

HIST 9601: Graduate Capstone in History

Three-credit course

Syllabus and Course Schedule

MA Program Requirement:

Upon nearing completion of degree work, MA candidates in the Graduate History Program are required to pass an oral exam that covers the coursework that they have completed during their studies. The oral examination committee consists of three professors. Candidates present and defend, before their committee, a portfolio of three papers (submitted in triplicate) that they have written in research seminars. Candidates may have no more than six credit hours of coursework pending at the time they attempt this examination. The examination, for which a student must register, will be given each semester, including summers, at times agreed upon by candidates and the history faculty. Prior to enrolling in HIST 9601, the candidate is responsible for contacting and securing a member of the graduate history faculty to supervise their capstone.

Course Description:

The preparation and oral defense of the portfolio of three research papers occurs as part of HIST 9601: Graduate Capstone in History for the History M.A. program. Through the course, faculty guide students in the revision of their papers, general preparation for the oral exam and the final presentation of a portfolio of three papers to the faculty committee. Graduate students enroll in this three-credit hour course during their last semester in the MA program. They enroll with one of the three faculty members with whom they have worked on a research paper. That professor then takes charge of and directs the exam for that student.

Oral Defense:

The exam focuses on the candidate's three research papers, course readings completed with the three faculty members of the committee, reading for their HIST 6000 Historiography course, and any additional reading assigned as oral prep. As the examination is an "oral" process, it is important for candidates to prepare themselves to engage in a scholarly discussion of their papers and readings. Specific questions might engage the relevant historiography, detailed elements of the paper, argumentation, the implications of their argument, the historical context, and anything about related books/articles from Readings seminars or HIST 6000: Historiography course completed by the student. Professors commonly request candidate to complete additional reading in preparation for the orals exam. Candidates will be inquired about those additional readings as well. Examinations typically take 1.5 to 2 hours total. Students may invite others to sit in on the exam as listeners.

Course Schedule and Specific Requirements:

Weeks 1-4 | Initial Meetings & Schedules

At the beginning of the semester when a student has enrolled in HIST 9601, the candidate should

- 1) Meet with the faculty member supervising their capstone course and review the schedule and expectations for the course.
- 2) In the first two weeks of the semester, you must complete two important pieces of paperwork 1) the Candidacy for Degree form and – available on the UCCS Graduate School website, which you filled out then email to Ian Smith to, our Assistant Program submit 2) Diploma Card – ensures that you get a diploma and that you can work at the commencement ceremony. Just fill it out and submit. That card goes to Admissions and Records.
- 3) Within the first month, the candidate should provide all three committee members with a two - to four -page (double spaced) document that:
 - a. summarizes the arguments of each of your papers in 1 - to - 2 paragraph abstracts for each paper;
 - b. identifies any common threads, methodologies, themes, etc. that permeate their work (1-3 paragraphs);
 - c. and discusses what type of historian they are and how their perspective on researching and writing history has changed during their years in the MA program (1-3 paragraphs).
- 4) The student should communicate with each of the professors serving on the candidate's committee and ask if there are any additional readings to the student to be read prior to the course.
- 5) The student should locate their digital copies of their three research papers (or of the first two, if they are writing their third one during that same semester), and begin to read and review for revisions.

Weeks 5-11 | Written Preparation

- 1) The primary work for these weeks for the student is to review, revise, re-write (where needed) their three research papers for their final portfolio.
- 2) Students should also locate and read any additional books assigned by their three professors.
- 3) Five to ten weeks into the semester, in consultation with the candidate's advisor, the candidate should contact the other two members of your committee and schedule the date and time of their oral defense. Email is the ideal format to make these arrangements. Oral exams should be scheduled no later than one week before the end of the semester.
- 4) Students will complete the revision of their three research papers and submit a portfolio of all three to each of the faculty on their committee at least two weeks prior to the scheduled date of the exam.

Week 12-13 | Oral Preparation

- 1) In order to perform well on the examination, the candidate will need to prepare oral responses to their examiners. The student should:

- Review - All prior coursework, course texts, critical historians that you have studied, as well as your three research papers.
- Read - Additional reading books/articles requested by professor as orals examination prep.
- Prepare - An oral presentation that highlights the key elements of your papers, as well as your historical approach.
- Deliver - A thoughtful, deliberate, and focused oral presentation that reveals your professional competence.
- Engage - In a Master's level discussion with the faculty so as to demonstrate that you have a command of the material.

The types of issues that are typically covered in an oral examination include:

- Specifically, research papers' arguments, historiography, research methods, sources, and evaluation of sources.
- Specifically, the major historical themes that emerge from the candidate's work.
- In general, the candidate's historical approach (and methods) and intellectual positioning within the discipline.
- In general, the candidate's ability to articulate arguments in the range of assigned course readings and oral preparation readings, particularly as relevant to their own work.
- In general, the candidate's self-reflection on their progression as a historian and how their research has evolved.
- At the Oral Defense, committee members will evaluate the written dossier and oral defense using the Core Competencies for the MA History Program document, available on our department website.

Weeks 14-15 | The Oral Defense

- 1) At the schedule date and time, the three-member faculty committee will convene for the oral defense of portfolio of research papers.
- 2) At the start of the examination, the candidate will give a brief overview of their papers and describe their growth through the program. After which, each professor will typically ask a few question about each paper and/or broader theoretical and historical issues.
- 3) After completing the oral examination, the candidate will be asked to leave the room and the faculty will vote to pass or not pass the candidate. The final course grade for HIST 9601 is determined by both the oral exam performance and the overall impression of final, re-edited, papers submitted for the exam. Faculty evaluate the written dossier and oral defense using the Core Competencies for the MA History Program document, available on our department website.

After the Oral Defense and once your transcript is completed, you will be awarded your degree. Please consider walking across the stage at the commencement ceremonies held at the end of the semester.

Congratulations on finishing your Master's Degree in History from UCCS!