

# Graduate Programs Handbook

Department of History

Iowa State University

# I. General Information

## 1.1 Introduction

This handbook describes the basic policies and procedures of the graduate programs of the Department of History at Iowa State University (general MA program and specialized PhD program in Rural, Agricultural, Technological, and Environmental History). This document and all policies described here are supplementary and subordinate to the policies and procedures of the Graduate College of Iowa State University (as expressed in, among other documents, the Graduate College Handbook). In certain cases, the Department has set stricter policies within parameters established by the Graduate College, in which case the policies here supersede those of the Graduate College.

## 1.2 Mission Statement

As recognized in the Department of History Governance Document, one of the primary roles of the Department is to train graduate students. To that end, the Department maintains two distinct but closely interconnected graduate programs. Many who obtain the Department's MA degree will use their expertise as teachers and as professionals in other fields, helping to extend the Department's influence well beyond ISU. The Department also maintains a PhD Program in Rural, Agricultural, Technological, and Environmental History (RATE). The ISU RATE Program trains specialists in the discipline of history and supports the strengths of the University, as a land-grant institution, in agriculture, rural and environmental studies, engineering, and technological development.

## 1.3 Learning Goals

These goals apply equally to students seeking the MA or PhD degree, although expectations for appropriate mastery in various areas will be higher for PhD-seeking students.

1. Demonstrate appropriate command of scholarly literature in particular areas of historical study as well as an understanding of basic methodologies of historical study in general.
2. Develop research projects that expand historical knowledge and understanding in particular areas.
3. Conduct research and interpret results appropriately, integrating them into existing disciplinary knowledge.
4. Communicate research findings effectively in both oral and written form, and through the use of other media when appropriate, to a variety of audiences.
5. Exhibit professionalism and correct ethical practices in scholarship and other professional conduct.
6. Cultivate an awareness of the full range of career options available to historians and the applicability of historical knowledge in diverse contexts.

## 1.4 Values Statement

The History Department's graduate programs represents an intellectual community dedicated to rigorous historical inquiry, solid professional training, and cultivation of the life of the mind. The goal of the programs is to give all students (MA and PhD) the skills and experience they need to succeed, however they individually define success. Students in the program collectively value:

- Intellectual and professional growth.
- Thinking deeply and critically about the past.
- Challenging assumptions, both their own and those of others.
- Subjecting their own work and that of others to rigorous but respectful critique.
- Receiving constructive, ongoing feedback on their work.

Students enter the program from a variety of backgrounds, seek different levels of training, and pursue different paths after graduation. This diversity is one of the program's great strengths and contributes to its intellectual vitality. As such, students also value:

- Diversity within the student cohort.
- Diversity of opinion about and approaches to the past.
- Principles of academic collegiality and professional conduct.
- Basic principles of equality and fair treatment for all members of the graduate community.
- Civility and mutual respect as the underpinnings for all intellectual engagement, participation, and discussion.

### **1.5 Administration of the Graduate Programs**

Both graduate programs are directed by a single Director of Graduate Education (DOGE). Students may direct any questions regarding the graduate programs to the DOGE. In addition, students who have not yet selected a major professor (generally students in their first year in either program) should consult regularly with the DOGE, as the DOGE functions as their de facto advisor prior to the selection of a major professor.

Students should bring any complaints of grievances about the program, other students, or faculty to the DOGE. If students are uncomfortable bringing a matter to the DOGE, they should bring it to the Chair of the Department. Students may also take certain complaints directly to the university's Office of Equal Opportunity (<https://www.eoc.iastate.edu/>).

The Department also has a standing Graduate Committee, consisting of the DOGE, Department Chair, and three appointed faculty members. This committee is responsible for all admission and funding decisions affecting graduate students. It is also responsible for developing programmatic policies, although these must be approved by the department faculty as a whole.

The RATE program also designates certain faculty in the Department as core faculty in the program (<https://history.iastate.edu/graduate-study/rate-ph-d/rate-program-faculty/>). These faculty sometimes meet as a committee of the whole to develop policies and curricular decisions that pertain only the RATE program.

The Department's administrative assistant also serves as the graduate programs staff assistant. The staff assistant handles all issues regarding the university's enrollment, payroll, and scheduling systems.

### **1.6 Select University Resources for Graduate Students**

Graduate College website (<http://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/>)

*Graduate College Handbook* (<http://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/handbook/>)

Graduate College financial aid information (<https://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/finance/>)

Graduate College dissertations and theses (<http://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/current/thesis/>)

ISU Academic Calendars (<http://www.registrar.iastate.edu/calendar/>)

ISU Course Catalog (<http://catalog.iastate.edu/>)

ISU Schedule of Classes (<http://classes.iastate.edu/>)

General information for ISU students (<https://web.iastate.edu/students>)

## II. Rough Guide to History Graduate Programs

The information below is meant as a rough guide to the most important basic requirements for the Department of History's graduate programs. More detailed information will be found in the sections of this handbook dedicated to each program.

### 2.1 MA Program Requirements

At least 30 credits, including:

- At least 21 credits in history (i.e. up to 9 credits in other departments may be counted)
- At least 9 credits in graduate seminars (i.e. not 590, 599, or 699), including 3 credits in a research seminar, plus 6 credits of HIST 699 if following Plan I Long Thesis Option.
- At least 12 credits in graduate seminars (i.e. not 590, 599, or 699), including 6 credits in research seminars, plus 3 credits of HIST 699 if following Plan I Short Thesis Option.
- At least 9 credits in graduate seminars (i.e. not 590, 599, or 699), including 3 credits in a research seminar, plus 6 credits of HIST 599 if following Plan II Non-Thesis Option.
- No more than 9 credits at the 400-level (not including HIST 490, 495, 498, or equivalents in other departments)

Students must select a major professor, form a program of study committee, and file a POS form by the end of their second semester in the program.

Grades below B in any course will trigger departmental review.

### 2.2. RATE Program Requirements

At least 72 credits, including:

- At least 30 credits completed at the MA level
  - Subject to all requirements listed above, if obtained at Iowa State
  - If students obtain a master's degree elsewhere, transfer credits will apply
- At least 18 credits of additional coursework in graduate seminars (in history, or in other fields if approved by the POS committee)
- At least 18 credits of HIST 699 (beyond any completed at the MA level)
- No more than 6 credits of HIST 590 and/or HIST 591

Students must select a major professor, form a program of study committee, and file a POSC form by the end of their first year at doctoral student status, i.e. post-MA (if the student obtained an MA in the program, this POSC replaces the MA POSC).

Students are generally expected to take preliminary exams (aka field exams) by the end of their second year at doctoral student status.

Students are generally expected to submit a dissertation prospectus to their major professor within six weeks of passing preliminary exams.

Students are encouraged to pass departmental language requirements by the end of their second year at doctoral student status, and are required to do so by the end of their third year. Language requirements may be met by taking a departmental exam (see DOGE) or completing two semesters of college-level language courses with grades of B or better.

Grades below B in any course will trigger departmental review.

# III. Master of Arts in History Program

## 3.1 Program Overview

For curious, budding scholars, Iowa State University's Department of History offers a graduate program leading to an MA degree in history. Because of the diversity of students and interests at ISU, the department has constructed an MA program flexible enough to service varied needs while maintaining rigorous expectations across the program.

For students interested in pursuing a doctoral degree with the intent of becoming teachers and researchers at the college level, the department offers two thesis options designed to facilitate transfer to PhD programs in history, as well as other career options requiring advanced historical training. The department also offers a separate plan for students more concerned with upgrading their general knowledge or with professional development. Although these plans and options vary, the department holds all students to the same exacting standards of knowledge and proficiency.

## 3.2 Admission

### 3.2.1 Admission Requirements

Students apply for admission through the Iowa State Office of Admissions website (<https://www.admissions.iastate.edu/apply/online/>). Applicants should have a strong undergraduate background in history or in some closely related field. Generally this means that applicants will have had at least 21 semester credits or equivalent in history or a closely related field. Applicants without this preparation are advised to contact the Director of Graduate Education (DOGE) to discuss their suitability for graduate study in history.

There is no fixed undergraduate GPA required for admission. Applicants must submit their official undergraduate transcripts, and the Department will consider all coursework and grades.

Other admission requirements include:

- Letters of Recommendation: Three letters, submitted electronically or sent directly to the DOGE, should come from individuals who are able to evaluate your academic ability and capacity to succeed in a graduate program.
- Writing Sample: Applicants should submit a writing sample with their application, or send it directly to the DOGE. This should be representative of your best academic work (typically a minimum of 8-10 pages).
- TOEFL: For international students, a TOEFL Paper (PBT) score of 600, TOEFL Internet (iBT) score of 100, or IELTS score of 7.0 is required for admission.

The Department no longer requires Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores from any applicant. In our experience, previous academic work, including applicants' writing samples, are better predictors of suitability and success in our program.

### 3.2.2 Application Deadline

If students wish to be considered for funding (see section 3.10), they must apply by January 15 for admission the following academic year. Otherwise there is no fixed deadline and the Department accepts applications for admission to the MA program on a continuous basis. Applicants should allow adequate time for processing their application (usually 4-6 weeks) before their desired semester of admission.

### *3.2.3 Preliminary Requirements after Admission*

Students should confer with the DOGE during the course registration period prior to their first semester in residence (see section 5.3.1), to discuss their first semester coursework and other matters pertaining to their entry into the program. The DOGE will continue to serve as their academic advisor until they select a major professor.

During the week prior to the start of fall semester classes, the Department schedules a graduate student orientation. Students will be informed of the exact date via email at least two weeks in advance, and all new students are required to attend. Students who enter the program in the spring semester will be expected to attend the orientation session the next fall.

## **3.3 Program Requirements**

An MA from the Department of History requires 30 credits of acceptable work, at least 21 of which must be in history. Depending on which degree plan they pursue, students must take 9-12 credits in graduate seminars (500- and 600-level, see section 5.1.1). Up to 9 credits of 400-level courses may also be taken for graduate credit, either in history or in another discipline, but no student may use HIST 490, 495, or 498 for graduate credit, or their equivalents in other departments. In addition, no more than 6 credits of History 590, Special Topics, may be included in the minimum 30 credits submitted for the degree.

Students will also complete either a research thesis or a creative component, depending on which degree plan they pursue. At the end of their program of study, all students must pass a final oral examination.

## **3.4 Major Professor and Program of Study Committee**

By the end of their second semester in residence, students must choose a tenure-line faculty member as their major professor (advisor). In consultation with their major professor, they must then select an advisory Program of Study (POS) committee. This committee shall consist of at least three members, including the major professor, at least one other Department faculty member, and one member from outside the Department of History. Following consultation with the POS committee, the student then submits a Program of Study and Committee (POSC) form.

The major professor has primary responsibility for guiding the student's program of study and especially the thesis or creative component (see section 3.5), in coordination with the other committee members. All committee members participate in the final oral examination.



### **3.5 Degree Plans**

The Department of History offers two plans for meeting requirements for the MA degree. Both involve similar amounts of coursework, but one culminates in a traditional MA thesis (either long or short) while the other culminates in a specially designed project (“creative component”). The two plans are intended to serve slightly different sets of students. Students must select a thesis or non-thesis option when they submit their Program of Study.

#### *3.5.1 Plan I – Thesis Option*

Plan I emphasizes both field readings and original research. It confers a variety of skills applicable inside and outside of academia and may be pursued by any student seeking a general MA degree. It is, however, strongly recommended for students considering or intending to continue on to a PhD program, either immediately or at some point after the MA. The plan culminates in either a long (generally 60-90 pages) or a short (generally 30-40 pages) thesis, with slightly different preliminary coursework required in each case.

For a long thesis, students complete 24 credits of coursework and 6 credits of research (HIST 699). A longer thesis is a multi-chapter work ideally leading toward a subsequent PhD dissertation. As part of their 24 credits of course work, students who undertake a longer thesis must complete at least 9 credits in graduate seminars, 3 credits of which must be in a research seminar (see section 5.1).

For a short thesis, students complete 27 credits of coursework and 3 credits of research (HIST 699). A shorter thesis aims at producing the equivalent of a publishable scholarly article. As part of their 27 credits of coursework, students who undertake a shorter thesis must complete at least 12 credits in graduate seminars, 6 credits of which must be in research seminars (see Section 5.1).

No official declaration of long or short thesis option is filed; the selection of an option is merely an understanding reached by students with their POS committees as to what sort of thesis they will work towards. So long as students remain undecided, they should be careful in selecting preliminary coursework not to preclude one thesis option or the other. E.g. the Department does not necessarily offer a research seminar every semester, so it would be wise to take 6 credits of research seminars when available, unless a student is already set on pursuing the long thesis option.

#### *3.5.2 Plan II – Non-Thesis Option*

Plan II is intended primarily for working professionals, especially those involved in secondary education, who are seeking a terminal MA degree for professional advancement. It emphasizes field readings, some research, and specially designed projects appropriate to students’ particular goals (e.g. for those involved in secondary education, the project might focus on pedagogy or course development).

This Plan requires students to complete at least 24 credits of course work and 6 credits of “creative component” (HIST 599). The creative component will consist of two parts: extending a seminar paper through additional original research (3 credits), and another project appropriate to the student’s educational or career goals, developed in consultation with the major professor and approved by the POS committee (e.g. for teachers, this might involve a curricular or pedagogical project of some kind). As part of their 24 credits of course work, students must complete at least 9 credits in graduate seminars, 3 credits of which must be in a research seminar (see section 5.1).

### **3.6 Examinations**

Following completion of all coursework and of the research or creative component, students shall schedule a final oral examination before the advisory committee following rules and timelines defined by the Graduate College. This will consist of a two-hour exam, and the committee will award a “fail,” “low pass,” “pass,” or “pass with distinction.” Students who fail the exam can retake it in the following semester, but a second failure will result in dismissal from the program.

For students pursuing Plan 1, the exam generally focuses on the MA thesis, although other aspects of the student’s program of study may be covered. For students pursuing Plan 2, the exam will focus on the extended research paper, special project, and overall program of study in degrees deemed appropriate by the major professor and POS committee.

### **3.7 Minor Field**

Students may pursue a graduate minor field in conjunction with their MA, if approved by their major professor and POS committee. Up to 9 credits taken for the minor may count toward the 30 credits required for the MA (as per the requirement that 21 credits be in History). Any additional credits required of the minor must be taken in excess of the 30 credits required for the MA. A representative of the minor must be included on the POS committee.

### **3.8 Important Deadlines**

No later than the end of the first year in the program, students must:

- Select a major professor and, in consultation with the major professor, a Program of Study (POS) Committee.
- Submit a Program of Study and Committee (POSC) form (<https://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/posc/>), on which they declare thesis or non-thesis option.
- Select a thesis topic, if pursuing the thesis option, or determine the nature of the creative component in consultation with their major professor, if pursuing the non-thesis option.

In the semester of planned graduation, students must:

- Submit an Application for Graduation at the beginning of the semester <https://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/student/forms/graduation-application/>.
- Submit a Request for Final Oral Examination (<https://secure.grad-college.iastate.edu/exam/>) at least three weeks before the examination date (and examinations must occur at least three weeks before the end of the term).

- Submit thesis or creative component to the POS Committee at least two weeks before the examination date.
- Bring a Graduate Student Approval Form ([https://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/documents/forms/Graduate\\_Student\\_Approval\\_Form.pdf](https://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/documents/forms/Graduate_Student_Approval_Form.pdf)) to the examination for the committee to sign.

### **3.9 Dismissal Policy**

Graduate students in the Department of History's MA Degree Program may be dismissed for the following reasons:

1. Failure to identify a major professor and program of study committee within twelve months of admission.
2. Failure to file a Program of Study and Committee (POSC) form within twelve months of admission.
3. Failure to earn a grade of B or above in any course.
4. Failure to comply with academic ethics (e.g. plagiarism)
5. Inability to meet program requirements in a timely manner.
6. Failure to complete the degree requirements in three years (for full-time students).

The Director of Graduate Education will notify students in writing of their deficiencies and will meet with the POS committee to decide the disposition of the case. The student will be notified in writing of the outcome. Dismissals may be appealed to the Chair of the History Department, who will notify the student in writing of the outcome. The dismissal of part-time students will be determined by Director of Graduate Education in consultation with the POS committee.

### **3.10 Funding**

The Department of History cannot guarantee funding for students in the general MA program. Unfortunately, departmental resources are limited and priority is given to students in the more specialized RATE program. If funding opportunities remain after those obligations are met, the department may offer funding to select MA program students on a competitive basis. Because departmental needs, as well as resources, change from year to year, funding offered in one year may not be continued into the next.

Departmental funding, when available, usually takes the form of quarter-time (10 hours per week) assistantships that involve grading duties in introductory or intermediate level courses (200 or 300 level), usually with up to 96 students enrolled. These assistantships are colloquially referred to within the Department as "graderships." A quarter-time appointment includes a stipend and 25% tuition scholarship.

In rare cases, MA students may receive half-time (20 hours per week) assistantships that involve both grading duties and leading discussion sections for introductory level courses (200 level). Students are typically responsible for four discussion sections with up to 24 students enrolled in each. A half-time appointment includes a stipend and 50% tuition scholarship.

Students on either form of assistantship are assessed in-state resident tuition for the duration of their appointment.

Graduate assistants on an appointment at least 3 months during each semester receive single student health insurance coverage which includes a prescription drug plan at no charge (additional coverage for a spouse, children, and dental is available for additional premiums).

Each spring, the DOGE circulates an Annual Funding Application. MA students are encouraged to apply for consideration, although again, funding options are often very limited. When funding is available, it will be awarded based on such factors as:

- Quality of student performance and progress toward degree (as evaluated by the faculty).
- Seniority in the program.
- Suitability to particular departmental needs (e.g. a student is well-suited by academic background or specialization for a particular course in which there is a teaching need).

The Department encourages all students to seek outside funding opportunities. Some limited information is available through the Graduate College (<https://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/finance/>). The DOGE regularly circulates all funding offers that the Department receives from other ISU units or from outside the university.

Students who receive departmental funding should be aware that the Department considers half-time appointments the maximum a student should work while still trying to maintain good progress toward degree. If students undertake additional work, either inside or outside the university, this may be grounds to question their progress toward degree and could affect future funding decisions.

## IV. PhD Program in Rural, Agricultural, Technological, and Environmental History (RATE)

### 4.1 Program Overview

The RATE program is dedicated to the close examination of pervasive and enduring questions about rural and agricultural communities throughout world history, the technologies developed and employed by these communities, and the environmental contexts in which they operate. RATE is the only doctoral program in the United States to offer this unique focus. The program, however, defines the areas of history it addresses broadly, to include a wide array of faculty and student interests. Students are admitted either after completing a master's degree elsewhere, or they may obtain an MA in history at Iowa State while progressing toward the PhD degree.

### 4.2 Admission

#### 4.2.1 Admission Requirements

Students apply for admission through the Iowa State Office of Admissions website (<https://www.admissions.iastate.edu/apply/online/>). Prospective applicants are advised to contact the Director of Graduate Education (DOGE) to discuss the appropriateness of the program for their academic goals and objectives. Full Admission to the RATE program requires graduation from an accredited college or university. Students who have already undertaken graduate work or received a master's degree in fields other than history should contact the DOGE to discuss what credit might be transferable.

Other admission requirements include:

- Letters of Recommendation: Three letters, submitted electronically or sent directly to the DOGE. Recommenders should be able to evaluate your ability to engage in advanced historical research and analysis in your area of study.
- Writing Sample: Applicants should submit a writing sample with their application, or send it directly to the DOGE. This sample should be 20-25 pages of representative academic work.
- Official undergraduate transcripts, and transcripts from all previous graduate programs (if any).
- TOEFL: For international students, a TOEFL Paper (PBT) score of 600, TOEFL Internet (iBT) score of 100, or IELTS score of 7.0 is required for admission.

The History Department no longer requires Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores from any applicant. In our experience, previous academic work, including applicants' writing samples, are better predictors of suitability and success in our program.

#### 4.2.2 Application Deadline

If students wish to be considered for funding (see section 4.12), they must apply by January 15 for admission the following academic year. Normally students enter the RATE program in the

fall semester. If circumstances require, students may apply for admission in the spring semester. However, if they wish to be admitted with funding, they must still apply by January 15 of the previous year.

After the January 15 deadline, the Department's Graduate Committee reviews all applications. The Committee endeavors to reach admissions decisions within a few weeks after the deadline, and students will be informed of the decisions as soon as they are finalized. Students who have been offered admission will then have until April 15 to consider the offer and either accept or decline. The Department reserves the right to rescind an offer if the student does not act by April 15.

#### *4.2.3 Preliminary Requirements after Admission*

Students should confer with the DOGE during the course registration period prior to their first semester in residence (see section 5.3.1), to discuss their first semester coursework and other matters pertaining to their entry into the program. The DOGE will continue to serve as their academic advisor until they select a major professor.

During the week prior to the start of fall semester classes, the Department schedules a graduate student orientation. Students will be informed of the exact date via email at least two weeks in advance, and all new students are required to attend. For students who have received funding offers involving a teaching assistantship (which is the most common case), there will also be a training session for new teaching assistants.

### **4.3 Program Requirements**

#### *4.3.1 General Requirements*

A PhD in RATE requires a minimum of 72 credits beyond the bachelor's degree and 42 credits beyond the master's degree. Students may enter the RATE program either with or without a master's degree, but students without a master's degree will normally be required to earn an MA in the program before progressing on to doctoral student status. Those with a master's degree in a field outside of history wishing to proceed directly to doctoral student status will be evaluated by the RATE program faculty on a case-by-case basis. Doctoral students must complete an additional 42 credits of graduate seminars, research, and exam preparation; demonstrate a reading proficiency in a world language; pass preliminary written and oral exams in major fields of study (usually by the end of the second year of doctoral study), and complete and defend a dissertation.

#### *4.3.2 Requirements for a Master's Degree*

Students who enter the RATE program without a master's degree must first complete the requirements for a Department's Master of Arts in History Program, outlined in Section III of this handbook. This includes 30 hours of graduate credit (24-27 credits of course work and 3-6 credits of research) and the writing and defense of an MA thesis (Plan I). Students who have undertaken some graduate coursework or obtained a master's degree in a field other than history

may, upon evaluation by the RATE faculty, be allowed to apply some or all of those credits to this requirement. Students who have attained an MA in history at another institution are normally admitted directly to doctoral student status.

#### *4.3.3 Requirements for Advancement to Doctoral Student Status*

If obtaining an MA in history within the RATE program, the MA portion of the program will culminate with a final oral examination in which the MA thesis is defended. As described in Section III of this handbook, the committee will award a “no pass,” “weak pass,” “pass,” or “pass with distinction” for this exam. Students who fail the exam can retake it in the following semester, but a second failure will result in dismissal from the program. At a minimum, students must achieve a “pass” on their first attempt in order to advance to doctoral student status and proceed to the PhD program.

#### *4.3.4 Requirements for Doctoral Students*

Doctoral students must complete an additional 42 graduate credits beyond the master’s degree, including at least 18 credits in graduate seminars, and at least 18 credits of dissertation research (HIST 699) once the student has reached doctoral candidacy. Students may include up to 6 credits of Special Topics (HIST 590) or Directed Readings (HIST 591). A major professor may also require that specific courses be included on a student’s Program of Study.

Doctoral students must select a major professor, form a Program of Study committee, and file a POSC form by the end of their first year at doctoral student status. They must pass comprehensive preliminary examinations in four fields of study, generally by the end of their second year at doctoral student status. They must also demonstrate reading proficiency in a foreign language, ideally by the end of their second year at doctoral student status.

### **4.4 Doctoral Program of Study Committee**

Doctoral students must form a Program of Study committee and submit a Program of Study and Committee (POSC) form by the end of their first year at doctoral student status. If they have previously completed an MA within the RATE program, this committee replaces the MA committee, although their membership can (and in most cases will) overlap. The doctoral committee must consist of at least five members of the graduate faculty, including:

- A major professor under whose direction the PhD dissertation will be written; in some instances two major professors may be appropriate, in which case the two major professors will serve as co-directors of the dissertation.
- Three other faculty from the Department of History, one of whom may be a long-term adjunct who is (or is eligible to be) an associate member of the graduate faculty and who is expected to be employed throughout the duration of the student’s candidacy; if the dissertation is co-directed, just two other Department faculty need serve on the POS committee.
- One faculty member from outside the RATE program, and possibly from outside the Department of History.

At least three members of the Program of Study committee will serve as examiners for the written/oral preliminary examinations in the student's first three fields. All five committee members shall serve as examiners for the oral defense of the dissertation.

#### **4.5 Fields of Study**

In consultation with the major professor, doctoral students must select four fields of study. Typically two will be in U.S., European, or global history, or some combination of these, intended to develop broad teaching competencies. Alternatively, in consultation with their major professor, students may select one broad field and one specialty field reflecting their research focus as their first and second fields. Students will choose a third field in rural, agricultural, technological, or environmental history related to their anticipated dissertation topic. Lastly, students will choose a fourth field of study as approved by the major professor. This field might broaden the student's research expertise or involve an interdisciplinary perspective or methodological approach that broadens the student's intellectual development.

*First and Second Fields (any two of the following)*

- United States History to 1865
- United States History since 1865
- European History to 1500
- European History since 1500
- Global History to 1500
- Global History since 1500
- Specialty field (developed in consultation with your major professor)

*Third Field (one of the following)*

- Rural History
- Agricultural History
- Technology History
- Environmental History

*Fourth Field*

Coordinated with the Program of Study Committee and approved by the major professor(s) and the DOGE. Students will develop a field that expands their expertise in their field of specialization (if not already addressed via a specialty field, as above), or that broadens their disciplinary range via a comparative or methodological focus.

#### **4.6 Preliminary Examinations**

Doctoral students should plan to take their examinations early in their fourth semester at doctoral student status. Exams will consist of four different four-hour exams over two weeks. Field examinations will consist of a written and oral component. Students will be graded within the following range:

- Pass with distinction
- Pass
- Low pass



- Fail

In the first two instances the student may proceed to Doctoral Candidacy without conditions. In the third instance, the student may be required to complete additional course or written work. A “Fail” requires retaking the examination, but no sooner than six months after the failure. In most cases the student will be required to withdraw from the program after failing examinations. In no instance may an examination be taken more than twice. In the event that five years pass between the preliminary examinations and the final oral defense of the dissertation, the student may be required to retake the preliminary examinations.

#### **4.7 World Language Proficiency**

The RATE program requires that all doctoral students demonstrate a reading proficiency in a world language other than their native language. This should ideally occur before the end of the second year at doctoral student status, before a student advances to doctoral candidacy, and no later than the end of the third year.

Students may satisfy the programmatic requirement by passing a written exam administered within the department or by successfully completing (with grades of B or higher) two semesters of college-level language courses. Student may use the same world language in which they demonstrated proficiency for a previous degree. In no instance can a competency in statistics or a computer-based research language be substituted for the programmatic language requirement.

The programmatic language requirement should be considered a minimum. A major professor or program of study committee may determine that competency must be demonstrated in additional languages, in which case the major professor and committee will determine how competency will be demonstrated, and what the timeline for meeting the requirement will be.

#### **4.8 Dissertation and Degree Completion**

Upon successful completion of preliminary (field) exams, a doctoral student shall be considered to have advanced to doctoral candidacy. Each doctoral candidate shall then research and write a dissertation on a topic selected by the candidate with the approval of the major professor. The dissertation must address some aspect of rural, agricultural, technological, or environmental history, broadly defined. The candidate will be required to prepare and defend orally before the POC committee a formal dissertation prospectus, which defines the subject area and problem to be researched, suggests a tentative thesis, and demonstrates knowledge of the research materials for the dissertation. The dissertation shall be written under the primary direction of the major professor but in consultation with the other committee members.

The final examination, which is oral, is intended principally as a defense of the dissertation. The exam will be administered by the Program of Study Committee upon the completion of the dissertation by the student. Normally only the candidate and committee members are present, and other observers may only be invited with the permission of the Program of Study Committee.

#### **4.9 Important Deadlines**

No later than the end of the first year at doctoral student status, students should:

- Have selected a major professor and, in consultation with the major professor, a Program of Study (POS) committee.
- Have submitted a Program of Study and Committee (POSC) form (<https://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/posc/>).
- Have determined their four fields of study.

By the end of the second year at doctoral student status, students should:

- Have successfully completed all preliminary field exams.
- Have submitted or be close to submitting a dissertation prospectus.
- Ideally have satisfied the program's language requirement.

In the semester of planned graduation, students must:

- Submit an Application for Graduation at the beginning of the semester <https://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/student/forms/graduation-application/>.
- Submit a Request for Final Oral Examination (<https://secure.grad-college.iastate.edu/exam/>) at least three weeks before the examination date (and examinations must occur at least three weeks before the end of the term).
- Submit the dissertation to the POS Committee at least two weeks before the examination date.
- Bring a Graduate Student Approval Form ([https://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/documents/forms/Graduate\\_Student\\_Approval\\_Form.pdf](https://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/documents/forms/Graduate_Student_Approval_Form.pdf)) to the examination for the committee to sign.

#### **4.10 Annual Review**

All students in the RATE program undergo an annual review. The DOGE circulates a review form each spring. Students complete the form and submit to their major professors by April 15. Major professors review the form and communicate with students regarding their progress. By the end of the spring semester (last day of classes), major professors submit completed forms to the DOGE, who will keep them on file.

#### **4.11 Dismissal Policy**

Graduate students in the RATE program may be dismissed for the following reasons:

1. Failure to identify a major professor and program of study committee within twelve months of admission.
2. Failure to file a Program of Study and Committee (POSC) form within twelve months of admission.
3. Failure to earn a grade of B or above in any courses.
4. Failure to comply with standards of academic ethics (e.g. plagiarism)
5. Inability to meet program requirements in a timely manner.
6. Failure of the preliminary examinations twice.

7. Failure to complete the degree requirements in five years if entering the program with an MA degree or within seven years if an MA is earned in the program.

The RATE program coordinator will notify students in writing of their deficiencies and will meet with the POS committee to decide the disposition of its case. Students will be notified in writing of the outcome. Dismissals may be appealed through the program coordinator to the entire RATE program faculty who, meeting as a committee-of-the-whole, will hear and decide the matter. The dismissal of part-time students will be determined by the program coordinator in consultation with the POS committee.

#### **4.12 Funding**

The History Department endeavors to provide five years of funding to all students enrolled in the RATE program (seven year, if students earn an MA in the program as well). Beyond that point, students may apply for additional funding which, if available, will be awarded on a competitive basis. All funding is contingent on students making good progress toward their degrees, and on the Department's annual budget.

Departmental funding typically takes the form of half-time (20 hour per week) teaching assistantships. A teaching assistant (TA) is responsible for all grading in a large introductory (200 level course) as well as leading weekly discussion sections attached to that course. Courses typically have four sections with up to 24 students enrolled in each.

In certain circumstances, a half-time assistantship may involve responsibility for grading in two large introductory or intermediate courses (200 or 300 level), each with up to 96 students enrolled, but no responsibility to lead discussion sections. Such assistantships are colloquially referred to within the department as "graderships."

Certain other forms of assistantships are available through the department, but they are rare.

However it is constituted, a half-time assistantship for students in the RATE program carries a stipend and a scholarship covering 100% of tuition. In addition, students on assistantship receive health insurance coverage that includes a prescription drug plan at no charge (additional coverage for a spouse, children, and dental is available for additional premiums).

Each spring, the DOGE circulates an Annual Funding Application listing various forms of departmental funding for the coming academic year. For students within the five-year funding window, this form is used to determine what form of funding is most appropriate. For students who have surpassed the five-year funding window, a determination will be made as to whether continued funding is warranted. Such determinations will be made based on factors including:

- The Department's budgetary constraints.
- The needs of students within the five-year funding window.
- The applicant's overall performance and progress toward degree.

Because budgetary constraints and programmatic conditions (primarily the number of students requesting funding) changes from year to year, it is not impossible that funding might be denied

to a student in one year but then reinstated the next. Likewise if a student is denied funding primarily due to performance, an improvement in performance could result in reinstated funding.

Students are encouraged to seek outside funding as well. Some limited information is available through the Graduate College (<https://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/finance/>). The DOGE regularly circulates all funding offers that the Department receives from other ISU units or from outside the university. External funding is especially desirable for students who need to be away from campus either for research or personal reasons. Since most departmental funding comes in the form of teaching assistantships, we have extremely limited capacity to support students away from campus.

Students who receive departmental funding should be aware that the Department considers half-time appointments the maximum a student should work while still trying to maintain good progress toward degree. If students undertake additional work, either inside or outside the university, this may be grounds to question their progress toward degree and could affect future funding decisions.

## V. Policies and Practices Common to Both Programs

### 5.1. Graduate Courses

#### 5.1.1 Graduate Seminars

Graduate seminars are defined as 500- and 600-level courses that generally fall into one of two categories: 1) readings seminars that focus on major works of scholarship and are intended to give students broad familiarity with particular fields of history; and 2) research seminars that may involve some broad reading in a particular field of history, but which also involve significant original research and are intended to develop students' skills performing and presenting original scholarship. The Department also offers some graduate seminars that focus on methodological issues.

#### 5.1.2 Other Graduate Course Designations

The following course designations at the 500- and 600- level do not count as graduate seminars:

- HIST 590: Special Topics designates an independent study developed between a graduate student and faculty member in a particular area deemed necessary for the student's program of study but which is not covered by regular graduate seminars. The course may focus on readings or research, as deemed appropriate by the student and faculty member.
- HIST 591: Directed Readings designates independent reading specifically focused on preparing for PhD field examinations undertaken by a student under the supervision of their major professor, if preparation is for the examinations generally, or sometimes under the supervision of another POS committee member responsible for one particular examination that the student plans to take.
- HIST 599: Creative Component designates capstone work undertaken by MA students pursuing Plan 2 (non-thesis option – see section 3.5.2 above).
- HIST 699: Research designates research and writing of a master's thesis undertaken by MA students pursuing Plan 1 (thesis option – see section 3.5.1 above), and research and writing undertaken by doctoral candidates in the RATE program for their PhD dissertation.

#### 5.1.3 Undergraduate Courses Taken for Graduate Credit

The Graduate College allows up to 9 credits of 400-level to be included on a graduate POS. The Department of History has determined that it is appropriate for students to include such coursework while pursuing an MA (in either the MA or RATE program). For RATE program students who have advanced to doctoral student status, if there is need for exposure to material covered in a 400-level course, students should take HIST 590 with the course instructor, which may include attendance at the undergraduate course but will also include additional work appropriate to an advanced graduate student.

#### 5.1.4 Departmental Course Offerings

The Department of History typically offers three graduate seminars each semester. Every effort is made to ensure that there is geographic, chronological, and topical diversity, as well as to ensure that one of the seminars is a research seminar. However, the Department cannot guarantee such diversity, nor can it guarantee that a research seminar will be offered every semester. Students, particular those nearing the end of their program of study, should plan carefully and take necessary courses when offered to ensure that they meet program requirements in a timely manner.

## **5.2 Registration and Enrollment**

### *5.2.1 Registration for Regular Course Offerings*

Students register for classes via their AccessPlus accounts. For graduate students, registration generally opens in week 9 of the preceding academic semester. Specific dates can be found here (<https://www.registrar.iastate.edu/calendar/registration-start-dates>). Departmental graduate course offerings rarely fill completely, and students can usually register at any point prior to the start of term (a late registration fee will be incurred starting the first day of classes). If students want to enroll in a 400-level class that has already filled, they are advised to contact the instructor and ask to be signed into the class, explaining the particular need it fills in their program of study.

As soon as future course offerings are set by the Department's Curriculum and Scheduling Committee (usually by late fall or early spring), the DOGE informs students of all planned offering, including 400-level courses that might be taken for graduate credit. Students should be aware that all course offerings are tentative until they appear on the university's official schedule.

Students should consult with their major professors before registering for classes, or with the DOGE if they have not yet selected a major professor.

### *5.2.2 Registration for Special Courses*

Registration for HIST 590, 591, 599, and 699 require special registration codes particular to the faculty member who will supervise these courses. Codes may be obtained from the faculty member or from the graduate staff assistant.

### *5.2.3 Maximum and Minimum Course Loads*

Graduate students may register for a maximum of 12 credits per semester. Students on half-time assistantships may register for a maximum of 9 credits per semester.

Students not on an assistantship must register for a minimum of 9 credits per semester to maintain full-time status. Students on assistantship are considered full-time students automatically.

### *5.2.4 Special Information for Doctoral Candidate Continuous Registration*

Doctoral students who have completed coursework and passed all preliminary field examinations are required to register each fall and spring term, even if they are no longer on campus or using Iowa State facilities. If all required coursework, including required HIST 699 credits, has already been completed, students may register for GR ST 681A: Required Registration: Doctoral Continuous Registration.

Students must register for at least one credit during the semester when they take their final oral examination (dissertation defense). If all required coursework has been completed, students may register for GR ST 681B: Required Registration: Final Exam Only.

### *5.2.5 Cancellation and Withdrawal*

After registration but prior to the start of classes, students may cancel their enrollment by completing a Registration Cancellation Form and submitting it to the University Registrar (<https://www.registrar.iastate.edu/sites/default/files/uploads/forms/cancel.pdf>). No tuition will be assessed if this is done prior to the start of classes.

After the start of term, students may withdraw from all classes by submitting a Request for Withdrawal form. Withdrawals may be for personal (“standard”) or medical reasons. Further information is available here (<https://www.registrar.iastate.edu/students/withdrawal>). Tuition will be adjusted based on the date of the withdrawal.

All students should consult the DOGE and/or their major professor before undertaking a cancellation or a withdrawal. Withdrawal applies only to enrollment in a given semester; it does not change a student’s status in the program. As long as students remain on active status, they may reenter the program simply by registering in a future term.

### *5.2.6 Reentry Registration*

Students can be designated as inactive rather than active status for a variety of reasons, including a lack of registration for four consecutive semesters (excluding summers). Inactive students can no longer register for courses and must request to be reinstated ([https://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/documents/forms/Request\\_to\\_be\\_Reinstated\\_to\\_Active\\_Status.pdf](https://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/documents/forms/Request_to_be_Reinstated_to_Active_Status.pdf)) before they can do so. Both the Department and the Graduate College must approve this request.

## **5.3 Expired Coursework**

Full-time students are generally expected to complete the MA program in two years and the RATE program in five years (seven if an MA is also completed in the program). The Department understands that extensions may sometimes be necessary.

Regardless of program, however, the Graduate College’s time-to-degree limit for all graduate students, both MA and PhD, is seven years, and all graduate coursework expires, i.e. becomes invalid for inclusion on a POS, after this point.

The Graduate College has set the following conditions for the inclusion of expired coursework on a POS:

- MA students may use up to six credits taken 8-10 years prior to the graduating semester at the discretion of their POS committee and the DOGE.
- PhD students may use all credits up to 10 years old and up to 36 credits that are more than 11 years at the discretion of their POS committee and the DOGE, so long as no more than 12 of those credits are more than 16 years old. Credits more than 16 years old must have been earned in the completion of a previous graduate degree.
- Any expired coursework (more than seven years old for MA students and more than ten years old for PhD students) to be used on a POSC requires an Expired Course Petition (<https://secure.grad-college.iastate.edu/expired-courses/>) be submitted at the same time the POSC form is routed.
- Coursework that does not meet any of these stipulations requires documented extenuating circumstances and special petition to the Graduate College.

## 5.4 Grading

The Graduate College stipulates that a grade of B is the minimum satisfactory grade for graduate students, and students who fail to maintain a cumulative 3.0 GPA may be placed on academic probation by the Dean of the Graduate College. The Department, however, stipulates that students must earn a grade of B or higher in each class. No class in which a student has earned below a B may be used on a POS, and any grade below a B may trigger a departmental review and corrective action, up to potential dismissal from the program.

Students should note, however, that course grades are not the entire basis for evaluating student performance. Students' progress will be evaluated on an ongoing basis by their major professor, POS committee, and the Graduate Committee.

## 5.5 Research and Travel Support

Through the generosity of an anonymous donor, the Department has an annual fund that can be used to cover research and travel expenses for any graduate student. The DOGE issues a call for applications twice each academic year, in fall for expenses that will be incurred in the following spring or summer, and in spring for expenses that will be incurred in the following summer or fall. Maximum awards are capped at \$1,000, and award requests below the maximum may also be only partially covered. Funding is awarded competitively and may be denied outright, although in general the Department seeks to extend at least partial funding to as many requests as possible.

Although funding is awarded in two cycles each year, the fund itself operates on an annual budget. Thus funding in the spring cycle will be awarded first to students who received either no funding or well below maximum funding in the fall cycle.