

**Department of History
Graduate Studies Handbook
2025–2026**

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Introduction

The purpose of this Handbook is to introduce students to the Department of History at the Catholic University of America and to gather into one place most of the information you will need during your graduate studies. Please read the Handbook carefully and then refer to it as you progress in your studies. While this Handbook will be updated regularly, the definitive statement of University policies can be found in the [CUA Graduate Announcements](#) and the [University's graduate policies website](#). In the case of conflict with this Handbook, the rules presented in the *Graduate Announcements* stand.

In the words of the late, and much lamented, historian of Tudor and Stuart England, Mark Kishlansky: “The purpose of graduate school is to get out of graduate school.” This Handbook is designed to help you on that journey. We encourage you to take full advantage of the resources available to you in this Department, University, and the area as a whole. Come to Department events, explore the museums and libraries of the city, see what is going on at other universities. The more you put into your education, the more you will get out of it. Stay connected with the Department, your professors, and your fellow students; all will help you on your journey through graduate school. The faculty of the Department aim to train you in the key skills of research, analysis, and communication that define the historian, to enable you to use those skills productively in a fulfilling and meaningful career, inside or outside the academy. This Handbook is therefore a roadmap to your journey through graduate study in History.

Overview of the Graduate Programs

The Department of History at CUA prides itself upon its professional but friendly atmosphere of close interaction between students and faculty. As a small Department, we place a great premium on the careful supervision of our students. The Department offers both MA and PhD degrees in the fields in which we have particularly rich faculty and scholarly resources, enumerated below. Graduate education in this Department combines the development of research and teaching skills. Not all of our graduate students go on to the PhD, or make use of their degrees in teaching at the university level. But the basic skills involved in graduate study—in acquiring substantive historical knowledge, in the critical analysis of material, and in the presentation of that analysis—are the same whatever the end use desired. Research is only one aspect of the professional development of a historian; the ability to communicate research and arguments, whether in writing, in debate, or through teaching, is an equally important component. This Department offers multiple opportunities to develop all these abilities. Our program is designed to train students, whatever their future career paths, in these key skills of the historian.

On the MA level, the Department offers an MA degree in History in the following fields: US History, Early Modern European History, Modern European History, and Medieval European History (with comparative attention to the pre-modern Islamic world). We also offer an MA program in Late Medieval and Early Modern Religion and Society, drawing on the particularly rich resources for the study of religious history available in the Department and the University more broadly. Additionally, we offer a joint MA program with the Department of Information Sciences (M.A./M.S.L.I.S.) and with the Columbus School of Law (M.A./J.D.)

On the PhD level, we offer degrees in US History, Early Modern European History, Modern European History, and Medieval European History, with particular strength in Medieval History.

Graduate Faculty

The following faculty members of the Department are available to supervise graduate work:

Americas:

Dr. Stephen West, Section Head
Dr. Samuel Fisher
Dr. Michael Kimmage
Dr. Julia Young

Early Modern and Modern European History

Dr. L.R. Poos, Section Head
Dr. Árpád von Klimó
Dr. Nelson Minnich
Dr. Caroline Sherman

Medieval History

Dr. Jennifer Davis, Section Head, Director of Graduate Studies
Dr. L.R. Poos
Dr. Lev Weitz

The University is also home to many other medievalists in academic units ranging from Philosophy to Theology and Religious Studies to the Department of Ancient and Medieval Languages and Cultures.

Biographies:

Jennifer R. Davis

Jennifer Davis is a historian of early medieval western Europe. Her first book, *Charlemagne's Practice of Empire* (Cambridge University Press, 2015), offered a new interpretation of this pivotal early medieval ruler and how he and his men attempted to control his vast empire. Her current project, *Per capitularios nostros: Law and its Uses in the Frankish Kingdoms*, examines how the Frankish kings produced law and how people in the Frankish orbit sought to put those laws to use. Based extensively on the surviving manuscripts of Frankish capitularies, the book

examines how and why various communities copied and adapted royal law for their own purposes. She is also the editor, with Michael McCormick, of *The Long Morning of Medieval Europe: New Directions in Early Medieval Studies* (Ashgate, 2008). Dr. Davis has held fellowships from the Institute for Advanced Study, the American Academy in Berlin, the American Academy in Rome, and the Fulbright Foundation, among others. She teaches a range of courses on early medieval history, including archaeology for historians and seminars on Carolingian history.

Samuel K. Fisher

Sam Fisher's historical interests are in early America and the North Atlantic world in the early-modern period. His current research project is entitled *Fit Instruments: Gaels, Indians, and the Making and Unmaking of Britain's Empire 1688–1783*. The project examines the experiences of three different groups of marginalized people in the eighteenth-century British empire—Native Americans, Irish Gaels, and Scottish Gaels (Highlanders)—in order to understand better the role of race and exclusion in the origins of the American Revolution. The study draws on Native American council speeches as well as Gaelic-language poetry (in Irish and Scottish Gaelic). The first publication resulting from this project appeared in the October 2016 issue of the *William and Mary Quarterly*. Firmly committed to the comparative approach, he is particularly interested in integrating early modern Irish and Scottish history with early America.

His next planned project, tentatively titled “*As now and in all former ages they have done*”: *Savage Rebellion and the Forging of a British Atlantic World*, takes a comparative approach to rebellions and uprisings by marginalized people within the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century British empire, asking whether “savage rebellion” was a meaningful category to people of the time.

Michael Kimmage:

Michael Kimmage is the author of two books, *The Conservative Turn: Lionel Trilling, Whittaker Chambers and the Lessons of Anti-Communism* (Harvard 2009) and *In History's Grip: Philip Roth's Newark Trilogy* (Stanford 2012). He is also the translator of Wolfgang Koeppen's *Journey through America* (Berghahn 2012), a German-language travelogue published in 1959. His next book, *The Abandonment of the West: The History of an Idea in American Foreign Policy*, is forthcoming with Basic Books in spring, 2020. His research interests range from intellectual history to diplomatic history and literary studies. A scholar of the 20th-century U.S., Professor Kimmage also takes a strong interest in the history of Europe and the Soviet Union/Russia; and from 2014 to 2016 served on the Secretary's Policy Planning Staff at the U.S. Department of State where he held the Russia/Ukraine portfolio. Professor Kimmage regularly teaches courses on the Cold War, on America and the world and on American conservatism. His graduate teaching has ranged from seminars on history and literature to seminars on American diplomatic history. He welcomes working with graduate students whose interests fall anywhere within 20th-century U.S. history and especially with those interested in U.S. history within a global context.

Árpád von Klimó:

Árpád von Klimó has done extensive research and published in different fields of nineteenth and twentieth century European history, mostly on Hungary, Italy and Germany. Currently, Dr. von Klimó has just finished working on a monograph about the memory of the Holocaust in Hungary

between 1942 and 1989, focusing on the Novi Sad massacre of 1942 (*Remembering Cold Days*, Pittsburgh University Press, 2018). He has also worked on the Routledge History of *Hungary since 1945* (which just appeared in early 2018). In 2017, the *Routledge History of East Central Europe since 1700*, co-edited by Árpád von Klimó and Irina Livezeanu, was published. Since 2001, von Klimó has been a mentor for a number of PhD students of whom some are now teaching at various universities (Dublin, Liverpool, Tübingen, Poznan, among others). He advises graduate research on modern Central Europe and on transnational and transatlantic topics, such as the globalization of Catholicism or the impact of Catholicism on the Cold War.

Nelson Minnich:

Professor Nelson H. Minnich is currently working on various projects. In particular, he is editing the papers from a conference commemorating the 500th anniversary of the Fifth Lateran Council (1512–17) for the Libreria Vaticana; co-editing the papers of the conference “Luther and the Shaping of the Catholic Tradition” for publication by The Catholic University of America Press; co-editing the volume the *History of Reformation Era Theology* for Cambridge University Press; editing the volume on *The Renaissance Papacy, 1400–1600* for Brill; and editing the *Cambridge Companion to the Council of Trent* for Cambridge University Press. To each of these volumes he will contribute one or more chapters. He is additionally at work on articles on the Rome of Raphael and a preaching manual.

L.R. Poos:

L.R. Poos specializes in the history of England in the later-medieval and early-modern periods, roughly from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries. His research focuses upon social, demographic, and legal history. His most recent book is a case study of contested marriage and property in sixteenth-century Lancashire, entitled *Love, Hate, and the Law in Tudor England: The Three Wives of Ralph Rishton* (Oxford University Press, 2022). He is now working on a reconstruction of land use and settlement in the parish of Stebbing in Essex from the thirteenth to the nineteenth centuries, employing Geographical Information Systems (GIS) analysis. Professor Poos’s teaching encompasses the histories of rural society, crime and state-building, religion, marriage, and population change in England. He has a particular interest in digital humanities and their applications to research and learning, and in early Japanese history and culture. Current and recent graduate students have done dissertations and research projects in subjects ranging from Reformation-era England, to disease and crime in early-modern London, to archaeology and history in late-medieval Ireland.

Caroline Sherman:

Caroline Sherman works on early modern intellectual history. Her book, *The Uses of the Dead: The Early Modern Development of Cy-Près Doctrine* (Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Canon Law, CUA Press, 2018) examines the Reformation origins of the doctrine of the approximation of donor intent in failing charitable trusts. She contrasts this modern, unilateral redirection of charitable property with the treatment of gifts in medieval canon law, in which all interested parties to the gift consented to its transformation. She is currently working on a book about inconvenient texts in the Renaissance and Reformation.

Julia Young:

Dr. Young recently published her first book, entitled [*Mexican Exodus: Emigrants, Exiles, and Refugees of the Cristero War*](#) (Oxford University Press, 2015). The book examines the network of religious exiles, political refugees, and labor emigrants who supported the Catholic Church during Mexico's Cristero war and, more generally, the ways that religion and religious conflicts can shape transnational diasporic identities among migrants. Her research and teaching interests include Mexican and Latin American history since the 16th century, the history of Mexican migration to the United States since the mid-1800s, Church and state in Latin America, global migrations, religion, and diaspora. Dr. Young is also a [fellow](#) at the [Institute for Policy Research and Catholic Studies](#). She recently completed a fellowship as a scholar in residence at the [Kluge Center](#) at the Library of Congress. While there, she conducted research for a new project related to religious visionaries and mystics along the U.S.-Mexico border during the twentieth century.

Lev Weitz:

Lev Weitz is an historian of the Islamic Middle East. His scholarly interests lie in the encounters among Muslims, Christians, and Jews that have shaped the Middle East's history from the coming of Islam to the present. He is the author of *Between Christ and Caliph: Law, Marriage, and Christian Community in Early Islam* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), which examines the multiconfessional society of early Islam through the lens of shifting marital practices of Syriac Christian communities. At Catholic University, Dr. Weitz teaches a range of courses on Middle Eastern and Mediterranean history from the Middle Ages to modernity and directs the Islamic World Studies program.

Stephen West:

Stephen West researches and teaches the history of the United States, with a particular focus on the political and social history of slavery, emancipation, and race from the Civil War era through the early twentieth century. He is currently at work on a book about the place of the Fifteenth Amendment in American political culture and memory during the fifty years after its ratification. Prof. West is co-editor of *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861–1867*, series 3, volume 2, *Land and Labor, 1866–1867* (2013), winner of the 2015 Thomas Jefferson Prize for documentary editing from the Society for History in the Federal Government. His first book, *From Yeoman to Redneck in the South Carolina Upcountry, 1850–1920* (2008), examined class and political relations among white Southerners in the slave society of the Old South, and their transformation in the wake of slavery's destruction. Prof. West is also the author of essays about the secession crisis, the historiography of Reconstruction, and urban politics in the post-emancipation South.

Admissions

Admission into the graduate program is highly competitive. The department typically enrolls approximately 2-5 new graduate students a year and has around 15-20 active MA and PhD students at any one time.

Graduate applicants should:

- Complete and submit the standard graduate application form along with the application fee. The application form should clearly indicate the degree program and concentration for which you are applying.
- Submit a personal statement, which should be a short (roughly two pages) explanation of the student's academic interests, why the student hopes to pursue these at CUA, and, for PhD applicants, an indication of possible areas of doctoral research
- Arrange for an official transcript of undergraduate grades (and graduate grades, if any) to be sent to the Office of Graduate Admissions. It is not necessary for an applicant to have been a History major at the undergraduate level, but ordinarily the Department would expect an applicant to demonstrate significant preparation in History.
- Arrange for the forwarding of at least three letters of recommendation—preferably by professors from the applicant's previous academic program—attesting to the applicant's ability to perform graduate-level work.
- Send a sample of writing, which should be a research paper on an academic subject (preferably History). The writing sample for a PhD applicant should be either a seminar paper incorporating original, primary-source-based research, or else an MA thesis. The writing sample should generally be on the lines of 15–25 pages, double spaced.

All these materials should be sent directly to the Office of Graduate Admissions, through the University's online admissions portal: <https://www.catholic.edu/admission/graduate/index.html>

Admission decisions are made by an Admissions Committee, reconstituted each year, including the Director of Graduate Studies, *ex officio*, and two other members of the full-time faculty representing different fields. The Admissions Committee will review all files; PhD applications are also carefully read by the intended supervisor of the proposed dissertation. The Committee, drawing on the feedback from other faculty, will present recommendations for admission to the Department as a whole, which will vote on graduate admissions and financial aid offers.

Although applications will be accepted at any time throughout the year, most applicants apply for entry in the fall semester (and applicants should note that scholarships are granted only upon fall entry). In order to receive full consideration for financial aid, applications must be received by February 1.

PhD Applicants:

Although the History Department does not require that students hold an MA prior to admission to the PhD program, please be aware that successful PhD applicants are expected to demonstrate especially high levels of aptitude and preparation. PhD applicants are urged to contact either the Director of Graduate Studies and/or faculty in their proposed area of study to discuss the suitability of their interests.

Medieval History Applicants:

Prior study of Latin is highly desirable for students applying in medieval History. Students with less experience of Latin are very strongly encouraged to take a summer course before they begin study at CUA. Our Department of Ancient and Medieval Languages and Cultures offers

numerous, rigorous courses in Latin (please see their website for details). Insistence on extensive training in Latin, including medieval Latin, is one of the hallmarks of our program.

Joint Degree Applicants:

Applicants for the joint MA/JD submit separate applications to the Columbus School of Law and the Department of History. The application to History is usually submitted after matriculation at the Law School.

Graduate Financial Aid

All applicants for graduate study in History are automatically considered for funding, provided the application is received by the February 1 deadline. No separate application is necessary. The Department will ordinarily admit a Ph.D. applicant only when it is able to offer that applicant a funding package, usually a combination of scholarships for tuition, teaching assistantships and stipends. The Department admits M.A. applicants with or without funding, and is able to offer tuition scholarships only to some M.A. applicants. Students in the joint M.A./M.S.L.I.S. program are eligible for additional funding from the Department of Library and Information Sciences and are encouraged to consult them directly. CUA is an equal opportunity educational institution.

Recipients of funding packages should note that the first paycheck of the academic year is issued in late September, and should plan accordingly.

In most circumstances, CUA requires full-time students to carry a health insurance policy. Students may either purchase the CUA plan or provide proof of coverage by another one. Note that graduate students enrolled at the full-time course credit load will be auto-enrolled in and charged for the CUA plan every semester unless they submit an insurance waiver. Further information is available at: <https://humanresources.catholic.edu/studentinsurance/index.html>.

In addition to some smaller funds, the Department's Angelton endowment supports a PhD student in medieval history, typically on a three year cycle. Medievalists are automatically considered for this award upon application.

Courses and Program of Study

The standard course load for graduate students is 3 3-credit classes per term. The Department offers a range of course options:

History 601

All students, whether admitted to an MA program or to the PhD program, must complete History 601, an essential introduction to historical analysis. Alternatively, if a similar course was taken elsewhere, the syllabus must be presented to the Director of Graduate Studies to determine whether it fulfills the requirements. History 601 is offered every Fall and ordinarily it is taken in the first semester of the program. Through intensive reading, discussion, and writing, centered on

a series of reading assignments illustrating the approaches and methodologies employed by contemporary historians, it aims to instill the substantive knowledge and the critical approaches necessary to study history at the graduate level. Mixing perennial issues and contemporary trends in the academic study of history, the course explores the relationship of theory, generalization, and historical practice. Emphasis is upon introducing students to some of the principal schools of thought exemplified in current historical writing and research: for example, approaches influenced by the social sciences (economics, anthropology, psychology), the humanities (literary or cultural theory) or recovery of the past through multiple perspectives (gender or minority history or comparative analysis).

Other Courses

In general, most courses in the department fall into one of two categories: colloquia (readings courses) and seminars (research courses).

Colloquia

The numerically predominant type of course in our graduate program is the readings course at the 600-level, often called a colloquium. Colloquia constitute the majority of the courses which a student completes, and it is in them that students develop the detailed understanding of the subject matter of their field. Colloquia are devoted to reading and critical discussion of the current (and sometimes older, foundational) secondary literature related to a specific topic, historical problem, or period and/or place in history. Students can expect to write historiographical essays as the primary grading instrument. Medieval historians are expected to take the History 609/610 sequence, which provides a historiographical foundation for the field.

Seminars

Courses at the 800-level are defined as seminars. Students must complete two seminars for the MA and two additional seminars for the PhD. In these courses students conduct and present primary source research projects. The Department expects such papers to be roughly equivalent to an article in a scholarly journal. The papers should be approximately 25 pages in length, and should involve original analysis of primary sources (written or material), in whatever languages are appropriate for the topic at hand, as well as analysis of the historiography on the topic. Historiographical essays, specifically, do not meet the seminar requirement.

History 795

All students are encouraged to take this course, which is a historical internship class. The Department keeps a list of programs with which we have relationships, where students can do an internship for course credit. Students can also set up an internship on their own. Should they wish to do this, the project must be coordinated **in advance** with the Director of Graduate Studies to ensure that the proposed work is acceptable for history credit and that it can be properly assessed.

Independent Studies

Many graduate students undertake independent studies as part of their coursework. Such classes can be done as either historiographical classes or research seminars. Depending on their schedules, most faculty are very willing to do independent studies with graduate students. Once a plan is agreed upon by professor and student, the student must submit a form to the Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences, available at: https://arts-sciences.catholic.edu/media/docs/independent-study1_all1y.pdf. Please deposit a copy of this form with the Director of Graduate Studies for your file. These classes appear in Cardinal Station as Directed Readings (History 792) or Directed Research (History 793). Please consult the Director of Graduate Studies to have a course set up for you.

Grading and Evaluation

Acceptable grades for a graduate student are A, A-, B+, B and B-. The University also records grades of C, but in the Department of History, although a student may receive University credit for completion of this course, any course receiving a grade below B- does not count towards a degree program.

Any student incurring more than one grade below B- (“C” or “F”) in a program may be dismissed.

To retain a scholarship or fellowship, a student is expected to do above average work, i.e., maintain at least a “B+” (3.3) average in work undertaken. Students who hope to move from an MA to a PhD are generally expected to maintain an “A-” (3.7) average in work undertaken.

The Department undertakes a full review of the progress of all graduate students every spring. In preparation for that review, all students are asked to complete a short self-assessment. The self-assessment exercise provides an opportunity for students to record milestones from the year past (requirements met, papers presented, grants won, etc.), to reflect on progress-to-date, and to develop a plan for the following academic year. ABD students also have a yearly meeting with their entire dissertation committee, convened by the director of their dissertations. The purpose of these meetings is to make sure that dissertation work is proceeding well, that the committee is fully informed and can advise on research and writing in-progress, and that the schedule for completion is clear. The faculty take the results of these meetings and the self-assessment exercise into account at the annual graduate student review. Any issues arising from the review will be addressed with the student by the major professor, Chair, and/or DGS.

Washington Area Research University Consortium

The Catholic University is a member of the Washington Area Research University Consortium. Therefore, graduate students may take a class, if the course is not offered here, at another University. In order to do this, students need the approval of their advisor or Section Head, the Director of Graduate Studies, and the Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences. Application forms and instructions for registration can be found here: <http://enrollmentservices.cua.edu/Registration-and-Records/Consortium.cfm>. Only one consortium class may be taken each semester.

Continuous Registration

Please note that in order to maintain your student status, graduate students must be continuously enrolled. Failure to enroll will result in a lapse in student status and may require a formal application for readmission to the University. For more details, see: <https://arts-sciences.catholic.edu/academics/graduate-programs/current-graduates/index.html> - continuous

Once PhD students have completed comprehensive exams, they should register each semester for History 996: Doctoral Dissertation Guidance.

Advising

The Department offers multiple levels of advising to graduate students. For MA students, the first ports of call are the Director of Graduate Studies and the Section Heads of the various fields covered by the Department. MA students should meet with either the Director of Graduate Studies and/or the Section Head for their field each semester before selecting classes. Students are also always encouraged to discuss their courses, goals, and aspirations with faculty especially knowledgeable in their particular fields of interest. The Chair of the Department is also always available to advise students. MA students should particularly bear in mind that the courses they take toward the MA should not merely constitute a smorgasbord of classes but a broad education in the entirety of the field of study they are pursuing. Thus, students must remember that they will ultimately take comprehensive examinations in the entirety of Medieval, Early Modern or Modern European, or US History, and should not concentrate their coursework upon any small selection of periods and problems within the field.

On the PhD level, students should consult regularly with the Director of Graduate Studies about the structure of the program and the requirements for degrees. The Director of Graduate Studies can also provide advice on course selection, fellowships, dissertation proposals, and so on. However, for PhD students, the primary advising relationship is with the dissertation director. Students are encouraged to be in regular and frequent contact with their advisers. Advisers can best help you when they know your plans and concerns.

The Department engages in an annual review of the progress of all graduate students every Spring, as explained above. After that meeting, should any concerns about graduate student progress arise, the students will be asked to meet with the Director of Graduate Studies and/or the Chair and their advisers to discuss the issues and how to ameliorate them.

The MA Program

The Department offers the MA in American history, early modern and modern European history, and medieval European history, and in Religion and Society in the Late Medieval and Early Modern World, and joint degrees with Library and Information Sciences, Secondary Education, and the Law School.

The MA in History

The MA in History has four components: coursework; a research requirement; language requirement; and comprehensive examinations.

All MA degrees in History require a minimum of 30 credit-hours of course work (10 courses). Normally, this can be completed in three or four regular semesters of full-time work. The 10 courses would include History 601, 2 seminars and 7 colloquia or readings courses in the field of study (that is, Medieval Europe, Early Modern Europe, Modern Europe, or US). Medievalists also take History 609/610 as part of their 7 colloquia. University regulations specify that a maximum of 2 courses (6 credit hours) can be transferred from another institution toward the MA at CUA. In order to transfer classes, students must meet with the Director of Graduate Studies and provide syllabi for the courses that might be transferred. Formal approval for the transfer of credits is granted by the Associate Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences.

Please note that language classes do not typically count toward History credit for the degree.

Language Requirement

As a requirement for the MA, students must submit evidence of proficiency in one foreign language (a computer language is not an acceptable alternative), except that graduate students in Medieval European History must meet the requirement in two languages, of which one must be Latin. This can be accomplished:

- by taking and passing a 500-level course in a language (the latter are offered regularly by the Department of Global Studies in the major European languages, and are geared toward reading comprehension; courses which afford basic grammar and comprehension of a language do not earn credit hours toward the degree in History, though more advanced courses offered by these Departments do count toward the History degree)
- taking a departmental language exam, offered every semester. These exams are translation exams; students will be given approximately two pages of academic prose in the original language in question. They have one hour to translate the passage and are allowed the use of one paper dictionary. Exams will typically be available in French, German, and Spanish. For an Italian translation exam, students should contact the Department of Global Studies. Sample language exams can be requested from the Director of Graduate Studies. Should students fail the translation exam, they may retake it (with new material) once. After a second failure, students will need to take a formal language course to fulfill their language requirement.
- or, in exceptional circumstances, by showing evidence of prior courses in a language which met the corresponding language requirement for a graduate degree in History at another university (this must be certified by the other university in question and is at the discretion of the Director of Graduate Studies in consultation with the Associate Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences)
- on the MA level, medievalists must complete Latin study through the level of intermediate Latin. In order to assess your Latin level, students should contact the Department of Ancient and Medieval Languages and Cultures to inquire about Latin

placement. On the PhD level, students must complete Latin 561, a course in medieval Latin, for which they do receive course credit. MA students who choose to take Latin 561 will also receive History credit for the class.

Comprehensive Examination

An MA candidate must complete a written comprehensive examination consisting of two four-hour examinations on the field of study, taken on consecutive days.

Each section organizes their comprehensive examinations differently, as follows:

Medieval Europe: In medieval history, MA candidates sit for two four-hour exams on consecutive days. All candidates are examined on three fields, namely, earlier medieval history, later medieval history, and pre-modern Islamic history. Students select either earlier or later medieval history as their major field, and are examined on that field on the first day of comps. The second day is devoted to the minor fields, which are the medieval European field not selected as a major field and pre-modern Islamic history. There are set reading lists for each section of the exam, which can be found in the appendices to this handbook. There are shorter and longer lists for each of the medieval European fields, to be used depending on which field each student selects as their major field.

Early Modern and Modern Europe: In early modern and modern European history, MA candidates sit for two four-hour exams on consecutive days. Through advising and course selection during the course of study for the degree, each student opts to concentrate more upon early modern (circa 1500–1750) or late modern (circa 1750–present) history. The MA reading lists (which can be found in the appendices to this handbook) are arranged into Part 1 (early modern) and Part 2 (late modern) lists. Each student is responsible for all the readings in each part. For students specializing in early modern history, the comps are arranged as follows: on the first day, the student answers three questions in early modern; on the second day, the student answers three questions, one in early modern and two in late modern. For students specializing in late modern history, the comps are arranged as follows: on the first day, the student answers two questions in early modern and one in late modern; on the second day, student answers three questions in late modern.

US: In US history, MA candidates sit for two four-hour exams on consecutive days. On the first day, students are examined on US history to 1877; on the second day, on US history from 1877 to the present. The exams are based on the reading lists found at the end of this Handbook. For each day's exam, students are given a list of 4-5 questions and required to answer 3. The examiners for Day 1 are currently Profs. Fisher and West; for Day 2, Profs. Kimmage and West.

Evaluation of comprehensive exams is done consistently across all sections. MA comps will be assessed for the student's content knowledge and use of evidence, command of the historiography, argumentative and analytical skills, and for the writing and organization of the exam. The full grading rubrics used to evaluate comprehensive examinations are available in the appendices to this Handbook.

These examinations normally are taken either during the semester in which the student completes the 30 credit-hours required for the degree (and the language requirement) or at the first available testing opportunity thereafter (that is, the next semester, or the summer following the semester during which the course requirements were completed). In order to take comps, students must register for either History 698A (Master's Comps with classes) or History 698B (Master's Comps without classes), as appropriate.

Examinations are based on standard reading lists prepared and regularly updated by the faculty of each Section. Students will be given the MA lists for each Section when they begin their MA studies. Most importantly, students should regard comprehensive examinations as a process rather than an event: that is to say, each student must take responsibility for meeting a number of times with each professor involved with the examination, to consult about reading, content, and preparation. Current lists can be found in the appendices to this Handbook.

Comps can be marked as satisfactory (pass), unsatisfactory (fail), or as pass with distinction, an honor awarded only to truly exceptional exams. The grade will be determined by committee consensus. When readers have submitted grades of "Pass" to the Department, the School of Arts and Sciences will be notified that the student has successfully completed this requirement. If a student is judged by the examiners to have failed any portion of the MA comprehensive examination, he/she has the right to retake the examination (with the same readers but with different questions) *once*, and this would ordinarily be in the following semester; a student who fails one part of the MA comprehensive need re-take only that one part.

Students are not allowed to sit for comprehensive examinations until all other degree requirements are met (or are in process), including the language requirement and the research papers (which must be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies before sitting for exams).

Religion and Society in the Late Medieval and Early Modern World

This field within the M.A. degree program is especially designed for individuals wishing to study the historical dimensions of religion and religious experience in the period from the 14th through the 18th century (1300–1800) in Western Europe and the Western Hemisphere.

This program combines a scholarly focus with a broad range of approaches and concerns. Although it addresses theology, doctrine and religious institutions, its main focus is to place religion in its social context and historical perspective. Topics treated in the range of courses offered include religious belief and popular practices; lay piety and religious enthusiasm; religious reform and evangelization; ritual and mysticism; secularization and tolerance; and the relationship between religion, on the one hand, and science and politics on the other.

The faculty of the Department of History is particularly strong in both aspects of this program, with a number of professors who study religion and whose chronological focus is the late medieval and early modern period. The program also draws upon the participation of members of Catholic University's distinguished School of Theology & Religious Studies.

The requirements for this field follow the general outline of those for the other fields offered for the MA in History. Students are expected to complete a minimum of 30 credit-hours of coursework (10 courses), including History 601 (Historical Methodology), and two research seminars. The language requirements are the same as for the MA in History.

The comprehensive exams follow the same structure as the MA in History, but are organized as follows:

The exam includes two fields. On the first day, the student is examined on Late Medieval Religion and Society. On the second day, the student is examined on Early Modern and Reformation History. The exam is graded according to the rubrics set out above for the MA in History.

[Joint History/ Information Sciences \(MA/MSLIS\)](#)

The joint degree requires 30 credit hours in Information Sciences and an additional 21 credit hours in History. Insofar as History is concerned, most other requirements apply as for the basic MA (7 courses, of which one must be History 601, one research seminar, one language requirement and comprehensive exams as defined above; note students in the joint program do only one research seminar, which is the major difference compared to the MA in History). Those interested in applying for the joint degree program are invited to communicate directly with the Director of Graduate Studies to discuss the program and its requirements further. A single application, which must be approved for admission by both departments, is required. Joint degrees are conferred simultaneously after all requirements for both degrees have been met.

[Joint History/Law \(MA/JD\)](#)

Admission to the Columbus School of Law at CUA is a prerequisite for admission to the MA/JD joint degree program. A student would ordinarily apply to the joint degree program at the end of his/her first year of law school. Nine law credits can be applied toward the minimum of 30 credits required for the MA in History. Students fulfill all other requirements for the Master's degree: proficiency in a modern language (and Latin for medieval history), minimum G.P.A of 3.0, satisfactory performance on the comprehensive exam, and two research seminars. Joint degrees are conferred simultaneously after all requirements for both degrees have been met. For further information regarding this option, contact the Director of Graduate Studies.

[The PhD Program](#)

The Catholic University of America has a strong tradition of graduate education in history, stretching back almost a century to the granting of the university's first PhD in History. Today, an accomplished faculty, strong resources on campus and in the Washington, DC, area, and a low student-faculty ratio create an ideal environment for graduate study.

Program Overview

Requirements for the PhD include: 54 hours of course work (18 courses beyond the BA); demonstration of proficiency in foreign languages; successful completion of comprehensive exams; and completion of the dissertation. The structure of the program is laid out below.

University regulations specify that a maximum of 8 courses (24 credit hours) can be transferred from another institution toward the PhD at CUA. In order to transfer credits, students must meet with the Director of Graduate Studies, and provide syllabi for the courses they would like to transfer. Formal approval for the transfer of credits is granted by the Associate Dean in the School of Arts and Sciences.

The time for completing the degree can vary dramatically, but it is the normal expectation that a full-time student can complete course requirements for the PhD in three years.

PhD students must take History 601, and four research seminars (for one of which they can substitute History 603). Other courses are typically colloquia, internship classes, and directed readings/research. Medieval historians should take the History 609/610 sequence.

PhD Students without an MA:

All students entering the graduate program without an MA who wish to continue to the PhD must make a formal application to do so. By **15 April** of their first year of study, students must submit to the Director of Graduate Studies an application consisting of an unofficial transcript, a short essay of about one page explaining their broad academic interests and a rough sense of a possible project, and the endorsement of a faculty member willing to supervise the PhD. Students should submit the transcript and essay to the Director of Graduate Studies via email or paper copy, and should arrange for the faculty member willing to supervise their work to contact the Director of Graduate Studies directly. The Department will look for evidence of success in coursework thus far, with the expectation that graduate students applying to continue should have at least an A- average in their History classes. The Department will also consider the quality, originality, and cogency of the proposed research interests, and the extent to which the proposed project can be successfully completed at CUA (with attention to the willingness of faculty to supervise the project). On the basis of these standards, the Director of Graduate Studies will prepare a set of recommendations to the faculty, to be voted on at the final Department meeting of the year. Students will be informed of the Department's decision by the end of their first year, so they can plan for their exams appropriately.

Colloquy

Planning the PhD program is essential. One critical aspect of this planning is the colloquy. This is a formal meeting involving the student, the professor most centrally involved in the student's preparation for the major examination field (and who will serve also as the student's dissertation director), and additional faculty members who will be involved in the major and minor fields (usually a total of three or four faculty). It generally takes place in the second or third semester of

a student's residence in the PhD program, although this may vary widely depending on previous graduate work, the number of courses a student is taking, the time planned to complete the degree, and other factors. The student should discuss the timing of the colloquy with the faculty advisor upon entering the program.

The members of the colloquy discuss the student's interests insofar as a dissertation topic is concerned, the major and minor fields for the comprehensive examination—as well as the faculty who will organize and write the questions—and set up a tentative timetable for the completion of the degree requirements. The chair of the committee draws up a formal report of the colloquy. The formal transfer of course credits from another institution requires specific departmental and School approval (as described above), and this should take place prior to the colloquy.

Language Requirement

As a requirement for the degree, students must submit evidence of foreign language proficiency (a computer language is not an acceptable alternative). For PhD students in US and Early Modern/Modern European history, proficiency in two foreign languages is required; in Medieval European History the requirement is three languages, one of which must be Latin (through Latin 561, as explained above). This can be accomplished in the same manner as outlined above for the language requirements for the M.A. degree.

The Language requirement must be completed before the comprehensive examinations can be taken (or during that semester).

Comprehensive Examinations

The program of studies for the PhD is tailored to each individual student's interests and background. The student is being prepared to complete the comprehensive examinations in one major and two minor fields, as well as to develop the foundation for the dissertation. For this reason, the complete schedule of courses to be taken must be worked out carefully as far in advance as possible.

It is important for each student to understand that the degree program is not just an accumulation of credits, but rather preparation for the two specific tasks outlined above. Faculty will not permit students to take the comprehensive examinations until they are convinced that the student is prepared both for the examinations, and to complete the independent research involved in a dissertation. More than the minimum number of credits may be required to reach those objectives.

Comprehensive exams are taken in a major field and two minor fields, each defined by the individual student in consultation with advising faculty. Establishing the shape of these fields is a major goal of the colloquy.

The major field is defined by the student's specific interests and possible dissertation topic. It is usually defined both chronologically and topically (High Medieval Social History, 1100–1350; Twentieth Century U.S. Political; Early Modern European social and economic; Modern German

political; intellectual; etc.). In the Medieval Section, the major field is examined by two professors.

The selection of minor fields (second and third fields) is more widely construed. The student is free, with departmental approval (granted by the adviser and Director of Graduate Studies), to pursue fields with faculty available in other departments of the University and within the Washington Consortium. One of these fields, as well, may be entirely outside of the discipline of history if the preparation it offers is judged to be important to the area of intended dissertation research.

The purpose of this requirement is to give the student some breadth and comparative perspective, both for intellectual as well as for practical reasons (preparation for a teaching position after graduation, ability to take a job in a Humanities organization, such as the NEH, etc.).

The three comprehensive examinations defined by the Colloquy (see above) must be taken on consecutive days (the date is set by the Department a semester in advance). For each field, students will complete a four-hour written examination. The major field examination is taken on the first day; the minor fields on the subsequent days in whatever order the student selects.

There is also an oral examination for the PhD. Within two weeks of the completion of the written comprehensives, there follows a one-hour oral examination on the material covered for the major field. The examiners will consist of the major professor, as chair, and two other readers of the written exams (for medievalists or others with four examiners, the two professors who supervised the major field will serve on the oral exam committee; the third member can be the professor from either minor field, at the chair of the committee's discretion). The examiners must submit a grade of pass for the completion of the requirement. As with the written exams, a student failing the oral examination will be permitted to re-take it a single time.

The student is not judged to have completed the requirement for the comprehensive examinations until the student has satisfactorily passed both the written and oral examinations. Success or failure is reported to the School of Arts and Sciences.

PhD comps will be assessed for the student's content knowledge and use of evidence, command of the historiography, argumentative and analytical skills, and for the writing and organization of the exam. Full grading rubrics can be found in the appendices. Comps can be marked as satisfactory (pass), unsatisfactory (fail), or as pass with distinction, an honor awarded only to truly exceptional exams. The entire exam is read by all examiners. If a student is judged to have failed the examination in one or more fields, he/she has the right to re-take the examination (with the same readers but with different questions) *once*, and this would ordinarily be in the following semester. Students are re-examined only in the field(s) failed at the first examination.

Students are not allowed to sit for comprehensive examinations until all other degree requirements are met (or are in process), including the language requirement and the research papers (which must be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies prior to sitting for exams). In order to sit for PhD comps, students must register for History 998A (Doctoral Comprehensive

Examination with classes) or History 998B (Doctoral Comprehensive Examination without classes), as appropriate.

Students who entered the PhD program without an MA will be awarded one upon successful completion of their comprehensive exams.

Candidacy

The next stage for PhD students after successful completion of the comprehensive examinations is to advance to candidacy for the PhD. Advancement to candidacy is not automatic. The Department will review each student's transcript, seminar papers turned in for research credit, and performance on the comprehensive examinations. It is expected that the candidate will also have been accepted for supervision by a PhD advisor. On the basis of these criteria, the Department will vote on allowing students to proceed to candidacy. Candidacy for the doctoral degree begins formally on the first day of the semester following successful completion of the comprehensive exam and subsequent Department approval. **The student has five years from this date of formal admission to candidacy to complete, defend, and deposit the dissertation.**

The application form for admission to candidacy can be found here:

<https://graduate-studies.catholic.edu/media/docs/application-for-admission-to-candidacy.pdf>

The Dissertation Proposal

The PhD dissertation topic must be submitted and approved within two calendar years after the date of admission to candidacy. However, the Department prefers students to present proposals the semester after they complete comprehensive exams. The development of the topic is the responsibility of the candidate working together with the professor who will direct the dissertation, and at least two additional faculty members who will serve as dissertation readers. When the student has defined the project to the satisfaction of the committee, he/she formally prepares a proposal which in no more than two single-spaced pages describes the issues the dissertation will address, the contribution to the literature it will make, and the sources and methodology to be employed. The proposal also includes a brief bibliography of the relevant background literature on the subject (a link to the guidelines is included below). Once the committee has approved this proposal, the student presents it at a colloquium attended by all members of the Department, faculty and graduate students. The proposal will be pre-circulated. At the colloquium, the student will orally introduce the project (speaking for about ten minutes) and take questions. On the basis of this discussion, the student will revise the proposal for submission to the Department. This revised proposal, together with the names of the faculty members who will constitute the dissertation committee, is then considered for approval by the entire voting faculty of the Department. When that approval is given, the proposal is forwarded to the School of Arts and Sciences.

Students should note that once a proposal has been approved, the School of Arts and Sciences requires that the committee and the topic (even the title) of the final dissertation conform exactly to that of the originally approved proposal, or else a formal application for change must be made to the School. Any changes, therefore, have to be brought to the attention of the School

administration, via forms for that purpose, prior to the submission of the final draft of the dissertation.

All necessary forms related to preparing the dissertation may be found here: <https://graduate-studies.catholic.edu/doctoral/forms.html>

Time Limits and Continuous Registration

The candidate has a total of five years from the time of entering candidacy to complete all of the requirements for the degree. If the final oral defense of the dissertation is not completed within the five years, the student must petition the Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences in writing for an extension. Unless there has been a leave of absence granted during the five year period, the extension can be granted for no more than one year. Be aware that these time limits are taken seriously and that a student who does not conform to them may be dismissed from the program. It is equally important that the student be continuously registered during the five-year period. The ordinary expectation is that the student will enroll for a one-credit course (History 996: Doctoral Dissertation Guidance) each semester during dissertation writing. The only exception arises in situations stemming from serious reasons approved by the school (e.g. serious health problems, required military service, major family difficulties) which result in involuntary interruption of graduate studies. In such cases the student is permitted to take a leave of absence, which costs no tuition but presupposes that the student will not have academic guidance from his/her dissertation committee (and a leave of absence also means that a student loses access to library and computer facilities during the leave). In order to do so, a student must apply to the Associate Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, using a form that can be accessed from this link: <https://go.cua.edu/gradstudies/>. Students are cautioned that the reasons for the leave are reviewed quite carefully and approval is given for only a single semester at a time.

Students should note that if continuous enrollment is broken, the student is automatically dropped from candidacy by the university. The result is that the student must re-apply to the PhD program.

There is another serious implication of these rules for the dissertation student: the financial implication. Students must expect that they will be required to register for the equivalent of a one-credit course for each semester during which they are working on completing the dissertation. Moreover, university regulations require that the student must be registered for full dissertation guidance during the semester when the dissertation proposal is submitted, and during the semester when the dissertation is submitted for committee approval; not even the extenuating circumstances set out above can alter this. Moreover, students must also be aware that under current rules the University does not regard a leave of absence as constituting full-time student status, and therefore will not certify such for the purposes of postponing repayment of student loans. It is vital that all graduate students plan ahead financially for these circumstances. The Department tries to support students during the final stages of writing; to that end, each year, dissertating students are invited to apply for a scholarship to cover their one-credit per semester of tuition. The number of scholarships available does vary, but is usually sufficient to provide for all students who are not otherwise receiving tuition from the University.

Writing the Dissertation

The process of writing a sustained piece of historical research (typically of 250 pages or more) is at the heart of a doctoral program in History. Doing so effectively requires designing a feasible and appropriate project (hence the long process of approval detailed above), sustained independent research by the student, and an engaged relationship between student and committee. It is the responsibility of the student to stay in contact with faculty, to devote significant time and attention to their research and writing, and to meet agreed deadlines. It is the responsibility of the adviser and committee members to read submitted work promptly and carefully, to offer their honest assessments of the work, and to be available, within reason, for consultation with students even when on leave. The dissertation involves a contract between students and faculty that requires all to do their part.

Completion of the Dissertation

The University has complex regulations regarding the style of the completed dissertation and the details of the final oral defense. The University regularly updates the handbook for dissertation writers. Students are responsible for knowing and following all the regulations set out in the handbook, which can be found here: <https://graduate-studies.catholic.edu/doctoral/handbook.html>

After the dissertation has been completed to the satisfaction of the dissertation committee and the committee has certified in writing their approval, the final stage in the requirements for the PhD is an oral defense of the dissertation, which is normally a two-hour examination conducted by the dissertation committee plus a defense Chair and Secretary chosen from outside the Department and assigned by the School of Arts and Sciences. A student must pass the defense of the dissertation, which is regarded as a separate act from the completion of the dissertation itself, in order to proceed to the degree.

Dissertation defenses are regulated by School and University rules, summarized here: <https://arts-sciences.catholic.edu/academics/graduate-programs/current-graduates/index.html#doctoral-oral>. It must be noted that a defense is a discussion and review of a completed project. The defense is not the chance for the student to discuss a draft with his/her committee, with the expectation of revising it afterward. The revision done after the defense is purely on the level of small errors and typos, akin to final proofs of a book. Therefore, students should not ask faculty to sign off on a dissertation until it is fully complete (title page to bibliography), and faculty should not do so until they can verify that all necessary revisions have been made and the work is in fact finished. Defenses can only be scheduled during the fall and spring terms, and only during the period in which classes are taught. Defenses must be scheduled at least three weeks in advance. Students should thus note that in order to defend, their dissertations must be fully complete at least a month before the end of classes. The possible defense dates for each academic year are announced by the Dean of Arts and Sciences in the summer before the year begins.

The University's guidelines for submitting the dissertation can be found here:

<http://graduatestudies.cua.edu/onlineSubmission.cfm>

The requisite copyright and open access forms can be found here:

Teaching Assistantships

The Department of History has a limited number of teaching assistant positions to offer in any given year. Many students are offered TA-ships upon admission to the program. There may also be positions available for continuing students. All continuing students who wish to serve as a teaching assistant should submit an application to the departmental admissions committee by January 25 each year. The application consists of: a short statement explaining the student's teaching interests and experiences, a list of all previous teaching experience, at CUA and elsewhere, and, when available, a copy of teaching evaluations. In distributing positions, the committee will consider the following factors: the clarity and cogency of the applicant's statement, the desirability of providing teaching opportunities to as many students as possible, the quality of previous teaching, and the needs of the Department (including having TAs teach classes in their fields and under the supervision of their faculty advisers). Positions awarded will be announced during the spring semester. PhD students are given preference for all teaching positions; it is very rare for MA students to be able to teach in the Department.

A teaching assistantship is not simply a way to support graduate students financially and staff large courses. Rather, a teaching assistantship is an apprenticeship for a graduate student to learn to become a teacher by working in close contact with faculty. Faculty should regularly meet with teaching assistants to review the course material and to discuss approaches to teaching it. Faculty should also observe each teaching assistant at least once a semester, and offer feedback and suggestions on the student's teaching. Teaching assistants are expected to attend all meetings of a class for which they are a TA, to hold regular office hours where students can meet with them, and to be available for consultation with students in scheduled meetings and over email. Typically, TAs also teach discussion sections and grade written work. However, each class is different, and it is incumbent on the supervising professor to meet with TAs at the start of the term to explain the course and their expectations of teaching assistants.

The Department also occasionally has teaching fellow positions to offer. Teaching fellows give their own undergraduate courses. The possibility of such classes is entirely dependent on the scheduling needs of the Department and the availability of faculty. Should such positions be available, the Chair, in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies, will invite experienced, advanced PhD students to apply.

There are also many other teaching opportunities available at the community colleges and other smaller schools in the DC-area. The Director of Graduate Studies regularly distributes announcements about such positions and many of our students have taught in such venues.

Department Events

The Department maintains an active calendar of graduate events. Graduate events are held on Wednesdays, at 5:15. We reserve this time slot so students and faculty can keep the time free. We expect students to attend all Department colloquia and the dissertation prospectus workshop. Students are encouraged to attend the other events hosted by the Department; doing so allows you to make the most of your education.

Department Colloquia

Typically two times every semester, the Department hosts colloquia. The colloquia involve presentations by prominent historians from other institutions, or occasionally one of our own faculty, to present work-in-progress. The colloquia involve a pre-circulated paper, which all attendees are expected to read in advance. At the colloquia, speakers introduce their projects, commentators offer an assessment of the submitted work, and the audience discusses the research. These occasions offer essential opportunities for graduate students to observe how historians debate and refine work, and to participate in discussion of on-going work in the field.

Professionalization Workshops

The Director of Graduate Studies coordinates a series of professionalization workshops, meant to provide graduate students with the kinds of skills not taught in the traditional classroom setting. The workshops include attention to both academic and non-academic career trajectories. Recent examples include workshops on the academic job market, submitting an article to an academic journal, or a presentation on the American Historical Association's career diversity initiative.

Graduate Student Writing Workshops

Twice a semester, the Department sponsors writing workshops for graduate students. Organized along the lines of Department colloquia, these workshops give graduate students the chance to present their own work-in-progress for feedback. The workshops involve discussion of a piece of pre-circulated writing by a graduate student (dissertation chapter, article draft, etc.), which the student introduces, then another graduate student comments, and finally all attendees discuss. The workshops provide a venue for students to receive useful feedback and to practice presenting their work in an informal, supportive setting. The workshops are by the DGS; students should contact the DGS for more information or to volunteer to offer a paper.

Pedagogy Discussions

This Department highly values teaching and subscribes to the view advocated by the American Historical Association that all historians, in academia or not, are teachers. Our commitment to teaching is evident in many ways, including History 603, our historical pedagogy course. We also seek to encourage discussion of teaching through our new series of pedagogy discussions. Coordinated by the Director of Graduate Studies, these workshops, led by both faculty and graduate students, bring together the Department to discuss issues related to teaching, such as

teaching writing, or developing grading rubrics, ranging from the nitty-gritty to philosophies of teaching.

Graduate Student Seminars

When prominent historians are on campus or in the area, the Department endeavors to have them visit CUA to offer seminars reserved for graduate students. Faculty in such seminars often work through a text with students, or discuss a book they have written, or review a given topic. Recent seminars have been led by Miri Rubin, Jay Rubenstein, and Chris Wickham.

Research and Travel Abroad

Research and travel abroad can be a key part of graduate studies. This section of the Handbook is meant to offer some suggestions and ideas for applying for external funding to make this kind of experience possible.

A few general points:

- Fellowship applications are typically due the fall before the year you will travel. This means you must begin planning the spring before the fall you apply, or almost 18 months before you will leave.
- This application schedule means many applications (especially the Fulbright, which has a very early deadline) are due at the very start of the semester. Your faculty must know in advance if they are going to write for you effectively.
- A corollary of the above: don't assume you will be able to get letters or prompt feedback on your proposal during the summer.
- Many fellowships require you to be ABD before applying; plan accordingly.

Identifying fellowships to which to apply can be a challenge; the list below is simply meant to get you started.

Students in search of external grants and fellowships may wish to begin with the list compiled by the [Office of Graduate Studies](#) and the calendar available from the American Historical Association: <https://www.historians.org/awards-and-grants/awards-and-fellowships-calendar>

General Fellowship and Grant Opportunities

- [American Association of University Women Fellowships](#) (several fellowships and grants for women graduate students)
- [American Historical Association](#) (various fellowships available)
- [American Philosophical Society](#) (offering a number of different fellowship opportunities)
- [Charlotte W. Newcombe Doctoral Dissertation Fellowships](#) (for dissertations addressing religious or ethical issues)
- Council for European Studies (<https://councilforeuropeanstudies.org/grants-awards-fellowships/>, for pre-dissertation travel and dissertation completion)

- [Fulbright Fellowships](#) (fellowships to most countries)
- [Huntington Library Fellowships](#) (for study at the Huntington Library, San Marino, CA)
- [Newberry Library Short-Term Fellowships](#) (for travel to the Newberry Library in Chicago)
- [Social Sciences Research Council](#) (for travel to various countries)
- [Woodrow Wilson Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship in Women's Studies](#)
- [Andrew W. Mellon Fellowships](#) (original research dissertation fellowships)

Fellowship and Grant Opportunities for US History

- [The Library Company of Philadelphia](#) (Colonial and Early Republic)
- [The Gilder-Lehrman Institute](#) (New York and Civil War History)
- [The Organization of American Historians](#)
- [American Antiquarian Society](#)
- [John Carter Brown Center](#) (Colonial Americas)
- [Omohundro Institute Fellowships](#) (early America)

Fellowship and Grant Opportunities for Medieval, Early Modern and Modern European History

- [The American Academy in Rome \(Rome Prize\)](#) (for travel to Rome)
- [The Camargo Foundation Fellowships](#) (for residence at the Camargo Foundation in Cassis, France)
- [Chateaubriand Fellowship](#) (for travel to France)
- [DAAD](#) (for travel to Germany)
- [Dumbarton Oaks Fellowships in Byzantine Studies](#) (for study at Dumbarton Oaks)
- [Gennadius Library Fellowships in Byzantine Studies](#) (for travel to Greece)
- [Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation Grants for Research on Venice and the Veneto](#)
- [Hill Museum and Manuscript Library Fellowships](#) (for study at the Hill Museum and Manuscript Library, which has its own manuscript collection, as well as digital copies and microfilms of many medieval manuscripts)
- [The Medieval Academy of America](#) (various fellowships available)
- [North American Conference on British Studies Dissertation Year Fellowship](#) (dissertation and pre-dissertation fellowships)
- [Phi Beta Kappa](#) (the Sibley fellowship given in alternate years for travel to France)
- [Vatican Film Library Fellowships](#) (for work at the Vatican Film Library, which contains microfilms of Vatican manuscripts, as well as other manuscript microfilms)
- [Richard III Foundation Fellowships](#) (for work on Yorkist England)
- [Society for Medieval Feminist Scholarship Foremothers Fund](#) (for a professional development project in collaboration with a senior scholar)
- [The Renaissance Society of America](#) (various fellowships available)

Resources

Graduate school is a marathon, not a sprint, and is an endeavor that taxes everyone who undertakes it. There are many resources to help you along the way; we encourage you to make use of them.

On-campus Resources

The CUA Libraries' wide range of resources and services, including databases, online journals, and FAQs are on the [main web site](#). For assistance on papers and assignments, consult the [research guides](#) or schedule an appointment with a [subject librarian](#).

CUA is part of the Washington consortium, which means students can borrow books from all the libraries in the consortium, including Georgetown, GW, etc.

The Center for Academic and Career Success (CACS) provides academic and career support services for all students through a broad base of programs and services, including Tutoring Services, Workshops, Individual Skills Meetings, Peer Mentoring, and more. CACS is located at 120 Garvey Hall.

Phone: (202) 319-6262 **Email:** success@cua.edu **Web:** success.catholic.edu

The Writing Center is an excellent resource for any student. The Writing Center is committed to supporting the writing needs of students at all stages of the writing process. If, at any point in the semester, you feel that you are struggling to draft, revise, or properly reference sources in a writing assignment, make an appointment online. We also welcome walk-in appointments at the Writing Center, which is located in 219 Mullen Library.

Phone: (202) 319-4286 **Email:** cua-writingcenter@cua.edu **Web:** english.catholic.edu/writing-center/index.html

The Office of Disability Support Services provides reasonable accommodations for the classroom and testing environment for students with documented disabilities. DSS is located in Pryz 127. Office hours are Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 8:00 am-5:00 pm, and Tuesday and Thursday 8:00 am-6:30 pm. **Phone:** (202) 319-5211 **Email:** cua-dss@cua.edu **Web:** dss.cua.edu

The Counseling Center provides free individual and group counseling services, psychiatric consultation, alternative testing, and emergency services to CUA students. In addition, we provide consultation services and outreach programs to the CUA community. Appointments can be scheduled in person in 127 O'Boyle Hall, or by phone.

Phone: (202) 319-5765. **Web:** counseling.cua.edu

Campus Ministry: The Office of Campus Ministry supports the members of The Catholic University of America community in their individual and communal growth as they strive to live the message of the Gospel. The central responsibilities for this office include: convening the community for prayer and worship; providing a pastoral presence on campus and in the residence halls; facilitating social justice, community service and outreach activities; offering sacramental catechesis and educational opportunities pertinent to faith development; and providing pastoral counseling, spiritual direction and retreat opportunities. **Phone:** (202) 319-5575. **Email:** cua-campus-ministry@cua.edu **Web:** <http://ministry.cua.edu/>

Graduate students typically live off-campus; the **Office of Housing Services** can provide advice on finding housing: <http://housing.cua.edu/offcampus.cfm>

For **Student Health Services**, see: <http://health.cua.edu/>

The **Graduate Student Association** coordinates a range of events and programs for graduate students; see their webpage (<http://gradstudents.cua.edu/>) or consult the Department's Graduate Student representative, Daniel Buck (buckd@cua.edu).

Off-campus Resources

A primary reason to study at CUA is the multiple resources available in the Washington, DC, area, ranging from world-class museums, to theatres, to libraries, and so forth. We encourage you to explore and benefit from the city around you. You can find an overview of these resources here: <https://www.catholic.edu/about-us/the-heart-of-washington-d-c/index.html>.

Comprehensive Examination Grading Rubrics

Department of History Rubrics for Grading Comprehensive Examinations

Grading Rubrics for MA Comps

MA comps will be assessed for the student's content knowledge and use of evidence, command of the historiography, argumentative and analytical skills, and for the writing and organization of the exam. Comps can be marked as satisfactory (pass), unsatisfactory (fail), or as pass with distinction, an honor awarded only to truly exceptional exams.

All members of the examination committee will read all components of the examination and assess them according to the standards below. The section head of the relevant field will then compile all responses on all components of the exam to reach one overall grade for the examination. The assessment of the majority of the examiners will prevail. Should there not be a majority opinion, the tie will be broken by the section head, if he/she was not already a member of the examination committee, or by the DGS or Chair of the Department, or, if all of these individuals were already on the committee, another member of the Department selected by the Chair.

No distinctions will be given without the unanimous agreement of the entire committee and must reflect distinction on the examination as a whole, not just separate components.

Exam component	Performance with distinction	Satisfactory performance	Unsatisfactory performance
Content knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The exam reflects extensive knowledge of the major people, events and sources for the period in question• The exam uses a wide range of precise and specific examples to answer the questions, including bringing in material not explicitly referenced in the question• The exam intelligently matches historical content	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The exam reflects solid knowledge of the major people, events and sources for the period in question• The exam uses a range of specific examples to answer questions and support arguments• The content is carefully tied to the	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The exam presents significant mistakes with historical details• The same few people, events or sources are referred to in every answer• The exam does not tie content to the

	to historiographical debate	historiographical issues addressed	historiographical debates covered in the exam
Command of the historiography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The answers reflect a comprehensive understanding of the field as a whole • The answers demonstrate an ability to bring together all works read into a sophisticated overview of the field as a whole • The examination reflects a deep understanding of the major themes and debates in the historiography and how these relate to each other • The exam assesses how the historiography has developed, setting different debates into context and in terms of their interrelationships • The exam reflects an ability to assess the strengths and weaknesses of different books, and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The answers reflect good awareness of the field as a whole • The examination is able to set books in dialogue with each other • The answers reflect a clear awareness of the major themes and debates in the field • The answers reflect awareness of how the field has developed over time • The examination offers a cogent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The answers reflect only limited knowledge of the field as a whole or erroneously represent the works studied • The examination may reflect understanding of individual books, but cannot link them into historiographical strands • The examination reflects only a limited sense of the major themes and debates in the historiography • The exam may reflect an understanding of different arguments, but cannot explain how the books reflect development in the historiography • The examination does not reflect an ability to evaluate the works read in

	demonstrates cogent interventions in the historiography with an eye to how the field might develop	assessment of the strengths and weakness of different books, and uses them to make arguments about historiography	historiographical terms
Argument and analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The responses fully and accurately address the questions posed, and are able to bring in works and ideas not directly referenced in the questions • The answers use the question as a starting point to develop a nuanced historiographical argument 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The responses fully and accurately address the questions posed • The answers offer a cogent argument in response to the question asked 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The responses do not answer the questions asked, or do so incompletely or inaccurately • The answers offer information that is not tied together into an overall argument
Writing and organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within the constraints of the exam setting, the essays are elegantly and clearly written • The essays carefully develop a logical structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within the constraints of the exam setting, the essays are written clearly and with minimal grammatical errors • Within the constraints of the exam setting, the essays are 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The essays are full of grammatical errors or are unclear • The organization of the essays reveals no governing logic or

		clearly organized	are incomprehensible
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Grading Rubrics for PhD Comps

PhD comps will be assessed for the student's content knowledge and use of evidence, command of the historiography, argumentative and analytical skills, and for the writing and organization of the exam. Comps can be marked as satisfactory (pass), unsatisfactory (fail), or as pass with distinction, an honor awarded only to truly exceptional exams.

All members of the examination committee will read all components of the examination and assess them according to the standards below. The section head of the relevant field will then compile all responses on all components of the exam to reach one overall grade for the examination. The assessment of the majority of the examiners will prevail. Should there not be a majority opinion, the tie will be broken by the section head, if he/she was not already a member of the examination committee, or by the DGS or Chair of the Department, or, if all of these individuals were already on the committee, another member of the Department selected by the Chair.

PhD students will sit for an oral examination on their major field within two weeks of writing the written exams. The oral examination will be assessed for content knowledge and use of evidence, command of the historiography, argumentative and analytical skills, and quality of oral response to questioning.

No distinctions will be given without the unanimous agreement of the entire committee and must reflect distinction on the examination as a whole, not just separate components. This includes the oral examination, with those members of the committee who give the oral exam voting on distinction for this component of the exam (again, requiring a unanimous vote of the committee and distinction on all parts for distinction to be awarded for the exam).

Written exam rubrics

Exam component	Performance with distinction	Satisfactory performance	Unsatisfactory performance
Content knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The exam reflects particularly extensive knowledge of the major people, events and sources for the period in question The exam uses an impressively wide range of precise examples to answer the questions The exam intelligently matches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The exam reflects extensive knowledge of the major people, events and sources for the periods in question The exam uses a range of specific examples to answer questions The exam cogently relates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The exam presents significant mistakes with historical details The same few people, events or sources are referred to in every answer Content is not tied to the

	<p>historical content to historiographical debate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The exam reflects both extensive depth and breadth of knowledge 	<p>content knowledge to the historiographical issues raised</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The exam reflects both depth and breadth of content knowledge 	<p>historiographical debates covered in the exam</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The exam does not reflect depth and breadth of knowledge
Command of the historiography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The answers reflect a comprehensive understanding of the field as a whole • The answers demonstrate an ability to bring together all works read into a sophisticated overview of the field as a whole • The examination reflects a deep understanding of the major themes and debates in the historiography and how these relate to each other • The exam assesses how the historiography has developed, setting different debates into context and in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The answers reflect good awareness of the field as a whole • The examination is able to set books in dialogue with each other • The answers reflect a clear awareness of the major themes and debates in the field • The answers reflect awareness of how the field has developed over time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The answers reflect only limited knowledge of the field as a whole or erroneously represent the works studied • The examination may reflect understanding of individual books, but cannot link them into historiographical strands • The examination reflects only a limited sense of the major themes and debates in the historiography • The exam may reflect an understanding of different arguments, but cannot explain how the books

	<p>terms of their interrelationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The exam reflects an ability to assess the strengths and weaknesses of different books, and to suggest how these could shape further research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The examination offers a cogent assessment of the strengths and weakness of different books 	<p>reflect development in the historiography</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The examination does not reflect an ability to evaluate the works read in historiographical terms
Argument and analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The examination demonstrates an ability to cogently synthesize information from different fields, books, approaches, etc. • The exam demonstrates that the student is able to cogently and critically conceptualize the field for him/herself, not just to reproduce what others have said • The exam reflects a sophisticated extrapolation from the historiography read to what else might be done or where the field is developing • The examination reflects extensive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The exam demonstrates an ability to synthesize information from different fields, books, approaches, etc. • The exam demonstrates that the student is able to conceptualize the field for him/herself, not just to reproduce what others have said • The exam reflects the student's ability to extrapolate from the historiography read to what else might be done or where the field is developing • The exam reflects original 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The examination does not reflect ability to synthesize information • The examination does not go beyond reflecting the views of others • The student cannot extrapolate beyond the works read

	<p>original thought about the chosen major field</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition to answering the questions posed, the essays offer careful, compelling, original arguments 	<p>thought about the chosen major field</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The essays offer careful, thoughtful arguments, that answer the questions posed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The examination does not reflect any original thought about the major field • The essays do not answer the questions posed or cannot develop a clear argument about them
Writing and organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within the constraints of the exam setting, the essays are elegantly and clearly written • The essays carefully develop a logical structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within the constraints of the exam setting, the essays are written clearly and with minimal grammatical errors • Within the constraints of the exam setting, the essays are clearly organized 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The essays are full of grammatical errors or are unclear • The organization of the essays reveals no governing logic or are not comprehensible

Oral exam rubrics

The oral examination will be assessed for content knowledge and use of evidence, command of the historiography, argumentative and analytical skills, and quality of oral response to questioning.

To assess content knowledge and use of evidence, command of the historiography, and argumentative and analytical skills, the same rubrics will be used as for the PhD written exam. The quality of response to questioning will be assessed as follows:

Performance with distinction	Satisfactory performance	Unsatisfactory performance
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student expands upon answers given on the written exam to bring in new material not covered on the original examination • The student is able to respond convincingly and cogently to unexpected questions • The student responds to his/her ideas being challenged by offering original ideas or reframing the terms of the question • The student's responses to questions are elegant and compelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student is able to expand upon his/her answers given on the written exam • The student is able to think on his/her feet and react to unexpected questions • The student reacts constructively to his/her ideas being challenged • Given the constraints of the examination setting, the student is able to answer articulately, clearly, and in a logical fashion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student cannot expand upon answers offered on the written examination • The student struggles to respond to new questions • The student cannot constructively defend his/her ideas • The student cannot respond articulately or clearly to questions
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**Department of History
Written Comps Assessment Form**

Student Name:

Exam Level (MA or PhD):

Date:

Faculty assessor:

Using the Department rubrics, please offer an assessment of the comprehensive examination in the areas indicated below. Note that your assessment should consider the entire examination, but comments on specific fields and answers are welcome. For each category, please indicate if you consider the answer to indicate distinction, satisfactory performance, or unsatisfactory performance.

1) Content knowledge and use of evidence

2) Command of the historiography

3) Argument and analysis

4) Writing and organization

Grade for the examination as a whole (unsatisfactory, satisfactory, or distinction):

**Department of History
PhD Oral Comps Assessment Form**

Student Name:

Date:

Faculty assessor (committee chair):

Using the Department rubrics, please summarize the committee's assessment of the oral component of the comprehensive examination in the areas indicated below. For each category, please indicate if you consider the answer to indicate distinction, satisfactory performance, or unsatisfactory performance. Please give the overall grade for the examination at the bottom.

1) Content knowledge and use of evidence

2) Command of the historiography

3) Argument and analysis

4) Quality of the oral response

5) Any additional comments?

Grade for the oral (unsatisfactory, satisfactory, or distinction):

Overall grade for the examination (unsatisfactory, satisfactory, or distinction, accounting for all assessments of the written exam and committee assessment of the oral):