

Master of Arts

History (MA)

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The Department of History offers courses of study leading to the Master of Arts with a major in history.

Admissions

Applicants must meet all University requirements and regulations for admission. Applications must include a short essay of 500 words or less addressing academic interests and goals and two letters of recommendation attesting to academic achievement and potential. A writing sample of 10 or more pages, preferably showing an applicant's work with primary sources, is also required.

An undergraduate major or minor in history is desirable but is not required for admission. Generally, 24 semester credit hours in history and closely related cognates are required for regular admission. Applicants with 18 semester credit hours may be considered for admission on a provisional basis. These credit hours should include survey and upper-level courses. The Graduate Program Director may prescribe certain undergraduate courses to be completed before recommending admission to the program. Under certain circumstances, students can be admitted to graduate courses while simultaneously completing an undergraduate prerequisite.

The requirement for admission to full standing (regular status) is 24 semester credit hours with a grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.00 in history and a general GPA of 3.00. Provisional admission requires a minimum of 18 credits (as described above) with a GPA of 3.00 in history and a GPA of 2.70. Students with averages below these minimums can attempt to improve their standing in undergraduate courses approved by the Graduate Program Director. However, they cannot be admitted to graduate courses until they have achieved acceptable averages in history. Applicants who are denied admission to the M.A. program in history are not permitted to enroll in history graduate courses as non-degree students.

Prospective applicants with questions about their admission credentials and preparedness should contact the Graduate Program Director in the Department of History. Those certain of their qualifications should apply through the Office of Admissions.

Admissions forms should reach Old Dominion University well in advance of the intended term of entry, but no later than November 1 for spring admission and June 1 for fall. All required forms and documents must be sent directly to the Admissions Office, which creates a central file for each applicant. Those seeking a graduate assistantship should file the Application for Institutional Graduate Financial Assistance (available from the Office of Graduate Admissions) and send a letter of application for fellowship consideration to the Graduate Program Director.

Graduate Financial Aid

Old Dominion University offers financial assistance to qualified graduate students. Types of aid include research and teaching assistantships, fellowships, grants, scholarships, and part-time employment. Nearly all forms of aid require that the student be engaged in full-time graduate study or nine semester credit hours.

Fellowships, assistantships, tuition grants, and small research grants may be available. Departmental funds may affect fellowship and assistantship amounts. The establishment of student need and academic promise also affect some grant amounts. The application deadline is February 15. International students must pass the SPEAK test (or an equivalent) of spoken English to become eligible for teaching assistantships.

Curriculum Requirements

Three courses of study are available. The examination option is a 30-credit program capped by written comprehensive examinations in two general

fields and an oral examination. The thesis option is a 30-credit program capped by a thesis for which students earn six credits (HIST 698-HIST 699) on a pass/fail basis, and an oral defense. The portfolio option is a 30-credit program capped by two portfolio components and an oral defense. Completion of any of the three options leads to an M.A. in history.

All candidates for the M.A. in history must meet the general graduate degree requirements established for the University. In addition, all students must complete HIST 600 during their first year in the program. No more than nine of the required 30 hours may be earned in 500-level courses. Students are permitted a maximum of six credits in other departments offering graduate courses if the work is germane to their historical studies; prior approval of the Graduate Program Director is required. Students who have received two grades of C+ or below will be indefinitely suspended from the program. Those students whose grade point average falls below 3.00 will be subject to the University's probation/suspension policy.

Examination Option

Students pursuing the examination option must take course work as follows:

HIST 600	Historical Theory and Practice	3
Electives *		
American History		6
Non-American History		6
Other Electives		12
HIST 675	M.A. Exam Preparation and Research	3
Total Credit Hours		30

* Elective courses can be at the 500, 600, or 700 level.

Students choose two fields of concentration for the Examination Option, which will conform to the expertise of two of the three committee members who constitute the student's exam committee. The fields can be tailored to the geographical areas, topical interests, or other fields of study in consultation with the exam committee.

Students pursuing the examination option must complete HIST 675 during their last year in the program. Written comprehensive field examinations may be taken in conjunction with HIST 675. The two field exams are taken during a department designated time each Fall and Spring semester. Within a two-week period following the successful completion of written exams, the student will take a two-hour oral examination. Exams are individualized by the student's examining committee but competence in the entire field is essential. Examinations are completed no later than 30 days before the end of a semester, and thus are normally scheduled in April and November. A field exam is judged in its entirety and is rated Pass or Fail by the examining committee; the same is true of the oral examination. Students who fail an exam can be re-examined in the next scheduled round of exams. Only one re-examination is permitted.

Thesis Option

Students pursuing the thesis option must take course work as follows:

HIST 600	Historical Theory and Practice	3
Electives *		
American History		6
Non-American History		6
Other Electives		9
HIST 698	Thesis	3
HIST 699	Thesis	3-9
Total Credit Hours		30-36

* Elective courses can be at the 500, 600, or 700 level.

The thesis option will be recommended for those students who have maintained a high GPA and have the support of a faculty thesis advisor. The master's thesis is written under the direction of the thesis advisor selected

by the candidate in consultation with the Graduate Program Director. The thesis is reviewed and the candidate examined by a faculty committee chaired by the thesis advisor. The thesis defense—normally a two-hour oral examination—focuses on the thesis, the historical context, and related aspects of the student’s concentration. Final approval of the thesis is the responsibility of the thesis advisor, the Graduate Program Director, and ultimately of the dean of the College of Arts and Letters, who certify the candidate for graduation.

Portfolio Option

Students pursuing the portfolio option must take course work as follows:

HIST 600	Historical Theory and Practice	3
Electives*		
American History		6
Non-American History		6
Other Electives		12
HIST 677	Portfolio Option Preparation	3
Total Credit Hours		30

* Elective courses can be at the 500, 600, or 700 level.

Students choose two components for the Portfolio Option: one or two research papers, a single examination field, a teaching preparation component, or a public history project. The portfolio is reviewed and the candidate examined by a faculty committee composed of three faculty members, each of whose fields of expertise relate to components of the portfolio. The defense of the portfolio is scheduled during a department-designated time each Fall and Spring semester, normally scheduled in November and April.

Students pursuing the portfolio option must complete HIST 677 during their last year in the program. Students may submit their materials and/or sit for the oral defense for the components in conjunction with HIST 677. The portfolio is judged in its entirety and is rated Pass or Fail by the examining committee. Students who fail the oral defense can defend again in the next scheduled period. Only one additional defense is permitted.