

The Doctoral Program in
THE HISTORY OF
THE AMERICAN WEST

College of Liberal Arts, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

The Department of History at UNLV has offered the Master of Arts degree since 1968 and, in 1991, inaugurated a program leading to the Doctor of Philosophy degree. Our graduates have gone on to careers in teaching, business, law, administration, professional writing, museum work and government service. Graduate degrees from UNLV have been especially helpful to those pursuing teaching careers in four-year colleges and universities, community colleges and secondary schools, and to those pursuing careers in Public History. The History faculty, which includes nationally and internationally recognized scholars, offers a wide range of topical and geographical courses. At the same time, the faculty is dedicated to providing each student with the individual attention necessary for a rewarding graduate experience.

History Department
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Las Vegas NV 89154-5020
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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PH.D.) PROGRAM

The History Department's doctoral program, initiated in 1991, embodies the ultimate expression of the Department's mission -- to generate and disseminate new knowledge through research, reflection and publication. The program trains students to teach and write history at a professional level. The doctoral program is limited to work in two areas: the history of the American West and the cultural and intellectual history of Europe and the United States. The commitment of UNLV to academic excellence and the cultural crucible of Las Vegas provide an ideal setting for rigorous interdisciplinary work in both the history of the American West and cultural and intellectual history.

Doctoral students take a specialized course of study in preparation for comprehensive exams in geographical, chronological and/or topical fields to assure a firm grounding in broad contexts and to cultivate expertise in specialized areas. The culmination of the degree is the dissertation: a major written contribution to the field of history based on original research, worthy of publication.

Courses are a mixture of colloquia (courses devoted to mastering the historical literature in particular fields) and seminars (courses dedicated to research work and writing) along with courses in historiography (the history of historical writing), historical methods and independent study. Students are encouraged to develop a course plan that reflects the interdisciplinary strength of the faculty

The doctoral program trains graduates to think analytically about the past, conduct original research and to convey their knowledge through clear, professional prose. The doctoral program qualifies graduates for employment in four-year colleges and universities, community colleges, secondary schools, and in a variety of other institutional settings.

Thirty students are currently enrolled in the Ph.D. program. The Department generally admits four to five new doctoral students per year.

Students in the doctoral program are eligible to apply for graduate assistantships and opportunities for part-time teaching in the University and Community College System of Nevada on a competitive basis. The Department also supports graduate student research and professional development with a competitive grants program. In addition, the Graduate College offers summer research funding on a competitive basis.

DOCTORAL PROGRAM IN THE HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN WEST

Located in the fastest-growing city in the nation, the UNLV History Department offers a broad range of opportunities for doctoral students seeking to pursue Western history in all its forms.

A core of five faculty specialists in Western history has helped UNLV emerge as a dynamic and rising program in the field. With specialists in tourism, post-industrial society, environmental history, Native American history, the Latino/a experience, historiography, cultural and intellectual history, regionalism, and public history, the core faculty collectively provides both depth and breadth in its coverage of the field, encourages the study of diverse cultures, and interdisciplinary work in Western history. UNLV's Western historians have won teaching and research awards both regionally and nationally, participate and lead in professional organizations, and are widely recognized as outstanding scholars and teachers by their peers. In addition, other members of the Department contribute expertise in women's, Asian-American, African-American, labor, religious, and urban history to the program.

Las Vegas is at the center of the New West, and the Western history program at UNLV capitalizes on themes related to its prominence. Revealing almost every dimension of the twentieth-century West, from Indian reservations to Yucca Mountain and the Nevada Test Site, the greater Las Vegas area provides countless opportunities to engage in historical research.

UNLV's Lied Library has developed a collection of primary sources offering rich scholarly opportunities. It contains an enormous collection of microfilm including Native American records, Spanish-language newspapers, and documents of key agencies, such as the Bureau of Reclamation and the National Park Service. Special Collections in Lied Library houses a vast collection of materials on Las Vegas and Nevada history.

CORE WESTERN HISTORY FACULTY MEMBERS

M. Raquel Casas (Yale, 1998), Latino/a history
Andrew Kirk (New Mexico, 1998), public history, environmental history
David M. Wrobel (Ohio, 1991), intellectual and cultural history, historiography,
regionalism

AFFILIATED FACULTY MEMBERS

Sue Fawn Chung (Berkeley, 1975), Asian-American history
Jay Coughtry (Wisconsin, 1978), labor history
Joanne Goodwin (Michigan, 1991), women's history
David Holland (Stanford, 2005), religious history
Eugene P. Moehring (CUNY, 1976), urban history

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Students must meet the following minimal requirements for admission to graduate standing:

1. B.A. or equivalent from an accredited institution with a minimum GPA of 3.00, with at least a 3.30 in history courses, or an M.A. or equivalent from an accredited institution with a minimum GPA of 3.50. Applicants must have completed significant course work at the upper-division or graduate level in American History (preferably the American West).
2. Competitive scores on verbal, quantitative and analytical measures of the Graduate Record Examination.
3. Recommendations from three former instructors addressing the applicant's preparedness for doctoral level work in the history of the American West.
4. A statement of purpose in which the applicant describes specific interests in and approaches to the history of the American West. The statement should also include a description of the applicant's background and training for advanced work in this field as well as academic and professional goals.
5. A writing sample in the form of a master's thesis or original research paper of substantial length and quality. If possible, the writing sample should address the history of the American West.

Please note that meeting these minimum requirements does not guarantee admission into the program. Decisions on admission are based on a number of factors including: strength of undergraduate and graduate GPA, letters of recommendation, writing sample, and statement of purpose, and concordance of student areas of interest and areas of faculty expertise. Decisions on admission into the PhD program are made by the Graduate Committee. Applications are accepted for fall only, and are due on February 1.

The application fee should be paid to the Graduate College and submitted with the application cover page. Transcripts should also be sent to the Graduate College:

Graduate College
University of Nevada Las Vegas
4505 Maryland Parkway, Box 451017
Las Vegas, Nevada 89154-1017

The application form can also be submitted online via the Graduate College web page:
<http://graduatecollege.unlv.edu/>

All other application materials: letters of recommendation, statement of purpose, and writing sample, should be sent to the History Department and should be addressed to:

Graduate Admissions
Department of History
University of Nevada Las Vegas
4505 Maryland Parkway, Box 455020
Las Vegas, Nevada 89154-5020

Materials can also be submitted in person to the History Department, Wright Hall, B329.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

1. A minimum of 56 credits of coursework beyond the B.A. or 38 credits beyond the M.A. in History or closely related disciplines.*

*For students entering the program prior to 2005, the minimum number of credits of coursework is 54 beyond the BA and 36 beyond the MA

2. For all students in the program, credits must be distributed as follows:

A. Minimum of nine credits of colloquium (HIST 724, 726, 728, 730, or 732), three credits of which must be in the non-U.S. field.

B. Minimum of eight credits of seminar (725, 727, 729, 731, or 733).

C. Minimum of nine credits of historiography (including 740f: American West; 740a: United States: Domestic; and 740g: United States Cultural/Intellectual, or 740h: European Cultural/Intellectual).

D. Minimum of twelve credits of work in an appropriate academic discipline/s other than history, and/or in a non-US field of history, or a 12-credit hour minor field in Public History.

3. Satisfaction of the foreign language requirement. This requirement can be met in any of the following three ways, though the chosen option must be approved by the chair of the student's examination committee:

I. Demonstrated reading knowledge of two foreign languages.

II. Demonstrated reading knowledge of one foreign language and the successful completion of SOC 604.

III. Demonstrated reading knowledge of one foreign language and advanced reading knowledge of the same language, assessed through the writing of a substantial historiographical essay in English based on scholarly literature in that foreign language.

4. Satisfactory performance on written and oral qualifying examinations. Students are examined in four required fields.

Students write on a total of five essay questions chosen from ten:

I. Major Field: American West. Students write on two of four questions (five hours).

II. Topical Field in U.S. History other than the American West. Students write on two of four questions (five hours).

III. Theory and Methods in American Western History. Students write on one of two questions (two and a half hours).

IV. Minor Field outside U.S. History, or Public History (oral exam only).

The oral examination must be scheduled within three weeks of notification of successful completion of the written examinations. Students are examined in all four fields during the oral examination.

Students who entered the program prior to 2005 have the option of taking examinations under the old structure. However, all students are strongly encouraged to take examinations under the new format.

Pre-2005 Examination Structure

- I. Major Field: American West. Students write on two of four questions (five hours).
 - II. Topical Field in U.S. History other than the American West. Students write on two of four questions (five hours).
 - III Regional Field outside U.S. History, or Public History (oral exam only). Students write on a total of four of eight essay questions.
5. A dissertation of substantial length and quality containing original research and interpretation on a topic in the Cultural and/or Intellectual History of Europe and/or the United States. The student must take a minimum of twelve dissertation credits.
 6. An oral defense of the dissertation.
 7. A total of at least 68 credits (including dissertation hours) beyond the B.A. or at least 50 credits (including dissertation hours) beyond the M.A.**
- **For students entering the program prior to fall 2005, the minimum number of total credits (including 12 dissertation credits) is 66 beyond the MA and 48 beyond the MA.

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

1. FIELDS OF STUDY

- I. **THE MAJOR FIELD:** Students master American Western History through a mixture of coursework and independent reading
- II. **TOPICAL FIELD:** Students master a topical US field that complements their particular area/s of interest within the Major Field. Topical fields could include (but are not limited to): US to 1877; US from 1877-present, cultural and/or intellectual history, diplomatic, gender and/or women's history legal, religion, the South, and Urban
- III. **THEORY AND METHODS.** Students master the theoretical and methodological foundations of American western history.
- IV. **MINOR FIELD:** choose a topical minor field in a geographical area other than the US (i.e., in Asia, Europe, Latin America), or in Public History.

2. COURSES

Students design their program, including the choice of courses, in consultation with their advisor. In the first year of coursework, students are advised by the Graduate Coordinator. Courses prepare students for qualifying examinations. Thus, students should take as many courses as possible with the members of the examination committee. Students are also strongly encouraged to take courses at the 700-level.

3. THE ADVISOR (COMMITTEE CHAIR)

The department chair will appoint a core western historian to advise an entering student. This will be done strictly on a rotating basis. Students in their first year of coursework are also advised by the Graduate Coordinator. At the end of the first year of doctoral work, the student selects a western historian as a permanent advisor. This advisor chairs the examination and dissertation committees. The chair is responsible for coordinating the activities of the examination and dissertation committees (including all scheduling and preparing of examinations and distributing of the dissertation). The student's entire graduate program is a product of discussion between student and advisor. A student should consult regularly with the advisor on all aspects of the program in order to achieve coherence and quality.

4. THE EXAMINATION COMMITTEE

By the end of the second semester of doctoral work, the student selects the other members of the examination committee in consultation with the permanent advisor. The composition of the committee must be approved by the department's graduate committee and by the department chair. Each faculty member of the examination committee sets a qualifying exam in one of the student's examination fields.

5. FOREIGN LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT

A student meets the foreign language requirement either by passing examinations in two foreign languages, by passing an examination in one foreign language and writing a substantial historiographical essay in English based on historical literature in the same foreign language, or by passing an examination in one foreign language and completing SOC 604 (Statistical Methods). In lieu of the foreign language examination, students may take a special graduate reading language course/s and earn a grade/s no lower than a straight "B."

Students cannot advance to candidacy until the foreign language requirement has been met.

6. QUALIFYING EXAMINATIONS.

In order to qualify as candidates for the doctoral degree, students must pass examinations in their chosen fields. The examinations aim to assess the student's mastery of the history and historiography of the fields.

7. BIBLIOGRAPHIES.

In preparation for the Qualifying Examinations students are required to prepare bibliographies for each of their four fields of study. These bibliographies are to be constructed in consultation with the major professor in each field and should contain approximately 100 books (or equivalent) per examination field. The bibliographies should both draw on and build upon course readings. A copy of each bibliography is placed in the student's file when the dates for the written examinations are set. These bibliographies are thus available for all members of the examination committee to review.

8. THE DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

During the second year of coursework the student must put together a Dissertation Committee. This committee may be the same as the Examination Committee, or may include one or more faculty members who are not on the Examination Committee. For example, if the student's dissertation does not draw in any significant way on their work in the Minor Field, then the student might wish to include another faculty member in the Major Field on the committee.

9. THE DISSERTATION PROSPECTUS

Students are required to file two prospectus documents

- I. A Short Prospectus (2 pages), submitted to the Graduate College prior to registering for HIST 791, dissertation credits.
- II. A Long Prospectus (at least 10 pages) to the members of the Dissertation Committee at the beginning of the first semester in which HIST 791, dissertation credits are taken.
 - The Long Prospectus should do the following:
 - i. Define the scope of the project
 - ii. Discuss the broader historiographical context
 - iii. Identify the research materials for the project
 - iv. Comment on the project's contribution to the scholarship in the field
 - v. Outline a tentative chapter structure for the project

A formal Dissertation Prospectus Discussion, including the students and all members of the Dissertation Committee, should be scheduled in the first month of the first semester that HISTa 791, dissertation credits are taken.

10. DISSERTATION

After completing all coursework, the student must register for three dissertation credits each regular semester until graduation. A student may not graduate until a minimum of 12 dissertation credits have been completed.

11. THE GRADUATE CATALOG

Students are responsible for familiarity with the requirements, procedures, and policies of the Graduate College, recorded in the Graduate Catalog, and for meeting all deadlines for forms and fee payments. Students can be automatically reminded of all deadlines through subscription to Gradlink. Using your UNLV email address, send an email to listproc@nevada.edu

- Make sure to leave the SUBJECT LINE blank
- Go to the main text area and type:

Subscribe GradLink <first name, last name>

Example: Subscribe GradLink Jane Doe

- Send the message. You will receive an email indicating that your subscription request has been forwarded to the Graduate College for approval.
- Once approved, you will receive an email confirming your subscription to GradLink.

12. GRADES

Any grade below a B- will not be accepted for graduate credit but will be included in the student's GPA. A minimum GPA of 3.0 must be maintained in graduate work applicable toward the degree.

In accordance with the Graduate College Grading System (see the UNLV Graduate Catalog) the Department interprets letter grades at the graduate level as follows:

“A” represents excellent work

“B” indicates minimally satisfactory performance

“C” suggests work below minimum graduate standards.

Pluses and minuses should be interpreted accordingly.

The Department assumes that students should regularly perform at or near the A level on the grading scale. Students whose GPA falls below 3.0 following the completion of 12 credits in History courses may be placed on probation or separated from the program. Normally probation will be reserved for short-term contingences or problems such as an extended illness, personal problems, or personality conflict with an instructor. By contrast, separation will be recommended for serious or continuing academic problems or deficiencies deemed irremediable. In addition, students who receive one grade below a B- will automatically be placed on probation; students who receive two grades below a B- will normally be separated from the program.

13. CONTINUOUS ENROLLMENT

In a calendar year, a student must complete at least six credits in course or thesis work applicable to the History degree program. A student who does not plan to do so must request approval for a leave of absence from the History Department. Upon returning, the student must file an Application for Registration for a Former Student Returning.

14. OVERLOAD

A student wishing to take more than 13 credit hours (or 10 credit hours if the student is a graduate assistant) in a regular semester, or more than six credits in one five-week summer session or twelve credits in two, must file an Authorization for Overload with the Graduate College. Overloads are strongly discouraged by the Graduate Committee.

15. ANNUAL EVALUATION

The History Department's Graduate Committee conducts an annual evaluation of all graduate students by examining their student files. While the Graduate College requires all students to complete a minimum of six credits each calendar year, the Department

expects all students to make continuous progress toward their degree. The cases of any students whose satisfactory progress is in doubt are forwarded by the Graduate Committee to the student's Advisory Committee and to the Department as a whole for a decision. Students are then notified as necessary of any Departmental decisions with respect to their cases.

16. FORMS AND DEADLINES

The student and student's advisor are responsible for the paper work required by the Graduate College.

The Appointment of Examination Committee and the Proposed Graduate Degree Program forms must be submitted after the completion of 12 credits. All changes in the composition of the committee must be approved by the Graduate Committee.

Any change in a student's Proposed Graduate Degree Program (including thesis topic) must be filed on the Change in Proposed Degree Program. Changes in committee members are made by a memo to the Graduate College, copied to the Department; however, a change in committee chair requires the submission of a new Appointment of Examination Committee form.

The Notification of Oral or Written Examination form must be submitted each time an examination is scheduled.

The Advancement to Candidacy for the Doctoral Degree form is submitted to the Graduate College after all course work (except dissertation credits) in the approved program has been completed, the qualifying exams have been passed and the Dissertation Prospectus has been approved and submitted to the Graduate College.

17. SUMMARY OF GRADUATE PROCEDURES AND DEADLINES**

What To Do	Deadline
Applying for Admission	
Submit application and supporting documents to The History Department and Graduate College Ph.D. admits only for the fall semester	February 1
If applying for Graduate Assistantship	February 1

After Admission

Confer with Graduate Advisor	ASAP and regularly
Choose a permanent advisor	After completion of 12 credits
Choose exam committee and submit Appointment of Examination Committee and Proposed Graduate Degree Program forms	After completion of 12 credits
Choose a Dissertation Committee and submit Appointment of Dissertation Committee form	During second year of coursework

Completing the Program

Submit first draft of bibliographies to committee and schedule written and oral exams	Four months prior to comprehensive exams
Submit final draft of bibliographies to committee	When exams are scheduled
Pass written and oral comprehensive exams	Prior to registering for dissertation credits
Complete foreign language requirement	Prior to registering for dissertation credits
Submit Short Dissertation Prospectus to Graduate College	Prior to registering for dissertation credits
Submit Long Dissertation Prospectus to Dissertation Committee and schedule Dissertation Prospectus Discussion	Within the first month of the first semester when dissertation credits are taken
Submit Final Dissertation draft to committee	At least three months before planned graduation date (a reasonable period?)
Apply for graduation and pay fee	See class schedule
Schedule Dissertation Defense (notify Graduate College)	At least one month before Defense

Submit final dissertation version to committee

At least two weeks before Defense

Pass Dissertation Defense

At least three weeks prior to end of semester of graduation

Deposit Dissertation with Graduate College

**Please note that this is not an exhaustive list. Please consult the Graduate Catalog early and often and meet regularly with your advisor.

18. GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

Graduate Assistants (GA's and PTIGA's) in the Ph.D. program receive a stipend of \$12,000 per year (payable in 10 monthly installments), and a tuition credit that covers 87 1/2 percent of the in-state or out-of-state tuition and fees.

PTIGA's are responsible for two sections of the introductory American, Western Civilization, or World Civilization surveys per semester. This teaching load is expected to occupy 20 hours per week.

GA's are responsible for 20 hours work, as a teaching assistant (discussion leader and grader, or grader), or research assistant.

Each spring semester the department selects a number of Graduate Assistants and Part Time Instructor Graduate Assistants for the next academic year. All students in the program are eligible for these awards and are encouraged to apply. Applications should include:

1. Application Cover Sheet (downloadable from the Graduate College website); submit to Graduate College.
2. Two letters of recommendation, preferably from university faculty. For new students (these letters have already been submitted to the History Department as part of the application for admission. Continuing students, including current GA's and PTIGA's should request letters of support from the faculty.

These materials must be submitted by February 1 for applicants to receive full consideration for GA and PTIGA positions.

All current GA's are required to apply for renewal of their assistantships. For assistantships to be renewed, current GA's need to be performing well in their coursework and need to be performing their GA assignments well.

Occasionally, assistantships do become available for the spring semester. To be eligible for these awards, students need to have submitted the required application materials by November 1 of the preceding fall semester. Students who submit materials by February 1, for consideration for the following fall, and do not receive a GA award, will automatically be placed in the pool of eligible applicants for spring semester awards.