

History PhD

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

Learn more about the Doctor of Philosophy in History.

About the Program

Temple University offers a varied and flexible program for graduate training in History on the PhD level in the Philadelphia area, which is rich in historical archives and museums. While general requirements ensure that every graduate is familiar with the basic issues of History and the latest approaches of professional historians, the program focuses on two thematic areas: Environments, Cities, and Cultures; and War, Empire, and Society. The thrust of the PhD program is to prepare professional historians who are equipped to function in academia, public history, government service or other related careers.

Time Limit for Degree Completion: 7 years

Campus Location: Main, Center City

Students take many of their courses at the Center City Campus, while preliminary examinations and dissertation defenses are conducted on Main Campus.

Full-Time/Part-Time Status: Students are required to complete the PhD program on a full-time basis.

Interdisciplinary Study: The program encourages interdisciplinary coursework, research and interactions among faculty and students.

Affiliation(s): The History program at Temple is affiliated with the Biographical Dictionary of Pennsylvania Legislators, the Center for the Study of Force and Diplomacy, The Myer and Rosaline Feinstein Center for American Jewish History, the Social Science Data Library, and Temple's Urban Archives.

Areas of Specialization: Faculty members specialize and offer substantial coursework in anti-colonial movements, cultural history, diplomatic history, gender, imperialism, international history, military history, political history, race and ethnicity, religious history, sexuality and social history. Thus, two thematic areas constitute the focus of the PhD program:

- Environments, Cities, and Cultures
- War, Empire, and Society

Although training is offered in many different historical eras at Temple, most doctoral students write dissertations that focus on the eighteenth, nineteenth or twentieth century. Most, but certainly not all, of the History Department's doctoral students focus on the history of North America.

Job Prospects: The program is primarily dedicated to producing well-trained historians who work in academia and public history.

Non-Matriculated Student Policy: Non-matriculated students are permitted to take up to 9 credits of coursework. These courses can be transferred into the degree program after their admission only if they earn a grade of "B" or higher.

Financing Opportunities:

Teaching Assistantships:

Teaching Assistants are required to teach or assist in teaching at Temple. Duties include 20 hours of service per week. Teaching Assistants receive tuition waivers for all courses taken during the Fall and Spring terms (up to 9 credits) that contribute to the student's program, plus a stipend and health insurance benefits. All Teaching Assistants are doctoral students.

Teaching Assistantships can be renewed for up to four years. Decisions regarding Teaching Assistantships are made annually in the Spring term. New applicants for the PhD program are automatically considered. Advanced PhD students who are not currently Teaching Assistants and who wish to be considered should send an application to the Chair of the History Department by January 31.

Fellowships:

Presidential and University Fellowships provide support for four years. The Graduate School funds Years 1 and 4; the College of Liberal Arts funds Years 2 and 3. In addition to free tuition and health coverage, these fellowships carry a stipend. While on fellowship, the student must take a minimum of 9 credits each term during the academic year. Students are nominated for a fellowship by the department upon admission to the program.

Fellowships from the Center for the Humanities at Temple (CHAT):

CHAT Senior Doctoral Fellowships provide support to advanced doctoral students pursuing research in the humanities or humanistic social sciences in any school or college at Temple. Fellows receive funding for full-time work on their dissertation. This includes a stipend, tuition, benefits and \$500 in research funding for the term. Fellows receive office space at the Center and participate in the bi-weekly Fellows Seminar.

CHAT Graduate Teaching Fellowships provide support for research and offer the opportunity to teach innovative and interdisciplinary humanities courses. CHAT Graduate Teaching Fellowships are configured as 75% directed research or creative activity in the applicant's area of interest and 25% teaching for a course of wide humanistic concern related to that interest, as it is tied to the focus of particular departments or programs.

Our students are highly competitive for CHAT fellowships.

Dissertation Completion Grant:

Students may apply for a dissertation completion grant in their last term before graduation. Applications are due in the History Graduate Office on the second Friday in March and the second Friday in October, which is one week prior to the Graduate School deadline. The Director of Graduate Studies or the Department Chair submits a letter of nomination on behalf of each applicant. Departmental nomination does not, however, guarantee the nominee receipt of the dissertation completion grant. Note that receipt of this grant disqualifies a student from receiving further financial support from Temple University.

Appointment as Part-Time Instructor:

PhD candidates are eligible for appointment as part-time instructors. The Department Chair, after consulting with the Director of Graduate Studies, is responsible for these appointments. Consideration is given to whether the candidate has assisted in the course and, if so, consultation is made with the faculty whom they assisted. Priority is given to qualified students who have not had the opportunity previously to teach independently.

Awards and Grants:

The History Department and the Center for the Study of Force and Diplomacy provide several awards and grants annually. For more information on these, see <https://www.cla.temple.edu/history/student-life/>.

Admission Requirements and Deadlines

Application Deadline:

Fall: December 15

Applications are evaluated together after the deadline date.

APPLY ONLINE to this graduate program.

Letters of Reference:

Number Required: 3

From Whom: Letters of recommendation should be obtained from instructors or other individuals who are familiar with the applicant's academic work.

Coursework Required for Admission Consideration: Applicants are expected to have majored or minored in History at the undergraduate level or to have received an MA in History. Those who lack either of these qualifications are considered on a case-by-case basis.

Master's Degree in Discipline/Related Discipline: A master's degree is not required.

Bachelor's Degree in Discipline/Related Discipline: All applicants must present credentials that are the equivalent of the appropriate baccalaureate degree at Temple University.

Statement of Goals: In approximately 500 to 750 words, share a clear statement of your interest in the doctoral program in History at Temple University and how Temple's program meets your needs, your major historical interests, career goals, and academic and research achievements, if applicable.

Standardized Test Scores:

GRE: Optional. Scores may be submitted if available.

Applicants who earned their baccalaureate degree from an institution where the language of instruction was other than English, with the exception of those who subsequently earned a master's degree at a U.S. institution, must report scores for a standardized test of English that meet these minimums:

- TOEFL iBT: 79
- IELTS Academic: 6.5
- PTE Academic: 53

Writing Sample: The writing sample should demonstrate the applicant's ability to conduct research and write a scholarly paper. It should be fully referenced according to a professional, scholarly style manual and should not exceed 30 pages in length.

Program Requirements

General Program Requirements:

Number of Credits Required to Earn the Degree: 39

Required Courses:

Doctoral students must take at least 11 courses in the History Department, and may elect to take courses outside the department with the permission of the Director of Graduate Studies. A minimum of 10 courses must be completed before the general examination can be taken. Students should consult with their advisor for specific field requirements for the following required courses:

- One methodology seminar [HIST 8714 Historical Methods (3 s.h.)], taken in the first year of study in the first academic term.
- Two 9000-level research/writing seminars (currently HIST 9208 Research Seminar repeated for a total of 6 credits) in which a substantial piece of original research is produced; one course must be taken in the first year, preferably in the second term.
- Eight 5000- and 8000-level reading and literature review courses (24 credits), with the course offerings coordinated by the Director of Graduate Studies; four of the courses are recommended to be taken in the student's area of interest.
- 6 credits of HIST 9994 Preliminary Examination Preparation, HIST 9998 Pre-Dissertation Research, and HIST 9999 Dissertation Research.

Language Examination: All students must show competence in at least one foreign language. To demonstrate competence, a student must pass a short translation exam administered, in most cases, by the University's language departments. The dissertation advisor determines whether competence in a second language is required. The language requirement must be satisfied prior to taking the general examination. For doctoral students in American History, the language requirement may be waived at the discretion of the advisor and with the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies.

Culminating Events:

Preliminary Examination:

All doctoral students take a preliminary exam in the September of their third term of study. The preliminary exam is a take-home exam consisting of one synthetic question covering one of two areas: either Environments, Cities, and Cultures (Track I) or War, Empire, and Society (Track II), each with its respective list of 50 books for students to study. Students choose one area/track and, at the exam, choose one of two questions in that area. They have one week to write an essay of no more than 6,000 words. In the preceding Spring term, the exam committee is responsible for conducting a workshop with first-year doctoral students in which the expectations of the preliminary exam are discussed.

The exam date is set, and the exam itself is graded by a pair of Graduate Faculty in each area who have been appointed by the Director of Graduate Studies. The exam is graded blindly by the exam committee. Doctoral students who twice fail the preliminary exam are dismissed from the program.

General Examination:

Doctoral students who pass the preliminary exam proceed to the general exam, which consists of three fields, each guided by a different member of the faculty. Note that the dissertation advisor should be the examiner in either the Geographic and/or Chronologically Distinct Field or the Thematic Field:

- Geographic and/or Chronologically Distinct Field – The reading list should include up to 75-80 books and articles that examine a broad field in terms of time and space, e.g., 20th-Century U.S. History, Atlantic World, Latin American or Caribbean History, or Southeast Asian History. Students designate a member of the Graduate Faculty to examine them in this field and collaborate with that faculty member in creating the reading list.
- Thematic Field – The reading list is made up of 50 books and key articles that explore a more focused and topical area, such as Urban History, Labor History, Diplomatic History, or Queer Studies. Students designate a member of the Graduate Faculty to examine them in this field and collaborate with that faculty member in creating the reading list.
- Teaching Field – Students submit a detailed and largely original syllabus, ideally for an undergraduate class, covering either the geographic field (a survey class) or the thematic field (a more specialized, upper-level class). They designate a faculty member to lead a discussion of the syllabus. The other two members of the exam committee are welcome to participate in this discussion. Students should submit the syllabus to all three members of the examining committee 72 hours before the exam.

Doctoral students typically complete the general exam in their fifth term. This oral exam is two hours long. All three members of the exam committee leading the exam in the Geographic/Chronological Field, Thematic Field, and Teaching Field need to be present at the exam. Students are asked to discuss issues pertinent to their prepared fields of study and teaching. To pass the exam, all three members of the committee must approve of the student's performance. Students may retake the oral exam if they fail. After failing twice, students are dismissed from the program.

University-wide regulations governing examinations when a PhD student matriculated apply throughout their career until the degree is received. If departmental or college regulations change, the student similarly follows the rules in place at the time of their matriculation unless they obtain approval of the advisory committee and written permission from the Graduate Council to follow more recent requirements.

Students preparing to take their general examination should confirm times and dates with their other committee members and the Graduate Administrator. All parties involved should receive confirmation of the time, date and room well in advance of the examination.

Dissertation Committee:

After passing the general exam and in consultation with the primary advisor, students select the members of their Doctoral Advisory Committee. The Doctoral Advisory Committee is formed to oversee the student's doctoral research and is comprised of at least three Graduate Faculty members, two of whom are from the History Department. The student's primary advisor functions as the chair of this committee and is responsible for overseeing and guiding the student's progress, coordinating the responses of committee members, and informing the student of their academic progress.

Further, either during the process of writing the dissertation prospectus, or at some time following its approval, students, again in consultation with their primary advisor, select a qualified external reader of the dissertation. The external reader may either be on the faculty of a Temple University department other than History or a member of the faculty of a college/university other than Temple. Once the external reader has agreed to serve in the capacity (and received approval from the Graduate School), that person is added to the Dissertation Examining Committee. The total membership of the Dissertation Examining Committee may exceed four faculty (the minimum being the three Graduate Faculty members who approved the prospectus plus the external reader). A majority of the committee's members, however, must be Temple University History Department Graduate Faculty.

Prospectus:

All doctoral candidates must prepare a dissertation prospectus in close consultation with the advisor prior to advancing to PhD candidacy. This document, usually 15 to 20 pages in length, must achieve the following goals:

1. Identify the major research question of the dissertation.
2. Situate the dissertation in the existing scholarly literature.
3. Lay out a coherent research strategy that identifies the archives and sources that will be used.
4. Include a timeline for research and writing of the dissertation.

The prospectus defense is a public event, open to History Department faculty and doctoral students. At this event, the doctoral candidate makes a brief presentation lasting approximately 10 to 20 minutes, outlining the contents of the prospectus. A copy of the dissertation prospectus is made available at least one week before the defense for examination by the faculty. During the defense, faculty and students engage the candidate in vigorous conversation about the proposed project.

The prospectus must be defended before the end of the sixth term. Failure to defend the prospectus by the end of the sixth term is grounds for dismissal from the doctoral program. At the end of the defense, the candidate's Doctoral Advisory Committee meets privately to vote on advancing the student to PhD candidacy.

Dissertation:

Dissertations must be written and defended within seven years of matriculation. Students who have made satisfactory progress toward completing their dissertation can apply for an extension of up to three additional years. Therefore, the maximum total time permitted for completing the PhD program is ten years. Students in the PhD program must register each term until all requirements for the degree have been fulfilled unless they receive a leave of absence.

All dissertations must be prepared in accordance with the guidelines of the *Dissertation and Thesis Handbook*, found at <https://grad.temple.edu/resources/dissertation-thesis-handbook>. Students should arrange a procedure for submitting draft chapters for review to their primary advisor and other members of the Doctoral Advisory Committee.

When the chair and a majority of the Dissertation Examining Committee agree that the written dissertation is of sufficient quality to be defended, the student should arrange with the Committee a time for the oral defense to be held. The student should then notify the Graduate Administrator of the proposed defense date. The oral defense must be publicly announced in writing at least ten days in advance of the date of the defense and must be open to the public. A copy of the dissertation is made available to the department at least one week before the defense for examination by the faculty.

An Oral Defense Chair must be identified. This person must be a Temple University presidential faculty member and may not be the chair of the student's Dissertation Examining Committee.

In the event that a member of the Dissertation Examining Committee cannot attend the defense, teleconferencing or videoconferencing is arranged. This arrangement must be approved by the Graduate School prior to the defense. No more than one member of the Dissertation Examining Committee can be physically absent from the defense.

The dissertation defense is a public event, open to History Department faculty and doctoral students. At this event, the doctoral candidate makes a brief presentation, outlining the main argument of the dissertation. During the defense, faculty and students engage the candidate in a vigorous conversation about the project. At the end of the defense, the Dissertation Examining Committee meets privately to vote on the candidate's performance. The candidate is notified immediately of the decision.

Contacts

Department Web Address:

<https://www.temple.edu/academics/degree-programs/history-phd-la-hist-phd>

Department Information:

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Philadelphia, PA 19122-6089
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215-204-7461

Mailing Address for Application Materials:

<https://apply.temple.edu/CLA/>

Department Contacts:

Director of Graduate Studies:

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