

Qualifying Exam Contract U.S. History

Student: _____

Committee Members:

1) Advisor _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) Outside member* _____

*One member of the committee must be a member of the UK graduate faculty from outside of the Department of History.

Qualifying Exams

The qualifying examination is designed to test a student's knowledge in broadly defined fields of study.

United States: Students concentrating in American history will be examined in three fields. They may also be asked to write a historiographical essay as part of the qualifying exam. The exam concludes with an oral examination of the written exams and, if applicable, the historiographical paper.

The exam fields include:

1) A General field that covers American history either from the Colonial period to 1877 or from 1865 to the present. This field may have one or two faculty examiners. The student the examiners may decide on a conventional 7-hour exam period or an examination written over 48- or 72 hours.

2) A Specialty field, which may be constructed chronologically or thematically, but it should be defined broadly and should be supervised by the major professor. A thematic field such as diplomatic or African American should encompass the chronological span of American history. This field may have one or two faculty examiners.

3) A third field must be a non-U.S. field and it should also be broadly constructed. Students may elect to do a comparative field as long as the focus is not largely U.S. history.

The historiographical essay, if the committee requires it, should be a 20-30 page paper that examines the major literature and scholarly debates pertaining to the student's dissertation topic. The research and writing of the paper will be supervised by the major professor, but the paper (once it has been approved by the major professor) is to be distributed to all members of the qualifying committee at least two weeks in advance of the start of the written examinations.

The qualifying exams constitute a major step toward earning a doctoral degree, and students sitting for the exams must engage in extensive reading and preparation in order to demonstrate a command of historical detail and of scholarly debates. At the same time, the faculty members realize that it is impossible to acquire a comprehensive or an exhaustive knowledge of a broadly conceived field of study. Normally, to prepare for the exams, students take extensive course work at the graduate level and also pursue extensive reading on their own. Students are expected to prepare reading lists for each field with the members of the qualifying exam committee. They are also encouraged to share reading lists (particularly for the general field) and to form study groups. Some committees will ask to meet periodically with the student to assess the student's preparation for the exams.

Qualifying Exam Contract Meeting

This meeting is held to:

- 1) Verify that the student has satisfied all pre-exam requirements (or will have satisfied these requirements by the time of the exam).
- 2) Select an exam period (August 15-September 15 or January).
- 3) Define the specialty field and the third field.
- 4) Discuss how the student should prepare for the various fields. This might mean advising the student about additional readings seminars or it might mean discussing the construction of a reading list. Committee members may prepare lists of readings or they may ask the student to submit a list which the committee member will review and approve. Reading lists should be constructed shortly after the contract meeting.
- 6) Determine whether the written exams will be a 7-hour exam or a 48-72 hour exam.
- 7) Establish expectations about the general nature of the questions that will be asked and how the questions should be answered.

Pre-Quals Checklist

Candidates may sit for the qualifying exam only after first having earned an MA in History and after they have:

- 1) satisfied the language requirement(s);
- 2) completed History 606 (unless waived by the DGS);
- 3) removed all incomplete grades;
- 4) completed History 640 and 641.

Fields:

1) Specialty Field: _____

Exam option: _____

Examiner(s): _____

Recommendations for preparation:

2) General Field (to 1877 or post- 1865) _____

Examiners: _____

Recommendations for preparation:

3) Non-U.S. or comparative field: _____

Exam (length): _____

Examiner(s): _____

Specific description of field: _____

Recommendations for preparation:

EXAM DATE: _____

Student: _____

Faculty Advisor: _____

DGS: _____

Date: _____