Doctor of Philosophy in History

Earning a KU Ph.D. in History requires a mastery of research skills, including the ability to contextualize and interpret primary sources, knowledge of the languages relevant to one’s research, and the ability to develop an original historical argument that contributes to the historiography of one’s field. Moreover, a KU Ph.D. in History certifies that students can communicate complex ideas persuasively in writing and orally. It also attests to the readiness of a graduate of our program to teach history and advise undergraduates at the level of the university classroom and to train graduate students.

Our program privileges advanced training in History that prepares and encourages students to research and write “across and between” conventionally-defined historiographical fields. To develop such a research program, students read in geographic, chronological, and thematic fields. Fields may be geographic, chronological, and/or thematic to provide maximum flexibility. Ph.D. students designate one major and two minor fields in consultation with their primary advisor and advisory committee.

All students who are admitted into the Ph.D. program for full-time study, except those who have secured guaranteed external institutional funding, are provided with 5 years of funding in the form of a fellowship, teaching, or research position contingent on funding availability. International students whose native language is not English are eligible to hold a GTA or research position contingent on funding availability. International or domestic applicants who are non-native speakers of English should carefully review Graduate Studies’ English Proficiency Requirements (https://gradapply.ku.edu/english-requirements/).

The application comprises the following:

- Statement of Academic Objectives (two pages, double-spaced), including a clear plan for graduate research in a specific field of study. This statement should be largely academic rather than biographical and should achieve the following objectives:
  - Suggest a potential direction for your research at KU as concretely as possible;
  - Outline how you see a PhD. in History fitting into your broad career goals; and
  - Identify specific chronological, geographical, and thematic areas of interest
- Curriculum Vitae
- Writing Sample (maximum twenty-five pages, double-spaced). The Department is interested in reviewing the best-crafted, most persuasively argued writing sample that applicants are able to provide. Such papers are often derived from an upper-level undergraduate history class in which the student conducted independent research and employed both primary and secondary sources.
- GRE Scores are not required
- Official Transcript from each institution that has granted you a degree, or at which you are currently enrolled
- Three letters of recommendation – The letters can be directly uploaded online directly by those who write the recommendations, or they can be mailed to the University of Kansas, Department of History, ATTN: Graduate Academic Advisor, Wescoe 3650, 1445 Jayhawk Boulevard, Lawrence, KS 66045. A recommendation form for hard copy letters can be downloaded here (https://history.ku.edu/phd/).

Please note that documents, including a writing sample and transcripts, should be uploaded to the application. Applicants should not send hard copies of application materials to the Department of History.

When you submit your online application, it is made available to the Department of History for review, yet it is the applicant's responsibility...
to ensure the Office of Graduate Studies has received all materials by the deadline. The Department of History Graduate Office cannot process your application and move it forward for consideration by the Graduate Committee until all materials have been received. The Department of History reviews applications for completeness, and the Graduate Program Coordinator will contact you if your application is not complete.

**Ph.D. Degree Requirements**

Students normally must complete the M.A. degree before they are eligible to enter the Ph.D. program. Students who enter the M.A. program may either complete the degree or petition for direct admission to the Ph.D. program. This petition first must be endorsed by the student’s advisor and the field committee and then be approved by the department’s graduate committee.

**Course Requirements**

1. A minimum of 33 hours of credit at the graduate level including the following:
   a. A minimum of three historiographical colloquia numbered HIST 801 and above
   b. Two HIST 802 Research Seminars
   c. HIST 805 The Nature of History
   d. HIST 998 Portfolio Preparation
2. At least 24 hours of the minimum credits must be taken as HIST courses.
3. At least 18 hours of the minimum credits must be taken at the 700 level or above.

See the Graduate Handbook (https://history.ku.edu/graduate-resources/) for a list of elective graduate courses.

**Research Skills and Responsible Scholarship**

In order to fulfill the University research skills and responsible scholarship requirement, all graduate students in History must take HIST 805 and HIST 802.

**Note:** Contact your department or program for more information about research skills and responsible scholarship, and the current requirements for doctoral students. Current policies on Doctoral research skills and responsible scholarship are listed in the Graduate Studies section of the online catalog and in the KU Policy Library (https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/research-skills-responsible-scholarship/).

**Research Language Requirement**

Upon admission to the program students should consult with their advisor to determine if their research interests require knowledge of a language other than English. Students should discuss research language expectations with potential advisors during the application process.

If a non-English research language is required, the faculty advisor should designate the primary research language. Students must certify proficiency in the primary research language by the end of their first year in the program.

Students whose primary research language is English may certify proficiency in a secondary research language designated by their advisor in order to fulfill this requirement.

Students whose primary research language is English and have not certified a secondary research language must fulfill the Alternative Doctoral Skills Requirement.

See the Graduate Handbook (https://history.ku.edu/graduate-resources/) for language certification requirements.

**Alternative Doctoral Skills Requirement**

Students who have not certified a non-English primary or secondary research language must enhance their historical studies by engaging in additional training in skills that augment their research and/or professional interests. This training may be fulfilled by completing any one of the following options:

1. Pass (with a B or above) a 3+ hour course on method or theory in another academic unit.
2. Pass (with a B or above) a 3+ hour course that provides a professional or research related skill.
3. Participate in an internship, practicum, volunteer experience that connects to the study, dissemination, presentation, or preservation of history.
4. Complete a graduate certificate in related field or interdisciplinary approach.
5. Students may petition the Graduate Committee to have an experience or combination of experiences be considered as fulfilling this requirement. See the Graduate Handbook (https://history.ku.edu/graduate-resources/) for additional details on how to complete this requirement.

**Portfolio and Oral Comprehensive Exam**

A written portfolio of the student’s work and an oral examination that will provide the candidate with an opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge they have acquired and respond to questions from the committee about their written portfolio. The student must pass their portfolio exam by the end of their fifth semester of study. Any exception to taking the portfolio exam as outlined above requires a petition to the History Graduate Committee.

**Dissertation Prospectus Defense**

Students will defend their Dissertation Prospectus in an oral examination with their Advisory committee the semester following their passing of the Portfolio Exam. Students must successfully defend a dissertation prospectus by the end of their sixth semester. Any exception to this requires a petition to the History Graduate Committee.

**Doctoral Dissertation and Defense**

The dissertation is a book-length piece of original scholarship that makes a significant contribution to historical knowledge. The candidate for the Ph.D. must defend this piece of scholarship in an oral examination.

For more information about the Ph.D. program in History, consult the Graduate Handbook (https://history.ku.edu/graduate-resources/)