

# University of South Florida History Department

## PhD Program Manual AY 2024-25

This document describes the Department of History's key policies, procedures, expectations, and responsibilities for students in the PhD program. Since it reflects the current status of our evolving program, it may be subject to change. Students should refer to the [USF Graduate Catalog](#) for all information on degree requirements. Please be sure to consult the FAQ at the bottom of this Program Manual and the [Graduate Program Canvas page](#) for additional details about the program.

### Important Contacts

**History Department Graduate Director:** Dr. Matt King, [matthewking1@usf.edu](mailto:matthewking1@usf.edu), SOC 213

**Graduate Program Specialist:** Ruth Borrero, [borrero168@usf.edu](mailto:borrero168@usf.edu), 813-974-2784, SOC 268

with satisfactory answers, please send an email to both the Graduate Director and the Graduate Program Specialist so that they can assist you to the best of their abilities.

### Deciding Upon a Course of Study

By the end of their first semester, students ought to have a general idea of their interests and be ready to start research on their dissertation topic. Although students may change this topic at any time within the first two years of their program, they are strongly encouraged to begin researching their topics as soon as possible in order to move through the program efficiently.

### Faculty Advisors and Dissertation Committees

Upon admittance to the program, students will be assigned a provisional faculty advisor in their field of study with whom they will meet to develop a plan for their coursework. Typically, this person will become the student's dissertation advisor (also called Major Professor). However, if the student's research topic changes or they find a better fit with another faculty member, they are free to choose another advisor. In this case, they need to inform their previous advisor, the Graduate Program Specialist, and the Graduate Director of this change via email.

During their first two years in the PhD program (and prior to advancing to doctoral candidacy), students also need to form a dissertation committee of four members. Three of these members should be graduate faculty within the USF History Department. The fourth committee member, formally known as the external member, may be selected from another department within USF or from another institution entirely. Students should work with their advisors to determine who will be the most suitable committee members, though it is the responsibility of students to form their own committees.

Students are required to have successfully completed at least 3 credits of course work with each member of their committee who is a faculty member within the USF History Department and is permitted to supervise doctoral students. The external committee member needs to hold a PhD

for the external member, but they still need to undergo an approval process. To have an external member approved for your committee, students should send to the Graduate Program Specialist a current CV (no more than a year old) of the proposed external member and a short paragraph (written by the student) that describes the expertise provided by this external member. Once a committee has been formed, students should inform the Graduate Program Specialist, who will begin the process of collecting signatures on the following forms:

- [History Department PhD Committee Form](#)
- [Graduate School PhD Dissertation Committee Form](#)

Any changes to this committee must be approved by the Graduate School through a [Change of Committee Form](#).

### **Graduate Student Responsibilities**

Graduate students are expected to maintain sufficient contact with their advisor to ensure that both are aware of the progress of the student in the program. The graduate student must take the initiative to schedule meetings. It is recommended that this be done during the first 2 or 3 weeks of each semester, and at other times throughout the semester as needed.

### **Meeting Official Deadlines**

Meeting all deadlines is the graduate student's responsibility. USF is a large institution with a complex bureaucracy, for which forms and procedures are critical to smooth transitions and complying with policies and requirements. Students should become familiar with requirements and deadlines for both the History Department and the Office of Graduate Studies. The Graduate Director and Graduate Program Specialist frequently communicate these deadlines with graduate students [via Canvas Announcements](#), which should be read promptly and carefully.

Every semester, the Graduate Program Specialist or Graduate Director will circulate a list of important Office of Graduate Studies dates. Students should note these and take them very seriously, for they are inflexible. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that such deadlines are met. The Graduate Program Specialist handles the distribution and processing of forms, but students and faculty advisors should monitor the submission of both departmental and college forms and procedures outlined in this document. These deadlines are also posted on the [Semester Deadlines & Exam Information page](#).

### **Degree Requirements and Coursework**

The USF History PhD curriculum and coursework requirements can be found in the [Graduate Catalog](#) corresponding to the year a student entered the program. Normally, full-time students will take 9 credit-hours per semester (the equivalent of three, 3-credit seminars) for their first two years of coursework. In their second year, they should complete their remaining courses and their Portfolio review to advance to candidacy. Students are required to complete 24 credit hours (typically equivalent to 8 courses) of coursework prior to advancing to doctoral candidacy, though many students take more than 24 credits based on course offerings.

## Curriculum and Required Courses

There are three core

Specialist so that they can issue an add code for the student. If a student is registering for a course in a different department, they should ask the instructor what their department's protocol is for registration. The schedule of classes is available online through the [Registrar's Student Schedule Search](#). Faculty email addresses are available on the [History Department website](#).

### Language Requirements

The language requirement for PhD students is optional and dependent on individual student needs/field requirements. Students should consult with their advisors to determine if foreign language proficiency is necessary for their research.

Regardless of their linguistic needs, all students should complete a [Language Proficiency Form](#) in consultation with their advisor by the end of their first year of study. On this form, students should indicate if they do or do not need to obtain proficiency in one or more foreign languages to complete the reseentor their-1 ( r)-1 (r)-1 (s)-5 ( n)-1(ee)4 (rt)-2 (ud)-4 (ud)-4(s)-5 (n)-4 ( t)-1( )-10 (F)2 (If)3 f tl

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**Portfolio Considerations:** Students should be using the Pro Seminar and seminar final assignments to prepare portfolio elements when appropriate, in consultation with their advisors.

**By the end of the first year of the PhD program:**

- Students should have developed (and ideally completed a draft of) their major research paper in their Pro-Seminar (spring semester).
- Students should have at least one historiography paper drafted and, at minimum, a plan for their second paper.
- If they have not already completed a syllabus and pedagogical statement during their first-

Assuming the completion of coursework at the end of the second year in the program, ABD students have 2 funded years to complete the research and writing of your dissertation. All students, including part-time and self-funded students, must complete their degrees within 7 years of entry into the doctoral program or will need to request an extension from the Graduate Director. Unfortunately, the university expects all Graduate Assistants to serve as TAs or Instructors during the academic year, which can hamper full-time research.

You should be in close contact with your advisor and the Graduate Director to let them know

early November or early April (not the end of the semester). Students planning to graduate in the spring semester should, therefore, schedule defenses no later than early October or early March in order to have time to make revisions and submit their final version through the [Electronic Thesis and Dissertation \(ETD\)](#) system on time.

Students should confer with the Graduate Program Specialist and, if necessary, appropriate staff in the Office of Graduate Studies regarding the Electronic Thesis and Dissertation submission process which entails specific deadlines. Students should plan to attend an [ETD workshop](#) at least one semester prior to their anticipated graduation date.

Students should not plan on completing drafts and distributing them during the summer, when committee members and supervisors might not be on academic contract and therefore unavailable for thesis/dissertation review and defense.

### The Dissertation Defense

Please see the [USF Graduate Catalog](#) for university policies on the conduct of the final oral examination, or dissertation defense. Once the committee has approved the dissertation and the advisor decides it is ready for the defense, the student should meet with the Graduate Program Specialist to check over their records and make sure they are prepared for the defense. The Graduate Program Specialist will then process the paperwork certifying that the dissertation is ready for defense, following the guidance of the faculty advisor and the requirements of the Office of Graduate Studies and the College. Advertisement of the defense must be posted at least two weeks prior to the date on which the defense is to occur to comply with state requirements.

The time and date of the defense will be set by the





program generally (and anything else that does not fit in the above categories), contact the Graduate Director, Dr. Matt King ([matthewking1@usf.edu](mailto:matthewking1@usf.edu)).

In general, you will find the most up-to-date and detailed information about the program on the [Canvas page](#). I highly recommend that you familiarize yourself with this page upon entry into the program so you can familiarize yourself with the department's policies and procedures. I also recommend changing your personal [Notification Settings](#) for Announcements from this Canvas page to "Notify Immediately" so you are aware of Announcements as they are posted.

### Can I change advisors?

Yes! We assign interim advisors at the beginning of your time at USF, but you are welcome to switch advisors (ideally within the first year of your enrollment) based on your preferences. If you have concerns about your relationship with your advisor, please contact Dr. Matt King ([matthewking1@usf.edu](mailto:matthewking1@usf.edu)) to inform him of the situation.

### How can I best utilize USF's libraries?

Reach out to our library liaison, [Dr. Matt Knight](#), who works directly with students and faculty to facilitate our access to research resources in the USF Library. Feel free to email Matt directly if you have questions related to library resources. He is an amazing resource and also teaches Irish and Irish-American history in our department!

### **FAQ: Classes and Coursework**

Where can I find...

courses outside of your geographic/chronological/thematic specialty so that you can approach your field from different vantage points. Some of my most rewarding experiences in graduate school were from classes that had little relevant to my field of study. The goal of coursework is to give you a wide toolset of skills related to the field of history, and while some of these might not be relevant to your dissertation directly, they still make you a stronger and more well-rounded scholar.

### Can I take courses outside the history department?

Yes, and we encourage this! If you are interested in taking seminars outside of the department, you typically need to introduce yourself (via email) to the professor teaching the seminar and ask for an add code. The departments listed below are some of the few that might have relevant courses: Anthropology; Economics; English; Humanities & Cultural Studies; Interdisciplinary Global Studies; Library and Information Science; Philosophy; Religious Studies; Sociology & Interdisciplinary Social Sciences; Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies; World Languages.

### How does the graduate minor work?

The minor is very flexible. In consultation with your graduate advisor, you choose two classes that are thematically related in some way, not used for any required components of your graduate degree, and then designate those two classes as fulfilling the prerequisites for your minor. These classes can be taken in the history department or outside of it. For example, you could take a history

**FAQ: Funding**

Where can I find resources related to funding opportunities?

We maintain a [Canvas page](#) dedicated to information about funding opportunities inside and outside the history department. Pay attention to Canvas Announcements, too, as faculty members sometimes make announcements about specific funding opportunities in their subfields.