



# MASTER OF ARTS (MA) IN HISTORY

GRADUATE HANDBOOK  
2015-2016

*Department of History, Central Michigan University*

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## Note

Please note that the department (and this handbook) commonly refer to the MA in History as the "traditional MA" in order to distinguish it from the Joint MA.

# DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

## Degree Requirements

The degree requirements summarized here come from the Bulletin, which should be consulted early and often when planning your program.

### OVERVIEW

A minimum of **30 hours** of graduate credit is required for the traditional MA in history. In most cases it will take at least a full year (two semesters plus summer classes) to complete the necessary work. A full-time MA student, for example, might take 12 hours per term in fall and spring plus 6 hours in the summer to reach 30 hours. A number of factors can influence the time to degree. While transfer credit can speed things up, funded students with teaching assistantships, on the other hand, usually take no more than 9 hours of coursework per term, which means at least three semesters plus summer study. The department makes every effort to ensure regular graduate offerings in the fields we cover but not all courses can be taught in a given year, and this may also affect your program plans. Since course offerings can depend on a number of factors, including faculty research leave, retirements, new hires, and so on, it's more than usually important to discuss specific course plans with your advisor, who will generally have good information about things like this.

### PLAN A & PLAN B

There are two paths to the MA. Plan A involves writing a thesis, while Plan B requires two substantial (article-length) research papers instead of the thesis. It is essential to discuss these options with your advisor as soon as possible.

#### Plan A (Thesis)

Students who choose to do a thesis should make arrangements with a thesis director as soon as possible in their first semester of graduate work. It would probably be wise to consult two or three members of the graduate faculty in your general field of interest before deciding to do a thesis and choose a director. The thesis director and the candidate choose two additional members of the thesis committee. Early action is, of course, more urgent for full-time students than for those who may be planning part-time work over several years. Since only six hours of credit are allowed for the thesis, it may be advisable to use HST 791 (Graduate Research) to explore a potential thesis topic. Registering for thesis credit should be done in the final stage of your degree. This keeps the Plan B option open longer and might avoid a useless 3 hours of thesis credit which will not apply to a Plan B degree.

Other points to note about Plan A and the MA thesis:

- Student may not register for more than 3 hours of thesis credit until the Prospectus has been approved by the department and College of Graduate Studies (see the Prospectus form).
- The finished thesis must be made available to members of thesis committee at least three weeks before the required oral exam on the thesis is scheduled. The thesis director is responsible for scheduling the oral exam.

# DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

- The finished manuscript must be deposited in the College of Graduate Studies six weeks before scheduled graduation.
- Final preparation of the thesis should be done carefully in consultation with the thesis director and meticulously following the guidelines required by the College of Graduate Studies. Questions on the format should be directed to the College of Graduate Studies since that office must pass on final acceptance. Students are responsible for additional costs related solely to preparation of the thesis, including duplication, binding, and copyright registration. These fees are assessed at the time of thesis clearance.
- If an original member of a thesis committee withdraws, a replacement may be selected by the thesis director, with the approval of the chair.
- A thesis is approved by the department when a majority of the thesis committee indicates its approval in writing. The chair of the thesis committee must file the thesis and appropriate forms with the department secretary. The department office will then forward the original to the College of Graduate Studies and file a copy in the student's permanent department record.
- There are no formal requirements for the length of an MA thesis in history, but the range at CMU has been from about 70 to 130 pages.
- Students who use charts, graphs, maps, or other forms of illustrations must obtain copyright authorization from the original source before submitting the thesis to the College of Graduate Studies.

## **Plan B (Two Research Papers)**

Students electing Plan B must submit two research papers as evidence of scholarship. Papers must be well-written and presented in a proper scholarly format. Their conclusions must rest on interpretation of a substantial body of primary sources. A minimum length of 6000 words is suggested.

These papers ordinarily originate in 700-level research seminars. Please inform your instructor if you plan to use the paper from a particular course for your Plan B. You and the instructor can then begin a dialogue about specific expectations.

Each paper must receive a minimum grade of B. The paper will then be revised (even if it earned an A, expect revisions) to qualify as a Plan B paper. After revision, each paper must be accepted by the professor responsible for the course as satisfactory for permanent filing.

Once a professor has approved the revisions and format of a Plan B paper, the student should submit it to the department for final clearance and filing. When the papers have been filed in the Department of History, the secretary will submit the appropriate paperwork to the College of Graduate Studies.

A Plan B Paper can be filed at any time during your coursework (or after), but it is recommended to revise any research paper and submit it to the department as soon as possible.

# ADVISING & ADVISORS

## Advising & Advisors

Graduate advisors assigned at the time of admission to the program in history serve as the starting point for guidance through the graduate program. You should meet with your assigned advisor early in your first semester of graduate study to complete your Program Authorization and begin course selection (as described in more detail below). Students are free to seek out direction from others they find helpful, including history and other university faculty.

Since the initial advising assignments are based on the department's evaluation of an applicant's stated interests – which may also develop or change over the course of the program – it may well be the case that a student will wish to change advisors. This is perfectly acceptable: please contact the Director of Graduate Studies to discuss or initiate the process.

# COURSE SELECTION

## Course Selection

You should select your courses with the help of your graduate advisor. Most students will not be able to plan their whole course of study before starting classes, so it's best to contact your advisor for advice about the first term (or two) as soon as possible after you've been admitted. For basic orientation, be sure to consult our [overview of graduate courses in history](#).

The most important part of the course selection process also happens to be the most important form you need for your degree: the [Program Authorization](#). Although it must be approved and filed with the College of Graduate Studies before graduation, there is no official deadline for signing and submitting the authorization. In general it's a good idea to do this as soon as possible, and ideally in your first term. At the least, students and advisors should use the authorization form when discussing course selection and program plans, since it is based on Bulletin requirements and will help ensure the right mix of courses.

As for course requirements, the Bulletin is once again the authoritative source for all the rules, but here are some highlights and extra advice:

- At least 20 hours must be in history (HST) courses. This means that up to 10 hours of coursework may come from cognate disciplines such as anthropology, economics, English, philosophy, religion, and so on (this is not an exhaustive list!), so long as your advisor approves the courses. The Bulletin is somewhat confusing on this point, so it's worth clarifying that you are not required to take any cognate (non-history) courses. It's just that you may.
- All of your hours must be in graduate courses, that is, at the 500-level or higher. (In the distant past graduate students were able to count certain 300-level courses, modified appropriately, toward their programs, but this is no longer the case.)
- At least 15 hours must be at the 600-level or higher. In other words, no more than 15 hours (5 3-hour courses) may come from 500-level classes. Consult our [overview of graduate courses for more details](#).

## Funding

For full details on MA funding opportunities, see the department's [graduate funding page](#). Currently funded MA students must submit a progress report if they wish to be considered for funding in the following year. See the [funding page](#) for details and the form. Traditional MA students may also be eligible to apply for research and travel funding. Amounts available vary from year to year; consult your advisor or the history department office for additional information. Small grants for research, publication and presentation are also available on a competitive basis from the College of Graduate Studies. [More information and application forms are available from the College of Graduate Studies](#).

# OTHER INFORMATION

## Other Information

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

The Department of History expects the highest standards of academic integrity throughout the university community. The department will strive to enforce the standards of conduct and academic honesty for students as set out in official university publications such as the Academic Integrity Policy for Graduate Students published in the [Graduate Bulletin](#) and the university's general [Policy on Academic Integrity](#).

In addition to the above, the Department of History has established the following procedures for dealing with questions of academic integrity in the graduate program.

The department will follow the established university grade grievance policy for handling disputes arising from the assignment of a student's grade or status in a specific course.

In other cases where a violation of academic integrity is alleged, the essentials of the case shall be reported first to the department chair.

If the chair agrees that a violation of academic integrity has occurred because of the conclusiveness of the evidence or because the student admitted to the violation, the chair shall authorize a letter to the student outlining the allegations and proposing a sanction. The letter shall also offer the student the option of a meeting on the matter before the Graduate Studies Committee of the department. If the student does not admit to the violation, the Graduate Studies Committee will schedule a meeting at which time the student will be present to discuss the allegation. The Committee will review all evidence and recommend an appropriate sanction.

The conclusions of the chair in the absence of a Graduate Studies Committee meeting or the conclusions of the Graduate Studies Committee's meeting, if such is required, shall be forwarded to the student complainant and to the College of Graduate Studies with the recommendation for appropriate sanctions.

If a decision and recommendation of the Graduate Studies Committee are unfavorable to a student complainant, the student shall be reminded of the further appeals process available in the College of Graduate Studies.

### HUMAN SUBJECTS IN RESEARCH

If your research requires oral history, interviews, or surveys, you are required to follow the guidelines of CMU's [policy on Human Subjects in Research](#). Among other things, this policy requires that you submit your research proposal and all explanatory information to either the departmental review committee (via the department chairperson) or the university Institutional Review Board. It is critical that you follow procedures for human subject research or your research, thesis, Plan B paper, or dissertation may be disqualified for academic credit. Full details are available from the [Office of Research and Graduate Studies](#).

# CONTACT INFORMATION

## Contact Information

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