Doctor of Philosophy in History

Degree Requirements

I. The Ph.D. is offered in the following major fields:
   - U.S. to 1877
   - U.S. since 1789
   - Early modern Europe
   - Modern Europe
   - Latin America
   - History of culture, identity and economic development
   - History of science, technology and environment

PhD candidates choose three fields of specialization. The major field shall be one of the above listed in which the PhD is offered. The second and third fields may include any of the major fields, public history, a thematic area approved by the student’s advisor(s), an interdisciplinary field, or a cognate field in another discipline.

One of the student’s two minor fields should cover a different geographical area (or areas) and/or time from the student’s major field; it must not be a subset of the major field. Secondary field can also be topical, thematic, or trans-nationally comparative fields. Normally, students will be expected to complete 9 hours of coursework in the second field and 6 hours of coursework in the third field.

II. Course Requirements (60 hours total):

*Doctoral students are required to take a minimum of 42 hours of coursework with at least a B+ average, but additional hours may be specified by their advisor and approved by the Committee on Graduate Studies. Students entering the program with an MA in history from another institution must take at least 18 hours of coursework, but often more. Courses from an MA can also be transferred in, upon application to and then with the approval of the department’s graduate committee.*

Required courses include:

1. Four 700-level reading seminars in the student’s major field of study. Students specializing in U.S. history shall two of the following courses as part of their program of study: HIST 701, HIST 702, HIST 703. (12 credit hours)
2. Three reading seminars in the student’s secondary field of study. (9 credit hours)
3. Two reading seminars in the student’s third field of study. (6 hours)

(The student’s advisor may approve other appropriate courses for these reading seminars, including courses taken outside the department of history.)
4. Two courses which will provide methodological and theoretical training that will complement the 700-level reading seminars. (6 hours)

- HIST 720 – Introduction to the Study of History
- HIST 783 – History and Theory

5. Two 800-level research seminars (6 hours)

6. HIST 815 – Dissertation Prospectus Seminar (Often taken after the comprehensive exams have been completed and can be taken concurrently with HIST 899 – Dissertation Prep) (3 hours)

7. Any other appropriate course(s).

8. HIST 899 – Dissertation Preparation (minimum of 18 hours)

III. Foreign Language Requirement

Every PhD student shall prove competency in at least one foreign language or appropriate methodology. Additional languages and/or methodological requirements will be determined by the student’s program advisory committee when the chosen fields or research interests demand more.

IV. Admission to Candidacy for the PhD Degree

Students are admitted to candidacy upon completion of the “qualifying exam.”

The qualifying exam shall consist of the students’ submission of an article-length original research paper, approved by the graduate committee. Students holding an MA in history from another institution must still submit the qualifying exam paper.

Qualifying exam papers, if not approved by the graduate committee, can be resubmitted once after revision. Students will be admitted to candidacy following approval of the qualifying exam and completion of 15 hours of coursework with at least a B+ average at the University of South Carolina.

PhD candidates shall file an official program of study with the Graduate School immediately after their admission to candidacy, which follows the successful completion of the qualifying exam and comes no later than 24 months after entering the program.

V. Comprehensive Exams

Written comprehensive examinations in three fields are required and offered in January, May, and August of each year. The major field will have two examiners, and there will be two four-hour examinations. Minor-field examinations will consist of one four-hour examination for each field. Each exam must be given by a different member of the regular graduate faculty.
Oral examinations covering the major and minor fields will be scheduled as soon as possible after the successful completion of written examinations in all fields. Completion of the oral exams requires the satisfactory completion of the language requirement and the removal of any grades of incomplete.

IV. Dissertation

In order to achieve ABD status, all students shall orally present and defend a written dissertation proposal to their committee and other interested members of the department.

Finally, candidates will prepare for submission a dissertation that is expected to represent a substantial contribution to historical knowledge.