

**IOWA**<sup>TM</sup>  
**HISTORY**

**GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS TO OUR  
GRADUATE PROGRAM**

Master of Arts in History  
Doctor of Philosophy in History



 [clas.uiowa.edu/history](https://clas.uiowa.edu/history)

 History at University of Iowa

**IOWA**<sup>TM</sup>

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## Graduate Program in History

Thank you for your interest in the graduate program in History at the University of Iowa. We have designed this short guide to supplement the material you have already received from the University of Iowa's Graduate Admissions office. In this guide you will find:

- Why choose Iowa? 3
- Highlights of our campus partners & research resources 4
- A brief overview of our degree programs 5
- Advice about how to apply for admission to the MA and PhD Programs 6
- An outline of our admissions & funding process 7
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Please read over this information before you contact us with further questions so that we may be able to help you as quickly and accurately as we can.

### University of Iowa Nondiscrimination Statement

The University of Iowa prohibits discrimination in employment, educational programs, and activities on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, pregnancy (including childbirth and related conditions), disability, genetic information, status as a U.S. veteran, service in the U.S. military, sexual orientation, gender identity, or associational preferences, or any other classification that deprives the person of consideration as an individual.

## Why Iowa?

The Department of History at the University of Iowa offers graduate programs for candidates who seek the Master of Arts degree (MA) and the Doctor of Philosophy degree (PhD). A small, personalized program promotes close association of faculty and students in teaching and research and ensures excellent training for a diversity of careers in and out of the academy.

Graduate study in History at Iowa offers many advantages:

- Personalized advising and programs of study tailored to student interests and needs
- A warm, supportive intellectual community of active faculty and graduate students
- A commitment to scholarly excellence, collaboration, and public engagement
- Career preparation in a diversity of fields, in and out of the academy
- Generous 5-year funding packages to make doctoral study financially possible
- Opportunities for online digital and oral history work through **History Corps**
- Protection for graduate instructors through the graduate student union, **COGS**

Our program is small, because we are committed to providing each student with hands-on, individualized mentoring and the financial support necessary to complete their degree. We do not admit students to the PhD program to whom we cannot offer funding; and sometimes we are able to offer funding to MA-only applicants. Unlike some departments, we do not expect students to apply to a specific faculty advisor, but we do work to ensure the department can offer appropriate mentoring to every student we admit.

The History faculty has particular strengths in Europe, modern East Asia, Native America, the Atlantic World and the Caribbean, modern US, women and gender, transnational and imperial history (including the US in the World), environmental history, public history, and the history of science, medicine, and global health. See full information about [our faculty](#) and their interests/expertise on our website.

To further enrich graduate study in these fields, the History Department maintains interdisciplinary links with other departments and programs across campus. History students can pursue Graduate Certificates in a number of areas. A [full list](#) is available on the Graduate College website, but these have been popular among History students.

## Campus Partners & Resources

Graduate students in History benefit from a range of campus partnerships and research resources in developing skills to achieve their academic and career goals. Among our valued partners are:

**The Obermann Center for Advanced Study:** A vibrant intellectual hub for interdisciplinary inquiry and public engagement with city, state, and global communities through programs like the Graduate Institute on Engagement & the Academy, Humanities, Arts, Science, & Technology Advanced Collaboratory, and Digital Bridges for Humanistic Inquiry.

**Digital Studio for Public Arts and Humanities:** Housed in the UI Libraries, the STUDIO works with faculty and students to design and implement digital scholarly research projects. They offer fellowships for graduate students seeking digital humanities training.

**International Programs:** The central home for international outreach on campus, with academic centers and programs in African Studies, Caribbean, Diaspora, and Atlantic Studies, Asian and Pacific Studies, European Studies, and South Asian Studies, as well as the Confucius Institute for US-China dialogue and King Sejong Institute for Korean language and culture. IP provides logistical support for international students, as well as financial support for UI graduate students doing research abroad through its own grants and external fellowship programs.

**Graduate & Postgraduate Career Services:** The UI Graduate College offers outstanding career advising to supplement the mentoring available from History faculty. The Graduate College has been a lead partner on the new ImaginePhD career exploration and planning tool for humanists, and we work closely with the Associate Dean for Graduate Development and Postdoctoral Affairs to help History students plan for careers both in and out of the academy.

**UI Libraries:** We are fortunate to have one of the largest public research libraries in the United States just down the block. In addition to the outstanding general and primary research collections available on campus, UI researchers have access to the combined resources of several national library consortia. Specialist librarians and archivists work with students on research, teaching, digital and public humanities projects, and professional development.

**UI Libraries Special Collections:** Special Collections holds over 200,000 rare books and 1,100 manuscript collections ranging from the medieval to the modern period. Highlights include the French Revolution Collection, Szathmary Culinary Arts Collection, International Dada Archive, world-class holdings related to television and cinema, children's literature, zines, and fandom.

**Louise Noun-Mary Louise Smith Iowa Women's Archives:** One of the jewels of the UI Libraries, with over 1,200 manuscript collections of national and international significance chronicling women's lives and work from the nineteenth century to the present. Ongoing outreach and oral history projects seek to preserve the history of groups underrepresented in archives, including Latinas, African-American women, and Jewish women. History students have also found opportunities to explore library careers through IWA internships.

**State Historical Society of Iowa:** One of the SHSI's two research centers is located two blocks from Schaeffer Hall, with extensive archival, printed, and manuscript materials related to the history of Iowa, the Midwest, and the region's national and global ties.

## Degree Programs Offered

The Department of History offers the Master of Arts degree (MA) and Doctor of Philosophy degree (PhD). In each program, students concentrate on multiple areas of historical scholarship. For further details about the requirements, please see our [Graduate Program Degree Requirements](#) page.

### Degrees in History

#### ***MA (terminal): Master of Arts***

This program is designed for students who want to obtain an MA degree and who do not intend to continue for a PhD degree. A student pursuing an master's degree must complete at least 30 credit hours of graduate coursework followed by an examination in the major area of study. MA students may opt to write a research essay instead of taking an examination. If an MA student later wishes to continue to the PhD, they must re-apply.

#### ***PhD: Doctor of Philosophy***

##### *Applicants without an MA degree:*

These students hold a BA and intend to complete the doctoral program. This program requires 72 credits of graduate course work and the completion of two research papers to demonstrate the student's ability to carry out original research and analysis. In addition, mentors may require students to master one or more languages, to demonstrate proficiency in particular research methods, or to develop other skills as necessary for their fields of study and dissertation projects. Students are automatically considered for continuation in the PhD program after successfully completing their comprehensive written exams and oral defense. The final step of the PhD program is the completion of a doctoral dissertation under the direction of a member of the department

##### *Applicants with an MA degree:*

Students who have an MA in History (or in a closely-related discipline) from another university may apply to the PhD program. The PhD degree requires 72 credits of graduate course work (including the credits obtained for the MA degree), comprehensive examinations in two major fields of history or a related field, and completion of a doctoral dissertation under the direction of a member of the department. In addition, mentors may require students to master one or more languages, to demonstrate proficiency in particular research methods, or to develop other skills as necessary for their fields of study and dissertation projects. Applicants with an MA from another university may transfer up to 30 credit hours of graduate credit, if accepted by the University of Iowa. Doctoral students thus need to complete an additional 42 hours of graduate credit for the PhD.

### Graduate Certificates

In addition to the degrees offered, students may pursue one of the 20 graduate certificates offered by the UI Graduate College to enhance their academic and professional training and marketability. The following certificates may be of particular interest:

- American Indian and Native Studies
- Book Studies/Book Arts and Technologies
- College Teaching
- Digital Public Humanities
- Gender, Women's and Sexuality Studies
- Global Health Studies

## How to Apply

Once you have reviewed this Guide, the History Department website, and have decided to apply, please complete your application as follows:

### Step 1. Create an account with the Graduate Admissions Office:

<https://apply.admissions.uiowa.edu/admissions/login.page>

### Step 2. Fill out the Graduate College Online Application

- a. Provide the basic personal information, program information, educational information, and residency information required by the Graduate College.
- b. Pay the \$60 application fee by credit card. (\$100 for international applicants.)

Applicants for whom payment of the application fee presents a significant financial hardship may request an application fee waiver. Further information is available on the Graduate Admissions website: <https://grad.admissions.uiowa.edu/finances/graduate-fee-waiver>

### Step 3. Submit supporting documents via MyUI Portal

Once you have filled out the Graduate College application, you will receive email instructions for uploading the following supporting documents through your Admissions Profile on the [MyUI portal](#).

- a. **Transcripts** of all post-secondary education.
- b. **Letter of Recommendation** from three (3) individuals, ideally faculty members or academic mentors who can speak to your preparation and aptitude for graduate student in history. You will enter their information and they will send their recommendations electronically.
- c. **Supplemental Degree Objective Form** specifying the degree program to which you wish to apply, the area of history you wish to study, and (if known) desired faculty mentor.
- d. **CV/Resume (optional)** you may submit an optional resume or CV.
- e. **Statement of Purpose** 2-page statement outlining your intellectual interests, academic preparation, and professional goals for graduate study in history.
- f. **Writing Sample** showing your ability to write clearly and to make a persuasive argument from primary and secondary sources. This is usually a term paper for an upper-level History course, an undergraduate Honors thesis, a master's thesis or a graduate seminar paper. If you don't have a recent research essay, please send the work you think displays your ability to write and think historically.

## Admissions and Funding Process

Once you submit your online application you can check its status and completeness through the online Admissions Profile. The History admissions committee begins to review completed files as they are received, consulting with potential mentors about applicants in their fields. We normally make final admissions decisions in late February/early March and applicants are notified immediately.

We do not impose quotas on specific fields within History, but we do consider the availability of suitable mentoring and financial support. Given these constraints, we often admit a certain number of students immediately and place some strong applicants on a waitlist pending available funding.

### Admissions Criteria

The admissions committee looks carefully at each applicant's writing sample, Statement of Purpose, recommendations, and academic record. There GPA requirement of 3.0 is set by the Graduate College. We do take GPAs into consideration but do so in light of our careful reading of the writing sample, statement of purpose, and letters of recommendation. An excellent writing sample can offset or "A" work in upper-level history classes can offset a low overall GPA resulting from poor early performance.

### Funding and Financial Aid for Incoming Students

The History Department strives to provide every admitted student with the financial support necessary to complete their studies. Students admitted to the PhD programs are normally offered 5 years of funding. Students applying for the terminal MA program are not usually offered funding by the department but may find other funding opportunities through the university. All applicants are automatically considered; no separate application is required.

**Graduate Teaching Assistantships:** Departmental funding takes the form of Teaching Assistantships, which include a monthly stipend, excellent health insurance, and a tuition scholarship covering the costs of full-time tuition in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and 50% of mandatory student fees.

**Graduate College Fellowships:** The Department may nominate especially strong applicants for one of two Graduate College fellowships for incoming students.

- **UI Recruitment Fellowships** enhance departmental funding with a stipend supplement of \$5,000 per year for up to 5 years and summer fellowships of \$5,000 per year for up to 4 years.
- **Lulu Merle Johnson Fellowships** are named in honor of the first African-American woman to earn a PhD at the University of Iowa and the first African-American woman to earn a PhD in History in the United States. They enhance departmental funding for doctoral students from underrepresented minority groups with a first-year academic non-service fellowship of \$26,000, years 2-5 academic year stipends of \$5,000, and summer fellowships of \$5,000 for up to four years. The fellowship is open to US citizens or permanent residents who are Black or African Americans, Hispanics or Latinos, American Indians or Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders.

## Ongoing Support for Graduate Study and Research

In addition to the multi-year funding packages offered to incoming students, there are a number of fellowships and grants for which doctoral students may apply to support research, conference travel, and dissertation writing after entering the program. Our commitment to funding graduate study in history includes helping students to develop the necessary skills to compete successfully for selective fellowships from university sources and national and international funding agencies.

### Graduate Teaching Assistantships

Graduate Instructors serve initially as section leaders for faculty-taught courses with discussion sections. Experienced students then have an opportunity to design and teach their own, General Education seminars under the guidance of a faculty supervisor. Teaching assignments may be supplemented by work as a grader for a larger course or as a tutor in the History Writing Center.

Stipend levels for graduate instructors are negotiated between the University and graduate employee union, COGS (United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, Local 896). Full employment terms and information can be found on the [Graduate College website](#).

*Because our Graduate Instructors are supported primarily by teaching, it is important they have the necessary speaking and writing skills to communicate effectively in the classroom. The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences requires graduate students for whom English is not a first language to pass the English Speaking Proficiency Assessment before they can be assigned teaching responsibilities. Foreign students should be aware of this expectation and be prepared to do intensive language work if necessary. Full details are available on the [CLAS ESL website](#).*

### Research Funding

*History Department:* The Department has a few endowed funds that support short-term or semester-long research work, which are awarded annually in a centralized departmental fellowships process. Modest funds are available for conference travel for PhD candidates.

*Graduate College:* The Graduate College offers several fellowships to support research, primarily for students who have passed their Comprehensive Exams. Fellowships range from a summer to a semester. Digital Scholarship & Publishing Studio Fellowships are open to students at any stage, and the Fellowship Incentive Program offers a bonus to students who apply for nationally competitive grants in their fields.

*International Programs:* IP administers Stanley Graduate Awards for International Research that support initial research abroad and serves as the UI sponsor for major international grants, including the Fulbright, Fulbright-Hays, and Critical Language Scholarships.

*External Grants:* History faculty, the Graduate College, and International Programs support student applications for competitive external fellowships with workshops, personal advising, and financial incentives. History students have won major dissertation fellowships from the American Council of Learned Societies, American Historical Association, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Berlin Program for Advanced German and European Studies, Council on Library and Information Resources, Council of American Overseas Research Centers, Fulbright, Fulbright-Hays, German Academic Exchange Service, Huntington Library, Library Company, National Endowment for the Humanities, Newberry Library, and Smithsonian Institution, and Société des Professeurs Français et Francophones d'Amérique.



## Faculty Interests & Advising

One of the strengths of our program is the individualized mentoring provided by the Department's faculty. The close collaboration between students and their advisors makes it very important that applicants carefully consider the availability of mentoring that fits their intellectual and career interests. We urge applicants interested in working with specific faculty members to contact them to discuss their intellectual interests, advising styles, and professional goals before applying.

Below you will find a brief introduction to the Department's faculty and their advising interests. Most members of the faculty offer graduate-level courses or welcome graduate students into their advanced undergraduate classes. Some members of the Department are not accepting new advisees at this time but remain available to work with students on comprehensive exams and to serve on committees. They are indicated with a \*\* in the list below.

For full information about faculty interests and CVs, please visit the [department website](#).

**Ari Ariel:** Modern Middle East; Jewish History \*\*

**Méiriam Belli:** Modern Middle East; Oral History and Memory; Social and Cultural History of the Arab Middle East; Transnational History of Death and Dying

**Sarah Bond:** Late Roman history, epigraphy, and late antique law; Roman topography and GIS; Digital Humanities

**Shuang Chen:** Late Imperial and Modern China; Social and Economic History; Historical Demography; Chinese Law and Society

**Mariola Espinosa:** Cuba; Empire and the Caribbean; Medicine and Public Health; Latin America

**James Giblin:** History of Africa; particularly Eastern and Southern Africa; Health and Healing in Africa

**Colin Gordon:** 20th-Century US; American Public Policy; US Political Economy; US Urban History

**Elizabeth Heineman:** Modern Germany and Europe; Gender and Sexuality; Historical Memory; Human Rights and Atrocity

**Viridiana Hernandez Fernandez:** Modern Latin America; 20<sup>th</sup> Century Environmental History of Mexico

**Ashley Howard:** African Americans in the Midwest; Intersection between Race, Class and Gender; Global History of Racial Violence

**Michaela Hoenicke Moore:** United States in the World; International Relations; US-European Relations; Political Culture of the US and US Foreign Policy

**Tom Arne Mitrød:** Early North America; North American Indians; Atlantic World

**Rosemary Moore:** Ancient History; Roman Military and Social History \*\*

**Lina-Maria Murillo:** Borderlands; Women's Health and Reproduction; Reproductive Justice; Latina/Latino/Latinx

**Alyssa Park:** Modern Korea History

**R. Tyler Priest:** 20th-Century US; Energy and Environmental History; Energy Policy; History of Business and Technology; Public History

**Robert Roupail:** Modern Africa & the Western Indian Ocean; Environmental History; Disaster Studies; Afro-Asia/Decolonization

**Landon Storrs:** Modern US, especially Social and Political History; Women and Gender; Social Movements; Social Policy

**Stephen Warren:** American Indian Histories and Cultures; Ethno-Historical Methods; Iowa and Midwestern History; Community-Engaged Scholarship

**Nick Yablon:** 19th-Century US; Cultural and Urban History; Visual Culture, Memory

**Elizabeth Yale:** History of Science and Medicine; History of the Book; Early Modern Europe; Early Modern Britain

#### ***Other Faculty Supporting History Students***

**Glenn Ehrstine (German):** Literature, religion, and politics in medieval and early modern Germany

**Thomas Gallanis (School of Law):** Legal History of England and Continental Europe

**Kristy Nabhan-Warren (Religious Studies):** American Catholicism; Mexican American Lived Religion; Youth and Religion; and Women and American Religion

## For More Information

If this Guide has not answered all your questions, please contact us.

### History Department

#### Graduate Program Coordinator, Kathleen O’Neill

Kathleen O’Neill coordinates the graduate admissions process and can update you on the status of your application materials, serve as a resource for questions, and/or direct you to the appropriate person for additional information.

319-335-2308 or [kathleen-c-oneill@uiowa.edu](mailto:kathleen-c-oneill@uiowa.edu)

#### Director of Graduate Studies, Professor Mariola Espinosa

Professor Espinosa can answer questions about the department’s graduate programs, admissions criteria, and career development issues, as well as connect you with appropriate faculty and current students.

319-335-2295 or [mariola-espinosa@uiowa.edu](mailto:mariola-espinosa@uiowa.edu)

### University Resources

#### Graduate Admissions

The Graduate & Professional Admissions staff can help with general questions about applying to the University of Iowa.

**General Information:** 319-335-1525 or [gradmail@uiowa.edu](mailto:gradmail@uiowa.edu)

**International Admissions:** 319-335-1534

#### International Student & Scholar Services

For questions about employment and immigration issues for non-US citizens pursuing graduate study at the University of Iowa.

319-335-0335 or [iss@uiowa.edu](mailto:iss@uiowa.edu)

<https://international.uiowa.edu/iss>