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 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 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 course work.

Students that pursue the research option 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 a major division of history and at least 6 s.h. in a second division, including either a seminar or a readings course numbered 6000 or above. Students are required to take HIST:6001 First-Year Graduate Colloquium during their first semester in the program and HIST:6002 History Research Methods during their second semester.

The research option requires completion of a research essay. The essay must be based on original research and should be approximately 10,000 to 15,000 words long. It is completed under the guidance of a faculty supervisor and must be defended to a committee of three faculty members. 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.

Students who choose the course work option 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 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 must take an exam in their major division of history, which is defended to a committee of three faculty members.

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 the Juris Doctor (College of Law) section of the Catalog.

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 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.