

**Department of History
Colorado State University
Graduate Program Policies**

Admission

The formal application must include a statement of purpose; three letters of recommendation; an academic writing sample; a curriculum vitae (C.V.); official transcripts; and any other materials required by the [CSU Graduate School](#). The Department of History does not require the GRE.

- **Statement of Purpose:** The statement of purpose, sometimes also called a personal statement, should clearly address why the MA in History program at CSU best fits the student's educational and career goals. Students should be sure to include the following information in statement:
 1. State the program of study (Plan A Thesis track, Plan B Non-Thesis track, or CRM & Historic Preservation) the student is interested in pursuing.
 2. Indicate which geographical (United States, Europe, Latin America, Asia, World, etc.), temporal (U.S. to/since 1877, Europe to/since 1850, World to/since 1500, etc.), and/or thematic areas (public history, women's and gender history, environmental history, religious history, etc.) within history the student intends to study.
 3. Identify the faculty whose teaching and research aligns with the student's interests, reach out to those faculty, and confirm that an appropriate faculty member is willing to serve as the student's primary advisor and mentor.
 4. Explain specifically how the student sees an MA in History from CSU advancing their professional goals. Applicants are encouraged to discuss their previous educational and work experiences as examples of their interests.
 5. Articulate which centers and activities at CSU the student is interested in participating in and what scholarly organizations they are a part of or would like to become involved with.

We do not admit students to our program whose interests do not align with the strengths of our graduate faculty and program.

- **Three Letters of Recommendation:** Letters should come from people familiar with the student's work. At least two references must come from academic faculty, preferably historians.
- **Academic Writing Sample:** The writing sample should be an argument-driven historical interpretation, preferably one that uses some combination of archival research and primary sources, existing historical interpretations (secondary sources) and engages some historiography (how other historians have approached the subject). It should feature the best and most polished academic writing and/or the best and most polished public-facing work. It should be free of grammatical, spelling, and punctuation errors and include source citation and a bibliography.
- **A Curriculum Vitae.** The C.V. should include the student's education, relevant work experience, internships, awards, honors, publications, presentations, and other relevant information.
- **Official Transcripts:** Students contact their previous institution(s) to request they submit the official transcript to Colorado State University (use CSU institution code 4075).

The Department of History requests that the applicant contact the [faculty member](#) they hope to work with as a primary advisor and mentor before applying. The department requests applicants indicate which faculty they want to work with in the statement of purpose.

Applicants are advised: "Meeting the minimum CSU or department standards does not entitle an applicant to admission. Meeting such standards only ensures consideration of the application. Since CSU cannot accommodate all who meet the minimum standards, it reserves the right to select individuals for admission on the basis of merit in such a way as to promote the best interests of CSU and the society as a whole and to maximize the potential for individual accomplishment." ([From the CSU Graduate and](#)

[Professional Bulletin](#))

Before beginning classes for the first time, admitted students should meet with their advisors and/or the Graduate Studies Committee's Chair to obtain appropriate orientation and course registration advice.

Coursework

The Department subscribes to the University policy that a student's graduate program consists primarily of "regular course work"—that is, courses other than independent or group studies, open seminars, thesis credits, U.S. travel or study abroad, supervised college teaching, practicum/internship, etc. At present, history regular courses include: 501, 503, 505, 511, 512, 516, 520, 521, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 539, 611, 621, and 640. Students are encouraged to refer to the appropriate programmatic check sheet - [Liberal Arts Plan A](#), [Liberal Arts Plan B](#), and [CRM/Historic Preservation Plan B](#) - available on the department's website.

If a student is unable to meet degree requirements with regular coursework, the following policies must be followed (see also Course Substitutions below):

- Only 3 credits of HIST 695 / Independent Study or HIST 697 / Group Study may be counted toward the M.A. degree in history.
- A maximum of 1 credit per semester is allowed for HIST 684, Supervised College Teaching, earned as a graduate teaching assistant. Only 3 credits of HIST 684 may be counted toward the M.A. degree in history. History graduate students may apply only 6 total credits of HIST 699, Thesis, to their 30-33 minimum credit M.A. program. This limit, subject to the discretion of a student's individual graduate advisory committee, may be appealed to the Graduate Studies Committee. All grades for work in HIST 684 and HIST 699 will be recorded as S or U.

Course Substitutions

The Department subscribes to the University policy that a student's graduate program consists primarily of "regular course work" (see above), and therefore only in **rare** cases will we approve substitutions for courses required by the student's program of study.

Students who wish to substitute HIST 695, HIST 697, or who wish to substitute a regular graduate course in History or another discipline for a regular graduate course in History to fulfill degree requirements other than electives must have the substitution approved by the GSC according to the procedure outlined below.

The substitution must be approved by the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) *before* enrolling in the requested substitution course. The petition should be submitted to the GSC Chair at least two weeks *before* the opening day of graduate student registration. The following procedure should be followed for substitution petitions:

- The student must present a written request to the GSC Chair, explaining the specific arrangements of the proposed substitution and reasons for the request. This request should be a formal letter. If insufficient detail is provided, the request will be denied.
- The student must show that a regular faculty member in the Department of History has agreed to provide the HIST 695/697 or other course indicated in the student's substitution request.
- The student's written request must be accompanied by a memo from the student's faculty advisor, indicating his/her support for the proposed substitution and rationale(s).
- Note: It will be the responsibility of the student's faculty advisor to assure that HIST 695/697 or the other requested substitution course will be comparable in workload and content to the regular graduate course in History for which the course is being substituted. Faculty advisors are encouraged to consult other department faculty as appropriate to help accomplish this.

The GSC will review the student's request and render a decision, taking into consideration the following criteria:

- The reason(s) for the student's request for a substitution.
- Support from the student's faculty advisor for the requested substitution.
- Evidence that a regular faculty member in History has agreed to provide the HIST 695/697 if the substitution is approved, or that any other course requested as a substitution is being offered and has the capacity to accommodate the student's request.
- Impact on enrollments in regular graduate courses in History if the substitution is approved or denied.
- Impact on the regular faculty member's workload and effort distribution to provide the HIST 695/697 if the request is approved or denied.
- Impact on the student's timely progress toward degree completion if the substitution is approved or denied.

The GSC's decisions about substitutions will be given in writing to the student and the student's faculty advisor, along with the rationale(s) for the committee's decision. A copy of the written decision will also be kept on file by the GSC Chair until the student graduates.

It is expected that a substitution approved by the GSC will be completed according to the terms of the request. Any changes in the specific arrangements for a substitution after it has been approved should be communicated to the GSC as soon as possible for the committee's further review.

Students who wish to substitute a regular graduate course in History or another discipline for a regular graduate course in History to fulfill degree requirements other than electives must have the substitution approved by the GSC according to the procedure outlined in points 1 through 5 above.

Incomplete Grades, Continuous Enrollment, and Degree Completion Limit

The History Department encourages students to complete all work on time. However, when unforeseen circumstances prevent on-time completion of work, students should be aware of the following policies.

- Incomplete Grades
 - The grade of "I" (incomplete) is a temporary grade awarded when, for unanticipated reasons, a student cannot complete a course. When an "I" is assigned, the instructor shall specify in writing the requirements that the student must fulfill to complete the course. According to the [CSU Academic Standards and Policies for Grading](#): "At the discretion of the instructor, a temporary grade of "I" may be given to a student who demonstrates it is not possible to complete the requirements of a course due to circumstances beyond the student's control and not reasonably foreseeable. A student must be passing a course at the time an Incomplete is requested unless the instructor determines there are extenuating circumstances to assign an Incomplete to a student who is not passing the course."
 - After one year, or at the end of the semester in which the student graduates (whichever comes first), an "I" will automatically be changed to an "F" (failure) unless the incomplete requirements are satisfied, and the instructor submits a grade change. Students must clear all grades of incomplete before taking their final examination recorded on the GS form 24.
- Continuous Enrollment
 - According to the CSU Graduate School's Graduate & Professional Bulletin (H.2.7): "All students admitted to a graduate degree program are required to be continuously enrolled in their degree programs in the fall and spring semesters. This policy applies from the time of first enrollment through the graduate term. Students should contact their advisor

if they do not plan to register for at least one credit of course work or research. Students graduating in the summer term are required to be registered for at least one credit or Continuous Registration (CR). Students registering for CR will be assessed a fee for each semester of CR registration.

- Degree Completion Limit
 - There is a ten-year limit for completion of the M.A. degree. Courses to be applied toward fulfilling degree requirements, including any graduate level courses transferred from another institution, “must have been registered for and completed within the ten years immediately preceding the date of completion of requirements for the degree.” (Graduate and Professional Bulletin)

Satisfactory Progress

All students must make “satisfactory progress” in their graduate program, which includes the following: meeting the academic standards outlined in the Graduate and Professional Bulletin; maintaining a 3.00 grade point average (GPA) in courses required for the M.A. degree; taking classes directly relevant to their degree program; selecting an advisor by October 15 if their first enrollment is the fall semester and March 1 if their first enrollment is the spring semester; participation in the intellectual life of the department (attending events, professionalization workshops, etc.); and (if relevant) performing satisfactorily as Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA). History graduate students will not receive credit toward the M.A. degree for any course where the grade is lower than a B-.

In their second semester, students will be formally evaluated to determine if they are making satisfactory progress. The Department of History is committed to advising and mentoring that identifies and praises strengths and areas where students may be struggling to provide resources for their improvement. To identify such needs, the instructors of record in all History graduate classes for each academic year, the advisors of all first-year graduate students, GTA instructors, and the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) will provide evaluations of first-year graduate students. They shall consider the measures listed in the previous paragraph as well as the students’ performance in graduate classes when evaluating the needs of graduate students and confirming that students are making “satisfactory progress” in their graduate program. Such comments should address both student strengths and concerns about the academic performance of any first-year students. Graduate students are encouraged to submit curricula vitae for consideration.

The GSC will compile and read evaluations to determine if students are making satisfactory progress in the graduate program. If the committee decides that a student is not making satisfactory progress, the committee, together with the student’s advisor, will create a progress plan for the student, as outlined in the “Scholastic Standards” section of the Graduate and Professional Bulletin. The student has the right to appeal these decisions (see “Graduate School Appeals Procedure: Adopted by Faculty Council, October 5, 1999”). The GSC Chair will meet with the students who are not making satisfactory progress in order to discuss their individual progress plans; the GSC Chair will notify all students who are making satisfactory progress in a formal letter.

Committee Requirements

After completing 12 semester credits appropriate to the student’s graduate program OR by the end of the second term of enrollment as a graduate student (whichever occurs first), the graduate student must formally establish a Graduate Advisory Committee (GAC) by completing the GS6 form. The student must meet with their primary advisor and/or the Graduate Studies Committee Chair for guidance in completing this document and obtain signatures from faculty who agree to serve on the committee. The GS6 form is accessed electronically through RamWeb and the Graduate School provides [instructions for the GS6 form](#). Graduate School rules stipulate that students who fail to complete the GS6 form will not be permitted to register for subsequent graduate classes.

Composition of Committees

The Graduate School [requirements for committee members](#) can be found on the Graduate School website. Please note special requirements in the Department of History for advisors. Teaching Professors and Instructors listed are not eligible to serve as primary advisors but may serve as a co-advisor along with an [eligible faculty member](#). The Graduate School requires that the committee include an advisor or co-advisors, additional committee members, and one outside field member. In practical terms, History GAC committees must include at least two members of the History Department (a primary advisor and a committee member) and one representing an outside field, that is, a faculty member not affiliated with the History Department. In addition to these criteria, the History Department also requires that the faculty serving on a student's GAC committee include specialists in the student's fields of study. The fields of historical study will be based on reading seminars and readings completed in other history courses taken at Colorado State University and will be in World, Europe, U.S., and Public History.

Exams and Forms for Graduation

At the beginning of the graduation semester, the student must complete GS25 form, stating the intention to graduate and noting academic program changes that differ from the GS6 form.

Liberal Arts Plan A (Thesis) Guidance for Comprehensive Examinations: The student may take the (up to) four-hour final written exam upon completion of all the readings required for the fields and no sooner than the last semester of required course work. Each member of the student's GAC from the Department of History will prepare one exam question and will grade (fail, pass) the student's answer to that question. During the four-hour examination, students will have two- and one-half hours to write on a question(s) related to their major field, and one- and one-half hours to write on question(s) related to their minor field. If the exam is less than four hours, the time allotted for major and minor fields questions will be proportional to the ratio of 5:3 used for a four-hour exam. If the student fails a question, she or he must retake that part of the written exam within one semester. When the student has passed each part of the written exam, the committee chair will notify the student.

Students should work with their GAC to schedule a final oral examination in accordance with current Graduate School deadlines. The final oral examination may take up to two hours and build on the student's written examination and cover their Plan A thesis. At the end of the oral examination, the student's committee will excuse the student and then decide by majority vote if the student has failed or passed. A student who fails a portion of the written final examination, or who fails a final oral examination, may be required to take extra course work or to complete additional readings, as determined by the GAC. A second unsatisfactory performance may constitute grounds for academic probation or dismissal from the program.

A written as well as an oral final examination is required of all graduate students during the semester in which they apply for graduation. These examinations are designed to evaluate the student's historical knowledge in two fields, one major and one minor, at the end of her or his graduate program. Upon forming an M.A. Graduate Advisory Committee (GAC), the student will schedule a meeting with each committee member to determine the student's two examination fields and exam process. These fields will be based on reading seminars and readings completed in other history courses taken at Colorado State University and will be in World, Europe, U.S., and Public History. These fields will be broad, rigorous, and consistent with the highest standards of the history profession and will require substantial course work and reading in preparation. The student will master at least 30 books and scholarly articles in the major field. The student will master at least 15 books and scholarly articles in the minor field. The student and GAC together may devise study questions or other study methods that will help guide the student's preparation and that may form the basis of the final examinations.

When scheduling the final examinations, the student and her or his GAC must keep in mind [form and graduation deadlines](#). The student and GAC should schedule a sufficient interval between written and oral exams to allow students time to remedy weaknesses or failures in the written examinations (typically 1-2 weeks).

Immediately following successful completion of the oral examination, the student's GAC members will sign GS24 form attesting to satisfactory completion of the Master of Arts degree in history. The student and committee must submit GS24 form to the Graduate School according to the date stipulated on the form. At the conclusion of the final examination, the student must complete the GS24 form. All Graduate school forms and instructions are found on the Graduate School's [webpage for Forms](#).

Liberal Arts Plan B (non-thesis) and CRM/Historic Preservation Plan B Guidance for Body of Work Portfolio: As evidence of mastery of two fields of historical study, the fields' historiography, conducting historical research, and other attendant interdisciplinary and professional skills, a body of work portfolio is required of all graduate students on Plan B during the semester in which they apply for graduation. The fields of study will be based on reading seminars and readings completed in other history courses taken at Colorado State University and will be in World, Europe, U.S., and Public History. The fields will be broad, rigorous, and consistent with the highest standards of the history profession and will require substantial course work and reading outside of classes. The fields may also have thematic subfield expressions. Upon forming GAC, the student will schedule a meeting with each committee member to determine the student's two fields and any attendant thematic subfields, book lists for their historiographic essays, and body of work portfolio contents. The body of work portfolio contents will consist of sections for job or doctoral program application materials, historiographic essays, research products such as a thesis and research seminar papers, statements of professional practice, and any additional elements the student's GAC deems appropriate. The student will write two original scholarly historiographic essays of 15-20 pages on their fields and attendant subfields outside of their coursework. All other body of work portfolio elements can come from the student's coursework, projects, and internships.

Students will present and discuss their body of work portfolio with their GAC in an oral examination. Students should work with their GAC to schedule a final oral examination in accordance with current Graduate School deadlines. The final oral examination may take up to two hours and will be built on the material presented in the student's body of work portfolio. At the end of the oral examination, the student's committee will excuse the student and then decide by majority vote if the student has failed or passed. A student who fails a final oral examination may be required to take extra course work or to complete additional readings, as determined by the GAC. A second unsatisfactory performance may constitute grounds for academic probation or dismissal from the program.

When scheduling the final examinations, the student and her or his GAC must keep in mind [form and graduation deadlines](#). The student and GAC should schedule a sufficient interval between the submission of the body of work portfolio and the oral examination to evaluate the body of work portfolio, provide guidance to students for the oral examination, and allow students time to prepare for the oral examination (typically 1-2 weeks).

Immediately following successful completion of the Master of Arts in History oral examination, the student's GAC members will sign GS24 form attesting to satisfactory completion of the Master of Arts degree in History. The student and GAC must submit GS24 form to the Graduate School by the appropriate deadline to ensure a timely graduation. At the conclusion of the final examination, the student must complete the GS24 form. All Graduate school forms and instructions are found on the Graduate School's [webpage for Forms](#).

Language Requirement

Historical research and practice is increasingly transnational and often requires the use of multiple languages. Being able to at least read, if not speak, another language opens up a window onto other societies, cultures, and worldviews that cannot be gained by other means. A professional understanding of the broader social frame of other societies through language is part of the academic study of history and the engagement of diverse audiences in the public sphere. All graduate students should have some exposure to multiple languages, but students on the Master of Arts in History, Liberal Arts Plan A degree at Colorado State University are required to demonstrate reading knowledge of a foreign language appropriate for the student's historical studies.

Students on the Plan A Thesis track should work closely with their advisors to complete the foreign language requirement. For students with little experience in a language other than English, we suggest starting work on this requirement in the first semester at CSU, because language acquisition is a gradual process. This requirement may be fulfilled in one of the following ways:

1. A language exam. The language exam shall require the student to translate one or more passages of a primary historical document or secondary work of history from the selected language, totaling approximately 250 to 300 words, into English. The translation must be completed within one hour. The student's use of a print dictionary is permitted. The text to be translated may be chosen by a faculty member of the Department of History or the CSU Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures (LLC). The student is not permitted to participate in the selection of the text and will not be given the text before the exam. Students are strongly encouraged to contact the faculty member who will administer exam during their first year in the MA program. The faculty member and student may agree to a practice exam at any time to gauge the student's progress in the language, but the text will not be repeated on a later exam used to fulfill the requirement. Students who fail the exam may repeat it after waiting at least two weeks. Students who dispute a failing grade on the exam may appeal the grade to the History Department chair, who will select another faculty member from the History or LLC Departments to regrade the exam. Individual exemptions or modifications to this policy may be granted by the Graduate Studies Committee, subject to approval by the department chair, if circumstances warrant (e.g., due to faculty availability, the nature of the language included in the exam, student accommodations specified by the Student Disability Center, etc.).

2. Completion of a language course.

- A grade of B or better in a college language course at the second-year level (L 200 series) or above offered by the Colorado State University Department of LLC. Students must also earn a grade of B or better in any first-year level (L 100) courses taken at CSU to meet pre-requisites.
- A grade of B or better in an upper-division course offered by the Colorado State University Department of LLC on the culture and literature associated with the language selected (L 300, L 400 series). The work in this course must be primarily in the foreign language, not in English.
- A grade of B or better in a fourth semester (2nd year) college level language course at another academic institution.

Students should email the Graduate Studies Committee Chair upon completion of the translation or coursework to ensure the requirement is noted in the student file.