

Graduate Student Handbook

History Area - Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi

Welcome

Learning about the past in an exciting endeavor. It also involves more than just telling stories. Professional historians use archives and the work of other scholars to develop their own understanding of the past. They research, analyze, and offer original interpretations of the past in rigorous and clearly-written work. As graduate students in history, you will do the same.

The Master's degree in History is structured to introduce students to these critical tasks. In your coursework and independent studies, you will:

- examine historical evidence.
- read and interpret academic scholarship.
- undertake archival research.
- confront and discuss ideas about the past with your peers and mentor.

The history faculty at Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi (A&M-CC) are committed to these goals and to the students enrolled in the History Masters program. Our degree plan offers a wide variety of graduate courses, provides a roadmap for students to follow to graduation and professional opportunities in history, and helps students to understand the past on its own terms.

The purpose of this document is to help our students successfully complete their Masters degree program in History at A&M-CC. The handbook is designed to answer basic yet important questions about the degree requirements, competencies, and final completion of a Masters degree. The document is divided into two sections.

- **Section One** contains a practical description of the degree requirements and the specific worksheets needed to complete your chosen degree path.
- **Section Two** explains the competencies you will develop in History graduate courses and the ways that graduate students can become more active and professionally engaged.

This document is intended as a useful guide to get started or to assess your progress. The provisions of this document do not constitute a contract, expressed or implied, between any applicant, student or faculty member of A&M-CC or the Texas A&M University System. The document is for informational purposes only.

For general information about admissions, scholarship, financial aid, and student services, visit the College of Graduate Studies website, : <http://gradcollege.tamucc.edu/index.html>.

For program information about admission, courses, program requirements, and exit requirements, consult the History section of the graduate catalog at <http://catalog.tamucc.edu/index.php>

To learn more about our program, contact the History Graduate Program Coordinator, whose contact information may be found at our departmental website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/humanities/history/history_graduate_program.html

Section One: Completing the History Graduate Program

Degree Requirements (Exam and Thesis Tracks)

The History MA requires students to complete thirty (30) hours of graduate coursework.

All students must complete their respective requirements with a 3.0 GPA or better, and can earn no more than one “C” grade in their graduate work.

Two Track Exit Requirements

Based on a student’s career objectives, there are two tracks that history graduate students may pursue to complete their degree: exam and thesis.

Both tracks provide advanced historical content and a comprehensive overview of the research and writing methods used by professional historians.

Both tracks require students to identify a primary advisor and, with that advisor, organize an individualized graduate committee.

- The exam track culminates in a comprehensive exit exam.
- The thesis track culminates in a written thesis.

The exam track is designed for students for whom the M.A. is the final or terminal degree. With the exam track students must pass a written comprehensive examination during the term of expected graduation. The comprehensive exam requires individualized study based upon a student’s historical interest and course preparation. The student’s three graduate committee members will construct the questions from an agreed upon reading list. The student’s graduate advisor will administer the examination, and the committee will evaluate the examination, designating the performance as a “pass with distinction,” “pass,” or “fail.” Any student who fails the comprehensive examination may retake it once within one calendar year. Failure to pass the examination a second time means that the student will be terminated from the program.

The thesis track is designed for students who intend to pursue further academic study beyond the M.A. program at A&M-CC (i.e., the M.A. is not the final or terminal degree sought by the student). Students intending to enter a history doctoral program must write a thesis. The history M.A. thesis requires substantial commitment and ongoing consultation with the student’s graduate advisor. The finished project must demonstrate historical knowledge, analytical ability, and research skills. Students on a thesis track will also be required to demonstrate competence in a second language, either by having successfully completed two years of course work in an approved language as an undergraduate, or by successful completion of a language exam.

Students are expected to complete all requirements for the comprehensive exam or defend their thesis at least one month before scheduled graduation.

CORE REQUIREMENTS

HIST 5310 Historiography (3hrs)

HIST 5320 Research Methods (3 hrs)

These classes are each offered every other year, typically in the Fall semester. Please make sure to complete these core requirements when they are offered.

All other classes are electives.

You may also seek to take a DIS with a specific faculty member if a particular topic has not been offered by the History area (within the areas of specialization of the History area faculty). It is recommended that DIS be taken in the second year of graduate school.

You may also take non-History courses, after approval from the Graduate Coordinator

- 6 hrs maximum for the exam track
- 3 hrs maximum for the thesis track

Please note every incoming student is automatically on the exam track until they determine or confirm their exit track when they reach 12 hrs of classes.

Please be aware that the following matriculation applies for full-time student.

If you intend on being a part-time student, please be aware that you will take far longer than two academic years into complete your coursework and requirements.

In that case, make sure to:

- Register for the core classes
- Meet with the Graduate Coordinator in your first semester to devise a matriculation guide (or degree plan).
- Meet with the Graduate Coordinator once a semester to evaluate your progress towards completion of your degree.

The Matriculation Guide (degree plan) is a recommendation. Changes may be made with the agreement of the graduate coordinator and Faculty Mentor or Advisor.

Matriculation Guide

EXAM TRACK

30 hrs

Comprehensive exams

YEAR 1

Fall (6 hrs)

Meet with Graduate Coordinator

Faculty Mentor assigned

Take one core course

Take one history elective

Spring (6 hrs)

Take two electives

Determine exit track: Select a primary faculty advisor (chair of exam committee)

Summer (3 hrs)

Take elective if offered

YEAR 2

Fall (6 hrs)

Take one core course

Take one elective

Formalize an exam committee (including chair and two examiners) and begin preparing comprehensive exams

Spring (6 hrs)

Take two electives

Formalize a timetable to take comprehensive exams over the summer

Summer (3 hrs)

Take DIS or elective (if offered)

Take Comprehensive exams at least one month before August graduation

Matriculation Guide

THESIS TRACK

30 hrs (24 hrs of coursework + 6 hrs of Hist 5395 thesis)

Foreign language requirement

Thesis

YEAR 1

Fall (6 hrs)

Meet with Graduate Coordinator

Faculty Mentor assigned

Take one core course

Take one history elective

Spring (6 hrs)

Take two electives

Summer (3 hrs)

Fulfill language requirement

YEAR 2

Fall (6 hrs)

Take one core course

Take one elective

Determine exit track: select Thesis Advisor

Spring (6 hrs.)

Take two electives

Select thesis committee (2 faculty)

Summer (3 hrs)

Take three hours of 5395

Write and defend thesis proposal

YEAR 2.5 - 3

Take minimum of three hours of 5395

Write and defend thesis

Graduate Students' Survival Guide: What you need to know

What is Graduate History?

Graduate history concentrates on developing the basic tools of professional historians. These include developing a defensible historical argument (or thesis), identifying and using primary sources, and understanding and using secondary sources.

What is an Argument?

An argument is a statement or conclusion reached by a historian about the past. A thesis is central to all professional historical writing.

Examples of historical arguments include:

- Economic change and industrialization determined the shape of modern American society.
- Slavery should be considered as the central cause of the American Civil War.
- Environmental realities explain the place of South Texas in the early history of the state.

Students will practice developing a thesis in almost all of their history graduate work (such as term papers, short essays, and, for those pursuing a thesis track, the master's essay).

What are Primary and Secondary Sources?

To “prove” or effectively demonstrate the soundness of a thesis, historians rely on primary and secondary sources. We want to be shown the evidence for what is argued.

- Primary sources are the artifacts (often written, but also found in other formats such as maps, photos, statistics, and many others) that record historical events *at the time* and by those who participated in these societies.
- Secondary sources are conclusions reached by others, often professional historians, about the meaning and importance of historical events. Scholarly articles, books, and documentaries are good examples of these secondary sources. Secondary sources are essential in constructing a new and original argument; after all, it is hard to say something new and original if we do not know what others have already said.

What is Historiography?

The study of the methods and approaches taken by other scholars in these secondary sources is called historiography.

Historiography actually refers to two different approaches to the past. In one, historiography refers to the vast literature about any given topic, such as all books and essays written about slavery, or Hitler, or the Vietnam War.

In another sense, historiography refers to scholars' philosophical approach to history; how they approach the past and the decisions they make in ranking the influence of historical change. An

obvious example of this is with the American Civil War. Was the conflict spurred by an “irrepressible conflict” between two very different economic systems or the result of a “blundering generation” of politicians unable to maintain a national compromise over the issue of racial slavery? Both approaches make assumptions that graduate students must work to understand and clarify if they are to better understand their own approach to the past.

Citations

The history area requires all graduate students who write papers and/or a Master’s thesis to use the Chicago Manual of Style (also known as the “Turabian” style) for all citations, including notes, bibliography, and paper formats. We will not accept finished written work using any other citation method.

A copy of the History Area Style Guide can be found on the History Department website.

Graduate School Culture and the Graduate Community

Graduate school is also about joining a *community of scholars interested in the past*. Historians like to engage each other in debating the meaning of historical events, the implications and contingencies of these changes, and the ideas of others. As graduate students enter into this community they need to understand that the culture is slightly different from those not concerned with ideas and evidence.

In most graduate classes, students and instructors will read a common set of documents (often a complete book or series of articles) and come together to debate the merits of the various arguments – not to simply agree on a “right” answer. Often, disagreements emerge over one’s philosophical approach to the topic (do you think economics are more important than gender, for example), the result being that we examine our own assumptions, modify our conclusions, and strengthen our overall appreciation of history.

In addition to your courses, the best way to absorb this graduate school culture is by participating in the many events held on campus. These include outside speakers, informal talks, and other presentations.

The best way to get connected to these events is through the history area listserv. Subscribe to the list by sending an email to Anthony.Quiroz@tamucc.edu.

Notifications of upcoming events and other information will also be periodically posted on the Tamucc History Department Facebook page. The page can be found with the following link: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Tamucc-History-Department/171133686252117?ref=ts&fref=ts>

Another important electronic resource is H-Net.

H-Net is an international interdisciplinary organization of scholars and teachers dedicated to developing the enormous educational potential of the Internet and the World Wide Web. Their edited lists and web sites publish peer reviewed essays, multimedia materials, and discussion for colleagues and the interested public. H-Net can be accessed at: <http://www.h-net.org/>

You should also meet with your advisor on a regular basis to discuss your progress in the program, your administrative concerns and problems. In a graduate program you will develop a close relationship with your advisor, other faculty, and, of course, your fellow grad students. The best way to squeeze the most out of your time in graduate school is to keep an open mind, follow the advice of your faculty, ponder the potential value of the viewpoints of students with whom you disagree, and question not just the values of others, but your own as well.

Success in the Classroom

Reading, Writing, Communicating, and Critical Thinking

All potential graduate students must understand that graduate classes differ *significantly* from undergraduate classes. In graduate history classes there will be few, if any, exams, and virtually no formal lectures (where professors deliver a set of lectures and students take notes). Instead, students are expected to drive the course. The professor acts as a guide, pointing them in the right direction through the syllabus, assigned readings, and graded events, but ultimately it is the student who “makes or breaks” the value of any course.

Your reading load in graduate history classes will be significantly higher than you are accustomed to. Expect to read a minimum of one book per week per class. In some instances you will also have to read a series of articles. Not only will you have to read more, you will be expected to read at a deeper level than you have in the past. You will have to understand books in terms of their arguments, their use of sources (primary and secondary), their relationship to other books on the same topic, and eventually their relationship to your own research.

The graduate classroom is driven by student discussion of the assigned readings and their own writings. The professor does not lecture, but facilitates discussion. You must therefore come to class having read all assigned material and prepared to talk about it critically and at length. You should feel free to express your own analysis in class, but be sure that your comments are well-thought out and well informed, especially by the assigned readings. The classroom should be a pleasant, exciting, and rewarding experience. Students are expected to be respectful of each other in demeanor, tone, and behavior, and consequently, rude or inconsiderate behavior and remarks will not be tolerated. Out of respect for the professor and fellow classmates it is a good idea to turn cell phones off and not use laptop computers in class unless allowed by the instructor.

You will also develop your writing skills. Graduate work requires clear and uncomplicated writing. You will learn to strip your writing of ambiguous language, weak arguments, and the passive voice. Ultimately, in-class discussion and written assignments are exercises in effectively

communicating your ideas to others.

Critical thinking forms the basis for your engagement in reading, discussing, and writing. Where you once may have passively read historical documents (assuming it “must” be true because it was found in a book), you now will critically (not negatively) question authors of essays and books. When sharing your ideas you must think them through and choose carefully your words to make sure that you convey your meaning clearly and unambiguously. Most of the writing you produce in our graduate program will be historiographical papers, research papers, and book reviews. Some faculty may also ask for reaction papers, outlines, bibliographies, annotated bibliographies, research papers, and other assignments.

Research Papers

Research papers at the graduate level are longer (generally 20+ pages) and involve higher expectations for original thought. Students must employ primary sources to tell their stories, and use secondary literature to offer context. Students must also locate their own work in the literature and explain the import of their contribution.

Book Reviews

Book reviews are not book reports. Reports simply prove to a reader that the student read a given book. A review locates that book’s place in the historiography, explains its arguments, use of sources, and overall effectiveness. A review does not comment on whether a book was “fun” to read. Rather, it focuses seriously on the ways in which the author was or was not persuasive. Please consult with your instructor, your faculty advisor, or professional history journals for examples of good book reviews.

Outlines, Reaction Papers, Bibliographies

These are somewhat self-explanatory. Your instructor will give you specific guidelines for such assignments. The only thing worth expanding upon here is the concept of the annotated bibliography. Requirements will range from professor to professor, but they should all include grouping books and articles by theoretical perspective, type of argument, topic and so forth. Each should also ask for a discussion (usually a few sentences) of the topic, argument, and contribution of each source. Embedded in such an assignment is the expectation that the student will learn to think and write critically about the various works.

The Exam Track

Some students will choose to complete the program via the use of comprehensive examinations. This method is preferable for students who plan to end their study of history at the M.A. level. As soon as the student has decided upon the exam track, they should choose an advisor whose specialization most closely matches their own learning interests.

The student should then consult with that advisor to choose two more committee members. While there is no stipulation that a committee have three members, this has been the general trend in the past. One may, in special instances, choose a committee member from outside the university as long as the individual has proper credentials and is acceptable to the rest of the committee and the graduate program director.

Comprehensive exams are comprised of three written examinations, each over a separate topic in history (for example, Mexican American, Civil War, Gilded Age, U.S. Since World War II, etc.). Once a student decides upon the comprehensive examination route, he or she should meet immediately with the members of the committee and draw up a readings list. Generally, the faculty assigns 25 to 50 books and articles per topic. Over the course of your graduate studies, you will have read assigned works that could constitute the bulk of these books and articles. As the student reads through this list and prepares for the examination, they should meet regularly with all members of the committee to ensure that they are on the right track and focusing properly.

Oral examinations are optional, depending on the composition of the committee and its chair's desires. Generally, the comprehensive examinations should be taken at the near completion of all coursework (but at least one month before scheduled graduation). A student may take up to six hours of Directed Independent Study in order to prepare for examinations.

The Thesis Track

Students who pursue further graduate education in history (to earn a Ph.D.) should strongly consider taking the thesis track. The process for forming a thesis committee is not that different from forming one for comprehensive examinations. Students should think carefully about their topic and choose as their chair the one among the faculty whose expertise most closely fits their research interests. The other members should be chosen based on their potential to contribute the strength of the final product. Again, an outside person may be chosen, but only after consultation with the committee and the graduate program director.

After a committee is formed, such details are worked out as the viability of the proposal, timeline for completion, role of the various committee members, and process for final distribution and defense. Generally, students will take six or more hours of thesis credit to complete research and writing of the thesis.

Defending Your Thesis

Upon completion to the satisfaction of the committee chair, the student will then distribute final copies of the thesis to all committee members and prepare for the defense. At the defense three things may happen. The student will "pass with distinction," "pass," or "fail." The student who fails will be given an opportunity to schedule another defense. In such instances revisions may or may not be required. If the student defends and fails a second time they will be terminated from the program.

Be forewarned that writing the thesis is a challenging intellectual assignment. Not only is it difficult to find adequate primary and secondary sources for a given topic, but organizing one's thoughts and arguments into a lucid presentation is far more difficult than many students imagine. With the thesis, you will be proving that you can master one specific set of literature and speak to it confidently and with substance. The writing at this point must be clear and precise. You will receive guidance and instruction from your chair and committee, but the responsibility of effectively responding to these suggestions remains with the graduate student.

The thesis defense generally takes ninety minutes to two hours. During this meeting the student must defend her arguments and use of sources. Assuming that the research is sound, committee members will not generally ask narrow questions about a single page or quotation, but rather more global questions about the importance of your work. How does it "speak" to what others have written? Why should non-specialists read your work? What kinds of sources did you use and why are these critical to answering your thesis? Understand that the thesis defense is not simply the "last hoop" through which you must jump. It is a serious undertaking that requires serious and careful consideration.

University Standards and Policies for Graduate Students

For the most current information, please consult the A&M-CC Student Handbook, the Graduate School, and the College of Liberal Arts standards. These and other policies can be found at the University website: www.tamucc.edu

Time Limit for Completion of the Degree

The graduate history program currently (as of Spring 2007) offers six graduate hours per semester. Considering that the degree requires 30 hours to complete, it should take two years to complete the program as a full time student on the exam track, and between two and three years for a student on the thesis track.

While there is no formal maximum amount of time allowed by the history program to complete the degree, we must follow the university rules which impose a seven year "recency of credit" rule. By this rule, any coursework that is more than seven years old will no longer be counted toward the degree except in exceptional circumstances.

Academic Standards

Students are expected to maintain a minimum 3.0 GPA throughout their time in the program. Once a student's GPA falls below 3.0 at the end of any semester or term, the student will be placed on academic probation.

- The student must raise her or his GPA to a 3.0 within the next nine hours of approved graduate study. If the student's GPA remains below a 3.0 at the end of that time, the student will be placed on enforced academic withdrawal.

- The history department also enforces a “two C” rule. By virtue of this rule, any student who receives more than one grade of C at any time during his or her presence in the program will be dismissed by the program.

Academic Honesty

University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty.

Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, forgery, or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.)

Disciplinary action for academic misconduct is the responsibility of the faculty member assigned to the course. The faculty member is charged with assessing the gravity of any case of academic dishonesty, and with giving sanction to any student involved. Penalties that may be applied by the faculty member to individual cases of academic dishonesty include one or more of the following:

- A Written Reprimand;
- Requirement to re-do work in question;
- Requirement to submit additional work;
- Lowering of grade on work in question;
- Assigning grade of “F” to work in question;
- Assigning grade of “F” for course;
- Recommendation for more severe punishment, such as dismissal from the program or from the University.

If the faculty member determines that assigning a grade of “F” to the course is the appropriate penalty and this disciplinary action occurs prior to the deadline for dropping courses, the student forfeits his/her right to drop the course in question.

If the faculty member recommends more severe punishment, such as dismissal from the program or from the University, the faculty member will notify the appropriate chair/college dean, who in turn will notify the Office of Student Affairs. If dismissal from the University is recommended, the Office of Student Affairs will follow its usual procedure for such cases. (As indicated in the Student Handbook and Code of Conduct, any nonacademic issues are referred to the Office of Student Affairs.) The faculty member must file a record for each case of academic dishonesty, including a description of the disciplinary action taken, along with any materials involved, with his or her college dean, who will forward a copy to the Office of Student Affairs. The office of the Academic Dean of the college in which the offense took place will maintain records of all cases of academic dishonesty reported for a period of five years. The Office of Student Affairs will also maintain records of such cases for a period of five years. The Office of Student Affairs will inform the Graduate Dean as appropriate.

Any student who has been penalized for academic dishonesty has the right to appeal the judgment or the penalty assessed. The Appeals Procedure will be the same as that specified for grade appeals.

Your Professional Resume and Professional Opportunities

What is a “C.V.” and why is it important?

CV is short for the Latin phrase *curriculum vitae* (literally the “course of your life”).

Unlike a typical resume, which asks for your work experience, goals, and other personal activities, a C.V. is a statement of your *academic* accomplishments. It does not measure your GPA or offer examples of your writing style; rather, a C.V. is a historical record of your *active involvement* in the profession. Typically a C.V. includes your educational history, any historical publications, the presentation of papers at professional conferences, teaching experience, and awards, as well as a listing of key academic references.

Your C.V. will develop and grow over time. The best place to begin thinking about your C.V. is by requesting a copy of your advisor’s C.V. to use as a guide. A C.V. is essential when applying to Ph.D. programs, requesting external funding, and, eventually, to landing a job in the profession. As a result, it is important to continue to update (and add to) the course of your academic life.

History Publications

Publications are the lifeblood of all academic disciplines.

Scholars publish in order to inform readers of a new or altered information, thesis, or conclusion. As relatively junior graduate students, you are not expected to publish your work, but publishing opportunities do exist. The two best opportunities are book reviews and encyclopedia entries. These opportunities are now almost exclusively announced electronically, making your participation on listservs essential if you intend to pursue an advanced degree beyond the M.A.

Please consult with your advisor about the most appropriate opportunities for publication.

Teaching Activity

While not yet essential to your academic development, an ability to teach history indicates your sophistication and skill in presenting complex material in a clear and objective way. Some Ph.D. programs will be greatly swayed by a long history of teaching while others will not.

The two most important opportunities for teaching experience at A&M-CC are as “teaching assistants” (graders for large undergraduate courses) and as “First Year Seminar” instructors

through the First-Year program at A&M-CC. Contact your advisor to discuss these and other options.

Typically, universities will NOT employ a part-time (or “Adjunct”) instructor who does not possess at least an MA in the discipline being taught or a minimum of thirty-six (36) semester hours in graduate course work.

Attending and Presenting Papers at Professional Conferences

A central part of the historical profession involves attending professional conferences.

Such meetings are important for presenting one’s original research to peers as is done in the medical, scientific, mathematical, and other professions. Conferences are also a way to connect with others in the profession. Professional meetings often hold sessions specifically for graduate students.

While such attendance can become expensive, there are some options. Students may present their work locally at the Nueces County Historical Society or other such venue. The A&M System sometimes holds graduate student conferences on our campus. Occasionally larger historical and social science organizations hold their meetings here in the city. Further, you may wish to apply for support through various grants (read the posts on the listserv and read campus announcements, fish the web, and ask around the hallways). If you decide to present your work at a conference do NOT do so without having at least your advisor read and critique your work well ahead of time.

Frantz Essay Competition

Each year the Frantz Fund sponsors a “best paper” competition among undergraduate and graduate students. The prize for the best undergraduate paper is \$200 and \$300 for the best graduate student paper. Applications are submitted in the spring semester. Determinations are made and prizes awarded by the end of that semester. Contact your advisor for more information on the Frantz Essay Competition.

Letters of Recommendation

Whether taking the examination route and entering the world of work upon completion of the degree or moving on to a Ph.D. program, students will all need strong letters of reference. The first rule to remember is that we cannot lie. We cannot say that poor-performing students are among the strongest we’ve ever taught. For this reason, remember that you need to be conscious of developing your professional demeanor throughout your entire graduate career.

Most employers and graduate programs require at least three letters of reference. Be sure to choose your referees carefully. With whom did you have the best rapport? In whose classes did you perform the strongest? Who really “gets” your work? Once you devise the list, you should

consider having each writer approach her or his letter from a different angle. Perhaps one could attest to your originality of thought, another to your work ethic, and another to your teaching abilities.

In any case, letters are crucial to your future. Be mindful of that as you interact with faculty in and out of the classroom.

Finding Jobs with an M.A.

Where can one find jobs with an M.A. in history? Many places, but you have to know where to look. The most current listings of job opportunities are now almost exclusively electronic. Scholarly trade publications such as the Chronicle of Higher Education are indispensable for locating these opportunities. In addition, listservs (such as www.h-net.org) and other active web services for graduate students can provide useful and timely information. Be sure to make yourself familiar with these forums; your competition certainly will. For jobs outside academia try the following:

- Museum jobs, see The American Association of Museums, www.aam-us.org
- Jobs at historical societies, go to The American Association for State and Local History www.aaslh.org
- Jobs in the federal government, consult the Office of Personnel Management, www.usajobs.opm.gov. Be warned, you will find a LOT of job listings here, but if you look carefully you will see openings requiring specific historical training
- Jobs in state and local government, go to the local agencies directly or you may try www.statejobs.com
- Archival jobs may be found at the Society of American Archivists; look for the employment bulletin at www.archivists.org, and also look at the National Council on Public History at www.ncph.org, and finally the Society for History in the Federal Government, www.shfg.org
- Further leads for jobs may be found at the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation at www.woodrow.org/phd, and *Careers for Students of History* may offer leads at www.historians.org/pubs.
- Finally, you should visit The American Historical Association website at <http://www.historians.org/>

Applying to a Ph.D. Program

In choosing a Ph.D. program the student should consider several factors, such as:

- What major area of research concentration will you pursue?
- How will you fund your graduate studies? Loans? Fellowships? Scholarships?
- What schools are you most likely to gain acceptance into?
- Given the answer to the question above, what schools have the faculty that are most able to help you develop as a professional?

The first place to start is the internet. Go the websites of schools in which you are interested and look up information on deadlines, financial aid, time to complete the degree, faculty, research resources, living arrangements, presence or absence of a union.

You should know that most programs offer some type of financial assistance through research assistantships or teaching assistantships. Research assistantships generally require the student to work ten to twenty hours per week conducting research for a faculty member. Teaching assistantships require students to grade and lead discussion sections, or in some cases, teach their own classes.

Each type of assistantship carries a stipend out of which the student pays living expenses, tuition, books, and fees. These pay scales are barely livable at best. In some smaller programs such support is less or non-existent. Even in some larger programs, there is limited funding which is doled out in a competitive atmosphere. Still, it is possible to finish a Ph.D. program with little or no debt. But be cautious and do the math carefully first.