History, M.A.

The Department of History offers a master’s degree program in history. Students interested in graduate work may obtain a copy of the current Guide to Graduate Study in history 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, including at least 24 s.h. in history coursework numbered 3000 or above. The M.A. is offered with two options: one that emphasizes the development of research capabilities culminating in a research essay that is designed to prepare students for doctoral studies, and one that stresses breadth of learning through coursework.

Students are required to take HIST:6002 Introduction to Graduate Studies in History: Historiography and Methods during their first semester in the program. They must take 12 s.h. of coursework (one course numbered 6000 or above) in one major division of history; and 6 s.h. each in two other divisions (with at least one course numbered 6000 or above in one of the two divisions), either in history or a related field. Students work with their primary faculty advisor to determine appropriate coursework.

Students who choose the coursework option must take an exam in their major division of history, which they defend to a committee of three faculty members.

Students who choose the research option must complete and defend a research essay to a committee of three faculty members. The essay must be based on original research and should be approximately 25-35 pages long. It is completed under the guidance of a faculty advisor. The finished essay should emulate the character of articles in learned journals, just as the Ph.D. dissertation takes the form of a full-length scholarly monograph.

Combined Programs

Combined M.A./J.D.

The Department of History and the College of Law offer a combined Master of Arts in history/Juris Doctor. The combined degree program allows students to count a limited amount of credit toward both degrees. Separate application to each degree program is required. Applicants must be admitted to both programs before they may be admitted to the combined degree program.

For information about the J.D., see Juris Doctor, J.D. (College of Law) in the Catalog.

Admission

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

Applicants must submit academic transcripts and Graduate Record Examination (GRE) General Test scores. They also must submit examples of original writing to the Department of History, 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 students choose to pursue the combined Master of Arts/Juris Doctor program which leads to degrees in both law and history; see Combined Programs [p. 1] in this section of the Catalog.

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.