

Graduate Student Handbook
HISTORY Department of Humanities
Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi
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Introduction

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi is a rapidly growing urban university located on the South Texas Gulf Coast. The Graduate programs prepare students for leadership roles in the future development of the region and the state through formal instruction, research and other forms of scholarly activity.

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi is committed to the pursuit of excellence in instruction, research, other forms of scholarly activity, and public service. Consistent with this commitment, the University seeks to identify, recruit and retain students who have high potential for academic success, especially those from groups who historically have been under-represented in higher education. To these ends, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi recruits and supports students, faculty and staff who share its broad purpose and commitment to excellence.

Welcome to the History MA Program

Learning about the past is an exciting endeavor. It also involves more than just telling stories. History refers to what we assume to be the past. It is also a body of knowledge to which many different kinds of people contribute to –amateurs, professional historians, archivists, as well as journalists, the public and public authorities. Last, history is a professional discipline bound together by shared practices and values and a commitment to the ongoing production of knowledge about the past.

Professional historians use archives and the work of other scholars to develop their own understanding of the past. They research, analyze, offer original interpretations of the past, and engage in debates over the nature of the past with other historians.

As graduate students in history, you will do the same. This program aims to provide students with advanced knowledge and skills in the content, critical theories, historiographies, research methods, and public presentation of history.

In your coursework and independent studies, you will:

- Examine historical evidence
- Read and interpret academic scholarship
- Undertake archival research
- Confront and discuss ideas about the past with your peers and mentors

Our degree plan offers a wide variety of graduate courses, provides a roadmap for students to follow to graduation and professional opportunities in history, and helps students to understand the past on its own terms. It is designed to offer a variety of forms of historical training. History faculty specialize in United States, Latin American, or European history and possess expertise in social, cultural, intellectual, and political history, labor and religious history, empire and colonialism, gender and sexuality, African American and Mexican American history, oral and public history, popular culture, film, and environmental history.

The MA in History is designed for students who wish to become historians, develop academic skills for careers in public history or archival science, or wish to prepare for Ph. D programs. It provides professional development for secondary education teachers and those seeking professions in nonprofit, education, and governmental sectors. The program also encourages students to involve themselves in historical activities.

This handbook is a **practical guide** designed to explain what it means to undertake and complete a graduate program at TAMU-CC. Please use it as reference for all information pertaining to the program.

For more information on the history area, the history faculty, and specific faculty websites, please see the area website at: <http://history.tamucc.edu/index.html>

For the most current information and all forms you will need to complete your application, registration, and funding requests, please see the TAMUCC Graduate Catalog, or visit

- The A&M-CC Graduate School website: <http://gradschool.tamucc.edu>
- The College of Liberal Arts (CLA) graduate student website: <https://cla.tamucc.edu/graduate-studies/index.html>

Graduate Faculty and Staff

Dr. Peter Moore

History Graduate Program Coordinator

FC 259

peter.moore@tamucc.edu

Ms. Cindy Sheehy

Graduate Academic Advisor – Liberal Arts

cindy.sheehy@tamucc.edu

Mrs. Amanda Hartlaub

DHUM Administrative Assistant

amanda.hartlaub@tamucc.edu

The Application Process

Applying for graduate studies in history involves two distinct processes.

- The **FIRST** where students to complete their formal application through the **Office of Recruitment and Admissions** at TAMU-CC.
- The **SECOND** occurs in the **history area**, but begins only after the completed application is forwarded to the History area from the graduate school.

An application is not complete until the Office of Recruitment and Admissions has received all the appropriate information, fees, transcripts and other required documents.

For the most current guidelines, see the TAMU-CC Graduate School website: <http://gradschool.tamucc.edu>. Also see the information on Graduate Admissions in the College of Graduate Studies – General Information section below.

STEP 1: The Basic Requirements

- To be admitted to graduate study, an applicant must hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution of higher education in the United States (or an equivalent foreign institution).
- To be admitted to the history graduate program, applicants must have completed at least 6 hours of upper-level undergraduate history credits, with a G.P.A. of 3.0 or better.
- Applicants may be conditionally accepted into the history graduate program with the stipulation that they complete 6 hours of upper-level undergraduate history credits with a G.P.A of 3.0.

STEP 2: Applying to the Graduate School

1. Complete the **application for Admission (Apply Texas)** available on the Graduate School website: <http://gradschool.tamucc.edu>.
2. **Complete payment** of current application fees
3. Forward the required documents to the Office of Recruitment and Admissions:
 - **Official transcripts** documenting all undergraduate and graduate course work taken at any accredited college or university attended. Official transcripts must be sent directly to Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi from the granting institutions. Hand carried or unofficial transcripts cannot be accepted.
 - **A writing sample** (minimally seven double-spaced pages in length with proper citations) of previous academic work.
 - **Two letters of recommendation**, at least one from a professor in your undergraduate major.

- **An Essay** (sometimes known as “Statement of Purpose”).

NOTE:

- If you are non-traditional student who is having difficulties supplying the required documents, please contact the Graduate Coordinator (GC).
- This MA Program does not require the GRE

4. DEADLINES:

<u>For the Fall:</u>	April 01
<u>For the Spring:</u>	November 01
<u>For the Summer:</u>	April 15

These are priority deadlines.

If you cannot meet these deadlines and still wish to apply, please contact the GC

Information for International students is available at:

http://gradcollege.tamucc.edu/degrees/liberal_arts/history.html

STEP 3: The Application Review Process

1. Once the graduate school application is complete, the entire file is forwarded to the History GC.
2. A History Admissions Committee chaired by the GC with two additional tenure-line members of the full-time faculty in history, will review the above materials.
3. Basing their decision upon the application materials, the committee will either:
 - a. *Unconditionally admit* the student
 - b. *Conditionally admit* the student (providing a clear statement of the conditions needed to be met), or
 - c. *Deny admission.*
4. Conditionally admitted students:
 - will be assigned a faculty mentor who will oversee their progress.
 - may accrue no more than 6 hours of graduate credit towards the MA prior to being formally admitted to the program.
 - must earn a minimum of a B in both of these graduate classes before full unconditional admission
 - will be notified by the GC of their final status after the end of the first semester, unless otherwise specified.

Completing the Program

Degree Requirements

The History MA requires students to complete thirty (30) hours of graduate coursework.

All students must complete their respective requirements with a 3.0 GPA or better, and can earn no more than one “C” grade in their graduate work in order to stay in the program.

Two Track Exit Requirements

Based on a student’s career objectives, there are two tracks that history graduate students may pursue to complete their degree: exam and thesis.

Both tracks provide advanced historical content and a comprehensive overview of the research and writing methods used by professional historians.

Both tracks require students to identify a primary advisor and organize a graduate committee.

The exam track culminates in a comprehensive exit exam.

The thesis track culminates in a written thesis.

- Once a student has decided upon a track (other than the default General Historical Studies exam track, she or he must declare the track to the GC.
- Once a student has officially formed a Committee with Chair and members, the Committee Chair will become their primary advisor.
- The GC is to be kept informed. However, approval of committee, proposal, defense, etc. is the responsibility of the Committee Chair.

The Exam Track is designed for students for whom the M.A. is the final or terminal degree.

Students must pass a written comprehensive examination during the term of expected graduation.

The comprehensive exam requires individualized study based upon a student’s historical interest and course preparation.

1. The student identifies **three fields of study**. These are usually based upon knowledge first developed in classes. If a student seeks a field not fully covered by a graduate seminar, she or he may inquire about a DIS.
2. The student asks a faculty to be their **Committee Chair** and, with this faculty’s advice, seeks to form a committee with **two additional faculty**. It is the student’s responsibility to contact faculty with the approval of the chair.

3. The student will set a **timeline for exam preparation and deadlines** with the Chair and Committee. She or he will subsequently develop **reading-lists for each exam field** that must be approved by each faculty for their respective field.
4. The student's three graduate committee members will construct the questions from an agreed upon reading list.
5. The student's Committee Chair will administer the examination. The exam (of all three fields) typically takes place **over a week**, with one day for each field exam.
6. The Committee will evaluate the examination: designating the performance as a "pass with distinction," "pass," or "fail." These are History recommendations and do not appear on the degree. Any student who fails the comprehensive examination in whole or in part may retake it once within one calendar year. Failure to pass the examination a second time means that the student will be terminated from the program.

The Thesis Track is designed for students who intend to pursue further academic study beyond the M.A. program or seek to engage in original archival research and scholarship. Students intending to enter a history doctoral program should consider writing a thesis. The history M.A. thesis requires substantial commitment and ongoing consultation with the student's graduate advisor. The finished project must demonstrate historical knowledge, analytical ability, and research skills.

Students on a thesis track will also be required to demonstrate competence in a second language, either by having successfully completed two (consecutive) years of course work in an approved language as an undergraduate, or the equivalent by examination.

1. The student approaches a faculty with a **proposed original thesis project**. This may sometimes emerge out of their Hist 5320 Research Methods final paper.
2. Once a faculty approves the project and agrees to become chair, she or he will develop a thesis committee with the student. It is then the responsibility of the student to contact each faculty to agree to sit on their committee. **A committee is usually composed of three faculty**. These can be all History faculty or, in the case of Interdisciplinary Studies Concentration, include a faculty from another discipline.
3. The student submits **Form A**
4. The student develops a **Thesis Proposal**. Once approved by the Committee Chair, a date will be set for a Thesis Proposal Defense.
5. Once the **Thesis Proposal Defense** has been defended, the student may register for Thesis Hours (Hist 5395) and undertake archival research.

6. Through the process of archival research and thesis writing, the student must communicate and regularly update their Committee Chair of their progress. She or he must send an update every semester to the Graduate Coordinator.
7. When the Committee Chair has reviewed a full draft of the thesis that she or he finds satisfactory, she or he will decide with the student on an appropriate thesis defense date.
8. The student must file **Form B** and, prior to the Defense, submit a full final version of the thesis to the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts for review and approval.
9. The **Thesis Defense** will take place.
10. Upon approval by the Committee, the student will file **Form C**

Students must successfully complete all requirements for the comprehensive examination or Thesis Defense at least two weeks before scheduled graduation.

Curriculum

Concentrations

The History MA includes 4 “concentrations”

Exit requirements for all concentrations will remain the same: Exam or Thesis.

General Historical Studies

This concentration is the default concentration for all students.

Hist 5310, Hist 5320, and Hist 5380 are required for both tracks

- **Thesis track:** 24 hours coursework
6 thesis hours
2 years foreign language or equivalent
(one non-history elective allowed)

- **Exam Track:** 30 hours coursework
(two non-history electives allowed)

Public History

This concentration is recommended for students interested in a career in Public History (though this program provides only an introduction to Public History)

1. In addition to Hist 5310, 5320, and 5380, students must complete **one course that will be designated as “Public History” (PH)** by the GC. There is no predetermined Public History course: the department usually offers a course every year that fits the description.
2. Students are required to undertake **one faculty-supervised internship (Hist 5390)**. They will liaise with the History Internship Coordinator and GC to organize an internship.
3. Students will have to do a Thesis for their exit requirement.

Requirements for all tracks: Hist 5310, Hist 5320, Hist 5380, Hist 5390 and one course designated PH

- **Thesis Track:** 24 hours coursework (including one internship: Hist 5390)
6 thesis hours
2 years foreign language or equivalent
(one non-history elective allowed)

History & Teaching

In addition to Hist 5310, Hist 5320, and Hist 5380, students will be required to complete a course on the practice and methods of teaching at the college level: Hist 5330: Professionalism and Pedagogy in History

Requirements for all tracks: Hist 5310, Hist 5320, Hist 5380, and Hist 5330

- **Thesis Track:** 24 hours coursework (including Hist 5330)
6 thesis hours
2 years foreign language or equivalent
(one non-history elective allowed)
- **Exam Track:** 30 hours coursework (including Hist 5330)
(two non-history electives allowed)

History & Interdisciplinary Studies

This concentration is recommended for students who wish to focus on a particular area of study or expertise or seek to complement their training in History with another discipline. This will not be officially registered in their transcript

- 1 Available concentrations are:
Visual & Media Studies (COMM, ARTS, ENGL) **Gender, Sexuality, and Queer Studies** (ENGL, COMM) **Race, Migration, and Borderlands** (ENGL, ARTS)
American Studies (ENGL)
- 2 If a student wishes to develop a **concentration not included in this list**, she or he will need to propose this concentration to be approved by the GC and Committee Chair.
- 3 In addition to History 5310, 5320, and 5380, both exam and thesis students will choose **two non-history electives in their chosen interdisciplinary field**. These courses must be approved by the GC. Upon completion of their concentration, students must demonstrate an understanding of the methods and objects of different disciplines and how they may be integrated (in an exam field or in their thesis).
- 4 All students seeking an interdisciplinary field specialization must **first complete a Preferred Concentration Form** with rationale for choice of concentration, which must be approved by the GC and Faculty Advisor/Committee Chair.
- 5 Students may include a non-history faculty from their chosen non-History discipline on their thesis or exam committee, with approval from the GC and Committee Chair

Requirements: Hist 5310, 5320, 5380, two non-History electives (in area of concentration)

- **Thesis Track:** 24 hours coursework (including two non-History electives)
6 thesis hours
2 years foreign language or equivalent
- **Exam Track:** 30 hours coursework (including two non-history electives)

Courses

Core Requirements

Hist 5310	Historiography (3hrs)
Hist 5320	Research Methods (3 hrs)
Hist 4380	Seminar in History (3 hrs)

Hist 5310 and 5320 are each offered every other year. Hist 5380 is usually offered each year. Please make sure to complete these core requirements when they are offered.

All other classes are electives.

You may also seek to take a DIS with a specific faculty member if a particular topic has not been offered by the History area (within the areas of specialization of the History area faculty). It is recommended that DIS be taken in the second year of graduate school.

You may also take non-History courses, after approval from the Graduate Coordinator

- 6 hrs maximum for the exam track
- 3 hrs maximum for the thesis track

Please note every incoming student is automatically on the exam track (and General Historical Studies concentration) until they determine or confirm their exit track when they reach 12 hrs of classes.

Directed Independent Study (DIS)

A Directed Independent Study is a one-to-one graduate seminar with a faculty.

A student usually seeks a DIS if they want to deepen their knowledge on a particular topic or field of study that has not been covered within a traditional graduate seminar. They may need it for their thesis topic or to prepare for their exam field.

Students should not expect to do a DIS in their first year of graduate study. Since it involves deepening knowledge in a particular field, a student should first undertake training in a variety of graduate seminars.

These are not automatically available and are available at the discretion of a faculty. Please keep in mind a DIS is not part of a faculty's regular teaching load and therefore unpaid additional labor.

Because of the one-to-one format, a student is expected to be self-disciplined, motivated, and serious. A DIS is not necessarily less work than a traditional graduate seminar but, in fact, more.

Internship (Hist 5390)

An internship is an opportunity to acquire professional experience that is related to your scholarly graduate training but not equivalent. Examples of past internships involve: research assistance for book manuscript preparation, work in a museum or an archive, or any other project that fulfills the terms of an internship.

Once an internship is decided, the student will submit a form that must be approved by the advisor and/or GC.

For more details, please contact the Internship Coordinator.
<https://cla.tamucc.edu/humanities/history/internships.html>

FORMS (for Concentration, or Travel Request, etc.) CAN BE OBTAINED FROM THE HISTORY GRADUATE COORDINATOR.

FORM for Internship CAN BE OBTAINED FROM THE INTERNSHIP COORDINATOR (and the History Graduate Coordinator kept informed).

Matriculation Guide (or Degree Plan)

Please be aware that the following matriculation applies to a full-time History student.

The History area considers 6 hours a semester to be “full-time” and does not recommend a student take 9 hours of graduate seminar a semester.

The Graduate College considers 9 hours a semester to be full-time and it is a requirement for some scholarships and other forms of financial support (GA-ship, TA-ship, etc.). If a student needs 9 hours, she or he needs to communicate with the GC to ensure they fulfil Graduate College full-time status.

If you intend on being a part-time student, please be aware that you will take far longer than two academic years into complete your coursework and requirements. In that case, make sure to:

- Register for the core classes
- Meet with the Graduate Coordinator in your first semester to devise a matriculation guide (or degree plan).
- Meet with the Graduate Coordinator once a semester to evaluate your progress towards completion of your degree.

The Matriculation Guide (degree plan) is a recommendation. Changes may be made with the agreement of the graduate coordinator and Faculty Mentor or Advisor

IMPORTANT:

A student must always be registered in the semester they graduate. They need not be registered for a full course or three hours. Contact the Graduate Coordinator and Graduate Advisor for details.

Exam track Degree Plan

30 hrs (graduate coursework) and comprehensive exams

YEAR 1

Fall (6 hrs)

Meet with Graduate Coordinator & Faculty Mentor assigned

Hist 5310

Hist 5380 or 53XX elective

Consider Concentration

Spring (6 hrs)

Hist 5380 or 53XX elective

Hist 53XX elective

Select a primary faculty advisor (chair of exam committee)
Determine Concentration

Summer (3 hrs)

Note: History graduate courses offered only occasionally in the Summer. Students may request to take a non-history graduate course.

YEAR 2

Fall (6 hrs)

Hist 5320

Hist 5380 or 53XX elective

Formalize an exam committee (including chair and two examiners) and begin preparing comprehensive exams

Spring (6 hrs)

Hist 5380 or 53XX elective

Hist 53XX elective

Formalize a timetable to take comprehensive exams over the summer

Summer (3 hrs)

Hist 5396 DIS or elective to help prepare for exams

Take Comprehensive exams

Graduation

Thesis Track Degree Plan

30 hrs (24 hrs of coursework + 6 hrs of Hist 5395 thesis + 2 years foreign language)

Note: while it is possible to complete a thesis track in two years, that is very rare. Completing the MA Program with a Thesis usually takes between two and half and three years.

YEAR 1

Fall (6 hrs)

Meet with Graduate Coordinator & Faculty Mentor assigned

Hist 5310

Hist 5380 or 53XX elective

Consider Concentration

Remember that you will need to complete 2 consecutive years of a foreign language (or transfer credits)

Spring (6 hrs)

Hist 5380 or 53XX elective

Hist 53XX elective

Determine concentration

Select Thesis Advisor and Thesis Committee (2 faculty)

Summer (3 hrs)

Note: History graduate Courses are not systematically offered in the Summer. Students may request to take a non-history graduate course, or use the summer to take language courses.

YEAR 2 Fall (6 hrs)

Hist 5320

Hist 5380 or 53XX elective

Draft Thesis Proposal

Spring (6 hrs.)

Hist 53XX elective

Hist 53XX elective

Complete and Defend Thesis Proposal

Summer (3 hours)

Archival Research

YEAR 3

Fall (6 hours)

Hist 5396 Thesis

Hist 5395 Thesis

Write Draft of Thesis Make sure to have completed 2 consecutive years of a foreign language (or transfer credits)

Spring (if needed)

Continuation of Thesis Hours if needed

Complete Thesis Defend Thesis Graduation

Important Deadlines

- A student must have declared a track and a concentration after a minimum of 9 hours and a maximum of 12 hours of graduate training
- Comprehensive Exams and a Thesis must be (successfully) completed **at least two weeks** before Graduation
-
- For other deadlines, see: https://gradcollege.tamucc.edu/current_students/masters_dates.html

A Student's check list

Here is a check list of steps to complete and important communication and paperwork.

Exam track

1. Declare track and concentration after min. 9 or max. 12 hours of Graduate training.
 - Submit "Preferred Concentration" form & select track
 - Form a Committee with Chair and Committee Members
2. Complete coursework
3. Complete organization of Comprehensive Exams with Committee Chair (deadline and requirements)
4. Successfully complete exams. Your Committee Chair will notify the GC.

Thesis Track

1. Declare track and concentration after min. 9 or max. 12 hours of Graduate training.
 - Submit "Preferred Concentration" form
 - Form a Committee with Chair and Committee Members once track and concentration declared.
 - Submit Form A (Graduate College)
2. Complete Coursework & fulfil language requirement: two consecutive years of the same foreign language (undergraduate credit can be applied).
3. Complete Thesis Proposal and set Thesis Proposal Defense with approval of Committee Chair.
4. Complete Thesis Proposal Defense
5. Complete Archival Research and Thesis
6. Complete Foreign Language requirement
7. Complete organization of Thesis Defense with Committee Chair (deadline and requirements)
8. Submit Form B (Graduate College) at least 5 days before the defense
9. Send Final Thesis draft with Dean of College of Liberal Arts for review and approval
9. Defend Thesis

10. Submit Form C (Graduate college) after successful thesis defense at least two weeks prior to graduation

Public History Concentration for Practitioners (with Internship)

1. Declare track and concentration after min. 9 or max. 12 hours of Graduate training.
 - Submit “Preferred Concentration” form
2. Form a Committee with Chair and Committee Members once track and concentration declared.
3. Complete coursework & internship
4. Follow the guidelines for Thesis students

A Survival Guide

Some Basic Principles of the Disciplines

What is an Argument?

An argument is a statement or conclusion reached by a historian about the past. A thesis is central to all professional historical writing. Examples of historical arguments include:

- Economic change and industrialization determined the shape of modern American society.
- Slavery should be considered as the central cause of the American Civil War.
- Environmental realities explain the place of South Texas in the early history of the state.

Students will practice developing a thesis in almost all of their history graduate work (such as papers, short essays, and, for those pursuing a thesis track, the Master's thesis).

What are Primary and Secondary Sources?

To “prove” or effectively demonstrate the soundness of a thesis, historians rely on primary and secondary sources. This is the evidence upon which historians rely to ensure the rigor of their interpretation.

- Primary sources are the artifacts (often written, but also found in other formats such as maps, photos, statistics, and many others) that record historical events *at the time* and by those who participated in these societies. These can be written or printed texts, maps, photos, all kinds of written records. They can also include material artefacts. Oral histories also constitute primary sources.
- Secondary sources are conclusions reached by others, often professional historians, about the meaning and importance of historical events. These include scholarly articles, scholarly books, and even documentaries. Secondary sources are essential in constructing a new and original argument: a historian develops their own new and original interpretation after deep knowledge and engagement with what other historians have said on their particular topic or object of study (or historiography).

What is Historiography?

Historiography actually refers to two different approaches to the past.

In one, historiography refers to the vast literature about any given topic, such as all books and essays written about slavery, or Hitler, or the Vietnam War. It is the study of the methods and approaches taken by other scholars in these secondary sources. Any historian will become proficient in the historiographical literature and debates of their chosen topic.

In another sense, historiography refers to scholars' philosophical and epistemological approach to history. It means reflecting and understanding the concepts that historians engage in and have

debated, and how these, in turn, shape our historical practice and writing. Such concepts and methodological concerns include questions of, for instance, narrative, fact, temporality (or chronology), causality, or the nature of archives. Historians have asked whether “history” is literature or science or what constitutes a “fact.” Discussions have focused on how “causality” is imagined by historians and other topics. Good places to read about these debates are in the journals *History & Theory* or *History of The Present*.

Citations

The history area requires all graduate students who write papers and/or a Master’s thesis to use the Chicago Manual of Style (also sometimes known as the “Turabian” style) for all citations, including notes, bibliography, and paper formats. We will not accept finished written work using any other citation method.

For a brief overview, a copy of the History Area Style Guide can be found on the History Department website. Please refer to the latest edition of Chicago Manual of Style (17th): <https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/book/ed17/frontmatter/toc.html>

Oral History

Oral history is increasingly practiced at both the amateur and professional level. It involves interviewing living individuals whose own experience the historian seeks to explore and document.

Because oral history also securing oral histories for preservation, there are particular rules and best practices to follow. The History area, like professional historians, follows Best Practices and Guidelines of the Oral History Association: <https://www.oralhistory.org/> Statement from the American Historical Association: http://chnm.gmu.edu/digitalhistory/links/cached/chapter6/6_23b_policy.htm Oral history is excluded from IRB overview.

Whether for a Hist 5320 essay or a Thesis, every graduate student must:

1. clearly explain **how and why** they will undertake oral history in their project
2. have a **clear plan and check list** of what is needed to be completed (Oral History process), as laid out by the OAH: <https://www.oralhistory.org/best-practices/>. This plan must be reviewed and approved by the Committee Chair and a copy sent to the GC.
3. The student shall share **two forms** with their interviewees:
 - a Legal Consent form (for interview & transcript)
 - a timeline of the process

Archives @ TAMUCC

The Special Collections include valuable and rare archival holdings that students can use:

- The Hector P. Garcia Archives

- The Mirabal Garza Collection
- The Blucher Archives

Among others. Contact the Archivist if you wish to be better acquainted with the holdings.

Graduate School Culture

The Graduate Community

Graduate school is also about joining a *community of scholars interested in the past*. Historians like to engage each other in debating the meaning of historical events, the implications and contingencies of these changes, and the ideas of others. As graduate students enter into this community they need to understand that the culture is slightly different from those not concerned with ideas and evidence.

In most graduate classes, students and instructors will read a common set of documents (often a complete book or series of articles) and come together to debate the merits of the various arguments – not to simply agree on a “right” answer. Often, disagreements emerge over one’s philosophical approach to the topic or object of study (what is a social history approach as opposed to a political history one? what is a “cause” for historical change? how does one develop an intersectional framework?), the result being that we examine our own assumptions, modify our conclusions, and strengthen our overall appreciation of history.

In addition to your courses, the best way to engage in this graduate school culture is by participating in the many events held on campus. These include outside speakers, informal talks, workshops, and other presentations.

You should also seek other opportunities such as conferences, workshops, or community events where you can share your own work (see **Professional Opportunities**).

The University website is a good place to start, but also keep notice of groups like the *Clearinghouse for Mexican-American Research* (CMAR), *Special Collections*, and the other departments of the College of Liberal Arts.

Other non-TAMUCC resources

- **H-Net** is an international interdisciplinary organization of scholars and teachers dedicated to developing the enormous educational potential of the Internet and the World Wide Web. Their edited lists and web sites publish peer reviewed essays, multimedia materials, and discussion for colleagues and the interested public: <http://www.h-net.org/>
- The **American Historical Association**: the official organization for all professional historians in the United States: <https://www.historians.org/>
- Every field of specialization usually has its own professional association and conference. Ask faculty about their recommendations for their field.

Your advisor

You should also meet with your advisor on a regular basis to discuss your progress, any concerns or problems, queries or plans. In a graduate program you will develop a close relationship with your advisor, other faculty, and, of course, your fellow grad students. Best practices include: keeping an open mind, following the advice of your faculty, engage in respectful disagreements with your peers, and question not just the values of others, but your own as well.

Success in the Program

All potential graduate students must understand that graduate classes differ *significantly* from undergraduate classes.

In graduate history classes there will be few, if any, exams, and virtually no formal lectures (where professors deliver a set of lectures and students take notes). Instead, students are expected to drive the course. The professor acts as a guide, pointing them in the right direction through the syllabus, assigned readings, and graded events, but ultimately it is the student who “makes or breaks” the value of any course.

Reading

Your reading load in graduate history classes will be significantly higher than you are accustomed to. Expect to read a minimum of one book per week per class, or a series of articles.

Not only will you have to read more, you will be expected to read at a deeper level than you have in the past. You will have to understand books in terms of their arguments, their use of sources (primary and secondary), their relationship to other books on the same topic, and eventually their relationship to your own research. It is recommended you read a book or article at least twice and systematically take notes.

Discussion

The graduate classroom is driven by student discussion of the assigned readings and their own writings. The professor does not lecture or “teach” as in undergraduate education, but facilitates discussion. You must therefore come to class having read all assigned material and prepared to talk about it critically and at length.

You should feel free to express your own analysis in class, but be sure that your comments are well thought out and well informed, especially by the assigned readings. Opinions and personal anecdotes do not constitute analysis and usually do not inform discussion.

The classroom should be a pleasant, exciting, and rewarding experience. Students are expected to be respectful of each other in demeanor, tone, and behavior, and consequently, rude or inconsiderate behavior and remarks will not be tolerated. Out of respect for the professor and fellow classmates it is a good idea to turn cell phones off and not use laptop computers in class unless allowed by the instructor.

Writing

You will also develop your writing skills. Graduate work requires clear and uncomplicated writing. You will learn to strip your writing of ambiguous language, weak arguments, and the passive voice. Ultimately, in-class discussion and written assignments are exercises in effectively communicating your ideas to others.

Critical thinking forms the basis for your engagement in reading, discussing, and writing. Where you once may have passively read historical documents (assuming it “must” be true because it was found in a book), you now will critically (but not negatively) question authors of essays and books. When sharing your ideas you must think them through and choose carefully your words to make sure that you convey your meaning clearly and unambiguously. Most of the writing you produce in our graduate program will be historiographical papers, research papers, response (or reaction) papers, and book reviews. Some faculty may also ask for outlines, annotated bibliographies, and other assignments.

Research Papers at the graduate level are longer (generally 20+ pages) and involve higher expectations for original thought. Students must employ primary sources to tell their stories, and use secondary literature to offer context. Students must also locate their own work in the literature and explain the import of their contribution.

Book Reviews are not book reports. Reports simply prove to a reader that the student read a given book. A review locates that book’s place in the historiography, explains its arguments, use of sources, and overall effectiveness. A review does not comment on whether a book was “fun” to read. Rather, it focuses seriously on the ways in which the author was or was not persuasive. Please consult with your instructor, your faculty advisor, or professional history journals for examples of good book reviews.

Outlines, Reaction Papers, Bibliographies

Your instructor will give you specific guidelines for such assignments. The only thing worth expanding upon here is the concept of the annotated bibliography. Requirements will range from professor to professor, but they should all include grouping books and articles by theoretical perspective, type of argument, topic and so forth. Each should also ask for a discussion (usually a few sentences) of the topic, argument, and contribution of each source. Embedded in such an assignment is the expectation that the student will learn to think and write critically about the various works.

The Comprehensive Exam

Some students will choose to complete the program with comprehensive examinations. This method is preferable for students who plan to end their study of history at the M.A. level. As soon as the student has decided upon the exam track, they should choose an advisor whose specialization most closely matches their own learning interests.

Committee: The student should then consult with that advisor to choose two more committee members. While there is no stipulation that a committee have three members, this has been the

general trend in the past. One may, in special instances, choose a committee member from outside the university as long as the individual has proper credentials and is acceptable to the rest of the committee and approved by the GC.

Exam Fields: Comprehensive exams are comprised of three written examinations, each over a separate topic in history (for example, Mexican American, Civil War, Gilded Age, Gender & Sexuality, Labor History, etc.). Once a student decides upon the comprehensive examination route, she or he should meet immediately with the members of the committee and draw up a readings list. Generally, the faculty assigns 25 to 50 books and articles per topic.

Over the course of your graduate studies, you will have read assigned works that could constitute the bulk of these books and articles. As the student reads through this list and prepares for the examination, they should meet regularly with all members of the committee to ensure that they are on the right track and focusing properly.

Oral examinations are optional, depending on the composition of the committee and its chair's desires. Generally, the comprehensive examinations should be taken at the near completion of all coursework (but at least one month before scheduled graduation and at the latest, two weeks before graduation). A student may take up to six hours of Directed Independent Study in order to prepare for examinations.

The Thesis

Students who pursue further graduate education in history (to earn a Ph.D.) should strongly consider taking the thesis track.

Committee: The process for forming a thesis committee is similar to that for comprehensive examinations. Students should think carefully about their topic and choose as their chair the one among the faculty whose expertise most closely fits their research interests. The other members should be chosen based on their potential to contribute the strength of the final product. Again, an external may be chosen, but only after consultation with the committee and approval from the GC.

After a committee is formed, such details are worked out as the viability of the proposal, timeline for completion, role of the various committee members, and process for final distribution and defense. Generally, students will take six or more hours of thesis credit to complete research and writing of the thesis.

Writing the Thesis: Be forewarned that writing the thesis is a challenging intellectual assignment. Not only is it difficult to find adequate primary and secondary sources for a given topic, but organizing one's thoughts and arguments into a lucid presentation is far more difficult than many students imagine. With the thesis, you will be proving that you can master one specific set of literature and speak to it confidently and with substance. The writing at this point must be clear and precise. You will receive guidance and instruction from your chair and committee, but the responsibility of effectively responding to these suggestions remains with the graduate student.

Defending Your Thesis: Upon completion to the satisfaction of the committee chair, the student will then distribute final copies of the thesis to all committee members and prepare for the defense. Your final thesis must be proofread without typos or mistakes and properly formatted.

The thesis defense generally takes an hour and a half to two hours. During this meeting:
- The student will provide a brief 5 to ten minutes presentation of the project, research, and thesis -
Each faculty will ask a series of questions: the student must defend her arguments and use of sources. Assuming that the research is sound, committee members will not generally ask narrow questions about a single page or quotation, but rather more global questions about the importance of your work. How does it “speak” to what others have written? Why should non-specialists read your work? What kinds of sources did you use and why are these critical to answering your thesis? Understand that the thesis defense is not simply the “last hoop” through which you must jump. It is a serious undertaking that requires serious and careful consideration.

At the defense, the student will “pass with distinction,” “pass,” or “fail.” These are internal History recommendations and do not appear on your degree. The student who fails will be given an opportunity to schedule another defense. In such instances revisions may or may not be required. If the student defends and fails a second time they will be terminated from the program.

Professional Life

History Publications

Publications are the lifeblood of all academic disciplines. Scholars publish in order to inform readers of a new or altered information, thesis, or conclusion.

As graduate students, you are not expected to publish your work, but publishing opportunities do exist. The two best opportunities are book reviews and encyclopedia entries. These opportunities are now almost exclusively announced on listservs, making them essential if you intend to pursue an advanced degree beyond the M.A.

Teaching

While not yet essential to your academic development, an ability to teach history indicates your sophistication and skill in presenting complex material in a clear and objective way. Some Ph.D. programs will value teaching experience and others will not.

TAMU-CC usually offers opportunities for teaching experience:

- as “Graders” or “Teaching Assistants” for undergraduate courses
- as “First Year Seminar” instructors through the First-Year program

Always inform the GC and contact your advisor to discuss these and other options.

Professional Conferences

An essential activity for professional historians involves attending and participating in professional conferences, workshops, and seminars.

Such meetings are important for presenting one's original research to peers as is done in the medical, scientific, mathematical, and other professions. Conferences are also a way to connect with others in the profession. Professional meetings often hold sessions specifically for graduate students. One can attend a conference after registration. However, typically, a student applies with a conference paper abstract and C.V to present at a conference.

Opportunities for conferences

- the College of Liberal Arts Interdisciplinary Graduate Symposium @ TAMU-CC, which takes place every year at the end of the Spring semester. The GC will circulate information: https://cla.tamucc.edu/humanities/graduate_symposium/graduate_symposium.html
- Local conferences in South Texas and Texas more generally: at Nueces County Historical Society, or the &AM System, which sometimes holds the Pathways graduate student conference.
- The Texas State Historical Association hosts an annual conference, which has provided a place for several of our past graduate students to present their work
- National conferences from professional organizations: please seek advice from faculty

If you decide to present your work at a conference do NOT do so without informing your advisor and having him or her read and critique your work well ahead of time.

Participating in a conference is expensive. However, you can apply for Travel Support to cover your expenses. See our website for guidelines and the Travel Support Form to submit to the GC. Always do so well in advance, preferably when you first apply.

Frantz Essay Competition

Each year the Frantz Fund sponsors a “best paper” competition among undergraduate and graduate students. The winner receives a cash award, and their name is engraved on the plaque in the Faculty Center. Applications are submitted in the spring semester. Determinations are made and prizes awarded by the end of that semester. Contact your advisor for more information on the Competition.

The Curriculum Vitae (or C.V.)

CV is short for the Latin phrase *curriculum vitae* (literally the “course of your life”).

Unlike a typical resume, which asks for your work experience, goals, and other personal activities, a C.V. is a statement of your *academic* accomplishments. It does not measure your GPA or offer examples of your writing style. Rather, a C.V. is a historical record of your *active involvement* in the profession. Typically a C.V. includes:

- your educational history
- any historical publications

- the presentation of papers at professional conferences
- teaching experience
- awards and prizes (if any)
- a listing of academic references.

Your C.V. will develop and grow over time. The best place to begin thinking about your C.V. is by requesting a copy of your advisor's C.V. to use as a guide. A C.V. is essential when applying to Ph.D. programs, requesting external funding, and, eventually, to landing a job in the profession. As a result, it is important to continue to update (and add to) the course of your academic life.

Letters of Recommendation

Whether taking the examination route and entering the world of work upon completion of the degree or moving on to a Ph.D. program, students will all need strong letters of reference. The first rule to remember is that we cannot lie. We cannot say that poor-performing students are among the strongest we've ever taught. For this reason, remember that you need to be conscious of developing your professional demeanor throughout your entire graduate career.

Most employers and graduate programs require at least three letters of reference. Be sure to choose your referees carefully. With whom did you have the best rapport? In whose classes did you perform the strongest? Who really "gets" your work? Once you devise the list, you should consider having each writer approach her or his letter from a different angle. Perhaps one could attest to your originality of thought, another to your work ethic, and another to your teaching abilities.

In any case, letters are crucial to your future. Be mindful of that as you interact with faculty in and out of the classroom.

Financial Support

Financial support can take the form of **scholarships** and **fellowships**, assistantships, **loans**, and **employment opportunities** through the university and/or College of Liberal Arts. Students are encouraged to seek out information and help

The best place to coordinate your efforts to secure financial aid in different forms is through the Office of Student Financial Assistance: https://gradcollege.tamucc.edu/funding/financial_aid.html

Scholarships are grants of money used for tuition and/or other specific activities. Those awarded scholarships are not required to financially reimburse the granting institution. There are a number of scholarship opportunities available:

1. A **CLA Scholarship** that you can apply to every semester:
<https://gradcollege.tamucc.edu/funding/scholarships.html>
2. The **Mirabal-Garza Endowed Scholarship in History**:
<https://www.tamucc.edu/news/2019/05/in-memory-of-rosie-mirabalgarza.html#.XxxvSR1Ok1g> The student must:

- maintain a 3.0 GPA
- use the publication *El Progreso* (1930-1940), or the work of Rodolfo Zepeda Mirabal and Dora Cevera in their research project
- Complete the Graduate University Scholarship

3. Instituto de Cultura Hispanica de Corpus Christi Endowed Scholarship

The student must:

- maintain a 3.0 GPA
- be studying a “Hispanic”-related field (such as Spanish language or literature, Latin American Art, Bilingual or Multicultural Education, International Studies with emphasis on “Hispanic Culture”
- Have graduated from one of the following: Calallen, Carroll, Flour Bluff, IWA, King, Miller, Moody, Tuloso-Midway, or West Oso
- demonstrate financial need

Other scholarship opportunities:

- The **Coastal Bend Community Foundation** offers a variety of scholarships: <https://www.cbcfoundation.org/>
- **External Funding Opportunities:** http://gradcollege.tamucc.edu/funding/external_funding_opportunities.htm

In addition, the following websites provide useful information:

- FinAid: The Smart Students Guide to Financial Aid scholarships <http://www.finaid.org/>
- Graduate Fellowships For Minorities Nationwide <http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/Student/GRFN/list.phtml?category=MINORITIES>

Assistantships offer other means of financial support in three different forms:

- Teaching Assistantships
- Research Assistantships
- Administrative Research Assistantships You can find details about these at: <https://gradcollege.tamucc.edu/funding/assistantships.html#collapse4>

Please be aware that you must be enrolled in at least 6 hours and some assistantships require you to be enrolled for 9 hours.

Funding for Conference or Archival Research: the History area provides financial support to students who wish to undertake archival research or participate in a history conference (but not for just attending a conference, unless there is a particularly exceptional reason to do so).

If you wish to seek support:

- download and review the [Graduate Student Travel Request guidelines](#).

- complete the Graduate Student Travel Request Form and forward to the GC for approval. - Once approved, you must contact the Administrative Assistant for review of procedure as she will organize your Travel Request.

Because this will be considered official university business, **properly completing the paperwork and following guidelines is crucial. Not doing so means you may not be reimbursed** All forms are available on the History MA Program website

University Standards and Policy

For the most current information, please consult: <http://gradcollege.tamucc.edu/>

Graduate Admissions

To be admitted to a program of graduate study, an applicant must hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution of higher education in the United States or an equivalent foreign institution. *(Note: The requirement to hold a bachelor's degree does not apply to students enrolling in the RN-MSN option in nursing.)* Decisions concerning admission to graduate study are based on all admission criteria. To be considered for a graduate program, a minimum last 60-hour GPA of 2.5 is required. Some programs may have higher GPA requirements; review specific program information in the graduate catalog or elsewhere in this handbook. All applications must be made via the following web site: <http://gradschool.tamucc.edu>. For complete information, see the Catalog, [Graduate Admissions section](#).

Graduate students should be aware of their enrollment status, as it may impact financial aid, veteran's benefits, or other important aspects of graduate life. In addition, international students have specific requirements about enrollment status. Enrollment status for graduate students is as follows:

Full-time graduate student	Fall or spring term = 9 hours Combined summer terms = 6 hours
Three-quarter-time graduate student	Fall or spring term = 7 hours Combined summer terms = 5 hours
Half-time graduate student:	Fall or spring term = 5 hours Combined summer terms = 3 hours

Continuous Enrollment

The University does not have a continuous enrollment policy for master's students. However, you should be aware of your own program's requirements, which may differ from general University requirements. Master's students should also know that if they do not attend for two years, they will be required to reapply to the University. Students should consider applying for a leave of absence (see below), especially if the time-to-degree and recency of credits requirements will be impacted by a needed absence.

Leave of Absence

Students experiencing life changing or catastrophic events should consult with their program coordinator and/or department chair and request a [Leave of Absence](#) in writing from the College of Graduate Studies using the [Request for Leave of Absence form](#). A student who is in good standing may petition for a leave of absence of no more than two full academic terms. The maximum number of leave of absence requests permitted in a program is two. A request for a leave of absence requires approval in advance by the faculty advisor, Program Coordinator, College Dean, and Graduate Dean. If the Graduate Dean approves the petition, the registration requirement is set aside during the period of time of the leave. Students should be aware that leaves of absences require suspension of all activities associated pursuit of the degree. See the catalog for more information.

Maximum Course Load

Graduate students may not register for more than 12 hours in a regular semester, 6 hours in a single session of summer school, or 12 hours in the combined summer session (not including Maymester) without the approval of the appropriate college dean. See the [Maximum Course Load](#) section in the catalog.

Repetition of a Course

There are specific policies about repeating courses for higher grades, including the provision that graduate students may retake a maximum of two courses during graduate study at the University. Each course may be repeated only once. Some courses may be repeated for multiple credit if those courses are so designated in the course description and approved by the faculty or program advisor as designated by their college. Complete catalog information may be found in the [Graduate Academic and Degree Requirements](#) section of the catalog.

Time Limit to Degree

The requirements for a master's degree at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi must be completed within seven years subsequent to admission to the program. The seven-year period begins the first semester of enrollment and is calculated from the date of degree conferral. Credit that is more than seven years old will not be counted toward a master's degree. Exceptions will require **strong** justification in writing from the student requesting the exception as well as submission of a revalidation plan. Credits earned at another university are not eligible for an exception. Written approval from the major department chairperson, the dean of the college offering the degree, the Graduate Dean, and the Provost are required. See the revalidation process below.

Revalidation of Courses Beyond Degree Time Limit

In order to revalidate dated courses, students should carefully attend information in the catalog (see [Graduate Academic and Degree Requirements](#) section of the catalog. Revalidation requests should be made using the [Revalidation Request Form](#).

If your program has shorter time-to-degree limits, it may impact recency of credit and other timelines. See program information in this handbook or seek information from your Program Coordinator.

Academic Requirements for Graduate Work

Good Standing. Graduate Students, including degree-seeking, certificate-seeking, and non-degree-seeking students are considered in “good academic standing” if they maintain a minimum 3.0 grade point average (GPA) on all graduate course work and earn a grade of S (Satisfactory), IP (In Progress, or CR (Credit) on all course work that does not affect GPA. A higher GPA may be required by some programs. In such cases, the higher standard will be substituted for 3.0 in all other matters related to good academic standing. A complete discussion of academic requirements including but not limited to scholastic probation and enforced withdrawal may be found in the [Graduate Academic and Degree Requirements](#) section of the catalog. For information regarding the effect of scholastic probation and enforced withdrawal, see the [Financial Assistance Suspension Policy](#) in the Tuition, Fees, & Financial Assistance section of the catalog.

Academic Integrity

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, which include but are not limited to illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, plagiarism, or collusion in any of these behaviors. All students should familiarize themselves with the full Academic Integrity Policy as well as the processes and procedures used to address violations thereof. You can find additional information in the [Academic Integrity](#) section of the catalog. Students can also access University Rules and Procedures [13.02.99.C0.04](#): Student Academic Misconduct Cases.

Additional Information

Information, policies, and procedures about tuition, fees, financial assistance, scholarships, and other topics important to graduate students can be found in the catalog. In addition to the catalog, web pages for offices and services on campus provide expanded information, forms, and contact names/phone numbers. Some of those webpages include the following:

[College of Graduate Studies](#)

[Office of Student Financial Assistance](#)

[Office of International Education](#)

[Scholarships](#)

[GROW](#)

[Assistantships](#)