Advisors

Upon admission, students are assigned an advisor. Once a student has identified who will serve as thesis director or comps chair, that professor should be designated as the student's advisor. To change advisors, complete the appropriate form https://dynamicforms.ngwebsolutions.com/Submit/Cosigners?form=7ae1354b-300f-4257-a630-166a085391be&section=462574&token=Fd40xicxRktisi1HB6DSGyBjSFJYME5VNQ42f_mSHPk.

Awards and Scholarships

The History Department offers several awards and scholarships to help support graduate study, research, and travel. While most of these are awarded in the spring for disbursement the following year, the Maddox is awarded and distributed in the fall. Some of these awards are by application, others by nomination. Information about deadlines and application forms will be posted on department bulletin boards.

Award	Amount	Details
Blake-Hulse Scholarship in Confederate History	$3000 to $5000, plus tuition	Graduate Student interested in Confederate History. Non-military focus preferred; woman favored if equal qualifications
Colonial Dames	$1000	Graduate or Undergraduate History major focusing on United States history.
Doris C. Miller Scholarship	$900	Alpha Delta Kappa preferred. Graduate student who lives in WV or intends to teach in WV.
Hershel Heath Scholarship	$1000	Outstanding Graduate or Undergraduate History Major. Academic achievement and Overall interest in continuing their education
Jean Ashby Johnson Sims Memorial Scholarship	$500 Per semester	Undergraduate or Graduate full time History major.
Robert Maddox Thesis Award	$500	Several may be given in a year. To support research and travel. This award is given in the fall semester
Shannon Ewing Sexton Scholarship	$900	Awarded to an exceptional graduate student.
Weill Essay Award	$100	For the best Graduate Paper

Blake Collection

One of the hidden gems of Marshall University's library is the Rosanna Blake Library of Confederate History, located on the second floor of Morrow Library, near the other Special Collections. At its heart is a massive collection of over 4,000 books, around 3,000 other printed materials, artifacts,

and images collected by Rosanna Blake, a native of Proctorville, Ohio, who graduated from Marshall College in 1934 and who cultivated a lifelong interest in Robert E. Lee, the Confederacy, and the Civil War. The collection was bequeathed to Marshall University and was moved to campus in 1987. Since then, it has grown and diversified into a fantastic research library related to all aspects of the Civil War. For more about the collection, see: https://www.marshall.edu/special-collections/blake/.

Materials held in the Blake Collection cannot be checked out (thus, they must be used on-site), but they do appear in regular library catalogue searches.

Careers

Students earning the M. A. in History at Marshall are prepared for a wide variety of career opportunities. Our M. A. students have recently gained admission to Ph.D. programs in History at the University of Florida, University of South Carolina, Fordham University, University of Kentucky, University at Buffalo, and West Virginia University. Other students have continued their education studying law, library science, and other graduate fields. Our graduates have found employment in archives including the National Archives, higher education, secondary schools, museums, historic sites, government agencies, and a wide array of businesses. In earning a M. A. in History, students acquire the ability to research and assemble material, analyze information, and clearly and concisely present orally and in writing their findings. These are skills that are always in high demand by employers in the private and public sectors.

Certificate Programs

In addition to the M.A., students can earn a certificate in subjects including Public History or Women's Studies.

Public History

The Graduate Certificate in Public History is an interdisciplinary program housed in Marshall University's History Department. The program combines practical coursework with field experiences and draws upon the faculty and resources of five graduate programs to prepare the student for career opportunities in museums, historic homes, libraries, archives, state and national parks and for local, state and federal governmental agencies.

Students already enrolled in the History master's program or other graduate program who wish to earn the certificate simultaneously can apply easily by submitting a Secondary Program Request form, obtained from the Graduate Studies web site https://dynamicforms.ngwebsolutions.com/Submit/Page?form=061dae0e-05d4-4b1a-8a96-4eadad445a66&section=631523&page=494391&token=J1hWdtxeyz2iUgVcDseAhRv4DGA3lZjYo4-ZtGrlHb8

Prospective certificate-only students should apply for admission to Marshall University as a Certificate/Professional Development student and select the Public History Certificate on the application form. The admissions requirements are the same as for the History Master's degree, except that a personal statement is not required. All materials should be submitted to the

Graduate Admissions office (http://www.marshall.edu/graduate/select-your-degree-or-certificate-program/how-to-apply-for-admission/).

To earn a Certificate in Public History, students must complete 18 credit hours of relevant coursework. Nine credit hours are the required courses HST 537, HST 640 and HST 680. At least six of the remaining nine credit hours must come from the following list: HST 524, HST 538, HST 635. The remaining three credit hours may come from HST 524, HST 538, HST 635, ANT 567, GEO 506, JMC 575, MKT 511 or SOC 615. Certain Special Topics in the Graduate Humanities program may also be used.

Women's Studies

Many history grad students also work toward a certificate in Women's Studies. The Graduate Certificate in Women's Studies strives to offer quality, multi-method, and interdisciplinary courses at the graduate level, supporting a curriculum that allows students to develop an understanding of the unique contributions and challenges faced by women, and interpret the human experience through a critical analysis of citizenship, disability, ethnicity, gender, race, religion, sexuality and social class. The program requires eighteen hours, including both elective study in multiple departments, two graduate seminars in History and Sociology, and individualized original research.

As with the Public History certificate, students already enrolled in the History master's program or other graduate program who wish to earn the certificate simultaneously can apply easily by submitting a Secondary Program Request form, obtained from the Graduate Studies web site https://dynamicforms.ngwebsolutions.com/Submit/Page?form=061dae0e-05d4-4b1a-8a96-4eadad445a66&section=631523&page=494391&token=J1hWdtxeyz2iUgVcDseAhRv4DGA3lZjYo4-ZtGrlHb8. Interested students should contact the Director of Women's Studies.

Choosing Thesis Versus Comps

Successful completion of either the thesis or the comprehensive examination will earn you a M.A. in History. The path you select is entirely up to you, but there are few things that you might want to consider as you make your decision. If it is important to you to complete the degree in four semesters, the comps might be the better option. Students can complete a thesis and graduate in four semesters, but most thesis writers will need additional semesters to finish the thesis. Comps are for most students a quicker and easier path to the M.A. There are, however, some compelling reasons for writing a thesis. If you are thinking about pursuing a Ph.D. at some point, the experience of writing a thesis will be invaluable in completing your dissertation. Some doctoral programs, in addition, look more favorably in the admissions process upon students who completed a thesis in earning their master's degree. Writing a master's thesis can also be a good test of a student's interest in and aptitude for writing a doctoral dissertation. Issues encountered in writing a 100-page thesis will only be magnified in writing a 300-page dissertation.

Citations

In citing their sources, historians use what is called either the Chicago or Turabian system of citation. There are two different styles of Chicago citations. Historians employ the Notes and Bibliography style and other fields primarily in the social sciences use the Author-Date style of the Chicago system of citation. Kate L. Turabian was for many years the person at the University of

Chicago who read all dissertations and made sure that they complied with the formatting and citations set forth in *The Chicago Manual of Style*. Turabian eventually produced a guidebook to the proper usage of the Chicago system which the University of Chicago press originally published in 1955 and is now in its 9th edition as *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. (https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/M/bo27847540.html). While you can find online many explanations of the Chicago systems, the History Department strongly recommends that you obtain a copy of Turabian's *A Manual for Writers*. Chapters 16 and 17 provide authoritative answers to most of the citation issues you will likely encounter. If you make use of one of the available citation generators, please check the results. Some of these citation generators do not always produce accurate Chicago style citations.

Classroom Expectations

As a graduate student in the History Department, you will be expected to have read all assigned course material by the date given on your syllabus and to complete all assignments on time. Participation in classroom discussions is absolutely essential. Grades in graduate classes are often based in large measure on the frequency and quality of your participation. Do not wait to be called upon to speak—jump in! If you are having a hard time doing this, ask your professor or advisor for help. Students who do not willingly and actively contribute in a thoughtful and meaningful way to discussion are not fulfilling their obligations as a member of the class.

Attendance is expected at all class meetings. Missing a class is not an option except in the rare emergency or when illness absolutely precludes attendance. If you are forced to miss a class session for any reason, you should immediately inform the professor. Do not show up late for class or under any circumstances disrupt class, unless your professor has a clear policy to the contrary (e.g., your professor may request that if you have an emergency brewing and may need to leave the classroom, you let them know before class begins). Graduate students should not have to be reminded to be quiet when others are speaking.

Pay close attention to any instructions provided by the professor in the syllabus or in class concerning any particular expectations pertaining to that course. If there is anything that isn't clear, ask!

Comprehensive Examination Option

For advice on choosing between Comprehensive Exam Option and Thesis Option, see "Choosing Thesis Versus Comps."

The comprehensive examination is a sort of history graduate student rite of passage. Your faculty all took similar examinations in earning their doctoral degrees and many also took comprehensive examinations for their M. A. degrees. The comprehensive examination requires students to demonstrate their knowledge of a particular field and their ability to frame and express sophisticated arguments about the past.

The non-thesis option for earning the M.A. in History requires that a student successfully complete written and oral comprehensive examinations. A student shall find three members of the History faculty who are each willing to administer an oral and a written examination in their field of expertise. The Director of Graduate Studies may, upon written petition, permit one of the student's

examiners to be a qualified individual from another department at Marshall University or from another institution.

Each examiner shall provide the Director of Graduate Studies with a written question or questions pertaining to the relevant field of study. Examiners may – at their discretion – include a minimum number of words or pages necessary to successfully answer the question or questions they have posed. The Director of Graduate Studies shall then present the student with the questions provided by the examiners.

The written portion of the comprehensive examination shall be completed in a classroom setting. A student shall be given four hours to write their answers. Students will be placed in a classroom and will not be permitted to consult any notes or sources in drafting their answers. The student shall reach an agreement with the three examiners as to which style of written examination will be completed. The written questions for all three fields must all be answered using the same examination format.

Examiners shall have 14 days to inform the Director of Graduate Studies whether the student has passed the written portion of the examination for their field. A student must pass the written portion of all three fields in order to proceed to the oral examination. Students who fail to pass one or more of the written fields will be given a second chance to take the written examination for any field or fields they failed. In the event a student fails any portion of a second written examination, that student will not be permitted to complete the Master's Degree in History.

The oral portion of the comprehensive examination shall be scheduled for at least two weeks after the successful completion of the written examination. The student will be examined on material relevant to the written examination and the reading lists for the three selected fields of study. The oral examination for all three fields will be conducted at the same time and will last at least one hour but no more than two hours. At the completion of the oral examination, the three examiners will meet to discuss the student's performance and vote as to whether the student has passed the oral portion of the examination. A student will pass the oral examination if at least two of the three examiners vote in the affirmative. A student who fails the oral portion of the examination will be given one more opportunity to take the oral examination with all three of the examiners. In the event a student fails the second oral examination, that student will not be permitted to complete the Master's Degree in History.

Preparing for the exams

The first step is in preparing for comps is discussing with each examiner what material your exam will cover. Once you have assembled your three reading lists try not to panic. It is common to feel a bit overwhelmed by the number of books and articles you will need to read. Generations of history graduate students have found it helpful to write a precis or abstract of each book or article on your list. A precis or abstract is a short summary of what the work is about and its thesis. This typically single-spaced page will prove highly useful to you when it comes time to actually take your examinations. The volume of material you will need to be familiar with will far exceed the ability of most people to recall without the aid of a written summary. A book's thesis which may seem clear and memorable in September may not come so readily to mind the following May after you have read several other works on the same topic. Everyone has different strategies for preparing to take

comprehensive examinations. There is no single right way to do it. Ask your examiners, other faculty members, and your fellow graduate students for suggestions and tips. The one bit of advice that will likely be universal is that you start early and take good notes on what you read.

What will the exams be like?

Comp questions will generally be historiographical in that you will be asked to synthesize and critique the relevant arguments concerning some important historical question. Questions asking you to consider the periodization of a particular field are also perennial comp favorites. You will generally not be asked to provide a detailed account of a particular historical event, but that, of course, depends on your examiner and the nature of a particular examination field. It is always best to ask your examiners for any guidance they are willing to provide in terms of the sort of questions they will be asking.

The written portion of the comprehensive examination is marked on a pass or fail basis. Each field is graded separately, and you must pass each of the three fields in order to move on to the oral examination. A student who fails the written portion of the examination of one or more fields will be permitted to retake the failed field one additional time. A second failure of any written field will prevent a student from proceeding to the oral examination and from earning an M. A. in history at Marshall.

The oral portion of the comprehensive examination will test your understanding of major issues in the relevant field and will likely ask you to defend and explain your written examination. While there will almost certainly be overlap between what you are asked to discuss in your oral examination and your written questions, expect to be asked to cover other aspects of your field.

The format for your oral comps depends, in part, on your examiners. Ask them in advance how they plan to proceed. Typically, the three examiners will take turns asking you questions pertaining to their fields. It is quite common for another of the examiners to ask you to clarify or expand upon your answer to another examiner's question or to ask you to draw some sort of comparison to his or her field. The oral examination will proceed in this fashion for at least an hour, but generally less than 90 minutes. At the end of the discussion you will be asked to leave the room while the examiners deliberate. You will then be brought back in and informed as to the results.

There are four possible results: pass with distinction, pass with satisfactory performance, pass with contingency, and unsatisfactory. A pass with distinction means that your performance on your comprehensive examinations was exceptional. This honor is not given lightly and should be received with much satisfaction. A pass with satisfactory performance indicates that you have performed admirably and are well deserving of your M. A. in history. A pass with contingency means that once you have successfully corrected some minor deficiency in your work, your committee will submit new paperwork to the Graduate College indicating that you have passed your comprehensive examinations. The History Department very rarely makes use of the pass with contingency option. An unsatisfactory result indicates that the comprehensive examination has been failed. The History Department allows students who fail their oral comprehensive examinations to take the oral portion of the examination a second time. In the event of a failure, students should consult with their committee and the Director of Graduate Studies for information

on retaking the oral examination. A second failure of the oral examination will prevent a student from earning an M. A. in history at Marshall.

Conference Presentations

It is an excellent idea for graduate students to consider turning a class research paper or thesis chapter into a conference paper. For most graduate students in history, an academic conference is the first opportunity to present their research to the larger scholarly community. Academic conferences come in all different shapes and sizes. Some – such as the annual gathering of the American Historical Association – are massive and feature numerous panels that span all of human history and most every methodological approach. Other conferences are narrowly focused on a particular time and place. There are even conferences that consider the life of a particular individual or the conduct of a single battle. Regardless of the size and subject matter specificity of a conference there are certain conventions that conferences at which historians present their work generally follow.

Conferences typically feature a series of panels made up of three or so presenters whose research shares some common themes or content. Some panels include papers that are clearly complimentary and work well together. Other panels appear to have been thrown together in a way that suggests that the conference organizers simply put together papers that did not fit in neatly with the work of other presenters. A scholar who presumably has some level of expertise in the relevant topic will read all of the papers in advance and provide commentary on the offered scholarship after the presenters have read their papers. There are also conferences where there is no commentator, in which case there will be someone assigned to introduce the participants and moderate the proceedings. After the papers have been read and any remarks by a commentator, questions and comments are solicited from the audience.

Presenters are typically given about twenty minutes to read their papers. While other academic disciplines have moved away from reading conference papers, historians have largely maintained the practice, which dates back into the 19th century. It is a cardinal sin to exceed the allotted time. Conscientious panel moderators will indicate, often silently by way of a sign held aloft, that time is running short. Once the time limit is reached, the moderator will typically ask the speaker to quickly wrap things up. Do not be the person who the moderator stops mid-sentence. Going over the time limit and not finishing the paper indicates to the audience that a speaker is poorly prepared or does not respect the other panelists.

The best way to avoid a paper that is too long or too short is to time yourself reading it aloud to other people. The History Department in conjunction with Phi Alpha Theta routinely holds practice sessions for students prior to conference presentations. Your advisor or the Director of Graduate Studies will be happy to arrange for you to read your paper to an audience. In addition to ensuring that your paper is the proper length feedback about the contents of your paper and your presentation style are invaluable in making for a positive conference experience and ensuring that your work receives the serious consideration it deserves.

Expect something at any conference to go awry. Other panel members will fail to appear, commentators will arrive unprepared, promised audio-visual equipment will break, outside noise will be disruptive, audience members will doze off, and on and on. Veteran presenters all have

stories and will advise that you should expect glitches and be prepared to adjust cheerfully as best you can to the circumstances as you deliver your paper.

We recommend that during your first year in the program that you adapt a paper or perhaps part of your thesis into a conference paper. Once you have drafted a paper, prepare an abstract of about 200 words which summarizes the contents of the paper, identifies your thesis, and suggests why your work contributes to the larger historical literature. This is, of course, a lot of material to squeeze into so few words. It is, however, important that you craft a clear and concise abstract of your work. When you apply to present at a conference you will most likely be asked to submit a CV and the abstract of your paper. An abstract that is riddled with grammatical errors and stylistic infelicities will not be received favorably by conference selection committee members. Pay attention to the length of the abstract that you are asked to provide and modify your abstract as necessary. Try to fall within 10 to 20 words of what the call for papers has asked for. Please feel free to ask your advisor or another professor to review your abstracts and conference papers prior to submission.

The bulletin board outside the copy room will have notices for upcoming conferences to which you might want to apply. Most of the calls for papers on the bulletin board will be for either graduate student conferences or for conferences that encourage submissions from graduate students. Many history departments with Ph.D. programs conduct an annual conference – typically during the Spring semester – inviting graduate students to submit their work. Such conferences tend to accept work covering all historical periods. Departmental faculty or other scholars usually serve as commentators. Graduate conferences provide a welcoming environment in which to present and feedback is for the most part encouraging and supportive. Some graduate conferences provide cash prizes for the best papers. Ph.D. programs are always on the lookout for promising applicants and a favorable impression at a graduate conference may help earn you admission to that school. Our students have presented in recent years at a number of graduate conferences including those held at North Carolina State University, Virginia Tech, Ohio University, and the University at Buffalo. Just because a conference is not reserved for graduate students does not mean that you may not submit your work. Some conferences such as the annual meeting of the Appalachian Studies Association are particularly welcoming of graduate student submissions. If conference conveners do not believe that your work fits well with other papers, they will decline to include your paper. Rejection is a universal experience for academics. We have all had solid work rejected by publishers, journals, and conferences.

Presenting at conferences is not free. In addition to the expenses of travel and lodging, many conferences charge a registration fee and some conferences convened by professional organizations such as the Society for the History of the Early American Republic require that all presenters be members of the organization. The History Department, Phi Alpha Theta, and the College of Liberal Arts do have limited funds available to help graduate students with the costs of presenting at conferences. Please ask the Director of Graduate Studies for information about requesting travel funds.

Presenting at a conference can be a daunting prospect. Speaking in front of group and opening up your work to professional criticism always involves a certain level of stress and anxiety. The History Department strongly encourages you to put aside any such concerns and apply to conferences

once you have a paper ready to present. Conferences are a fundamental means by which historians present their work, meet colleagues from other institutions, and hone their scholarship.

Course Selection

To earn a M. A. in history at Marshall, all students must successfully complete 36 credit hours. The only class that all students must take is HST 600 (Methodology). Students must choose between the thesis and non-thesis options in completing their degree.

The Department of History encourages all students to choose the thesis option because the research and writing of history is an integral part of the craft of history. Students who plan to continue their graduate studies should write a thesis. A thesis is typically between 70 to 100 pages in length and must reflect original research from primary sources, expertise in the subject area, value to the discipline of history as an original contribution, the ability to do research in the field of history, and the ability to write in a professional and scholarly manner. Students who write a thesis must take 3 to 6 credit hours of HST 681 (Thesis).

The non-thesis option for earning the M.A. in history requires that a student successfully complete written and oral comprehensive examinations. A student shall find three members of the department willing to administer an oral and a written examination in their field of expertise.

Students are encouraged to discuss with their advisor or the Director of Graduate Studies which courses will fulfill graduation requirements and would best serve their academic interests. Do not hesitate to ask a professor for more information about the material that will be covered or the format for an upcoming class.

Graduate History courses are offered at either the 500 or 600 level. History 500 courses are also listed under the same title at the 400 level. The American Revolution is, for example, listed as both 409 and 509. Classes listed at the 400 and 500 level enroll both undergraduate and graduate students. It depends on the instructor, but such classes are more likely to resemble an upper-level undergraduate course than the typical graduate level history seminar. While graduate students may count as many as 18 hours of 500 level credits towards completion of the History M. A., students are strongly encouraged to use considerably fewer 500 credit hours than permitted. Courses at the 600 level are designed for and limited to graduate students. The History Department recommends that students only take a 500-level course when the subject matter of that class is of particular interest or fits well with their thesis topic or is related to a comprehensive examination field. Note that if you completed a 400/500 course as an undergraduate at Marshall, you may not take that same class at the 500 level as a graduate student.

Courses Outside the History Department

Students are permitted to earn graduate level credits from other departments in completing their required 36 credit hours. In order for a class from outside the History Department to count towards graduation it must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies. Written approval from the Director of Graduate Studies is required. Make sure that your Plan of Study indicates that these courses from outside the History Department will count towards the 36 credit hours needed to graduate.

C.V. (Curriculum Vitae)

A CV is the academic version of a professional resume. In general, a CV will provide your contact information, education including your degree in progress with your anticipated date of completion, relevant employment, published works including material that has been accepted for publication or which is under contract, papers presented at conferences or accepted for an upcoming conference, and other relevant skills such as the ability to speak or read other languages. Once you have produced a CV, the History Department urges you to show it to your advisor or another member of the faculty. The faculty all have extensive experience writing CVs and will be happy to share with you their suggestions. It is never too early to start your CV. Please do not be discouraged if your first CV is a bit brief. This is normal and part of your time in the M. A. program at Marshall can be spent adding material for your CV.

Director of Graduate Studies

The Director of Graduate Studies is, at the risk of stating the obvious, the faculty member in the History Department who oversees the M.A. program. Your initial advisor will be the Director of Graduate Studies and until you request another professor, such as your thesis committee chair, is the person you should consult in selecting courses and other related issues. Even after you have selected another advisor, the Graduate Director is always willing to discuss your path to completing your degree, career options, or additional graduate study. Should you experience any problems with any of your classes that you do not feel comfortable discussing with the relevant professor you should bring any concerns to the attention of the Director of Graduate Studies. Such concerns may include but are not limited to how you are treated by the professor either in class or outside the classroom, the amount of work assigned, grading standards, or the appropriateness of material discussed in class. If you are experiencing problems with other students or some other unit of the university, you should also seek out the Director of Graduate Studies. Issues involving the Director of Graduate Studies should be directed to the Department Chair.

Grades

Graduate school grading is different from what you likely experienced as an undergraduate. The expectation is that you will do A work in every class. While every professor has particular expectations, an A in a graduate course means that you are performing up to the high standards that professor believes reflects the expected level of scholarship and effort. A B indicates that you have not in some way performed up to the professor's expectation. It is a passing grade but should be considered a low pass and should cause you to reflect on how you might improve your performance. Should you receive a B, be sure to speak with the professor to better understand your weaknesses as a student and what you can do to address them. While a C will earn you credit for a course, it is a clear sign that your work is considered well below the standards of the department. The problems in a student's performance that result in a C are even more apparent and serious when a grade of D or F is received for a course.

In addition to speaking to the professor who assigned a grade of C, D, or F, the student must meet with the Director of Graduate Study to discuss the situation.

Two grades of C or below in courses taken for completion of the M. A. in History will result in the automatic dismissal of a student from the program.

If you are interested in pursuing a Ph.D. in History, it is imperative that you earn an A in all of your classes. A graduate program will question your aptitude or commitment to the hard work needed to succeed in a doctoral program if you received one or more B grades in earning your M. A. While a single B grade may not be fatal to your chances of admission, a second B grade or a single C in a graduate course may well prove fatal.

Graduate Assistantships

The History Department employs two graduate assistants. In return for twenty hours of work per week for the department during the Fall and Spring semesters, graduate assistants receive a remittance of 70% of in-state tuition and a modest stipend. Assistants may be assigned to a particular professor for whom they will perform tasks such as grading and, in some cases, a limited amount of teaching. An assistant may also be asked to assist that professor with research. In addition to their work with an assigned professor, assistants will be expected to keep office hours in the department. At the beginning of each semester, the assistants meet to set a schedule that will ensure that at least one of them is available as much of the time as is possible to complete departmental tasks that arise on a daily basis. As part of their duties in the department, assistants frequently make copies, get the mail, proctor tests, and other similar tasks.

Applications to be a graduate assistant for the History Department for the upcoming academic year are due during the Spring semester. The Director of Graduate Studies will notify students as to the deadline for applications. Students should submit a one or two-page statement setting forth their interest in and qualifications for the position. Students may also be asked to submit additional material in support of their application. All material should be sent directly to the Director of Graduate Studies who will provide all of the applications to the department's Graduate Committee for consideration and selection. Any questions about the duties of a graduate assistant in the History Department and the application process should be directed to the Director of Graduate Studies. General information about graduate assistantships is available from the Graduate Studies Office:

https://www.marshall.edu/graduate/graduate-assistantships-2/graduate-assistantship-overview/.

There are additional opportunities to serve as a graduate assistant throughout the university. A list of available graduate assistantships, qualifications, and the application process is maintained at:

http://www.marshall.edu/human-resources/job-opportunities/.

Many of our graduate students have worked as assistants for other departments and university offices.

Graduation

The Graduate Studies website contains much helpful information about the process of applying for graduation and all the relevant deadlines. (https://www.marshall.edu/graduate/students/) In summary, the process is as follows:

- Prior to the start of or shortly after the start of your final semester, you should file an Application for Graduation and pay a commencement fee. Consult the Graduate Studies website for information on how to make this payment and submit the application form
    - Timeline for filing:

      https://www.marshall.edu/graduate/deadlines-dates/
- If you have elected the **non-thesis option**, you must successfully complete your comprehensive examinations by the last day of exam week. The chair of your committee will file with the Graduate Studies Office the Comprehensive Assessment Evaluation Form indicating that you have successfully completed your comprehensive examinations.
- If you elected to write a **thesis**:
    - Prior to starting work on your thesis, you must complete online ETD (Electronic Thesis and Dissertation) training and obtain a letter of approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). This letter will be attached to your completed thesis as an appendix. See the Graduate Studies website for detailed instructions. https://libguides.marshall.edu/etd/beforestarting
    - At some point during the first half of the semester of graduation, you will defend your thesis before your thesis committee. The chair of your committee will file with the Graduate Studies Office the Comprehensive Assessment Evaluation Form indicating that you have successfully defended your completed thesis.
    - You must electronically submit about a month prior to the date of graduation a copy of your approved thesis.
        - Timetable for submission:

          https://www.marshall.edu/graduate/graduation-and-commencement-timetable/.
        - Portal for electronic submission of your thesis: https://www.etdadmin.com/main/home.
    - Your thesis will be reviewed to ensure that it meets the applicable standards. The Graduate Studies Office website has a thesis style guide that you should follow carefully. If corrections are required, you will make the changes and resubmit the thesis. Please notify your thesis advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies immediately if you do not understand the requested changes or if you believe that the changes are unreasonable or unnecessary. If your thesis advisor agrees with you, the History Department will do its best to convince the Graduate Studies Office that the requested changes need not be made. It is important to keep in mind that you will not be allowed to graduate until the Graduate Studies Office has approved your thesis.
        - For the Style Guide and Thesis Template:

https://www.marshall.edu/graduate/thesis-and-dissertation-style-guide/

Historiography

Historiography is the study of how historians have created and refined over time the methods and standards that define the academic discipline of history. The term is also often used to refer to the development of the ways in which historians have written about a particular subject, period, or field. You will frequently be asked to discuss in class the historiography of the subject at hand and how a particular book or article fits into that historiography. You might be asked to explain how the argument of a particular scholar concerning, for example, the causes of the American Civil War fits in with what previous and subsequent historians have written on the topic. Or, to provide another example, you might be asked to discuss the ways in which historians have over time changed how they divide up the past into different periods such as the Middle Ages and the Early Modern period.

The historiographical essay is a standard graduate school assignment. In assessing the historiography of a subject, you will want to consider some of the following issues: the kind of historical questions being asked; the sort of sources available; the historical methods employed; the historical context in which a historian was working; the political ideology, belief system, and prejudices of the historian; and, most importantly, how and why the work on a subject has changed over time. There are, of course, many other factors going into the development of the historiography of any subject. When you write any research paper or your thesis, it is essential that you explain the relevant historiography and how your work fits into that historiography. The goal of any work of history is to add to the existing historiography in a meaningful way. This may be accomplished, for example, by using previously unknown or unused sources, refuting an established argument, or offering a new interpretation or analysis. Although historians tend to work alone, they are always in dialogue and conversation with other historians. Our goal is to give you the tools, skills, and guidance to become a part of that conversation.

The scholarly literature on how historians go about their business is expansive. Some general treatments of broad historiographical trends and development include the following: John H. Arnold, *History: A Very Short Introduction*; Jeremy D. Popkin, *From Herodotus to H-Net: The Story of Historiography*; Ernst Breisach, *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval, and Modern*; and Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the Historical Profession*. You should consult your professors for additional suggestions and for works that look at a particular subject or period.

History Club

The History Club is a social organization open to all Marshall students. One does not need to be a history major or graduate student to participate. The History Club sponsors events throughout the academic year including field trips to historical sites, movie nights featuring films depicting historical events, and various social events. For information, please contact Dr. Laura Michele Diener. diener@marshall.edu

Internships

Internships in public history provide students with an opportunity to apply the skills of the historian, earn valuable experience, and develop a resume and professional network. According to a 2015

survey of over 400 employers in the public history sector, the successful completion of one or two internships made a significant effect in how employers perceived applicants. Over 85% of respondents responded that an internship was either "indispensable" or "extremely valuable" while only one percent responded that they were not valuable. Employer surveys revealed that skills related to writing and interpretation were valued above all else. The top three skills employers predicted would be successful in the future were fundraising, digital media development and production, and project management. The survey revealed a steady but competitive job market in public history and was conducted by the four largest academic and public history organizations in the United States.

In recent years, Marshall University students have completed internships in area archives, community organizations, and humanities organizations. Students have also secured part-time and full-time positions around the state through the Preservation Alliance of West Virginia's AmeriCorps program. In recent years, Marshall University students have served as interns with Heritage Farm, Clio, West Virginia Archives and History, Marshall University Special Collections, and the Appalachian Studies Association. For those who might be interested in internships in West Virginia beyond a commuting distance from the university, there are also internship opportunities at the Mine Wars Museum, the West Virginia and Regional History Center, and several other sites. The National Council on Public History and the Association for the Study of State and Local History each maintain a database of internship opportunities.

Networking

If you talk to career counselors, life coaches, or self-help experts long enough, you will likely hear the claim that "*who* you know" matters more than "*what* you know." This might be pushing a good point too far, but it is unquestionably true that when you are searching for a job, applying to a new school, or seeking funding for a project, it helps to have powerful allies. For that reason, it is never too early to begin building a vibrant professional network. And while it might seem daunting at first, particularly if you are venturing into a new field in which your established networks of friends, family, and classmates might not help, you will soon find that networking gets easier over time, since the more people you know, the easier it will become to make new contacts. Now is the time to start.

Some suggestions to consider:

1. Don't be afraid to reach out to someone you don't know, whether through email or in person. Assuming that you go about it the right way—spell-check your emails! maintain a reasonable level of formality! keep your message concise and to the point!—people will be flattered to hear from you and, more often than not, eager to help if they can. Remember: if you don't reach out, you won't get help from that person, and your network won't grow.
2. That said, have a purpose when you make initial contact. Don't just drop someone a line and leave it at that. Be specific about your purposes in writing: propose a conference panel, ask a question about useful sources for your research, seek information about a degree program, or in some other way show that you know something about the person and an idea of how he or she can help you. This is a chance to showcase your knowledge and present yourself as a colleague.

3. Avoid flattery for the sake of flattery—it will be all too obvious—but do be clear and precise about how someone's work has helped you. Mention something that stood out to you about his or her book; emphasize your shared interest in a particular topic; indicate that you attended the same conference.
4. Give the person a chance to help you, even if she or he can't comply with your request. Ask if the person can provide names of other contacts who might be helpful or suggestions for where you might look next. This will help to grow your network even more, and it will cut down on the number of dead-ends.
5. Be smart about whom you contact: think about people whose work you admire, who have followed career paths you would like to emulate, and so forth. This will help you develop a network that will be especially valuable for you later on.
6. Be ready to drop names—but *only* if you have cleared it with the people whose names you will drop first. If you want to mention your adviser, a classmate, or another contact, that's fine, but get permission before doing so.
7. Always remember point #1.

Phi Alpha Theta

Phi Alpha Theta is the national honorary society for history students. Our Phi Alpha Theta chapter (the Gamma Chi Chapter) sponsors on-campus presentations, field trips, student travel to regional conferences, movie nights, book sale fundraisers, and social activities that allow students and faculty to get to know one another better. Members are also entitled to wear the society's red and blue chords with their regalia at graduation.

Many advantages accrue from joining an academic honorary society. Employers and post-graduate program administrators recognize membership in academic honorary societies as an indication of your seriousness as a candidate and potential to succeed when faced with difficult challenges. You should always list your membership in academic honorary societies on resumes, curriculum vita, and on employment and admissions applications.

We normally initiate new members two times per year, at our winter party, and again in the spring at the department's annual awards banquet. If you are interested in joining Phi Alpha Theta, please contact Dr. Laura Michele Diener diener@marshall.edu for information; you are also always welcome to our chapter's events whether you are a member or not.

Ph.D. Programs

Many of our graduate students consider the possibility of going on to earn a Ph.D. once they have completed their Master's degree. If you are thinking that you may want to do so, you are encouraged to discuss the process of earning a Ph.D. with your professors. The faculty all have different experiences and perspectives and can each add a piece to the picture that will give you a better idea of whether or not you would like to continue your academic study of history.

What does getting a Ph.D. entail?

While no two Ph.D. programs are alike, there are things that most share. Most Ph.D. students will take classes for approximately two years. After coursework is completed, students will take comprehensive examinations that will consist of written answers and an oral examination. These

comprehensive examinations are similar to what are given at Marshall, but the expectations will be much greater in terms of the volume of material to be mastered and the quality of the responses.

The next step will be to write a dissertation proposal, which must be approved by your dissertation committee chair. A student who has passed the comprehensive examination and has an approved dissertation proposal is then considered a doctoral candidate and is sometimes referred to as being ABD (All but Dissertation). Researching and writing a dissertation is, of course, a lengthy and involved process. Once the dissertation is completed, the student will meet with his or her committee and answer their questions or concerns about the dissertation. This is known as defending the dissertation and a successful defense is the final step in earning a Ph.D. A rough estimate of the time needed to complete the entire Ph.D. program is approximately five to ten years.

Financial considerations

In considering whether or not to pursue a Ph.D. in history there are obvious financial considerations. Tuition, living expenses, and the costs of research are considerable. Fortunately, fellowships and graduate assistantships are often available to help defray the costs. Graduate assistantships typically provide tuition reimbursement and a modest stipend. In return, the student will serve the department as a teacher, grader, or research assistant. Some departments will only admit students that they can fund by way of an assistantship or fellowship. Once a student is ABD there will often be additional teaching opportunities in the department or at other nearby schools.

Given the high costs of earning a Ph.D., students are often advised not to enter a Ph.D. program without departmental or university funding. There is, of course, no right answer as to whether one should take out huge loans in earning a doctorate in history. You must answer that for yourself after gaining as much information as you can about the job market for history Ph.D.s and assessing your own willingness to accumulate debt. The job market is not great, but it has not been great for a very long time. One pursues a Ph.D. in history because one has an overwhelming desire to do so, not because of the guarantee of future employment as an academic or a big payday.

Applying for Ph. D. programs

Deciding to which Ph.D. programs you should apply should be approached like a research project.

There are about 200 Ph.D. programs in history located in the United States and Canada. These programs vary greatly in location, size, areas of specialty, approach, admission requirements, funding of students, prestige, and success of graduates in finding employment. There is no single place where you can gain all of this information. We keep a copy on the shelves in Harris Hall 104 of the American Historical Association's *Directory of History Departments, Historical Organizations, and Historians*. This book includes all history departments in the United States and Canada, their areas of specialty, tuition, contact information, and a list of faculty with their fields of study. Unfortunately, this volume does not provide a separate list of Ph.D. programs so you will have to work your way through the alphabetically listed history departments to see which offers a doctorate in history. The American Historical Association does maintain a website available to nonmembers of information on graduate programs in the United States and Canada:

https://secure.historians.org/members/services/cgi-bin/memberdll.dll/openpage?wrp=search_institution.htm

As in other aspects of deciding where to apply, however, your professors in the History Department are the best source of guidance. They will have insight into the programs in their field of expertise that you should consider. Once you have identified a program as being of interest, you should go on their website. Departmental websites vary in usefulness, but many will be quite helpful in gaining relevant information.

In creating a list of potential programs, you need to be realistic about your chances of gaining admission. Applying to only the *U.S. News and World Report* top ten programs in your particular field of interest is not a realistic approach even if you are an exceedingly strong candidate with very high scores on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). No student is so spectacular that admission is guaranteed at the most selective institutions. Being highly desirable, elite institutions receive a high volume of applications and accept only a handful of students. Departments will often decline to admit a student not because the applicant is found wanting but simply because that student does not fit well with a faculty member's interests or willingness to take on another graduate student.

We suggest that you apply to a range of programs. Gaining admission to any particular program is never a sure thing, but some schools are clearly less selective. You should include some programs that are less selective in addition to some that admit a lower percentage of applicants. Being realistic does not mean that you should not be ambitious in choosing schools. We all know people who were admitted to programs that seemed beyond their reach.

One way in which you can improve your chances for admission or weed out particular programs is by contacting professors you might like to study with. Write them an email introducing yourself and expressing your interest in working with them in their doctoral program. The more specific you can be about your interests and how that is related to their work the better. If you have concerns as to striking the proper tone of respect without sounding like a potential stalker have your advisor read what you intend to send. Some professors will doubtless fail to respond while others will hopefully express interest in your work and encourage you to apply. If a professor is interested enough in taking you on as a student, she will hopefully advocate for your admission with the department's admissions committee.

We suggest that in compiling a list of schools to which you will apply you consult with several different faculty members. In the end, it is, of course, up to you, but your professors have all been through this process before and will be able to make thoughtful suggestions.

Once you have decided where you would like to apply, the next step is preparing your application. You will obviously want to follow the application instructions as closely as possible. Pay particular attention to deadlines and do not wait until the last minute to submit your application. Most doctoral programs only accept applications for the fall semester and some deadlines may be as early as November.

Although application materials differ, most schools will require the following: college and graduate school transcripts, GRE scores, a sample of your academic writing, faculty letters of

recommendation, and a personal statement setting forth academic interests and qualifications. A student's GPA and GRE scores serve for some institutions as a means of trimming the list of candidates for admission. The failure to have a certain GPA or GRE will result in an automatic rejection. While there is no way to expunge bad grades from your transcript, there are things you can do to prepare for the GRE. In addition to expensive GRE preparation courses, there are reasonably priced books that give advice on taking the test and provide access to online practice examinations.

In selecting a writing sample pay attention to exactly what the program is requesting. If they ask for a ten-page sample do not send them twenty pages or five pages. You do not want to annoy an admissions committee with too many or too few pages. A writing sample should be an example of your best academic writing. Once you have selected what you would like to submit begin a rigorous editing of the work. Mistakes in grammar or incomprehensible passages tell committees that you do not have the requisite writing skills or are not motivated enough to effectively edit your submission. Feel free to ask one of your professors to read your writing sample and suggest areas of improvement.

Drafting a personal statement is a difficult and often unpleasant part of the application process. Most students are uncomfortable with singing their own praises and are convinced that they have only succeeded in sounding arrogant. In truth, most applicants undersell themselves. The best advice is to answer the exact questions asked and to demonstrate that you are a good fit with the program. Research the faculty and the program and indicate with whom you would like to work and how you would fit in with the department's emphases. As with your academic writing sample, it is imperative that your personal statement is clear, concise, and free or errors. Again, show your personal statement to faculty members.

As part of the application there may be a place to indicate your interest in departmental funding or there may be separate material needed to apply for an assistantship or fellowship. By all means, apply for the money. They expect you to apply for funding and will not be more favorably inclined to admit you if you do not ask for money. As previously indicated, some programs automatically fund all admitted students.

Getting recommendations

Most programs will require two or three letters of recommendation. Your recommenders should be faculty members with whom you have successfully completed a class, preferably one at the graduate level in which you earned an A grade. Recommendations from non-academic providers such as friends, employers, or clergy should not be used except in exceptional circumstances. Doctoral programs are primarily interested in your ability to think and write as a historian.

Make sure that you ask faculty members as much in advance as possible if they would be willing to write you a recommendation for doctoral programs. Do not just assume that faculty members will agree. Professors do not like to write letters for students they cannot in all honesty enthusiastically recommend and so may decline for that reason. It is strongly recommended that you waive your right to see your recommendation letters. Some faculty members will not write letters for students who do not waive this right and some departments doubtless believe that recommenders will be less honest in their assessment of students who may see their letters.

As soon as you are sure where you are going to apply, let your recommenders know the details of what the different departments require in terms of the content of the letter and the deadline and logistics of submission. Many doctoral programs have simplified their procedures in recent years and provide recommenders with an email prompt linking to a letter submission website. Please notify your recommenders with as much advance notice of upcoming deadlines as is possible. Drafting a thoughtful letter that will help you gain admission to the program of your choice is time consuming. Provide your letter writers with a copy of your CV, your personal statement, and any other information that will help your recommenders compose a strong letter supporting your application.

Plan of Study

The Graduate Studies Office requires that students submit a Plan of Study prior to enrolling in their 12th credit hour. The Plan of Study sets forth the courses taken and those a student will take in the future to graduate. Students must indicate at this time whether they will be pursuing the thesis or non-thesis option. The Plan of Study form is available from the Director of Graduate Studies and online at https://www.marshall.edu/graduate/files/Plan-of-Study-Template-fillable-11-23.pdf The form should be filled out with the assistance of your advisor or the Director of Graduate Studies. The completed form must be submitted to the College of Liberal Arts (110 Old Main) for the approval of the COLA Dean. You must also submit a copy of your completed Plan of Study to the Director of Graduate Studies.

Reading as a Graduate Student (Smart Reading)

One of the most difficult aspects of the transition from undergraduate to graduate study is the sheer volume of reading—and your professors' expectations for what you get out of completing that reading. You are not only expected to read more than in the past (a book or the equivalent thereof per week, per course would not be unusual), you are also expected to extract from that reading the vital material that you will then discuss in class and write about in papers. If you sit down and try to read everything straight through, from start to finish, like a novel, you might find yourself overwhelmed. The trick is to read *smarter*; that is, to read more actively, purposefully, and strategically, than you might be used to doing.

Each time you start to read something, ask yourself why you are reading it. Is it a course assignment? Is it for your own research? Are you trying to find a new research topic? Are you brushing up on a subject for teaching? Once you have determined *why* you are reading, the next step is to be very mindful of *how* you read it.

If you are reading for your own research and the book or article is vitally important to your field, you should be prepared to read every word. The details matter and you need to know the work inside and out.

If you are reading to prepare for a course discussion, you might be able to read more selectively and swiftly. The key is to be strategic about how you do so. Simply skimming over every line will not enable you to speak or write intelligently about the book. Instead, try the following:

1. Learn something about the book and the author before you start in. Read the author's webpage, if available, and look over some reviews of the book (or the abstract of the article). This will give you a sense of what to look for.
2. Pay attention to the parts of the book that are easy to pass over, like the table of contents, the back cover or dust jacket, the footnotes, and the bibliography. Together, these resources will tell you a lot about the book's topic, argument, contributions, and sources. Knowing these things will make reading the main text of the book more efficient and will give you a leg up on what you need to know.
3. Read the introduction closely. A good introduction will lay out the book's main topic, themes, arguments, and historiographical contributions, and it is here that you will find much of the basic material you need for speaking or writing thoughtfully and critically about the book.
4. Read all chapter introductions and conclusions, as well as the introductions and conclusions of subsections within chapters, carefully. These are often places where authors will sum up the main points of that chapter/section.
5. Read the rest of the book more selectively. Some people focus on topic sentences; others might zero in on places where the author discusses a topic of particular interest or explores a source of special importance. Read enough of the text to make sure that the author is doing what he or she promised to do in the introduction, but don't feel that you have to memorize every name, date, or detail.

By training yourself to read in this fashion, you will make your reading more efficient: you will get out of the time you spend reading, much more than you otherwise could, and you will therefore save time without sacrificing the quality.

Once you start to experiment with this, be sure to evaluate the results. If you find it difficult to keep up with a class discussion or to complete a class assignment, you probably leaned too far in the direction of skimming. On the other hand, if you are performing well in class but finding it difficult to complete the readings on time, you might need to streamline the reading process. Either way, remember that good historians are more than receptacles for endless historical trivia; they are people who know how to get the information they need and who have mastered a process of reading history books that enables them to understand the significance, strengths, and weaknesses of a book without spending a week reading it.

Sabbaticals

Every seven years tenured members of the faculty are eligible to apply for a sabbatical leave. A sabbatical provides a professor with time off from teaching obligations for a semester or an entire academic year. When you are selecting a thesis advisor, you should ask whether a professor will be applying for a sabbatical in the near future. Just because a professor will be on sabbatical does not mean that he or she will be unable or unavailable to serve as your thesis advisor during the sabbatical. You should discuss with the professor his or her willingness and ability to oversee your thesis during the sabbatical. A professor on sabbatical is not, however, allowed to be the instructor of record for HST 681 thesis credits. If your thesis advisor is on sabbatical and willing to unofficially oversee your thesis credits, please contact the Director of Graduate Studies who will arrange for you to register for HST 681 credits with another member of the department listed as the instructor of record.

Stress and Anxiety of Graduate School

We have all known or heard tell of graduate students who breeze through their course work and complete their degrees with minimal stress and cheery good humor. Such students are rare. Most graduate students find the work – while intellectually satisfying – quite challenging. The fear that you are not working hard enough or that your performance does not measure up to that of your peers can to a limited degree be a healthy spur to greater effort and focus. The problem, of course, is when this anxiety and fear limits your ability to get your work done or – more importantly – interferes with your emotional and physical well-being. If your stress and anxiety begin to impede your ability to carry out your everyday activities, you should seek professional help. Your faculty is always willing to lend a friendly and supportive ear, but we are not trained to deal with more serious issues concerning your mental well-being. Marshall University provides a Counseling Center that in addition to regular business hours has a staff member on call at all times.

For information on the Counseling Center, see https://www.marshall.edu/counseling/. You can also try

- Marshall Health Psychiatry & Behavioral Medicine: https://marshallhealth.org/services/psychiatry/
- Harris Hall Psychology Clinic: https://www.marshall.edu/psych/clinics/campus-psychology-clinic/

If, however, you are experiencing the sort of low-level stress and anxiety that comes with any challenging endeavor, the following might prove helpful. Your fellow graduate students can be your best source of reassurance that you are not alone in feeling the stress of graduate studies. It is also a time-honored tradition for graduate students to rant about their professors and assignments.

Take care of yourself. Although it seems rather obvious and might strike you as a bit condescending, you cannot function at your best on inadequate levels of sleep and on poor nutrition. Feeling sleep-deprived is the natural state of a graduate student during a semester, but there really is a point where you would be better-served by sleeping rather than working.

If you find yourself struggling in a particular class, speak with the instructor. That professor may have suggestions to help you succeed in the course or may be able to assure you that your performance is better than you think. It is also important that you speak to your professors if some situation arises during the semester that might interfere with your ability to complete assignments or attend class. Life sometimes intrudes and we are all forced on occasion to attend to family emergencies or our own medical issues. The sooner you inform your professors as to your circumstances, the better able they will be to find a suitable accommodation. In the event, however, that the situation prevents you from successfully completimg a semester, you should discuss your options with the Director of Graduate Studies.

Summer Research and Writing

While the summer months present a tremendous opportunity to conduct research and write, there is also a great challenge presented by the unstructured nature of this time. Begin by removing the unessential things from your life that might cause you to fail. This includes everything from negative

habits to the things that distract you from your goals or steal your time. Schedule time for the people and activities you love. You can even make some allowance for downtime where you can disconnect so long as you remain in control of your daily schedule.

On that note, be sure to create a schedule. At least one month prior to the start of summer, students should create a realistic plan that includes specific tasks and milestones as well as time for family, friends, and self-care. Your advisor can help you create an attainable set of goals and a doable schedule.

If you plan on taking any summer courses, begin by including time for study and assignments. Consider any family and work obligations before seeing how much time you realistically might devote to research and writing. That time will move very quickly, so be sure to create a plan for how you wish to spend that time. Plan research trips, schedule time to organize notes, and for those working on a thesis or other major project, set aside between ten and twenty-five hours each week for writing.

Thesis Option

For advice on choosing between Comprehensive Exam Option and Thesis Option, see "Choosing Thesis Versus Comps."

A history master's thesis is a work of original scholarship that is deeply grounded in primary sources. Typically anywhere between 70 to 100 pages, a successful thesis will advance a historical argument that makes a meaningful contribution to the existing literature. Your completed thesis will be published online and will be available to scholars around the world. It is therefore important that you work be as well researched and written as possible.

Writing a proposal

A thesis proposal is a formal statement that sets forth the topic of your thesis, the historical questions you are addressing, the argument you will be making, how your argument fits into and contributes to the larger historical literature on the subject, and the sources and methodology you will employ. A bibliography of your most important primary and secondary sources should be part of your thesis proposal. There is no single model for exactly how long your proposal should be or as to how much detail each section should contain. In writing your proposal you should work closely with your thesis advisor. Each faculty member has specific expectations as to what constitutes a successful thesis proposal. Despite these differences, all thesis advisors will require that your proposal address the topics listed above and believe that a thesis proposal should serve as the foundation for the research and writing to come.

It is never too early to start thinking about your thesis topic. Once you have identified a topic and found a professor willing to serve as your thesis advisor begin discussing with your advisor his or her expectations for the proposal. The clearer idea you have as to what your advisor expects, the easier it will be to write a proposal that gains approval. Do not, however, be shocked or overly dismayed if your advisor requests that you revise your proposal one or more times prior to approval. This is part of the editing process by which the clarity of your prose is improved, the focus of your research is tightened, and your ideas are sharpened. Published monographs and

articles have all been edited carefully and repeatedly. As frustrating and time consuming as the editing process can be, it is absolutely essential to a successful final product.

Prior to writing your thesis, you must complete online ETD (Electronic Thesis and Dissertation) training and obtain a letter of approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). This letter will be attached to your completed thesis as an appendix. See the Graduate Studies website for detailed instructions. https://libguides.marshall.edu/etd/beforestarting

Time Limit for Completion of the M. A.

M. A. students must complete their degrees within seven years from the end of the first semester they took a class that will count toward their degree. If this is going to be an issue, you should discuss your situation with the Director of Graduate Studies to avoid being dropped from the program. It is possible to receive an extension of time in which to complete the degree. An extension requires that credits that were earned more than seven years ago be revalidated by the History Department. See the Graduate Catalog for more detailed information on the process and applicable fees for the revalidation of expired credits.

Timeline for Degree Completion

For a full-time student beginning courses in the Fall Semester

- Semester 1: All full-time students should take 9 credit hours. It is not too early to begin deciding whether you want to write a thesis. In order to complete the required credit hours and write a thesis within four semesters you will need to be very efficient in how you go about managing your time. By the end of your first semester, you should ideally have identified a thesis topic and a faculty member willing to serve as your thesis advisor.

  Non-thesis students should begin to think about their three comprehensive examination fields. As examination fields are tied to graduate classes taken, you will not really be in a position to identify with any certainty your examination fields or the faculty members who will be on your committee.

- Semester 2: All full-time students should take 9 credit hours and should submit their competed Plan of Study to the College of Liberal Arts (110 Old Main) for the approval of the COLA Dean. Thesis writers should have a thesis topic and a willing advisor by the end of their second semester. At this stage, your thesis topic may still be a bit fuzzy, but you should be working to narrow and refine the topic as the semester progresses.

  Non-thesis students should, by the end of their second semester, have identified at least one field for their comprehensive examination based upon a course already taken. Do not assume that just because you have taken a class that the professor will automatically agree to supervise an examination field with you. Some graduate courses such as HST 600

(Methodology) do not readily lend themselves to an examination. Other commitments may prevent a professor from being available to serve on a comprehensive committee.

- Summer between first and second years: Credit hours are optional, but you may want to take a summer class or perhaps do a public history internship. If you are also pursuing a Public History certificate, summer can be an excellent time to do your required HST 680 internship. Summer break will ideally allow thesis writers the time to conduct research and begin writing. By the end of the summer, you should have a draft of your thesis proposal completed and ready for your advisor to review.

  Students not writing a thesis should also make profitable use of their time during the summer. Prior to the end of the second semester, meet with faculty who have already agreed to serve on your examination committee and discuss the material you will be expected to have read for that field. Some professors have a standard reading list while others will create a reading list tailored to your particular interests and the course or courses you have taken with them. Once you have a reading list, you should start working your way through it. You will be happy that you got an early start on your reading as the date of your examination draws near.

- Semester 3: All full-time students should take 9 credit hours. All students should finalize the members of their thesis committee or the three professors who will oversee their comprehensive examinations. Both thesis and non-thesis students should fill out the Supervisory Committee Form and submit it to the Director of Graduate Studies for approval. The proper form is available from the Director of Graduate Studies. Early in the third semester, thesis writers should have their thesis proposal approved and be actively writing. Thesis writers must take between 3 and 6 thesis hours in completing their degree. Thesis writers should discuss with their advisor when to take their thesis credits (HST 681). Some students take three thesis hours during their third semester and three during their fourth semester. Other students take all six thesis hours during a single semester.

  Non-thesis students should make progress in determining their three comprehensive fields and preparing for the examination.

- Semester 4: All full-time students should take 9 credit hours. Prior to the relevant deadline, all students who intend to graduate at the end of the semester must file the Application for Graduation. See the sections concerning the thesis and comprehensive examinations for additional information as to the timeline for completion.

For a full-time student beginning courses in the Spring Semester

- Semester 1: All full-time students should take 9 credit hours. It is not too early to begin deciding whether you want to write a thesis. In order to complete the required credit hours and write a thesis within four semesters you will need to be very efficient in how you go about managing your time. By the end of your first semester, you should ideally have identified a thesis topic and a faculty member willing to serve as your thesis advisor.

  Non-thesis students should begin to think about their three comprehensive examination fields. As examination fields are tied to graduate classes taken, you will not really be in a position to identify with any certainty your examination fields or the faculty members who will be on your committee.

- Summer 1: Credit hours are optional, but you may want to take a summer class or perhaps do a public history internship. If you are also pursuing a Public History certificate, summer can be an excellent time to do your required HST 680 internship.

  Summer break will ideally allow thesis writers the time to conduct research and begin writing. In an ideal world, you will by the end of your first summer have a draft of your thesis proposal completed and ready for your advisor to review. This will likely prove unrealistic for most students. After only a single semester in the program you may not be in the position of having a solid thesis topic with a faculty member signed on as your thesis advisor. If not, as much progress as you can make in deciding upon the topic and doing research the better shape you will be in to complete the thesis in a timely fashion.

  Students not writing a thesis should also make profitable use of their time during the summer. Prior to the end of the first semester, meet with any faculty who have already agreed to serve on your examination committee and discuss the material you will be expected to have read for that field. Some professors have a standard reading list while others will create a reading list tailored to your particular interests and the course or courses you have taken with them. Do not assume that just because you have taken a class that the professor will automatically agree to supervise an examination field with you. Some graduate courses such as HST 600 (Methodology) do not readily lend themselves to an examination. Other commitments may prevent a professor from being available to serve on a comprehensive committee. Once you have a reading list, you should start working your way through it. You will be happy that you got an early start on your reading as the date of your examination draws near.

- Semester 2: All full-time students should take 9 credit hours and should submit their competed Plan of Study to the College of Liberal Arts (110 Old Main) for the approval of the COLA Dean. Thesis writers should have a thesis topic and a willing advisor by the end of their second semester and ideally have their thesis proposal approved.

  Non-thesis students should, by the end of their second semester, have identified at least one field for their comprehensive examination based upon a course already taken.

- Semester 3: All full-time students should take 9 credit hours. All students should finalize the members of their thesis committee or the three professors who will oversee their comprehensive examination. Both thesis and non-thesis students should fill out the Supervisory Committee Form and submit it to the Director of Graduate Studies for approval. The proper form is available from the Director of Graduate Studies. Early in the third semester, thesis writers should have their thesis proposal approved and be actively writing. Thesis writers must take between 3 and 6 thesis hours in completing their degree. Thesis writers should discuss with their advisor when to take their thesis credits (HST 681). Some students take three thesis hours during their third semester and three during their fourth semester. Other students take all six thesis hours during a single semester.

  Non-thesis students should have identified their three comprehensive fields and be preparing for the examination.

- Summer 2: Thesis writers should be well into the writing of their thesis and should have a completed draft by the end of the summer. Non-thesis writers should be busily preparing for their comprehensive examination.

- Semester 4: All full-time students should take 9 credit hours. Prior to the relevant deadline, all students who intend to graduate at the end of the semester must file the Application for Graduation. See the sections concerning the thesis and comprehensive examinations for additional information as to the timeline for completion.

For a part-time student

There are too many variables depending upon the speed at which one is moving through the program to supply a meaningful timetable. Part-time students should discuss their progress regularly with their advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies and determine a reasonable course of study. Part-time students need to be aware that university requires that M. A. students complete their degrees within seven years from the end of the first semester they took a class that will count toward their degree.