

Doctor of Philosophy in History

About the Program

The Doctor of Philosophy in History at UT-Arlington is designed for people with a passion for researching the past to inform the present. Students are trained in historical research and writing and can gain further expertise in digital humanities tools and methods, as well as in public history and archival administration. Graduates pursue a range of careers in academia, archives and museums, and the private sector. Students who earn a PhD in History are trained in a wide range of transnational, global, and cross-cultural approaches to historical phenomena.

Competencies

1. Upon completion, students will possess the ability to discover independently the appropriate primary sources to answer specific historical questions; analyze primary sources at a professional level, in order to build an independent historical analysis or argument using primary sources.
2. Upon completion, students will possess the ability to analyze secondary sources, in order to recognize qualitative differences between such sources, including distinct perspectives.
3. Upon completion, students will possess the ability to articulate the historiography and research methods associated with National and Transnational History.
4. Upon completion, students will demonstrate professional level writing skills, with the ability to present an independent historical argument persuasively, in good style and grammar, in written English, including a dissertation.
5. Upon completion, students will demonstrate professional level oral proficiency, especially by delivering advanced research-based presentations and participating in career-oriented conferences and workshops, and otherwise demonstrating professional standards within the history discipline.
6. Upon completion, students will demonstrate in-depth knowledge of three historical research fields including at least one from National History and one from Transnational History.
7. Upon completion, students will possess the ability to develop a professional portfolio required for future careers, including professional, written documents required when interviewing or teaching a college-level History course or projects indicative of requirements for public history or non-academic careers, as part of the development of the student's career skills.
8. Upon completion, students will develop cultural competency, including the ability to recognize the reliability of sources and understand and identify implicit bias.
9. Upon completion, students will demonstrate advanced verbal communication skills, specifically in the area of lecture presentations as part of the student's professional development in teaching college-level History courses.
10. Upon completion, students will acquire a solid command of a language other than English.

Admissions Requirements

UNCONDITIONAL ADMISSION

Applicants presenting the following may be offered unconditional admission.

- A prior academic degree (BA or MA in History or related fields) from an accredited institution (verified by transcripts from each college or university previously attended sent directly from the registrar of that institution to Graduate Admissions).
- A minimum undergraduate GPA of 3.0 in the course of completing a BA degree in History or a related field from an accredited institution (verified by official transcripts from each college or university previously attended sent directly from the registrar of that institution to Graduate Admissions).
- A writing sample demonstrating the applicant's research, writing, and analytical skills. The Department prefers that applicants send a primary source-based research paper not to exceed twenty-five pages.
- A letter of intent of approximately two pages describing the student's historical interests and how they intersect with the faculty and strengths of the PhD program.
- Three letters of recommendation (from university or college professors) mailed directly from the recommenders to the History PhD advisor.

Admissions decisions are not based on one factor alone, but rather a holistic review of the application package, including past academic performance, letter of intent, writing sample, and letters of recommendation. Applicants are encouraged to contact the current PhD advisor if they have any concerns about meeting unconditional admission criteria.

PROVISIONAL ADMISSION

An applicant unable to supply all required documentation prior to the admission deadline but who otherwise appears to meet admission requirements may be granted provisional admission. Provisionally admitted students must adequately satisfy any incomplete documentation by the end of the semester in which they are admitted. If the applicant fails to do so, the student will be dropped from the program. He or she may seek readmission when provisional requirements are complete.

PROBATIONARY ADMISSION

An applicant whose credentials approximate but do not meet minimum admission standards, may be granted Probationary Admission subject to the condition that the candidate must earn no grade lower than a B in his/her first 12 semester hours of graduate work taken at UT Arlington.

DEFERRAL OR DENIAL

If two or more of the criteria have not been met satisfactorily, the applicant will not be admitted on any of the three levels above but will receive deferral or denial. A deferred decision may be granted when a file is incomplete or when a denied decision is not appropriate.

APPLICATION DEADLINE

The PhD admissions committee will begin its evaluation of completed applications on February 15 and will continue to meet periodically until the Graduate School deadline of June 15.

Curriculum

Students accepted into the PhD program are expected to take a total of 46 semester credit hours in a three-year period. During the first or second year, full-time students take HIST 5339, HIST 6100, and two of the following three courses: HIST 5340, HIST 5341, or HIST 5350, as well as three colloquia (reading courses). During their second and third year, students take at least three seminars (research courses), as well as nine additional colloquia or seminars. The colloquia must include HIST 5363 and HIST 5364. The seminars must include HIST 6363 and HIST 6364. In their sixth semester, students commonly enroll in HIST 6690 to prepare for the Comprehensive Exam.

Foundations

HIST 5339	HISTORICAL THEORY AND METHODOLOGY	3
HIST 6100	HISTORY AS A PROFESSION	1
Select two from the following:		6
HIST 5340	ISSUES AND INTERPRETATIONS IN U.S. HISTORY	
HIST 5341	APPROACHES TO WORLD HISTORY	
HIST 5350	HISTORY OF CARTOGRAPHY	

Colloquia (reading courses)

HIST 5363	READING COLLOQUIUM IN NATIONAL HISTORIES	3
HIST 5364	READING COLLOQUIUM IN TRANSNATIONAL HISTORY	3
Select one from the following:		3
HIST 5360	READING COLLOQUIUM IN EARLY TRANSATLANTIC HISTORY	
HIST 5365	READING COLLOQUIUM: TOPICS	

Seminars (research courses)

HIST 6363	SEMINAR IN NATIONAL HISTORIES	3
HIST 6364	SEMINAR IN TRANSNATIONAL HISTORY	3
Select one from the following:		3
HIST 6360	RESEARCH SEMINAR IN EARLY TRANSATLANTIC HISTORY	
HIST 6361	RESEARCH SEMINAR IN LATE TRANSATLANTIC HISTORY	
HIST 6365	SEMINAR: TOPICS	

Electives

In consultation with the Graduate Advisor select additional courses sufficient to bring didactic hours to 46.	18
---	----

Dissertation

After admission to candidacy students will enroll in the following courses until the dissertation is complete, see Dissertation Guidelines.

Select at least 9 hours from the following.		9
HIST 6399	DISSERTATION	
HIST 6699	DISSERTATION	
HIST 6999	DISSERTATION	
HIST 7399	DOCTORAL DEGREE COMPLETION	

Total Hours	55
--------------------	-----------

Full-time doctoral students are expected to take nine hours each semester. Part-time students are required to take at least six hours each semester. Each semester a student must consult the graduate advisor before he/she can be cleared to register.

SUGGESTED PLAN OF STUDY

First Year			
First Semester	Hours	Second Semester	Hours
HIST 5339		3 HIST 5341, 5340, or 5350	3
HIST 5340, 5341, or 5350		3 HIST 5364	3
HIST 5363		3 One colloquium	3
HIST 6100		1	
		10	9
Second Year			
First Semester	Hours	Second Semester	Hours
HIST 6363		3 HIST 6364	3
One colloquium		3 One colloquium	3
One colloquium or seminar		3 One colloquium or seminar	3
		9	9
Third Year			
First Semester	Hours	Second Semester	Hours
One colloquium		3 HIST 6990	9
One colloquium or seminar		3	
One colloquium or seminar		3	
		9	9
Fourth Year			
First Semester	Hours	Second Semester	Hours
Comprehensive Exam		HIST 6699	6
Dissertation Proposal is due			
HIST 6990		9	
		9	6
Fifth Year			
First Semester	Hours	Second Semester	Hours
HIST 6699		6 HIST 6699	6
		6	6
Sixth Year			
First Semester	Hours	Second Semester	Hours
HIST 6699		6 HIST 7399	3
		6	3
Total Hours: 91			

Program Completion

DIAGNOSTIC EVALUATION

At the end of the first academic year or after the student has completed the first 18 hours of coursework, each student will have to pass a diagnostic evaluation. History faculty with whom the student has worked will be asked to submit a written evaluation of the student's potential to continue in the program, using a form developed by the Graduate Advisor. The Graduate Studies Committee will review these evaluations and give each student one of four results:

1. approval to continue in the doctoral program;
2. approval to continue with specified remedial work;
3. failure, but with permission for assessment through a second diagnostic evaluation after no more than one year;
4. failure and referral of the student to the MA program, in which the student will be allowed to work towards a terminal MA degree.

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT

If the student has not already fulfilled the foreign language requirement before entering the PhD program, he/she is expected to use the first three years in the program to satisfy the foreign language requirement. The student is expected to choose a language that will be required to work on the PhD topic of his/her choice. Each student is expected to have a solid reading knowledge in at least one language other than English. The language proficiency can be demonstrated in three different ways:

1. If the student has not already taken four semesters (from an accredited university) in a single foreign language with at least a B before being admitted to the PhD program (within 10 years prior to admission), the student needs to complete four semesters in one foreign language with at least a grade of B prior to taking the Comprehensive Exam.
2. Demonstrating proficiency in a foreign language by taking the CLEP test and scoring 71-80 in German, 68-80 in French, and 67-80 in Spanish.

3. Taking the Reading Comprehension Exercise by an appropriate faculty member in which the student during one semester must read a source of the faculty member's choosing in a language other than English and submit a summary in English, which must include up to three pages of direct translation.

The language requirement must be satisfied before the student can take the Comprehensive Exam. For the student at the dissertation stage, the candidate's doctoral committee may require that the student demonstrates competency in a second foreign language in the same fashion as the first foreign language if that second language is judged essential for the student's dissertation research.

MA IN PASSING

Students admitted with a BA will be awarded an MA degree after sitting for their comprehensive examination. Students who pass the oral examination unconditionally will proceed to the dissertation (ABD) phase of the program.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAM

Committee

If the student is allowed to stay in the program, he/she should, after consultation with the PhD Advisor, establish a five-member Comprehensive Exam Committee. The student must first ask a graduate faculty member whose research closely relates to the student's anticipated dissertation topic to chair the committee. The chair of the committee will then assist the student in assembling the rest of the committee. Four of the five committee members must be from UTA's History and Geography Department. The Ph.D. advisor reserves the right to attend the oral portion of the Comprehensive Exam. One member can be from outside the department or even from another university.

Exam

After the student has completed all or most of the 48 hours of coursework and satisfied the language requirement, he/she, upon consultation with the Ph.D. Advisor and the Comprehensive Exam Committee, should begin preparing for the Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam. It is strongly recommended that students wait until they have completed all 48 hours of coursework before they take the Exam. To prepare for the Comprehensive Examination, students may enroll in Directed Study courses, HIST 6190 (<https://catalog.uta.edu/archives/2025-2026/search/?P=HIST%206190>), HIST 6390 (<https://catalog.uta.edu/archives/2025-2026/search/?P=HIST%206390>), HIST 6690 (<https://catalog.uta.edu/archives/2025-2026/search/?P=HIST%206690>), or HIST 6990 (<https://catalog.uta.edu/archives/2025-2026/search/?P=HIST%206990>) during their sixth semester.

Only after the student has the approval of the Ph.D. Advisor, he/she may arrange the date of the exam in consultation with all committee members.

The Comprehensive Examination is meant to test the student's knowledge in at least three broad areas of study and to determine whether the student is prepared to teach in those areas. Students work with their professors to define each of their three exams, and students' earlier coursework should be used to help them prepare for their exam fields. One field must be on a national history or topic (for example, "History of Mexico" or "Gender in Mexico"), one must be on transnational field or topic (for example, "Transatlantic History" or "Transatlantic Migration"), and the third field can be individually constructed by students in consultation with their supervisors—this field may be related to certain careers (for example, Public History), a dissertation topic (for example, History of Cartography), or on a related discipline outside of the History and Geography Department (for example, Women's Studies or Sociology).

The student and each exam field supervisor will decide upon a book list of approximately 30-40 books, and choose whether the exam for that field will be a timed essay or a take-home essay. Students may schedule their written exams with no more than one business day between the completion of one exam and the beginning of the next.

- Timed essay exams must be taken on campus, seven hours each exam, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Students may use a personal computer available in the department to take their examination. They may not use texts or notes during the exam unless expressly permitted by that field's examiner. Chairs should ensure that time-limits for individual parts of the examination are observed.
- Take-home essay exams will begin when a student is given the essay question by the field examiner. The student will hand in an essay responding to the question (~15-20 pages) no earlier than 12 hours and no more than 72 hours later, as agreed upon with the field examiner. The student may consult notes and readings during the writing process.

A member of the department's office staff will email each field's reading list, exam question, and completed written exam to the entire comps committee. After the written exams are completed and the committee has read all three parts, students will take the oral exam (within one week of completion of the third written exam).

Students must take both the written and oral exams or they will automatically fail the comprehensive exam. After the oral exam is over, the committee members will discuss the exam as a whole (written and oral). Then the committee will decide on one of the four options listed below.

1. Passed, approval and recommendation to begin dissertation research under the supervision of the committee chair.
2. Passed, approval to remain in the program upon meeting certain specified additional requirements.
3. Failed, with permission to retake the examination after a certain period as specified by the examining committee.
4. Failed: Recommendation not to continue in the program.

Students are required to pass this examination before they proceed to the dissertation (ABD) phase of the program.

DISSERTATION GUIDELINES

By the end of the first semester after the successful completion of the Comprehensive Examination, the student should submit a dissertation proposal to the committee members and the PhD Advisor who assures that it fulfills the expectations of a doctoral project. The dissertation committee ordinarily consists of three of the five professors involved in the Comprehensive Examination of the student. All three members of the dissertation committee must be members of the UT Arlington History and Geography Department. The student together with his/her primary supervisor may, if deemed necessary, invite outside readers to become additional members of the dissertation committee. Students should work closely with the chair of their committee while researching and writing their dissertation.

During the dissertation phase of the program, students enroll in HIST 6399 (<https://catalog.uta.edu/archives/2025-2026/search/?P=HIST%206399>), HIST 6699 (<https://catalog.uta.edu/archives/2025-2026/search/?P=HIST%206699>) or HIST 6999 (<https://catalog.uta.edu/archives/2025-2026/search/?P=HIST%206999>) and, in exceptional cases with prior approval of the PhD Advisor, in HIST 6190 (<https://catalog.uta.edu/archives/2025-2026/search/?P=HIST%206190>). HIST 6190 (<https://catalog.uta.edu/archives/2025-2026/search/?P=HIST%206190>) may be taken by students following their Comprehensive Exams for a maximum of four semesters, if their dissertation chair concludes that in a given semester they are not engaged full-time in work on their dissertation. In the final semester of dissertation work, students must enroll in HIST 7399 (<https://catalog.uta.edu/archives/2025-2026/search/?P=HIST%207399>) to be in compliance with the requirement of the Graduate School. Students should be aware that the dissertation defense should occur after NO more than four years from the Comprehensive Examination. If the student takes more time to finish the doctoral dissertation, he/she has to file for an extension with the Graduate School.

Once the student, the chair of the committee, and the primary readers agree that the dissertation is ready to be defended, the student must schedule the dissertation defense. Before he/she applies for graduation, the student must receive approval from the PhD Advisor. The student should furnish each committee member with a copy of the dissertation, including notes and bibliography, at least three weeks prior to the defense date. The oral defense of the dissertation generally lasts 1-2 hours. Questioning of the candidate will be supervised by the chair of the student's dissertation committee. Committee members may request that the dissertation be further revised and may withhold final approval of the dissertation until the revisions have been made. If the dissertation has been approved by the committee, the student has to submit the dissertation and the dissertation defense report to the Graduate School. The deadline dates for each semester are published in the Graduate School Calendar.

Advising

Applicants should apply through ApplyUTA and have three letters of recommendation and writing samples sent separately to the grad advisor. First-time college students are also encouraged to reach out to the graduate advisor before applying.

Location:

MA Advisor

310 University Hall

PhD Advisor

322 University Hall

Email:

HistoryMAadvisor@uta.edu

HistoryPhD@uta.edu

Phone:

817-272-2861

Web:

MA Advising info (<https://www.uta.edu/academics/schools-colleges/liberal-arts/departments/history/study-with-us/graduate/masters/masters-advising/>)

PhD Advising info (<https://www.uta.edu/academics/schools-colleges/liberal-arts/departments/history/study-with-us/graduate/phd/phd-advising/>)