History, M.A.

The Department of History offers two program options for students interested in earning a master's degree in history—the terminal M.A. track and the M.A./Ph.D. track.

Students interested in graduate work may obtain a copy of the current Guide to Graduate Study from the Department of History website. The guide is revised annually to include the latest faculty listings, research interests of faculty members, detailed regulations on study toward advanced degrees, and other information for students.

Requirements

The Master of Arts program in history requires a minimum of 30 s.h. of graduate credit and is offered with two options: one for students who plan to work toward the Ph.D., the other for students who do not. The two plans differ mainly in their concentration in fields; the Ph.D. track emphasizes development of research capabilities culminating in the essay; the non-Ph.D. track stresses breadth of learning.

The M.A. with Ph.D. track requires completion of a research essay. Students must earn at least 24 s.h. of the minimum of 30 s.h. required for the degree in history or related field courses numbered 3000 or above, including at least two seminars, or one seminar and one readings course numbered 6000 or above. One seminar or readings course must be taken in each of the first two semesters of residence. Students must earn 12 s.h. in the area of their essay topic and at least 6 s.h. in a second division, including either a seminar or a readings course numbered 6000 or above. Students in this track are required to take HIST:6001 First-Year Graduate Colloquium during their first semester in the program; HIST:6002 History Research Methods must be completed prior to earning the M.A. degree.

The essay in the major division must be based on original research and should be approximately 10,000 to 15,000 words long. It usually begins as a term paper for the seminar in the major division and is completed the following semester under the supervisor's guidance. Students defend the final M.A. essay to a committee of three faculty members. The finished product should emulate the character of articles in learned journals, just as the Ph.D. dissertation takes the form of a full-length scholarly monograph.

Requirements for the M.A. with non-Ph.D. track are similar to those for the Ph.D. track. Students must earn 24 s.h. of the minimum of 30 s.h. required for the degree in history or related field courses numbered 3000 or above. Students in this track are required to take HIST:6001 First-Year Graduate Colloquium during their first semester in the program. They earn 12 s.h. in one major division of history and must include at least one readings or seminar course numbered 6000 or above. Students earn an additional 12 s.h. in history by taking 6 s.h. in each of two other divisions of history, or by taking 6 s.h. in one other division of history plus 6 s.h. in a related department; the additional 12 s.h. in history course work must include at least one readings or seminar course numbered 6000 or above. Students in the non-Ph.D. track are given the option to take an exam in their major division of history or write an essay; either is defended to a committee of three faculty members.

Admission

Applicants must meet the admission requirements of the Graduate College; see the Manual of Rules and Regulations of the Graduate College.

Applicants must submit academic transcripts and Graduate Record Examination (GRE) General Test scores. They also must submit examples of original writing to the history department, such as a term paper, a seminar paper, or an honors thesis; letters of recommendation from three persons familiar with the student's past academic work; and a one- or two-page personal statement of the applicant's purpose for doing graduate work. Applicants submit their application online; see History (M.A. or Ph.D.) on the University of Iowa Graduate Admissions website. All application materials are due by January 15 for entry the following August.

Career Advancement

Graduate study in history prepares students for occupations such as high school or college teaching, publishing, commercial research, foundations and nongovernmental organizations, and government or other public service. With additional specialized training, students may become qualified for careers in historical site preparation and display, and archival, library, or museum work. Some choose to pursue the joint Master of Arts/Juris Doctor program, which leads to degrees in both law and history; see the Juris Doctor (College of Law) section of the Catalog for information about the J.D. degree.

The University of Iowa's history graduates who earn an M.A. experience remarkable job placement rates, depending on their area of study. Graduate and Postdoctoral Career Services offers multiple resources to assist students in locating opportunities and preparing for jobs upon completion of the program.