The Department of History offers the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in History. In view of our commitment to the doctoral program, we do not offer a terminal Master of Arts (AM). Although the department offers any historical specialization covered by a tenured faculty member, it specializes in the history of 17th- through 20th-century America; Africa; American political culture; Central Europe; Medieval and Early Modern Europe; East Asia (China, Japan); international urban history; and the Middle East.

Many of our students pursue interdisciplinary studies and have teaching opportunities in other departments and programs: African and African-American Studies; American Culture Studies; East Asian Languages and Cultures; International and Area Studies; Jewish, Islamic and Near Eastern Languages and Cultures; and Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. The graduate program admits only a small number of students each year in order to promote a close working relationship between students and faculty. We encourage students to develop creative, self-tailored programs of study.

In considering applications for admission, the department places great emphasis on an applicant's fit with a particular tenured faculty member (who will serve as the student's primary adviser), on the applicant's proposed future research as described in the personal statement, and on the writing sample submitted with the application.

Doctoral students generally devote their first three years to courses, preparing for qualifying examinations in three fields of history, and producing a portfolio containing two research papers of publishable quality.

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Website: http://history.artsci.wustl.edu/graduate-program

Faculty

Chair
Peter J. Kastor (http://history.artsci.wustl.edu/peter_kastor)
PhD, University of Virginia
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Endowed Professors
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PhD, Northwestern University
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PhD, University of Chicago
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Hillel J. Kieval (http://history.artsci.wustl.edu/hillel_kieval)
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Associate Professors
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Assistant Professors

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PhD, University of California, Santa Cruz  
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Senior Lecturer

Krister Knapp (http://history.artsci.wustl.edu/krister_knapp)  
PhD, Boston University  
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Affiliated Faculty

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(Jewish, Islamic and Near Eastern Languages and Cultures)

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PhD, Stanford University

Degree Requirements

PhD in History

Requirements and Academic Assessment

Doctoral candidates ordinarily spend at least two, and more often three, full academic years in residence. Before the dissertation defense takes place, doctoral candidates must have gained essential language and quantitative skills, completed the necessary courses, and researched and written a dissertation.

Languages and Quantitative Skills

Each graduate student's need for linguistic and quantitative skills is determined during the first semester in consultation with their advisor. 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, and competence in one other language (not 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 performance 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 should be viewed as a warning that they have 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 impacting a student's chances on the academic job market.

Annual Letters of Review and the Second-Year Review

The Department of History uses annual letters of review and the second-year review to keep students informed of 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 studied during the academic year, whether as students or as assistants in instruction. The letters will identify any areas in which the student needs to improve, and provide clear steps for addressing this. 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 a Master of Arts (AM) degree before leaving the PhD program. In such cases, requirements for the AM degree are as follows:

- Students must have satisfactorily completed a minimum of 36 hours of credit. Since the department does not offer a separate AM degree, we do not require an AM thesis. Therefore, none of the required 36 hours will be awarded for thesis research.


• Students must have successfully completed the courses: History 5470 Writing Historical Proposals and Prospectuses, and History 5471 Literature of History.

• 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.

Additional History Department Requirements and Explanations

A full-time graduate student shall not be 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 to four additional Department of History faculty members appointed by the chair of the department at the beginning of each academic year.

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

These guidelines (http://history.artsci.wustl.edu/graduate) will remain posted on our website, and hard copies will be distributed at the annual department orientation for new PhD students in August.