

History

The School of Humanities

Chair

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Degrees Offered: B.A., M.A., Ph.D.

The undergraduate program offers courses in the four main areas of ancient-medieval history, modern European history, U.S. history, and the histories of Asia, Latin America, and Africa. The department encourages its majors to acquaint themselves with other humanistic disciplines, such as literature, fine arts, and philosophy; the contributions of political science, sociology, economics, and anthropology are also vital to historical studies. The graduate program, which trains a limited number of carefully selected students, offers studies in a number of areas, with faculty interests ranging from ancient and medieval history to modern British, French, German, and Balkan history; from areas in American history that include Colonial America, the Old and New South, the Civil War, legal/constitutional and intellectual history to world military history; and from the history of science to East Asian, Latin American, and Middle Eastern history.

Degree Requirements for B.A. in History

For general university requirements, see Graduation Requirements (pages 16–18). Students majoring in history must complete at least 30 semester hours (10 courses) in history, with 18 hours (6 courses) at the 300 or 400 level. Students may apply advanced placement credit to no more than 6 of these hours (2 courses). Majors should select 2 of the required upper-level courses from a departmental list of seminars devoted mainly to writing and discussion. Departmental distribution requirements are as follows (although students may not use advanced placement credit for these requirements):

Ancient medieval history—at least 1 course

Modern European history—at least 2 courses

U.S. history—at least 2 courses

Asian, Latin American, and African history—at least 2 courses

Some foreign language proficiency is desirable, and the department highly recommends that students who are contemplating graduate work in history study at least 1 foreign language in some depth.

Transfer Credit and Advanced Placement Credit. The Department of History grants transfer credit on a case-by-case basis to enrolled undergraduates (the registrar determines the hours to be credited). However, history majors must take **at least 18 semester hours** (6 courses) of the required 30 hours in history at Rice. No more than 4 courses may be satisfied through advanced placement and transfer credit. Advanced placement credit may not be used to satisfy departmental distribution requirements for a history major.

Rice students who wish to take classes for credit at another U.S. university should allow sufficient time to get advance confirmation from the department that the course is eligible: courses are eligible only if taken at a four-year institution. Rice students planning to study at a foreign university also must get course approval from the Office of International Education.

After completing an approved course from either a domestic or a foreign university, students should submit a request for transfer credit, including evidence of the scope and work requirements of the course to be transferred (e.g., a syllabus, reading lists, and copies of exams and papers), to the department's director of undergraduate studies.

Honors Program. Qualified undergraduates may enroll for 6 semester hours of directed honors research and writing, completing an honors thesis in their senior year (these 6 hours are **in addition to** the 30 hours required for the major). Students must complete both semesters of HIST 403/404 to receive credit; the grade for the final project applies to the full 6 hours. Interested students who have a grade point average of at least 3.50 in their history courses should submit a substantial historical essay, an honors thesis proposal, and recommendations from the instructor to whom the paper was submitted and from their proposed adviser. Financial assistance is available for honors students to conduct research on their honors theses during the summer between their junior and senior years. After their admission to the program, a periodic workshop allows honors students to share problems and ideas. Once the adviser and another reader have evaluated the completed thesis, the director of the honors program determines whether to award honors. Students who miss the final thesis deadline (which is well before the end of their senior year) will receive a grade and credit for completed work, but no honors.

Degree Requirements for M.A. and Ph.D. in History

The Rice University graduate program in history is primarily a Ph.D. program. Students who have a B.A. in history (or its equivalent) from an acceptable institution are eligible to apply to the Ph.D. and M.A. programs. Although many successful candidates to the Ph.D. program have an M.A. or other advanced degree, advanced study is not a requirement for admission. Graduate degrees are offered in U.S., European, intellectual, and other areas of history. Further information is available on request from the department. For general university requirements, see Graduate Degrees (pages 60-65).

The department awards graduate tuition waivers and fellowship stipends, within the limits of available funds, to qualified Ph.D. candidates with demonstrated ability. University funding is not available for masters program study only. All graduate

students in the history department are expected to participate in the professional activities of the department as part of their training. These include, but are not limited to, assisting with the *Journal of Southern History* or the *Papers of Jefferson Davis* and serving as research assistants or teaching assistants for department members. Insofar as possible, these assignments are kept consistent with the interests of the students.

M.A. Program. The department gives priority to applicants for the Ph.D. Completion of the M.A. degree usually takes two years; no more than three years may elapse between graduate admission and the completion of the degree unless the department Graduate Committee approves an extension. M.A. degrees are awarded in two ways: (1) completion of one year of course work (24 credit hours) and a thesis written and defended in an oral examination during the second year; and (2) completion of two years of course work (48 credit hours), normally including at least 8 seminar research papers.

Ph.D. Program. Doctoral candidates must prepare themselves in three fields of history: two in their major area of concentration, whether European, U.S., or other history, and a third in an area outside of that concentration (e.g., if the major area is European history, the third field must be in U.S. or other non-European history, and if the major area is U.S. history, the third field must be in European or other non-U.S. history, and so on). Students who wish to pursue a third field in an area outside the department should petition the Graduate Committee by the end of their second semester.

The requirements for completing the degree will be administered as flexibly as possible within the bounds of the general university regulations. These requirements state that the Ph.D. degrees “will be awarded after successful completion of at least 90 semester hours of advanced study and an original investigation reported in an approved thesis.” Passing the qualifying exam and receiving approval of a dissertation prospectus allows the student to apply for formal admission to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree.

For the Ph.D., candidates must:

- Prepare themselves thoroughly in three examination fields.
- Take 8 graduate seminars, including Introduction to Doctoral Study in History.
- Pass reading examinations in the principal language of research (unless it is English) and one other language (not English).
- Perform satisfactorily on written and oral examinations. For students entering with a B.A., those examinations will normally be taken before the beginning of the fifth semester and no later than the beginning of the sixth semester. Students entering with an M.A. may take their examinations earlier, with departmental approval.
- Complete a dissertation presenting the results of original research.
- Defend the thesis in a public oral examination.

See HIST (pages 386–409) in the Courses of Instruction section.