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Students with Disabilities
The University of Texas at San Antonio in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act provides reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. Any student with a disability who is requesting an accommodation must provide the instructor with official documentation in the form of a letter from Student Disability Services. Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at www.utsa.edu/disability or by calling Student Disability Services at (210) 458-4157 (Main) or (210) 458-2945 (Downtown). Also, visit the office on the main campus at MS 3.01.16.

Sexual Harassment
The University of Texas at San Antonio is committed to maintaining a learning and working environment that is free from discrimination based on sex in accordance with Title IX of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs or activities; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), which prohibits sex discrimination in employment; and the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE Act).

Sexual misconduct is a form of sex discrimination and will not be tolerated. Sexual misconduct includes sexual harassment, sexual violence, sexual assault, stalking, domestic violence and/or dating violence. Individuals who engage in sexual misconduct and other inappropriate sexual conduct will be subject to disciplinary action.

The University will take prompt disciplinary action against any individuals or organizations within its control who violate this Policy. The University encourages any student, faculty, staff or visitor to promptly report violations of this Policy to an appropriate university or department office.

Racial/Ethnic/Religious Discrimination
It is the policy of The University of Texas at San Antonio to provide an educational and working environment that provides equal opportunity to all members of the UTSA community. In accordance with federal and state law, UTSA prohibits unlawful discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, citizenship, gender identity, gender expression, and veteran status in all aspects of employment and education. Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is also prohibited pursuant to this policy.
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Overview

This handbook is designed to help students understand the program requirements and become familiar with resources that support them in their course of study.

The 30-hour degree program offers students an opportunity to learn various theoretical and methodological approaches to history, gives them both breadth and depth of knowledge on different historical topics, and cultivates their research and critical thinking skills. Some graduate courses correlate to geographical areas, but many others are based on issues and topics that cut across regions and are transnational in scope. Recently, our department has adopted “Empires, States, and Borders” as its overarching theme. In teaching as well as research, our faculty members regularly engage in topics such as empire and nation building, civil wars, state formation and disintegration, migration, and borderlands in a variety of geographic settings and across historical eras. This transnational emphasis and thematic design aligns with larger trends in the profession that go beyond the conventional study of nations and states as geographically bound entities, and highlight the importance of human mobility and all sorts of historical contingencies.

The Graduate Advisor of Record (commonly referred to as the GAR) serves as the director of the History M.A. Program. The position is currently held by Dr. Wing Chung Ng, Professor of History and a historian of modern China and the Chinese Diaspora. The GAR oversees all aspects of the program, such as admission, curriculum, course offering, and program assessment etc. The GAR offers advice to students on course selection, internships, funding opportunities, professional development, and the scheduling of the comprehensive exams. Once a student reaches the threshold of 15-18 hours, the GAR conducts a degree audit to review student’s degree plan, check the progress towards completion, and offers an opportunity for students to discuss any concerns. The GAR is assisted by a Graduate Program Committee which meets regularly to address programmatic issues.

Upon admission to the program, each student is assigned a faculty advisor to provide an additional conduit for mentoring. Incoming students are encouraged to contact their faculty advisor quickly to establish a channel of communication and seek advice from the professor if they have any question during the course of their study.
I. Introduction to History: Theories and Methods

HIS 5003 (Introduction to History: Theories and Methods) provides the groundwork for all future classes by examining various ways that historians “know what they know.”

Historical theories describe the ways in which historians interpret their sources. The historian’s goal is to make sense of why things happened in the way that they did. Historians often understand events differently, causing significant historical debates or “schools of thought.” Historiography traces the ways that scholars have researched and interpreted historical events over time, and how and why these interpretations have changed. By exploring the ways in which historians have understood their sources and have constructed their arguments, HIS 5003 reinforces the fundamental idea that history is more than collecting increasingly detailed levels of information. Historical thinking provides a framework to make sense of the past.

The course also offers an introduction to how historians research—what tools do they use to investigate a topic? What types of sources are they using and what are the strengths and weaknesses of these sources? We encounter typical archival materials such as correspondence, diaries, diplomatic or intelligence reports, etc. Other research methodologies may examine images—photographs, postcards, advertisements, or editorial cartoons. Oral histories are increasingly being used as a way to learn multiple perspectives of events, especially when formal literacy may be limited. Each of these “methods” has its strengths and limitations, and a practicing historian ought to recognize the biases of each method and source.

This course is offered in the fall semester of every academic year. All in-coming students (including those admitted in the spring and summer) must take this course during their first fall semester.
II. Comparative History

Comparative history highlights how distinct social, economic, political, or cultural contexts affected similar institutions, ideas, or events in radically different ways. It examines similar historical processes and/or institutions in different time periods or in different geographical regions. Moreover, by taking a comparative approach historians can see how unique or common outcomes develop in similar situations.

Under the current catalog (2017-19), students are required to take at least three semester hours (one course) in a designated Comparative History course. The courses that can be used to fulfill this requirement are listed below:

- HIS 5263: History of the Spanish Borderlands
- HIS 5314: South Texas: Rural and Urban
- HIS 5323: The U.S. Mexican Border
- HIS 5453: The French Revolution and the Greater Caribbean
- HIS 5733: Migration in Historical Context
- HIS 6153: History of Sexuality
- HIS 6173: Latino/as in U.S. History
- HIS 6193: Comparative Urban History
- HIS 6323: Comparative Environmental History
- HIS 6443: Comparative Nationalism in the Modern World
- HIS 6453: Comparative U.S. Home Fronts: Civil to Cold War
- HIS 6483: Topics in Comparative History

Student may note that in the next catalog cycle, 2019-21, a new requirement on "historical practice" will replace comparative history. Of course, comparative history will always be part of historians' skill set, but recent trends in the profession suggest that our students can benefit from more exposure to the practical application of history. This new requirement can be fulfilled by an internship, teaching practicum, a course on GIS or quantitative methods, etc. So stay tuned for this exciting development.
III. Electives and Focus Area

Students can take 18 credit hours of electives (six classes total) and may choose either a U.S. or World focus area, depending on their specific interests and career goals. Students will take four elective courses within their main focus area and the other two outside. The Department strives each term to offer several electives across geographic and thematic areas, although it cannot guarantee that a specific course will be offered in a particular semester.

Some courses do not have a specific geographic point of reference. In that case, it will depend on the readings and assignments. Consult with the professor if you are not sure. The GAR will no doubt offer advice during degree audit.

To make the best use of all available resources at our disposal, to accommodate diverse interests, and to ensure progress towards graduation in a timely fashion, students may apply the following to their degree plans:

- Up to 6 hours of graduate level courses outside the History program
- Up to 6 hours of Independent Study hours – with approval of instructor
- Up to 6 hours of Internship
- Up to 6 hours of Upper-Division courses with graduate-level course enhancements – with prior approval of instructor

*Students should note that GAR approval is needed prior to pursuing any of the options above.*

The history program encourages students to pursue internship opportunities as part of their coursework. The History Department has a current list of internship sites where we have placed interns in recent years and the GAR will also offer update through newsletters and special announcements. Our students have interned with local organizations such as UTSA’s own Institute of Texan Cultures (ITC) and the Center of Archaeological Research, the Witte Museum, the San Antonio Museum of Art, the archives of various military bases, the National Park Service, and the Holocaust Memorial Museum. Some students have also undertaken internships away from Texas. Internships will offer students an opportunity to utilize archival/research/writing skills in ways that both advance their own learning and career goals, while providing an important service to the host institution.
IV. Research Proseminar/Seminar and the Thesis Option

1. Proseminar/Seminar:

The Proseminar/Seminar is designed to be the capstone experience for the MA program. Students spend an academic year researching a particular topic and writing an original article-length paper based on primary and secondary research.

Each year, the program offers at least one Proseminar/Seminar sequence. Topics tend to be very broad in order to accommodate a wide range of student interests. Recent examples include genocide and human rights, labor history, and migration history. The first semester of the class introduces students to a variety of background readings on the general topic, and offers students guidance to develop their research proposals. The second semester allot more time for individual student/faculty meetings, as students complete the research and writing of the paper.

Many students will present their seminar papers at conferences, including the annual COLFA Research Conference in the spring and other conference venues outside UTSA. Participation in conferences is a wonderful opportunity for students to receive useful feedback for their work in progress and to meet up with fellow graduate students and scholars.

2. Thesis:

For many MA students, the proseminar/seminar sequence is their capstone signature research experience. Occasionally, a student has developed a strong interest on a historical topic that may not fit under the seminar AND the student has demonstrated the potential to carry out a substantial research project. In that case, a thesis option is available. To do so, the student must seek the advice of a principal faculty supervisor and the approval of the GAR to proceed. A thesis committee that includes a principal supervisor and two faculty members will oversee the entire project. Students taking this route will have to exercise considerable personal initiative. Being organized and able to work independently are essential for success.

Note that there are several additional requirements for the Thesis option:

1. Students must submit a completed “Intent to Write a Thesis Form” before taking the Comprehensive exams.
2. Students must pass the Comprehensive examinations before enrolling in HIS 6983.
3. A total of 6 hours of HIS 6983 can be applied towards the total 30 semester credit hours required for this degree. Students electing to write a thesis will complete HIS 6983 Master’s Thesis (6 Hours) in accordance with University regulations.
4. Students must be enrolled in HIS 6983 during the semester in which they graduate.
V. Potential Timeline for Graduate Students Studying Full-time

The program is designed for full-time students to complete all degree requirements within two academic years. The following timeline is an example for someone who enters the program in the fall semester, takes a full load of three courses each in the first two semesters, and then proceed to enroll in two courses each in the two semesters of the second year.

First Year/Fall Semester:
- HIS 5003 Theories & Methods
- Elective Course #1
- Elective Course #2

First Year/Spring Semester:
- Comparative History Class
- Elective Course #3
- Elective Course #4

Second Year/Fall Semester:
- HIS 6813 Research Proseminar
- Elective Course #5

Second Year/Spring Semester:
- HIS 6903 Research Seminar
- Elective Course #6
- Comprehensive exams

We realize that some students work full time and have other commitments that might cause them to spread out their coursework beyond two years. Students who enter the program in the spring or summer may have to take an extra semester to finish because some required courses are offered only in a certain semester and must be taken in sequence. Students taking the thesis route might need some extra time to complete the work. In all cases, we encourage students to finish the program within a reasonable timeframe. The GAR will work with each student to design a course of study to fulfill the educational goals and meet all degree requirements.
VI. Comprehensive Exams

The comprehensive exams are designed to give students an opportunity to demonstrate their proficiency in two distinct fields of historical studies. Each field requires its own examiner and the two examiners constitute a committee. The fields should be based on the coursework completed thus far. Students should specify the fields by discussing with the professors concerned. They agree on a reading list of books, book chapters, and journal articles, typically from a dozen items to no more than twenty per field. In light of the courses we offer in the program, we encourage students to consider fields by considering topics under the following clusters: gender and sexuality, borderlands and migration, war and society, and empires, states, and revolutions.

Students should note that faculty availability to serve on exam committees depends on a variety of factors, including the number of other students being mentored, teaching and administrative obligations, and research leave.

Comprehensive exams are offered twice a year (during the seventh week of the Fall or Spring semester), and the paperwork to take the exam is due the semester prior to the exams. Students will usually take the exam in their second year after they have completed 15-18 hours of coursework; many will do so during the same year they are enrolled in the proseminar/seminar sequence.

The written exam lasts for four hours. Students will be given two questions in each field, and they will answer one question each. The department will notify them about the time, date, and location of the exam in advance.

Note that students taking the thesis option will have to pass the comps before they can formally begin their thesis work.

Students taking the proseminar/seminar have the opportunity to declare "Historical Research & Writing" as an exam field as part of the comprehensive exams in the spring semester. This portion of the exam consists of an oral presentation of a substantial research project with the Graduate Committee serving as a panel of examiners. The oral presentation will take place about two weeks before the written exams (i.e. about the fifth week). Students who have had a head start with their projects in the fall and are committed to make considerable progress by the early weeks of the spring are suitable candidates for this format. In any case, their eligibility depends on the endorsement of the professor in the proseminar/seminar.
VII. Funding:

1. **Reader/Grader or Research Assistant Jobs**

The Department offers a variety of reader/grader positions, for up to 19 hours/week. Reader/graders help professors manage exams and general grading tasks. This may include helping with *ParScore*, running Scantrons, helping maintain grades in *BlackBoard*, etc.

Research assistants are competitive positions for highly motivated, self-directed students. Graduate research assistants have helped professors in diverse tasks, including preparing annotated bibliographies, doing archival research, transcribing oral histories, checking sources, etc.

Announcements about these positions are broadcast by emails or in the Graduate Student Newsletters. Feel free to check with the GAR (Wing Chung Ng) or the Graduate Administrative Associate (Tara Thompson) for additional information.

2. **Fellowships and Scholarships**

The Department of History provides a variety of scholarship/fellowship opportunities for students. The most notable awards are the Nau Fellowships and Nau Teaching Assistantships. The Nau Graduate Fellowship award is only available for incoming students entering in the Fall semester. Second-year students may apply for the Nau Teaching Assistantships; recipients of this latter award will serve as a teaching assistant for a professor and help mentor undergraduate students in an upper division writing intensive class.

Graduate students are also eligible for the *Henderson Scholarship*. In addition, graduate students who have completed 6-12 hours and meet the GPA requirement may be nominated for the *Wing Ching Lam Scholarship*. Both scholarships are awarded annually.

3. **Department funding for presentation and attendance at conferences and for research**

Along with the professional development support offered by the Graduate School, MA students can apply for travel support from the History Department to present papers at conferences. In addition, pending availability of funding, we also subsidize up to $200 for a student to attend conference once a year. Travel support is also available for students to undertake research in libraries and archives. The GAR will provide information on the application process and deadlines.
VIII: Resources

1. Graduate Cohort

The Department of History encourages a collaborative, friendly learning environment. Students in the program can help one another refine ideas, suggest readings, and provide hints to sources/archives. Along with academic and intellectual interchange, fellow students will also become a source of moral support. Graduate school can be stressful when balancing the demands of school, work, and family. Talking to peers can be a great way to gain fresh perspectives and to solve various problems.

2. Phi Alpha Theta

The Department of History has an active chapter of Phi Alpha Theta (PAT), the history honor society. They sponsor a variety of events including movie nights, trips to local historical sights, etc. The national and regional PAT association hosts various conferences for student research presentations.

Phi Alpha Theta, Alpha Theta Iota chapter has an open membership. Anyone interested in attending meetings and events is welcome, however, only those members accepted into the Phi Alpha Theta National History Honor Society may elect officers of, or hold office in the Alpha Theta Iota chapter. Graduate students must have completed at least one-third of the residence requirements for their Master's Degree. The student must have at least a 3.5 GPA in all graduate classes.

3. Faculty: Mentoring and Professional Development

Each student entering the program is assigned a faculty advisor usually on the basis of declared interests in the application. The advisor can serve as a wonderful resource regarding secondary readings, research topics, and other general advice regarding their program of studies. Oftentimes, faculty advisors also can help students with professional development in the areas of teaching, internships, and further graduate study. If you are interested in learning how to teach, you may want to ask a professor for permission to observe their class. Talk to a faculty advisor about tips on internships as they have professional contacts in their fields. Faculty advisors also have up to date information on academic conferences that might be suitable venues for students to present their work. They can also offer valuable suggestions regarding doctoral programs should that be your interest at some point.
4. **Graduate School/Tomás Rivera Center/The Writing Center**

Students admitted into the graduate program have excellent undergraduate records. However, the level of writing, researching, time-management, and reading skills advances to an entirely different level in the graduate program. Students may find that faculty members refer them to various workshops held by the graduate program, or to services offered by the Tomás Rivera Center. Faculty members sincerely want students to succeed academically, and students are encouraged to take advantage of opportunities to polish their writing skills or develop their research abilities. The TRC has very specific programs geared towards graduate students at all stages, from new students to those completing a thesis. [http://utsa.edu/trcss/la/gsla.html](http://utsa.edu/trcss/la/gsla.html). In addition to formal workshops, the TRC also offers academic coaching, which is a one-on-one meeting focused on meeting a student’s specific academic needs.

The Writing Center helps students with various elements of drafting a paper or working with various writing or grammar challenges. [http://www.utsa.edu/twc/](http://www.utsa.edu/twc/). Unlike the TRC program, they can provide more immediate assistance than the formally scheduled writing workshops. Students who need short-term help with brainstorming or proofreading a paper may find the Writing Center helpful, while those who want to work more intensively on a variety of academic skills may find the TRC beneficial.

The Graduate School also offers a variety of activities and workshops. Take advantage of career building opportunities offered by the university—these are an integral part of becoming a professional historian. [http://graduateschool.utsa.edu/current-students/graduate-student-success-events](http://graduateschool.utsa.edu/current-students/graduate-student-success-events)
@ Revised in the summer of 2018 with assistance rendered by MA students Ahmed Sharma and Delilah Hernandez.