

**The University of  
North Carolina at Charlotte**

**History Department**

**2020-21 Graduate Student Handbook**

**Revised August 2020**

## Welcome to the History Department at the University of North Carolina, Charlotte!

We are very pleased to have you as one of our graduate students, and we hope that you are also excited to begin your studies with us. As starting a graduate program can be a little scary, we have prepared this handbook to help acquaint you with the requirements of the MA degree and the policies and procedures you will need to know as you navigate through the program.

For 2020-21, the faculty member in charge of the MA program, known as the Director of Graduate Studies, is Dr. Peter Thorsheim ([peter.thorsheim@uncc.edu](mailto:peter.thorsheim@uncc.edu)). The Interim Director of Public History for 2020-21 is Dr. Karen Cox ([kcox@uncc.edu](mailto:kcox@uncc.edu)).

In normal times, the hub of the History Department is 226 Garinger. There you will find Dr. Jurgen Buchenau, the Chair of the Department of History. He can be reached at [jbuchenau@uncc.edu](mailto:jbuchenau@uncc.edu). The office staff of the History Department—Ms. Linda Smith, Business Services Coordinator ([lsmith@uncc.edu](mailto:lsmith@uncc.edu)), and Ms. Gloria Davenport, Administrative Support Associate ([GDavenport@uncc.edu](mailto:GDavenport@uncc.edu)) are vital members of the Graduate Program team. Please introduce yourselves and get to know them. During the present crisis, the office has very limited hours; you should not assume that it will be open without making advance arrangements. If you are a graduate assistant, the key to your office will open the door that leads directly to the mailroom. Only one person is allowed inside at a time. While you are there, please leave the door ajar to signal that it is occupied, and lock it when you leave.

The department currently has 26 regular members of the graduate faculty (who can serve as thesis and exam committee chairs) and several other members who can serve in non-chairing roles on committees.

|               |                |   |                  |
|---------------|----------------|---|------------------|
| Andres        | Benny          | <a href="mailto:bandres@uncc.edu">bandres@uncc.edu</a>  | Regular          |
| Buchenau      | Jurgen         | <a href="mailto:Jbuchena@uncc.edu">Jbuchena@uncc.edu</a>  | Regular          |
| Cameron       | Christopher    | <a href="mailto:ccamer17@uncc.edu">ccamer17@uncc.edu</a>  | Regular          |
| Cox           | Karen          | <a href="mailto:kcox@uncc.edu">kcox@uncc.edu</a>  | Regular          |
| <i>Cozart</i> | <i>Daniel</i>  | <i><a href="mailto:dcozart1@uncc.edu">dcozart1@uncc.edu</a></i>                                     | <i>Associate</i> |
| Du            | Dan            | <a href="mailto:ddu2@uncc.edu">ddu2@uncc.edu</a>  | Regular          |
| Dupre         | Daniel         | <a href="mailto:ddupre@uncc.edu">ddupre@uncc.edu</a>  | Regular          |
| Edwards       | Erika          | <a href="mailto:eedwar27@uncc.edu">eedwar27@uncc.edu</a>  | Regular          |
| Ehlers        | Maren          | <a href="mailto:mehlers@uncc.edu">mehlers@uncc.edu</a>  | Regular          |
| Flint         | Karen          | <a href="mailto:kflint@uncc.edu">kflint@uncc.edu</a>  | Regular          |
| Fratantuono   | Ella           | <a href="mailto:efratant@uncc.edu">efratant@uncc.edu</a>  | Regular          |
| <i>Gibson</i> | <i>Shimon</i>  | <i><a href="mailto:S.Gibson@uncc.edu">S.Gibson@uncc.edu</a></i>                                     | <i>Associate</i> |
| Goldfield     | David          | <a href="mailto:drgoldfi@uncc.edu">drgoldfi@uncc.edu</a>  | Regular          |
| <i>Gray</i>   | <i>Stewart</i> | <i><a href="mailto:stewart.gray.preservation@gmail.com">stewart.gray.preservation@gmail.com</a></i> | <i>Associate</i> |
| Haynes        | Christine      | <a href="mailto:chaynes@uncc.edu">chaynes@uncc.edu</a>  | Regular          |
| <i>Higham</i> | <i>Carol</i>   | <i><a href="mailto:ahigham@uncc.edu">ahigham@uncc.edu</a></i>                                       | <i>Associate</i> |

|                   |               |                             |                  |
|-------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|------------------|
| <i>Hyland</i>     | <i>Steven</i> | <i>s.hyland@wingate.edu</i> | <i>Associate</i> |
| Johnson           | David         | dajohns1@uncc.edu           | Regular          |
| <i>Johnson</i>    | <i>Lyman</i>  | <i>ljohnson@uncc.edu</i>    | <i>Emeritus</i>  |
| Massino           | Jill          | jmassino@uncc.edu           | Regular          |
| <i>McEachnie</i>  | <i>Robert</i> | <i>rmceachn@uncc.edu</i>    | <i>Associate</i> |
| <i>McKinley</i>   | <i>Shep</i>   | <i>swmckinl@uncc.edu</i>    | <i>Associate</i> |
| Mixon             | Gregory       | gmixon@uncc.edu             | Regular          |
| <i>Morrill</i>    | <i>Dan</i>    | <i>dlmorril@uncc.edu</i>    | <i>Emeritus</i>  |
| Perry             | Heather       | hrperry@uncc.edu            | Regular          |
| Pipkin (Anderson) | Amanda        | apipkin@uncc.edu            | Regular          |
| Prasad            | Ritika        | rprasad2@uncc.edu           | Regular          |
| Ramsey            | Sonya         | sramse17@uncc.edu           | Regular          |
| Sabol             | Steven        | sosabol@uncc.edu            | Regular          |
| Shapiro           | Aaron         | ashapi10@uncc.edu           | Regular          |
| Shull             | Kristina      | kshull1@uncc.edu            | Regular          |
| <i>Smail</i>      | <i>John</i>   | <i>jsmail@uncc.edu</i>      | <i>Admin</i>     |
| Smith             | John David    | jdsmith4@uncc.edu           | Regular          |
| Soliz Urrutia     | Maria         | msolizur@uncc.edu           | Regular          |
| Thorsheim         | Peter         | pthorshe@uncc.edu           | Regular          |
| Wilson            | Mark          | mrwilson@uncc.edu           | Regular          |

For a look at some of our graduate faculty's most recent research projects and teaching interests, you can look at their profiles online (<http://history.uncc.edu/people/faculty>) or just introduce yourself and say hello. All faculty have posted office hours each semester or would be happy to make an appointment to meet with you. During the pandemic, email is by far the best way to contact both faculty and staff. Many are working from home, and virtually all meetings with them will have to occur over the phone or via Zoom.

The History Department faculty have their offices in the Garinger building, most on the second floor and some on the first. The History Department office is located in 226 Garinger. We look forward to seeing you in the halls and in our classrooms once it is safe to do so.

### **Degree Requirements**

To get the Master of Arts degree in History, you must complete one of the following sets of degree requirements, with an examination option, a thesis option, or a public history concentration. Students who take at least three courses (nine credits) per semester are considered full time; to be considered a half-time student, you must take at least 5 credits per semester. Graduate assistants must enroll in at least 6 credits per semester. You should check your progress each semester in [DegreeWorks](#), and you should contact the Director of Graduate Studies if you have any questions or notice a problem.

### **MA in History (examination option): 30 credit hours**

Required Courses (15 total hours)

- Three colloquia (9 hours)
- HIST 6693: Historiography and Methodology (3 hours)
- HIST 6694: Seminar in Historical Writing (3 hours)

Electives (12 total hours)

- At least 3 hours must be in 6000-level history courses
- No more than 9 hours of electives can be at the 5000-level, in independent study (HIST 6894) or outside the department of History (with no more than six hours of any one of these), in any combination

HIST 6698: Examination (3 hours)

At least 6 hours (two courses) must be in fields other than United States history

### **MA in History (thesis option): 30 credit hours**

Required Courses (15 total hours)

- Three colloquia (9 hours)
- HIST 6693: Historiography and Methodology (3 hours)
- HIST 6694: Seminar in Historical Writing (3 hours)

Electives (9 total hours)

- At least 3 hours must be in 6000-level history courses
- No more than 6 hours of electives can be at the 5000-level, in independent study (HIST 6894) or outside the department of History, in any combination

HIST 6699: Thesis (6 hours)

At least 6 hours (two courses) must be in fields other than United States history.

### **MA in History, Public History Concentration: 36 credit hours**

Required Courses (21 total hours)

- Two colloquia (6 hours)
- HIST 6693: Historiography and Methodology (3 hours)
- HIST 6694: Seminar in Historical Writing (3 hours)
- HIST 6330: History in the Digital Age
- HIST 6320: Historic Preservation
- HIST 6310: Museum Studies

Electives (9 total hours)

- At least 3 hours must be a Public History elective
- No more than 6 hours of electives can be at the 5000-level, in independent study (HIST 6894), or outside the department of History, in any combination

HIST 6400: Internship (3 hours)

HIST 6999: Thesis (3 hours)

NOTE: Unless a student is required to be away from campus for a semester or more for a competitive academic opportunity, such as study abroad or public history internship, no required course, particularly the Historiography and Writing seminars, may be waived.

### **Post-Baccalaureate or Transfer Courses**

If you took courses at UNCC as a post-baccalaureate student before applying to the MA program, you can count up to six hours of 5000 or 6000-level coursework in History towards your degree. The same applies to courses taken at another institution, provided they meet our standards. The Director of Graduate Studies will make that decision.

### **Grade Requirements**

All students must make “satisfactory progress” towards their degree. This means earning a grade of “A” or “B” in all of your courses. The “C” grade is not considered satisfactory in graduate work. The History Department requires that all MA students earn a grade of “B” or better in HIST 6693. Students who do not achieve this grade must repeat the course and earn at least a “B” in order to graduate.

In order to graduate, you must have a combined GPA of 3.0 or better. If you get three “C” grades or one “U” grade (the graduate equivalent of “D” or “F”), you will be automatically suspended from the program. If you are suspended, you will not be allowed to take courses.

If you are suspended due to poor grades, you can appeal the suspension, but such appeals are rarely granted. If you think you have a case, you should submit a “Suspension Appeal Form” to the Director of Graduate Studies. The department will review your appeal and make a recommendation to the Dean of the Graduate School about whether or not you should be allowed to continue in the MA program. You will be notified about this decision by the Dean of the Graduate School. If your request for reinstatement is rejected, you can appeal the decision (if you need details, ask the Director of Graduate Studies). If you are reinstated, you must get satisfactory grades in all of your courses. If you get another “C” or “U” grade, you will automatically be terminated from the program.

What Makes A Colloquium Different From a Seminar?

Definitions of Different Types of Courses

### **A. Colloquia (this is plural; the singular is colloquium!)**

These are reading/discussion courses that are designed to introduce graduate students to the most important scholarship in a given regional and temporal field of historical study. These courses are not meant to be comprehensive, but they examine a wide range of topics and show you what kinds of questions historians in that field find interesting. In most colloquia, students will read the equivalent of about a book a week. Written assignments in these courses generally consist of response papers / books reviews and/or several short (5-7 page) analytical essays based on assigned reading. Students should not write research papers in these courses, though they may begin to explore a topic of particular interest, for example in an annotated

bibliography. By taking three of these courses (two for Public History students), you will acquire the broad base of knowledge you will need before moving on to more specialized work.

The department offers six different colloquia: US History to 1865 (taught each fall semester); US History since 1865 (taught in the spring); Europe from the Enlightenment to the First World War (taught each fall); Europe in the Twentieth Century (taught each spring); Colonial Latin America (taught each fall); and Modern Latin America (taught each spring).

### **B. HIST 6693: Historiography and Methodology**

This course is required of all MA students. Students should take this course as soon as they have completed at least six hours of graduate-level history courses in our department. In this course, students learn about how historians write history. We explore different methods of research and analysis, reading examples of both theoretical texts and historical writing. As part of this course, you will begin to develop a research project of your own and draft a proposal (of approximately 15 pages) for a major paper, of article length (25-40 pages), if you are pursuing the exam option, or longer (of 50-75 pages), if you want to pursue the thesis option. By the end of the course, you should defend your proposal before a committee of three members of the graduate faculty (one of whom may be from outside the department), which will become your exam or thesis committee. Students who do not pass their thesis defense by the end of the semester in which they take HIST 6693 will automatically be shifted to the exam track and will lose the eligibility to graduate with a concentration in Public History.

### **C. HIST 6694: Seminar in Historical Writing**

This research course is required of all graduate students. It is taught each fall semester and sometimes in the spring. Students should expect to take this course upon completion of Historiography (History 6693). In the seminar, students will meet for the first few weeks to discuss common readings, but will then focus exclusively on their own independent research project in close consultation with their committee chair (i.e., their major exam field or thesis director). The course should culminate in a research paper or thesis chapter of between 25-40 pages (article length), based on original analysis of primary sources. During the semester, students will meet with their committee chair to discuss their work in progress. There will also be exchanges with the seminar instructor and classmates, but the major work will be done with the committee chair.

### **Electives**

Each semester, the department offers one or more 5000 or 6000 level topics courses, which count as electives. These courses examine a given theme across regional and/or temporal boundaries. Examples of themes might be nationalism, globalization, gender history, urban history, race and race relations, African Diaspora or environmental history. Relevant courses taken outside the History Department can also count as electives, subject to the permission of the department offering the specific course.

## **Independent Study Courses**

If no elective is offered in your area of interest and a member of the graduate faculty is agreeable, you may design an independent study course. Two options exist:

### **HIST 6894: Readings in History**

Used only in rare cases because of the extensive time it requires of the supervising faculty member, in this course the student meets regularly by arrangement with the faculty member to discuss a concentrated reading list of about a book a week and then develop a historiographical essay, annotated bibliography, or research paper (of at least 20 pages). You must secure an **Independent Study Form** from the History Graduate Studies website and in conjunction with the supervising instructor briefly outline the plan of study and final project. Both the faculty member and student must sign the form, and the student must send it via email to the Director of Graduate Studies to request authorization to register.

### **HIST 6901: Directed Readings/Research (in conjunction with undergraduate lecture course)**

If you see a 3000-level course taught by a member of the graduate faculty that interests you, you can ask the instructor for permission to use the course as the foundation for an independent study course under their supervision. You will attend the course and act as a full participant, and you will also do additional work as assigned by the faculty member to allow you to earn graduate credit for it. Note: You should not register for the undergraduate version of the course, because it would not count toward your degree. You must secure an **Independent Study Form** from the History Graduate Studies website and in conjunction with the supervising instructor briefly outline the plan of study and final project. Both the faculty member and student must sign the form, and the student must send it via email to the Director of Graduate Studies to request authorization to register.

## **Public History Sequence**

All students who want to graduate with the concentration in Public History must complete the following series of three courses that serve as an introduction to the discipline: History in the Digital Age (HIST 6330), Historic Preservation (HIST 6320), and Museum Studies (HIST 6310). The department will offer these courses every other year. For future course offerings, see <https://history.uncc.edu/graduate-studies/public-history/courses> Each course is on a different topic, so they need not be taken in any particular order. We encourage students who do not intend to complete the concentration in Public History to consider taking one or more of these courses as electives.

## **Public History Electives**

These courses tackle some area of Public History. Some examine fields of professional practice, like Preservation Law, Collections Management, Heritage Tourism or Documentary Editing. Others look at methodology, like Oral History or Print History. Any student can take these courses, but Public History students must take at least one of them. Also please consult with the Director of Public History and the Director of Graduate Studies for any elective courses you might pursue outside the History Department.

## Course of Study

**Full Time Students.** The course of study for full time students (both Public History and regular MA) is fairly set for the first year, as shown in the [Course of Study Grid](#). Required courses MUST be taken during the appropriate semester. For financial aid eligibility, graduate students must enroll in at least 9 credits per semester to be considered full-time, and 5 credit hours to be considered part-time. In addition, graduate assistants are required to take at least 6 credit hours per semester. The second year program is more individualized and depends on your own interests and degree requirements, except that each fall semester third-semester graduate students will be expected to enroll in the Writing Seminar. If you are on the thesis track, you should finish any required courses you have not yet completed (such as the third colloquium and the Writing Seminar), and then take those electives that will be most useful to you as you complete your thesis. You will also take 6 hours dedicated to thesis work. If you are on the comprehensive examination track you should finish any required courses you have not yet completed and then take those colloquia or electives that will most help you develop the broad field knowledge necessary for your exam. You will also take three hours of exam preparation. If you are a Public History student, you should finish any required courses you have not yet completed, including any remaining courses in the Public History sequence, and take additional electives, colloquia, or independent study to prepare for your Public History thesis. Use [DegreeWorks](#) to follow your progress and to see which course requirements remain. Also check in with the Director of Graduate Studies and your Faculty Advisor/Thesis Chair to discuss the specifics of your program.

**Part Time Students.** Part time students, as well as Early Entry students and those who begin in the spring, will need to work with the Director of Graduate Studies to determine a course of study that fits their needs. Two possible programs are shown below. Note: these are only examples and you might need to modify them depending on course availability and your own curricular needs. Part time students should be particularly attentive to the placement of Historiography (after completion of six hours in graduate history courses) and Writing Seminar (after completion of Historiography). The Writing Seminar must be completed prior to the semester in which you defend your thesis or take your comprehensive exam.

### How do I sign up for courses?

To enroll in all History graduate courses, you need to obtain advance authorization by responding to a survey that the Director of Graduate Studies will send via email prior to registration. After the DGS approves your request, staff in the office will issue your authorizations and confirm this via email. You can then register for these courses, provided that registration is open and a seat remains. Note: Receiving an authorization does NOT register you for a class or guarantee you a place in it; it merely means that you are allowed to register. This system, while somewhat cumbersome, is meant to protect you, so that the Director of Graduate Studies may check that your courses meet the program requirements and that no students from outside the program may take seats in our courses before our own students have had a chance to register.

To register for any independent work, you must fill out the form available in the “Forms” section of the History Graduate Studies website. This form must be signed by the supervising faculty member and the student and then given to the Director of Graduate Studies before you can receive authorization to sign up for these courses.

We try to issue authorizations within 48 hours after they are requested, but you should not always expect to get an immediate response, especially in the summer. To ensure yourself a space in the courses you want, you should try to register as early as possible. If you change your mind and drop a course (or decide not to register in the first place), please let the Director of Graduate Studies know.

### **Advising**

A faculty Advisor will be assigned to you upon entrance to the Program. Your faculty advisor will assist you in developing as a historian. The advisor will also work with you on planning your course of study, deciding on a thesis or comprehensive examination as your capstone project, and developing a thesis proposal. The faculty advisor may or may not become your thesis chair/comprehensive examination chair. Once you have chosen your own thesis or exam advisor, that person will become your academic advisor. As a mark of professional courtesy, please inform your original faculty advisor when this occurs.

For questions regarding courses, requirements, registration authorizations, and overall guidance about the overall program, you should consult with the Director of Graduate Studies.

Public History students should also feel free to contact the Director of Public History with any questions about Public History requirements, internships, or course offerings.

### **Grievances**

If you feel you have a serious and justified grievance of any sort with a faculty member in the department, you should consult with the Chair of the History Department, Dr. Jurgen Buchenau ([jbuchenau@uncc.edu](mailto:jbuchenau@uncc.edu)) about the issue.

### **Comprehensive Exams and Theses**

The culminating project for the History MA degree is either a comprehensive exam or a thesis. Each is described in detail below. Both involve you working closely with a committee of members of the graduate faculty. As a guide to the process, please review the [Best Practices Guide](#) on the History Graduate Studies website.

#### **What is a comprehensive exam and why should I take it?**

The exam is useful for people who want to gain broad expertise rather than concentrate on a very specific subject in the way a thesis project requires. The exam is generally the best option for students who are or plan to become high school or community college teachers, for example, or are pursuing the MA for enrichment purposes.

The Comprehensive Examination will test your knowledge of the existing historical literature in three fields (one major field and two minor fields). Each field is supervised by a different faculty member and has its own separate written examination consisting of one to three essay questions per examiner. You will have three hours for the written exam in your major field and two or three hours for each of the minor fields. You are free to consult your notes while taking the exams; the essays that you submit to Canvas will be subject to screening for the prevention and detection of plagiarism. You must take all three of your written exams within the space of one week, which means that you should plan carefully your schedule of exams. After you have completed all three exams, each committee member will read the exam in their area of expertise. You will then meet with your entire exam committee for an oral defense of your written answers one week after completing the written examination. The comprehensive examination defense should last about an hour. To the comprehensive examination defense, be sure to bring the required forms described at the bottom of this section.

An exam field is a broad area of historical research. It can be defined thematically, regionally, and/or temporally. Some examples include: modern European gender history, American military history, Soviet history, the New South, nationalism, modern China, the Second World War and its aftermath, labor in modern America, the Progressive Era, the Habsburg Empire from 1848-1918, African Americans in a specific time period or a specific event/theme such as lynching or gender. For each field, you will develop a reading list in consultation with the supervising faculty member. For the major field, the lists will consist of approximately 20 books or the equivalent (you can substitute 5-6 articles for a book). The two minor field committee members will each assign you about 10 books or the equivalent, not to exceed 14 books. You should choose exam fields that build on your knowledge from the courses you have already taken. The exam is not the place to study something completely new to you, but a chance to deepen, expand, and reflect on your existing knowledge.

Once you have chosen your exam fields and committee members (by the end of the Historiography Seminar or, at the latest, during the Writing Seminar), you should draw up a reading list for each field, in conjunction with the committee member supervising that field. Copies of these lists should be given to all committee members, as well as to the Director of Graduate Studies. As you prepare for the exam, you should plan to meet at least once or twice (more, if you have not yet had a course or independent study with the faculty member) with each committee member, to discuss the readings and hypothetical exam questions. It is up to you to schedule these meetings.

It is also up to you, in conjunction with the members of your committee, to schedule each written exam and the oral defense. You or your committee chair will need to reserve a room for your defense by contacting the office staff.

Required forms for the Comprehensive Examination

Before you can register for the three hours of exam preparation, you must have your Comprehensive Examination Committee members sign the Comprehensive Examination check-

sheet (available on the History Graduate Studies website) and give it to the Director of Graduate Studies.

After you have taken your Comprehensive Examination, you must inform the Graduate School that your exam has been successfully completed by submitting the Report of Exam or Thesis form, signed by all members of the committee, to the Director of Graduate Studies, who will sign it and forward it to the Graduate School. This form is available at the UNC Charlotte Graduate School website. In addition, your major field advisor must inform the Director of Graduate Studies of the grade to report for your exam hours. Remind them that they need to do this.

Note: additional forms beyond those necessary for the exam are needed to graduate. See the section on “Forms for Graduation” for details.

### **What is a thesis and why should I write one?**

A thesis is your chance to write history on your own, based on primary source research. A thesis is not just a retelling of what other historians have said, but adds something new to the state of historical knowledge. You might research something no one else has written about, or provide an entirely new interpretation of an event or process. Writing a thesis gives you the opportunity to experience how professional historians work. Any student thinking of pursuing a PhD in history should plan on writing a thesis, since this is good preparation for doctoral work. Students who do the Comprehensive Examination are not precluded from advancing to doctoral level work, but writing a thesis is helpful in preparing a student for the dissertation process and in producing a writing sample for the application to Ph.D. programs.

There is no typical master’s thesis because individual projects can vary a great deal (see <https://history.uncc.edu/graduate-studies/recent-theses>). You can see past History MA theses on the bookshelves in the department and download electronic versions from the library. Theses typically range between 50 and 100 pages; students should consult with their chairs to learn their expectations. One thing you need to remember when thinking about potential thesis topics is the availability of sources. Your thesis must be based on your own research. This means you must pick a topic for which sources are available locally or with feasible travel, and the material must be in a language that you can read. Students who want to write theses that involve languages other than English should be careful to consider how they will acquire the necessary language skills if they do not have them already. If this applies to you, you should begin or continue language training as soon as possible.

### **The Thesis Committee**

You do not write a thesis on your own. You will choose a thesis committee chair to guide you through the process. The person you choose must be a regular (not associate) member of the History graduate faculty whose research interests are closest to your own. It should not simply be the faculty member you know best. The most important factor here is their area of expertise. It does not matter if you have taken a class with this person. Simply contact them, explain your ideas, and ask for their help.

Your thesis chair will help you define your research questions, point you to useful primary and secondary sources, push you to analyze the results of your research more critically, and read drafts of your chapters as you write them. Every faculty member has a different style, so your thesis chair may not operate in the exact same way as your friend's chair.

Once you have found a thesis chair, this person will help you choose two other graduate faculty members to be on your thesis committee. This committee should be finalized by the end of the historiography course, when you will defend your thesis proposal. At the proposal defense, the committee will decide whether you may proceed with the thesis project.

Your thesis committee will also read and comment on your thesis and help decide your final grade. One of these readers can come from outside the History Department. The first reader will typically read drafts of the chapters as they are written, while the second reader will usually only read the final version before your thesis defense if that is the arrangement that faculty member makes with you and the thesis advisor. Some second readers will want to be involved in reading the thesis chapters from the first draft onward to completion of the project. Again, you should meet with all of your readers to clarify what they expect of you and how extensive they want their involvement to be.

### **The Thesis Process**

Pursuit of a Master's Degree in History also requires submitting several forms (in bold below) in a timely fashion. It is your responsibility to make sure that this is done. All forms are available in the department office and on the Graduate Studies section of the website.

### **Thesis Proposal**

You will write a first draft of this proposal (of about 15 pages) in your Historiography class, but your thesis chair may have their own requirements and may ask you to substantially alter what you have done in class. When the final version is ready, it should clearly state the issues or questions you want to examine. The final draft of the thesis proposal also explains how you will go about researching the primary questions, identifying the kinds of sources to be used, and where the materials are located. This document should additionally situate your project in the appropriate historiography. When these standards are met and your thesis chair agrees that you are ready to defend the thesis proposal, you should give it to all the members of your thesis committee.

### **Proposal Defense**

After your three-person thesis committee reads your proposal, you will meet with them for about an hour to discuss your project. This is your proposal defense. At the end of that hour your committee will decide whether your proposed project is viable. If you have been granted permission to write a thesis, you must ask your committee to sign two forms: **Appointment of Master's Thesis Committee, and Proposal Defense Report** (both forms are available at <https://graduateschool.uncc.edu/current-students/forms>). After you and your committee have filled out and signed these forms, you should ask your committee chair to send them to the

Director of Graduate Studies, who will sign them and forward them to the Graduate School. You should check [DegreeWorks](#) a week after your proposal defense. If it doesn't indicate that you have passed your proposal defense, please inform the Director of Graduate Studies.

Oral history projects no longer require approval by the university's Institutional Review Board (see <https://research.uncc.edu/departments/office-research-protections-and-integrity-orpi/human-subjects/guidelines-research>), but as they must involve informed consent and follow the principles and practices developed by the Oral History Association (see <https://www.oralhistory.org/about/principles-and-practices-revised-2009/>).

### **Research and Writing.**

You should register for 3 to 6 hours of thesis credit while you are researching and writing your thesis. You can take all 6 hours in one semester or split it over two semesters.

The research for a thesis project is not something you can do in a few weeks. It will take many months to find, read, digest and analyze your sources. Typically, the first step is gaining a deep familiarity with the secondary literature on your topic. Once you have this background, you will need to dig for your own primary sources. This might involve traveling to an archive and reading through months or years of a newspaper or periodical. You should remember that even finding or getting your sources can take time, especially if you need to travel or order them through Interlibrary Loan.

Writing the thesis is also a long process. Thoughts are not usually as easy to put on paper as you wish, and your ideas will develop and change as you write. You will definitely need to write multiple drafts of each chapter, so make sure to leave enough time to write, get feedback, rewrite, get more feedback and then perhaps rewrite again. Some people like to do most of their research and then start writing, others prefer to research and write each chapter in turn. How you proceed is really up to you and your thesis chair. However you choose to do it, you should come up with a reasonable schedule very early on (right after your proposal defense if not before) that has due dates for first and second drafts of each chapter. Stick to your schedule and you will be fine!

### **The Thesis Defense**

When your thesis is complete, you will "defend" it before your committee. You are responsible for setting the defense date and time with your committee. To graduate in a given semester, you must defend your thesis and submit it by the posted deadlines (see <https://registrar.uncc.edu/printable-calendar>). You should be sure to give your completed thesis to your committee members at least 14 days before the defense date (they have to read it, remember). Your defense will take approximately an hour. During the defense, your committee will ask you questions about your thesis and its larger significance. Although you might be required to make some minor revisions after the defense, you will know whether or not you passed (with a grade of A or B) immediately after it is over.

Before you can graduate, you and your thesis committee must sign three documents: 1) your thesis title page, 2) the Final Defense Report (<https://graduateschool.uncc.edu/current-students/forms>), and the Dissertation/Thesis Submission & ETD Form (<https://graduateschool.uncc.edu/current-students/forms>). It is your responsibility to ensure that all three documents are emailed as PDFs to the Director of Graduate Studies for signature and forwarding to the Graduate School at the conclusion of your defense, regardless of whether you will be making any additional corrections before submitting your thesis. In addition, your thesis chair must inform the Director of Graduate Studies of the grade to report for your thesis hours. Remind them that they need to do this.

### **Submitting your Thesis**

The Graduate School requires all theses to be in a specific format and has a number of procedures with which all students must comply. For details, see <https://graduateschool.uncc.edu/current-students/thesis-and-dissertation>. One of their requirements is that each student set up a formal preliminary review of their thesis by the Graduate School to address formatting issues. This review should occur as early as possible prior to the thesis defense but must be completed by the posted deadline, usually two to three weeks before the end of the semester.

### **Public History Thesis/Internship**

All students in the Public History concentration are required to complete a master's thesis. In addition to writing a slightly shorter thesis, students will develop a public history project in conjunction with their thesis topic. Students may develop a historic preservation project, an exhibit for a museum or historic site, a website or online resource for an organization, or a documentary film (though students are not limited to these choices). This project, which must be made available to the public, provides students with valuable experience in the practical application of scholarship, and prepares them to better serve the general public as they interpret that knowledge for a broad audience. For more details on both thesis and internship, contact the Director of Public History.

Despite the differences in their thesis project, Public History students still need to follow the basic steps above, including the thesis proposal defense, research and writing, thesis defense, and completing all of the same forms and meeting all of the same deadlines for submitting their thesis.

### **How do I know what is going on in the department?**

We often rely on email to communicate essential information to students. As a rule, we send messages to your UNCC email account (@uncc.edu). The Graduate School also sends messages to this account. You cannot expect faculty to keep track of whatever other email addresses you have. Therefore, you MUST make sure to check your UNCC email frequently (or set it to automatically forward messages to another account). We are not responsible if you miss deadlines, meetings, or anything else because you did not check your email in time. If you wish to share information of a professional nature, like announcing meetings, conferences, and so on, please forward it to the Director of Graduate Studies for posting on the GHA Google Group,

which will then appear in your email inbox. Past messages that you may have deleted can be found at <https://groups.google.com/u/1/a/uncc.edu/g/GHA-L-group>

### **The Graduate History Association**

All graduate students in the Master's Program in History are expected to become members of the Graduate History Association (GHA). It is a professional obligation that you need to take seriously as an active member. Membership requires paying annual dues that allow participation in GHA sponsored events and the Graduate and Professional Student Government (GPSG). The GHA sponsors a number of professional development events throughout the year, including workshops, panel discussions, meetings with professionals, and social gatherings, with and without faculty members. The GHA website is: <https://history.uncc.edu/graduate-studies/graduate-history-association-gha>. You can reach the officers of the GHA by sending email to [GHA@uncc.edu](mailto:GHA@uncc.edu).

The GHA's largest project each year is to organize a graduate student history conference, the Graduate History Forum. The Forum has been a proud tradition at UNCC for many years and has achieved wide recognition, attracting student presenters from across the country. It is a mark of distinction for our students to run such a longstanding and well-regarded conference. At the Forum, UNCC students join with their peers from other institutions to present their original research in a collegial and constructive atmosphere. UNCC faculty serve as panel discussants, and it includes addresses by one professor from our department and a distinguished scholar from another institution. The Forum usually takes place early in the spring semester. All UNCC History MA students should plan on presenting a paper at the Forum at least once during their graduate career.

### **Graduate Assistantships and Other Employment**

The History Department currently manages sixteen graduate assistantships, both TA (Teaching Assistant) and RA (Research Assistant) positions. All graduate assistants are required to be registered as full time students (six hours) and must maintain a GPA of at least 3.0. You must agree not to take additional paid employment while you are a graduate assistant. All graduate assistants in the department are required belong to the GHA and are expected to take part in its meetings and events.

Most assistantships are awarded during the admission process for fall applicants who apply by the priority deadline of Feb. 1. Assistantships are generally awarded for two academic years (assuming satisfactory academic and professional work), although we will occasionally have a vacancy, in which case we will issue a call for applications from current students. Assistantships occasionally become available in other units on campus. To search for them and for other employment, go to <https://hireaniner.uncc.edu/> The responsibilities of graduate assistants vary according to the needs of the faculty member to whom they are assigned. Generally, a TA will be expected to attend all class sessions and have excellent mastery of the course material, hold office hours and advise students on their coursework, assist with grading quizzes, papers and exams, and lead discussion sessions or exam preparation workshops.

**Time to Degree**

Full time students should be able to complete their program in two years. Taking longer to finish is fine, although you should keep a few things in mind when planning your program. First, the Graduate School requires that all coursework for an MA be completed within six years. Coursework from more than six years before graduation must either be retaken or revalidated (this means you need to show you still have some familiarity with the material, like retaking an exam or writing a paper reviewing the literature). This includes courses taken as a post-baccalaureate student at UNCC and courses transferred from elsewhere. Second, you must be formally registered in the semester in which you graduate.

**Leaves of Absence**

You must enroll in at least one course each fall and spring to remain in the graduate program, unless you have been granted a leave of absence. Leaves of absence are generally granted for a period of up to one year. To request a leave of absence, go to <https://academicpetition.uncc.edu/> NOTE: If you do not apply for a leave of absence, or if more than 12 consecutive months elapse without you being enrolled, you will be required to reapply for admission to the Graduate School before you can register for classes again.

The university requires that you be registered during the semester in which you graduate, and that you apply to graduate early that semester, at <https://academicpetition.uncc.edu/>. See <https://registrar.uncc.edu/printable-calendar> for the deadline.