

**GRADUATE PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS  
ADMITTED BEFORE 2005**

**BROWN UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY**

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## I. Master of Arts

Possible routes to the M. A. are:

1. Eight courses, including at least one research seminar, plus the writing of an M. A. thesis. This route will normally take more than one academic year.
2. Eight courses, including at least two seminars, at least one of which must be a research seminar. This route will normally take one academic year.
3. Satisfactory completion of the first year of study for the Ph.D. program.

Seminars should be taken with at least two different instructors. Seminars (and the thesis and graduate colloquium, if elected) must be completed with grades of B or better. Overall grade averages should be B or better. A maximum of two courses, not including required seminars, may be taken outside the Department, provided the student presents a coherent program. There is no foreign language requirement for the master's degree.

## II. Doctor of Philosophy

### A. The First Year

First-semester students must register for the colloquium and a research seminar. Second-semester students must register for a research seminar and a Study Section (if one is offered in an area in which they are preparing fields). In the absence of a research seminar in his/her field of specialization, a student may, with the approval of the appropriate faculty member and the graduate advisor, register for a supervised research project. Students may not work with the same professor two semesters in a row. When a student registers for a research seminar or a supervised research project, s/he should also register for a reading course with the same instructor. This device effectively makes the research seminar a double credit course and gives the student time for intensive work in that field.

The rest of the student's program (one course each semester) should be devoted to preparation for preliminary exams and/or acquiring the knowledge and skills that the student needs for research in his/her area of specialization. Some students will need to take language courses or theoretical courses in other departments. Students may also register for "reading and research" courses with specific professors. The content of these reading courses must be worked out in advance with the graduate advisor and the supervising professor. Required work may include assigned readings and auditing undergraduate courses. It is expected that some written work will also be required, but supervising professors are asked to remember that the student's main workload is in the research seminar and the colloquium.

### B. The Second Year

During their third and fourth semesters students continue to prepare for their preliminary exams. In addition, they are encouraged to enroll in a Study Section, and they should begin to develop a dissertation prospectus. They may continue to take language and theory courses and to register for research and reading courses with specific professors.

### C. The Workshop

All graduate students are expected to participate as often as possible in the departmental Workshop, which meets approximately every other week to discuss presentations of research by advanced graduate students and faculty. In addition, at least one workshop at the beginning of each semester will deal with teaching methods. These sessions should be aimed especially at second-year students and should help to prepare them for the practical problems they will face as TAs.

#### **D. The Preliminary Examination and Thesis Preparation**

Students are urged to specify their examination fields as early in their course of study as possible. By the end of the first year of study, the student will have compiled the necessary departmental form in which are listed the three fields in which s/he will be examined in the Preliminary Examination. The student will indicate the field in which his/her dissertation will be written. This will be the major field; the others will be the minor fields. No more than two fields may be in the history of the same national culture. Normally, all three examiners will be members of the History Department, and the fields will be chosen from the list provided in another part of this document. No later than the second semester of study, a student may petition the Department for presentation of a field not included in this list. A student may also petition the Department (again no later than the second semester of study) for permission to prepare one field in another Department or Program. All three examiners must inform the Graduate Advisor in writing of their willingness to supervise these fields. The boundaries of each field should be clearly understood by both the student and the examiner. Acceptable ways of doing this include the compilation of a reading list (or the designation of relevant course reading lists) or the initialing of a statement defining the precise focus of the field and the topics to be covered. This statement may be placed in the student's file at his or her request.

Before the beginning of the fifth semester of full-time study, students will be expected to take the preliminary examination in the chosen three fields. This examination will be in two parts, written and oral. Students who have not passed the preliminary examination by the beginning of their fifth semester shall be considered not in good standing, and may be ineligible for further financial aid from the Department.

Students must petition the Department in writing for any postponement of the examination beyond the beginning of the fifth semester. Petitions must be accompanied by a recommendation of the student's examining committee. Grounds for such an extension include protracted illness, or the student's performance (at the Department's request) of teaching duties beyond those normally expected of second-year students. The Department also recognizes that students specializing in certain fields requiring extensive language or methodological training may need additional time.

The written examinations are usually administered during reading period in the spring semester and in the week preceding the beginning of each semester. Written examinations in each field shall be three hours long. All three fields must be completed within this five-day period. The oral examination shall be held as soon as practicable (and not more than one month) after the written examinations. It may begin, at the discretion of the candidate, with a statement prepared by the candidate, of not more than 20 minutes in length setting out the most important problems of the minor fields as they relate to the candidate's scholarly interests. The candidate will then be questioned by each examiner in the respective field for

approximately thirty minutes (and slightly longer, if necessary, on the major field). The student's performance in the examinations will be judged as a whole, the written and oral portions being combined in the evaluation. Within two weeks after the examination, the examiners will provide the candidate with written evaluations of his or her performance. Copies will be retained in the Department's files.

If the examining committee judges that the candidate has failed all or part of the examination, it will recommend to the Department either:

- i. A second opportunity after an interval of time to be determined by the committee (normally one semester) for the candidate to attempt the failed portion of the examination, or
- ii. Termination of the student's study for the Ph.D. degree.

If the candidate should fail the examination a second time, the Department will normally recommend termination of candidacy for the Ph.D.

Once the student successfully passes the preliminary examinations, s/he will convene a dissertation committee, consisting of a director and two additional members. The Graduate Advisor will verify that the thesis director, who will normally also have been the supervisor of the student's major field examination, accepts the role of the student's major professor and dissertation advisor. At the same time the Graduate Advisor shall nominate, with their written approval, two other professors who have been agreed upon between the thesis director and student. In case of disagreement, the choice will be made by the Department. With the consent of the thesis director and Graduate Advisor, the dissertation committee may include a person from outside the Department. This committee will be responsible for evaluating the student's detailed written thesis proposal, normally to be presented no later than the end of the fifth semester, and for approving the final version of the student's dissertation.

The thesis topic should normally be defined, with the advice and approval of the prospective thesis director, by the end of the fourth semester. A detailed proposal is to be submitted to the student's dissertation committee for discussion and final approval no later than the end of the fifth semester. In some cases, and with the permission and/or encouragement of their major field director, students may present the prospectus in addition to their three fields for discussion in the oral examination.

A thesis prospectus should be divided into the following four sections:

- a. Historiography -- setting the proposed study in the context of the relevant historical literature,
- b. Methodology -- outlining the approach the student proposes to take,
- c. Types of sources to be examined,

- d. Significance -- the historical importance of the work and why we need such a study.

In addition, there should also be a bibliography of primary and secondary sources. If deemed unsatisfactory, the proposal may be referred back for resubmission by the end of the sixth semester. Students who have not presented their thesis proposal to their dissertation committee by the end of the sixth semester shall be considered not in good standing and may be ineligible for further financial aid from the Department.

Students must petition the Department in writing for any postponement of the submission of their thesis proposal beyond the end of the fifth semester. Petitions must be accompanied by a recommendation of the student's dissertation advisor. Grounds for such an extension include protracted illness, teaching duties beyond those normally expected of second year and fifth semester students, or the discovery of unexpected difficulties with his/her thesis topic (e.g. a recently completed dissertation or book on the same subject).

#### **E. Procedures for Evaluation of Candidacy for the Doctorate in History**

The History Department's procedures operate within the framework established by the Graduate School and the general regulations of the University. The Graduate School is administered by the Faculty of the University which delegates certain of its powers to the Graduate Council. Graduate students are admitted to candidacy by the Graduate Council upon recommendation of the department concerned. No candidate may be admitted to study for an advanced degree without the consent of the appropriate department.

To be admitted to candidacy for the Ph.D. in history, a graduate student must successfully complete the course work outlined. In preparation for this examination, each student will be given the opportunity, in consultation with the Graduate Advisor, to construct a course of study best designed to fulfill his or her expectations and interests. All written work in courses taken in this program will be read and graded only by the professor teaching the course, not by a graduate assistant or proctor.

Acceptance by the History Department and the Graduate School for advanced study at Brown implies that the student has the credentials and potential to pursue graduate work. It is the obligation of the Department to provide expert criticism and guidance for the student and to help realize this potential. At the same time, by enrolling for graduate study in the Department of History, the student acknowledges the right and competence of the Department to evaluate and even if necessary recommend termination of candidacy or study leading to candidacy.

The Department continually evaluates the student's academic performance

throughout the period of graduate study and may make appropriate recommendations to the Graduate Council at any time. There are, however, several points at which formal consideration of and decisions about the student's academic performance are made:

1. At the end of the first semester, the Department:
  - a. Will recommend to the Graduate Council those students applying for financial aid who it believes deserve financial aid for the following year;
  - b. Will notify by letter those students applying for financial aid who are not being recommended for financial assistance in the following year;
  - c. Will warn by letter students considered to be in serious academic difficulty that they must improve markedly in the second semester if they wish to remain in the Ph.D. program;
  - d. May recommend special consultative meetings between a student and the professors in the student's fields; the Department may recommend such meeting at any time during the student's preparation for the Preliminary Examination for the benefit and guidance of the student.
2. At the end of the student's second semester, the Department will make one of the following recommendations to the Graduate Council and will so inform the student in writing:
  - a. Immediate termination of the student's study at Brown.
  - b. Termination of the student's work for the Ph.D. but with permission to proceed to the M.A. degree.
  - c. Permission to proceed into the second year and continue preparation for the Preliminary Examination. This decision means that in normal circumstances, the student will be permitted to remain in the program at least until the time of the examination in the third year.

#### **F. Foreign Language Requirements**

The foreign language requirement for the Ph.D. varies according to the student's major area of interest.

The foreign language examinations are administered by the Foreign Language Examination Board (FLEB) which is made up of history faculty who administer the foreign language examinations together with the graduate advisor. FLEB will designate times during the academic year at which examinations normally will be administered.

In the case of Chinese, the satisfactory completion of course work, as described below, will constitute evidence of language proficiency.

The examination consists of written and oral translations from the foreign language into English. A dictionary may be used in the written portion of the examination. Only after students have passed the written portion of the examination will they be permitted to take the oral portion. The oral translation consists of sight translation from the foreign language into English, not oral use of the language.

The first examination in each language will be administered and graded by an individual faculty member. If the student fails the examination, this faculty member will schedule a second examination for the student. This second examination, however, must be read and graded by at least two faculty members of FLEB. In those cases where there are not two faculty members in the Department to read the language exam, FLEB can call on the expertise of other members of the Brown faculty. If a second failure occurs, a third and any additional exams for that student must be agreed upon by FLEB. After a second failure the student is expected to take a course in the language or to do other remedial work as FLEB may direct. All examinations by a particular student after the initial one must be read and graded by at least two faculty members of FLEB.

No student will be permitted to take the Preliminary Examination until the language requirements appropriate to his or her major field have been met. A student who has not completed the requirement may petition the Department to postpone taking the Preliminary Examination for one semester. After one such postponement, continued failure to meet the language requirements will be sufficient grounds to bar a student from continuing in the Ph.D. program.

#### *American History*

The language requirement will be set by each director of the student's major field.

#### *English and British History*

A reading knowledge of either French or German. With the consent of the major field advisor another language may be substituted. The director of the student's major field may require additional languages as well. The examination will be taken during the registration week in September. In case of failure, the exam may be retaken and must in any case be passed prior to the Preliminary Examination.

#### *Continental European History*

A reading knowledge of at least two languages, including either French or German. The Director of the student's major field may require additional languages as well.

Proficiency in at least one of the languages must be satisfactorily demonstrated in September of the first year, so that students will be able to take related research seminars during the first year. Students who fail to pass one examination at that time must retake and pass it before being allowed to register for a second year. Major field advisers may require such students to take a seminar in that field during the second or third year. The second language examination must be passed before the student is allowed to take the preliminary examination.

#### *Latin American History*

A reading knowledge of at least two languages, including either Spanish or Portuguese. The Director of the student's major field may require additional languages as well.

Proficiency in at least one of the languages must be satisfactorily demonstrated in September of the first year, so that students will be able to take related research seminars during the first year. Students who fail to pass one examination at that time must retake and pass it before being allowed to register for a second year. Major field advisers may require such students to take a seminar in that field during the second or third year. The second language examination must be passed before the student is allowed to take the preliminary examination.

#### *East Asian History*

- a. Proficiency in Japanese language; or in Chinese, equivalent to the completion of Chinese 70-80, plus Chinese 104 and/or Chinese 109 or their equivalents.
- b. Proficiency in a second foreign language. Before taking the Preliminary Examination the student must have passed the examination in the second language, and have demonstrated satisfactory progress towards completing the Chinese or Japanese requirement.

### **G. Teaching Requirement**

Candidates for the Ph.D. must normally demonstrate satisfactory performance as a Teaching Assistant in undergraduate courses at Brown, or in teaching at another institution approved by the Department.

Students preparing for the examinations will normally be given preference in the assignments for teaching assistants and proctors. Work loads for such

positions will conform to standards set by the Graduate School: "limited enough in scope [requiring no more than 20 hours per week] so that normal progress can be made in the student's educational program."

## H. The Doctoral Dissertation

### *Preparation and Examination*

After passing the preliminary examination and obtaining approval of his/her dissertation proposal by the dissertation committee, doctoral candidates are encouraged to proceed with this research with speed and efficiency. As the research progresses, if unexpected discoveries about the nature of the sources or other unforeseen developments occur, the student and thesis director should confer in case redefinition of the topic seems necessary. During the research and writing of the thesis, it is the student's responsibility regularly to provide the thesis director with evidence of satisfactory progress towards completion. Such evidence will normally be provided in informal consultations between student and thesis director; if the student is absent from the campus, it should be provided by letter at least once each semester.

All students will normally be expected to give a presentation before the History Workshop (or other similar group) of all or part of the dissertation (or other research).

The doctoral dissertation should be completed within four years after the student passes the preliminary examination. Exceptions to this rule will be granted only upon a written petition by the student to the Department.

A faculty member has the right to refuse to direct a thesis without stating specific reasons. However, once he or she has agreed in writing to direct a thesis, the directorship may not be relinquished unless both the student and the Department are informed of the reasons in writing. A student may ask the Department to appoint a new thesis director at any time.

A thesis director leaving the University should state in writing whether he or she wishes to continue to direct doctoral theses already in progress. Even after leaving the University, faculty member is ordinarily expected to continue directing theses until their completion. But if the departing faculty member declines to continue the thesis direction, the student will be given every assistance in finding a new director.

The student shall present a penultimate draft of the thesis to the Graduate Advisor no later than the fifteenth day of March in the year the student intends to graduate. The Graduate Advisor shall then distribute the thesis

draft to the members of the dissertation committee, who shall have one month to prepare their evaluations. If all members of the committee agree that the thesis is acceptable, the student will then prepare a final copy and arrange for a thesis defense.

If one or more members of the committee judge the thesis to be unacceptable, the student will be asked to rewrite the thesis so as to satisfy the objections of the disapproving reader(s). If all members of the committee are then agreed that the revised thesis is acceptable, the student will then prepare a final copy and arrange for a thesis defense.

If the revised thesis is deemed unacceptable by a majority of the entire committee, it is considered rejected. If the revised thesis is deemed unsatisfactory by a minority of the committee, then the Department may decide either to overrule the objection and recommend approval of the thesis, or it may appoint a fourth reader. If the fourth reader rejects the thesis, then it is considered rejected.

In the case of rejection, the Department may decide either to permit the student to undertake a new thesis, or it may terminate the candidacy of the student.

#### *The Final Defense (optional)*

The Department expects each student to have a Final Defense with the approval of the graduate advisor, although in exceptional circumstances the director of the thesis may waive the defense. The defense will normally be conducted by the dissertation director, the readers of the dissertation, and the Dean of the Graduate School or his/her representatives. If the candidate so wishes, other graduate students may attend and participate in the discussion.

The defense will focus on the problems and potentialities of the thesis. Its purpose is to provide a forum not for approving the thesis (which has already been done) but for a general discussion of the thesis as a contribution to knowledge for the benefit of the candidate.

#### *Grievance Procedures and Appeals*

The Department is bound by Graduate School procedures which are described in the Graduate School memorandum, "Resolution of Graduate Student Grievances."

### III. Admissions and Financial Aid

The Graduate School strongly encourages interested candidates to [apply for admission on-line](#); standard [paper applications](#) are also available.

The Graduate School, on the recommendation of the History Department, normally offers a small number of fellowships to entering students seeking the doctoral degree. These fellowships provide tuition and stipends of varying sizes. Only about one-third of the entering class can expect to receive fellowships from the Graduate School. No such aid is available for master's degree students.

The History Department encourages applicants to apply for grants such as [The Andrew W. Mellon Fellowships in Humanistic Studies](#) to help fund their graduate studies.

Beginning in the second year, doctoral students in history normally win appointments as teaching assistants or proctors. Contingent upon satisfactory progress toward the degree, these awards are usually renewable for two years. The awards provide tuition and stipends, which have steadily increased in recent years.

The Department also recommends advanced students (writing dissertations) for financial aid in furtherance of research. These help to cover a variety of expenses, including travel and living expenses incurred in the process of research.