhD, Cambridge University
Gerald N. Izenberg (https://history.wustl.edu/people/gerald-izenberg)  
PhD, Harvard University  
David T. Konig (https://history.wustl.edu/people/david-konig)  
PhD, Harvard University  
Linda J. Nicholson  
Susan E. and William P. Stiritz Distinguished Professor Emerita of Women’s Studies  
PhD, Brandeis University  
Max J. Okenfuss (https://history.wustl.edu/people/max-okenfuss)  
PhD, Harvard University  
Peter Riesenberg (https://history.wustl.edu/people/peter-riesenberg)  
PhD, Columbia University  
Laurence Schneider (https://history.wustl.edu/people/laurence-schneider)  
PhD, University of California, Berkeley  
Richard J. Walter (https://history.wustl.edu/people/richard-walter)  
PhD, Stanford University

Degree Requirements

PhD in History

Requirements and Academic Assessment

Doctoral candidates ordinarily spend two to three full academic years in residence. Before the dissertation defense takes place, doctoral candidates must have completed 72 units of graduate credit. Over the course of their doctoral program, graduate students may not register for more than 72 units of credit without special consideration. Of the 72 required units, no more than 24 units may be transferred from previous graduate work elsewhere.

Languages and Quantitative Skills

Each graduate student’s need for linguistic and quantitative skills is determined during their first semester in consultation with their adviser. This determination is subject to review by the Graduate Studies Committee. The student’s examining committee will ascertain, by the time of the qualifying examination, that sufficient progress toward acquiring these skills for dissertation research has been made.

The minimum requirement is normally competence in the language of the documents or culture in which the student proposes to do dissertation research as well as competence either in one other language (other than English) or in the practice of a quantitative or other technical skill. Students normally demonstrate competency by successfully taking a particular course, by passing a translation examination, or by using foreign-language primary sources to write a research paper.

Grades

The performance of students in the Graduate School is marked by the grades A, B, C (Conditional) and F. The grade of C indicates unsatisfactory work and will be awarded academic credit only if matched by an equivalent number of units graded A. Plus or minus grades may be given, except for grades of B- or C+. Some courses may be graded S (Satisfactory) or F.

Graduate students should expect to earn a grade of A or A- as a mark of good progress through the program. Although a grade of B+ or B will qualify a student for full credit, these grades should be viewed as a warning that the student has not sufficiently demonstrated a full mastery of the course material at the doctoral level. More than one or two grades at this level carry the risk of negatively affecting a student’s chances on the academic job market.

Annual Letters of Review and the Second-Year Review

The history department uses annual letters of review and the second-year review to keep students informed about our expectations of their progress and to identify any problems. At the end of each academic year (except the second year), students receive annual letters of review based on the observations of all faculty members with whom they have worked during the academic year, whether in a class, in a directed readings course, or in a mentored teaching experience. The letters will identify any areas in which the student needs to improve and provide clear steps for addressing any concerns. In January of the second year, students receive a second-year review letter. The department uses the second-year review to identify students who are not performing at a satisfactory level. In consultation with the student’s primary adviser, the department then sets goals for that student to meet by the end of the second semester of the second year. If these goals are not met, then the student will not be allowed to proceed to the PhD qualifying examinations; instead, the student will be offered an opportunity to secure an MA degree before leaving the PhD program.

In such cases, requirements for the MA degree are as follows:

• Students must satisfactorily complete a minimum of 36 hours of credit. Because the department does not offer a separate MA degree, we do not require an MA thesis. Therefore, none of the required 36 hours will be awarded for thesis research.
• Students must successfully complete the course Literature of History (L22 5471).
• Students must develop expertise in two fields of historical study: one primary field and one secondary field.
• Students must pass an oral examination in these two fields of history.
Academic Probation and Dismissal

The Department of History closely follows the guidelines of the Graduate School of Arts & Sciences as described in the Policy on Probation and Dismissal for Academic Reasons.

All students in the PhD program are expected to satisfy the academic performance requirements of the Graduate School, which can be found in the General Requirements section of the Graduate School Bulletin.

Additional History Department Requirements and Explanations

A full-time graduate student is not allowed more than one incomplete per semester, and that incomplete must be removed by the end of the following semester. Within this requirement, faculty and students may wish to enter into contracts specifying conditions for the removal of the incomplete.

To remain in good standing, a student should take the qualifying examinations by the first semester of the fourth year, at the very latest.

The Department of History’s Graduate Studies Committee manages all departmental decisions regarding placement on probation, removal from probation, recommendations for dismissal after a probationary period, and recommendations for immediate dismissal due to extreme underperformance. The Graduate Studies Committee consists of the Director of Graduate Studies and three or four additional history department faculty members appointed by the chair of the history department at the beginning of each academic year.

Otherwise, there are no additional requirements beyond those of the Graduate School.

These guidelines will remain posted on the Department of History website (https://history.wustl.edu/graduate-requirements-grades), and hard copies will be distributed at the annual history department orientation for new PhD students held in August each year.