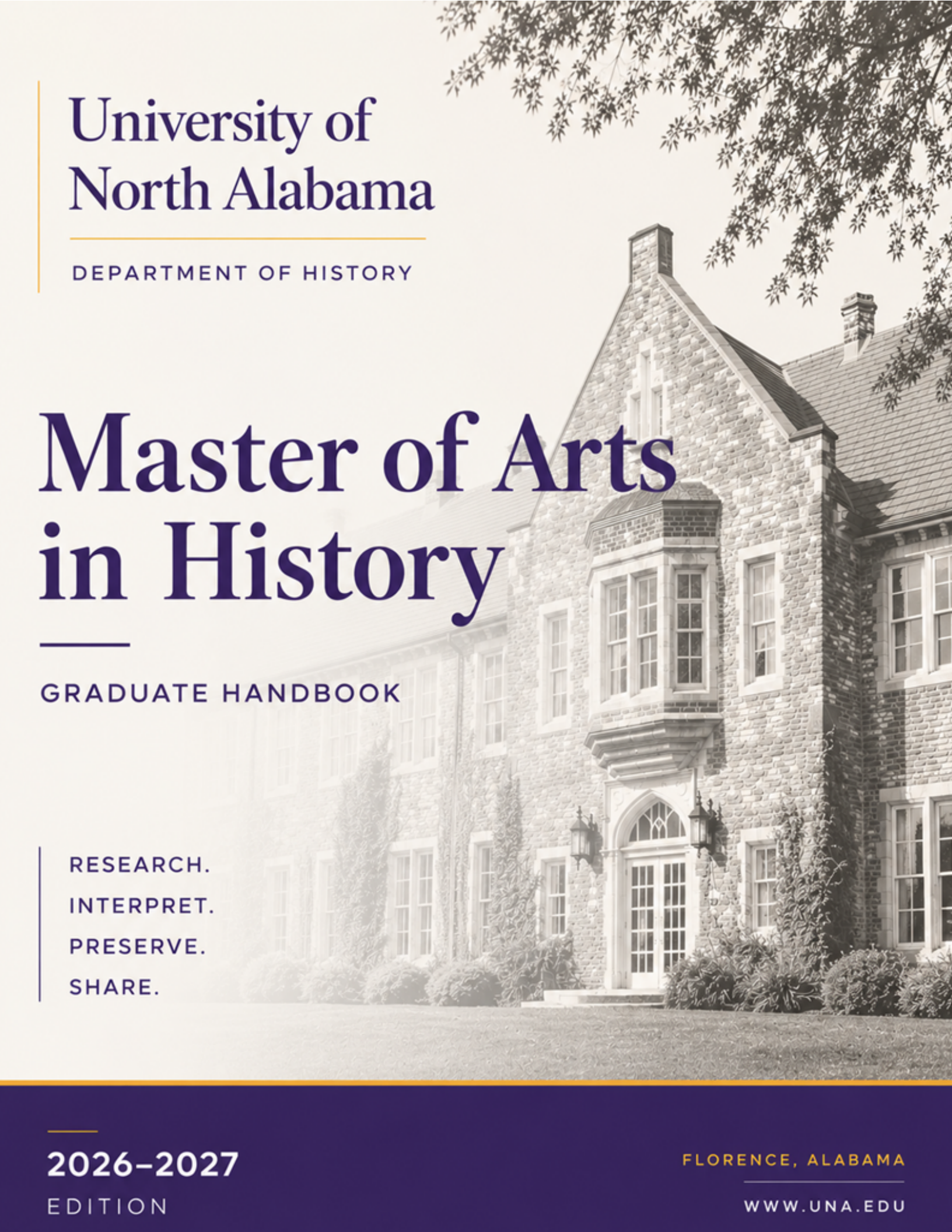




University of
North Alabama

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

Master of Arts in History

GRADUATE HANDBOOK

RESEARCH.
INTERPRET.
PRESERVE.
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2026–2027
EDITION

FLORENCE, ALABAMA

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Introduction

Welcome to the Master of Arts in History program at the University of North Alabama! We are glad that you have chosen to pursue graduate study with us and look forward to supporting your intellectual and professional development. Whether your goal is to advance your career in education or public history, to prepare for doctoral study, or simply to deepen your understanding of the past, we are excited to be part of your academic journey.

This handbook is designed to help you navigate the MA in History program from your first semester through graduation. It provides an overview of degree requirements, program expectations, university resources, and opportunities for professional development. You will also find information on advising, thesis requirements, graduate assistantships, research funds, and other policies to help you successfully complete your degree.

While this handbook answers many of the questions students commonly have, it is intended to supplement—not replace—the University’s official policies and procedures. Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the following university publications:

- [UNA Graduate Catalog](#)
- [UNA Student Handbook](#)
- [UNA Student Code of Conduct](#)

If you have questions that are not addressed in this handbook, please contact the Graduate Coordinator, Dr. Carolyn Crawford, cbarske@una.edu.

Remember, all department faculty and staff are here to help, and we encourage you to reach out whenever you need guidance or assistance!

University Contacts & Resources

Department of History Chair: Dr. Ansley Quiros, aquiros@una.edu

Graduate Coordinator: Dr. Carolyn Crawford, cbarske@una.edu

Senior Administrative Assistant: Mrs. Angela Fitzsimmons, aafitzsimmons@una.edu

UNA Public History Center Director: Dr. Brian Dempsey, bdempsey@una.edu

Collier Library, Department of History Library Liaison: Ms. Baylee Smith, bsmith9@una.edu

[UNA Center for Writing Excellence](#) & writingcenter@una.edu

[UNA Registrar](#) & registrar@una.edu

[Office of Financial Aid](#) & financialaid@una.edu

[Office of Student Accounts](#) & studentaccounts@una.edu

IT Help Desk: helpdesk@una.edu

Getting Started at UNA

Beginning graduate school involves learning several university systems that you will use throughout your time at UNA. Becoming familiar with these resources early will help you stay organized and ensure that you receive important university communications.

UNA Portal

The UNA Portal is your primary access point for many university services and you can access it via the [UNA home page](#) (top right side of the screen). You will use Portal to register for most of your courses, view your tuition bill, monitor financial aid, and check for any registration holds on your account. Portal also provides access to [Degree Works](#), which allows you to monitor your progress toward completing the MA in History. Students are encouraged to review their degree audit regularly and contact the Graduate Coordinator if they have questions about their degree plan or graduation requirements. You can also use the [Plan of Study](#) form included in the Appendix to track your progress.

Most courses can be added through Portal. However, certain courses—including directed research and study courses, independent studies, thesis hours, comprehensive examinations, and internships—require departmental approval and cannot be added through regular registration. When registering for one of these courses, please reach out to the Graduate Coordinator.

[Additional information about registration](#) is available through the Office of the Registrar.

UNA Email

Your UNA email account is the university's official method of communication. Faculty, Financial Aid, Student Accounts, and other university offices will send important information exclusively to your UNA email address. It is essential that you check this account regularly.

Your email can be accessed through the Microsoft Outlook web application or by configuring Outlook on your computer or mobile device using your UNA Portal credentials. If you prefer to manage all your email in one inbox, Outlook also lets you forward your UNA email to another account. Instructions for enabling email forwarding are available in Outlook Mail under Forwarding.

Be sure to monitor both your Junk folder and the university's spam quarantine notifications. Legitimate university messages are occasionally filtered and should be reviewed before being deleted.

Important: Missing an email from your UNA account does not excuse missed deadlines or required university communications.

Canvas

Canvas is the learning management system used for all courses at UNA. You will log in using the same username and password that you use for UNA Portal. You can access it via the menu on the top right-hand side of the UNA homepage. You can also download the Canvas app on your phone or tablet.

Courses will open on the first day of classes.

While every instructor organizes Canvas differently to fit their teaching style and course objectives, all courses include a syllabus, and most include announcements, course modules, assignments, discussion boards, grades, and other instructional materials. Your instructor's syllabus should always be your primary guide for understanding how a particular course is organized and where assignments are located.

Students who are new to Canvas are encouraged to review [the tutorials and resources](#) provided by Information Technology Services.

Microsoft Office

All UNA students receive free access to the [Microsoft Office suite](#), including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, and Teams. These applications are used extensively throughout the MA program for writing papers, collaborating with faculty, and participating in online meetings.

Microsoft Teams

Microsoft Teams is the university's primary platform for virtual meetings. Faculty often use Teams for office hours, advising appointments, thesis meetings, and virtual thesis defenses. You may access Teams through your web browser and log in with your UNA credentials or by downloading the desktop or mobile application. Meeting invitations and notifications will be sent to your UNA email account, so checking your email regularly is essential.

UNA Bookstore

Before the start of each semester, check [the UNA Bookstore](#) website to view the required and recommended materials for your courses by entering your course numbers on the "Textbook" page. You may purchase required textbooks through the bookstore or from any bookseller of your choice. Many students find good prices on used books through retailers such as AbeBooks, ThriftBooks, and Amazon. If you are an on-campus student, you may also visit the UNA Bookstore, where course textbooks are located on the second floor. The bookstore often stocks used copies of required texts, which can be a cost-effective option. Whenever possible, we encourage students to purchase rather than rent their textbooks. Many graduate courses build on one another, and books from earlier semesters often become valuable resources for future coursework, thesis research, and comprehensive examinations.

In addition to assigned textbooks, many instructors provide supplemental readings through Canvas or make them available electronically through Collier Library.

Graduate Study in History

Graduate study is fundamentally different from undergraduate education. While undergraduate courses often emphasize learning historical content, graduate courses focus on how historians create historical knowledge. Rather than simply mastering what happened in the past, you will learn to evaluate historical interpretations, analyze primary-source evidence, engage with scholarly debates, and contribute original research to the field.

Graduate courses are typically taught as seminars rather than lectures. Students are expected to complete substantial weekly reading assignments, participate actively in discussions, and engage thoughtfully with the ideas and arguments presented by historians and classmates alike.

Assignments emphasize analytical writing, research, and critical thinking rather than memorization or objective examinations.

Throughout the program, you will be expected to develop the skills of a professional historian, including:

- Conducting independent research using primary and secondary sources.
- Analyzing and engaging with historiography.
- Developing clear, original historical arguments supported by evidence.
- Writing in a clear and professional academic style using the Chicago Manual of Style.
- Presenting your research and participating in scholarly discussions.
- Collaborating professionally with faculty, classmates, and community partners.

Graduate study also requires a greater degree of independence than undergraduate coursework. Faculty members serve as mentors and guides, but students are expected to take responsibility for managing their time, meeting deadlines, seeking assistance when needed, and making steady progress toward their academic and professional goals. Successful graduate students are curious, self-motivated, and willing to revise their work in response to constructive feedback.

Finally, remember that graduate school is about becoming part of a community of scholars. Some of the most valuable learning experiences occur through conversations with faculty and fellow students, participation in conferences, collaborative projects, and the exchange of ideas both inside and outside the classroom. We encourage you to take advantage of these opportunities as you develop your identity as a historian.

Communication and Progress

Regular communication with faculty is an essential part of graduate study. Whether you are enrolled in coursework, completing a directed research project, or working on your thesis, faculty are your mentors and are invested in your success. If you encounter challenges that affect your academic progress—whether personal, professional, or academic—please communicate with your instructor, advisor, or the Graduate Coordinator as early as possible.

Graduate students occasionally become overwhelmed and stop responding to emails or disengage from their coursework. While we understand that life circumstances can change unexpectedly, it is

much easier for faculty to provide guidance, identify available resources, and develop a plan for moving forward when communication remains open. Even a brief email letting us know you are experiencing difficulties is far better than disappearing altogether.

Maintaining regular communication with faculty demonstrates professionalism, helps prevent small challenges from becoming larger obstacles, and allows the department to better support you throughout your graduate studies.

MA Program Overview

The Master of Arts in History at the University of North Alabama is a thesis-based graduate program that prepares students to become skilled researchers, effective communicators, and engaged professionals. Through advanced coursework and the completion of an original research thesis, students develop the analytical, writing, and critical thinking skills that are essential for careers in history and related fields.

The program is designed to prepare graduates for a variety of professional and academic paths, including:

- Careers in secondary and higher education
- Public history careers in museums, archives, historic sites, government agencies, and cultural organizations
- Doctoral study in history and related disciplines
- Professional positions that require advanced research, writing, communication, and analytical skills

At the heart of the program is the master's thesis, which provides students with the opportunity to conduct original historical research using primary and secondary sources. Throughout the program, students learn to formulate meaningful historical questions, evaluate evidence, engage with historiographical debates, and communicate their findings through clear, persuasive writing.

Students interested in applied history may also pursue the 12-hour Public History Concentration as part of their MA degree. The concentrate provides hands-on public history experience through project-based coursework and internships with historical organizations.

Because the program serves students with a wide range of professional goals, faculty work closely with each student to develop a course of study that aligns with their interests and career aspirations. Whether your goal is to teach, work in the public history profession, pursue doctoral study, or strengthen your research and communication skills for another career, the MA in History is designed to provide a strong foundation for your future.

MA Degree Requirements

The Master of Arts in History requires the successful completion of 33-36 semester hours of graduate coursework. Students should consult the UNA Graduate Catalog, Degree Works, and the Graduate Coordinator to ensure they are meeting all degree requirements.

Curriculum Overview

Students complete a combination of required coursework, history electives, a thesis sequence, and the Research Literacy Requirement.

Core Courses	Hours
HI 605 – Historiography and Methodology	3
HI 611 – Seminar in U.S. History to 1877	3
HI 612 – Seminar in U.S. History Since 1877	3
HI 621 – Seminar in World History to 1815	3
HI 622 – Seminar in World History Since 1815	3
HI 691 – Research Design	3
HI 695 – Thesis	3
HI 699 – Thesis Defense	0
History Electives	12
Research Literacy Requirement	0–3 ¹
Total Hours	33–36

Graduate Coursework

Graduate students complete coursework at both the 500- and 600-level.

500-level courses are cross-listed with undergraduate 400-level courses and may be offered online or face-to-face. These courses allow graduate students to study specialized topics while completing additional graduate-level assignments beyond those required of undergraduate students.

600-level courses are graduate seminars. These classes emphasize discussion, historiography, independent research, and advanced analytical writing. Students should expect a substantial reading load, frequent participation in seminar discussions, and a major research project.

¹ Some students choose to complete a foreign language course as a refresher before taking the graduate reading proficiency examination, one option for satisfying the Research Literacy Requirement. Students may also fulfill the requirement by successfully completing one of the approved public history methodology courses. These courses count simultaneously toward both the Research Literacy Requirement and the program's elective requirements, allowing students to satisfy both requirements without taking additional coursework.

Elective coursework may be completed through either 500- or 600-level history courses. In addition, the topical seminar courses HI 611, HI 612, HI 621, and HI 622 may be repeated for credit, provided the course topic is different each time it is taken. Students who satisfy the Research Literacy Requirement by completing an approved public history course may also count that course toward their 12 hours of elective coursework.

Students should complete HI 605 – Historiography and Methodology during their first fall semester whenever possible, as it introduces many of the research and writing skills used throughout the program.

Several required courses—HI 611, HI 612, HI 621, and HI 622—are topical seminars. Although the course numbers remain the same, the historical subject changes from semester to semester. For example, HI 611 may focus on the Early Republic one year and Immigration another.

Students satisfy degree requirements by completing the required course number rather than a specific historical topic.

Complete course descriptions are available in the [UNA Graduate Catalog](#).

Thesis Requirement

Beginning with students entering under the 2025–2026 Graduate Catalog, the MA in History is a thesis-only degree. Additional information about the thesis process, committee structure, timelines, and defense requirements can be found in the [Thesis Requirements](#) section of this handbook.

Students whose catalog year is 2024–2025 or earlier may still complete the non-thesis option, which consists of two HI 640 Directed Research and Study courses and HI 698 Comprehensive Examination. Please see the [Non-Thesis Requirements](#) section of this handbook.

Research Literacy Requirement

All students must complete the Research Literacy Requirement before graduation. Because this requirement may take additional planning, students are encouraged to satisfy it as early in the program as possible.

Students may fulfill the requirement by either:

- passing the graduate reading proficiency examination administered by the Department of Foreign Languages, or
- successfully completing one of the following approved public history courses:

HI 511 – Material Culture

HI 513 – Historical Archaeology

HI 514 – Fieldwork Methods

HI 515 – Digital Collections Management

HI 576 – Oral History

HI 580 – Digital History

Department-led study abroad courses may also satisfy the requirement with departmental approval.

Public History Concentration

Students interested in gaining experience in public history may pursue the Public History Concentration, which provides specialized training in practicing history beyond the traditional classroom. The concentration requires 12 hours of approved public history coursework, including HI 665 – Public History and 9 additional hours of public history electives. These courses fulfill the program’s elective requirement.

Public history courses emphasize experiential learning through projects in areas such as digital history, museum and archival work, oral history, historic preservation, cultural resource management, and heritage tourism. Students may also gain professional experience by completing a 140-hour internship with a museum, archive, government agency, nonprofit organization, or other historical institution.

HI 665, the required introductory course for the concentration, is offered each fall. Students are encouraged to complete it during their first year because it provides a foundation for more advanced public history coursework.

Required Course (3 hours)

HI 665 – Public History

Choose 9 additional hours from the following (each course is 3 hours):

HI 511 – Material Culture

HI 512 – Collections Management

HI 513 – Historical Archaeology

HI 514 – Fieldwork Methods Course

HI 515 – Digital Collections Management

HI 516 – History of American Architecture

HI 564 – Unlocking the Archive

HI 565 – Exhibit Design

HI 576 – Oral History

HI 580 – Digital History

HI 667 – Heritage Tourism

HI 670 – Historic Preservation and Cultural Resource Management

HI 671 – Historical Administration

HI 679 – Public History Internship

Plan of Study and Advising

One of the first steps in beginning the MA in History is developing a Plan of Study with the Graduate Coordinator. This plan serves as a roadmap for your degree and helps ensure that you complete all program requirements in a logical sequence while making steady progress toward graduation. [A Plan of Study](#) form is included in the Appendix.

Your degree plan should:

- Identify the courses needed to complete the degree.
- Map coursework across future semesters.
- Ensure thesis requirements are completed in the appropriate sequence.
- Incorporate the Research Literacy Requirement.
- Allow adequate time for thesis development and completion.

As your interests develop or course offerings change, your Plan of Study may be revised in consultation with the Graduate Coordinator. Students are encouraged to review their degree plan before registering each semester to ensure they remain on track for graduation.

Sample Degree Plans

Every student's path through the MA in History program is unique. Many of our students attend part-time while balancing careers, family responsibilities, and other commitments. The following schedule illustrates one possible path for a full-time student and one path for a part-time student beginning the program in the fall semester. Because course offerings vary from year to year, your individual degree plan may differ.

Sample Schedule – Full Time

Semester	Typical Coursework
Fall – Year One	HI 605, HI 611, History Elective
Spring – Year One	HI 612, HI 622, History Elective
Fall – Year Two	HI 691, HI 621, History Elective
Spring – Year Two	HI 695, History Elective, HI 699

Sample Schedule – Part Time

Semester	Typical Coursework
Fall – Year One	HI 605, HI 611
Spring – Year One	HI 612, HI 621
Summer – Year One	History Elective
Fall – Year Two	HI 622, History Elective
Spring – Year Two	History Elective, History Elective
Summer – Year Two	History Elective
Fall – Year Three	HI 691 – Research Design
Spring – Year Three	HI 695 – Thesis

Planning Ahead

Because some required courses are offered only once each academic year and seminar topics rotate from semester to semester, careful planning is essential. Students should work closely with the Graduate Coordinator when developing and updating their Plan of Study to ensure they complete degree requirements in the appropriate sequence. Beginning to think about potential thesis topics early in the program—and discussing those ideas with faculty—will make the transition into HI 691 and HI 695 much smoother.

Applying for Graduation

All students are required to apply for graduation, regardless of whether they plan to participate in the commencement ceremony. Graduation is not automatic. Students must submit their graduation application by the published deadline, typically during the semester before they intend to graduate. Failure to apply on time may delay the awarding of the degree.

The university sends reminders for the graduation application deadlines through UNA Portal and the UNA Digest. Complete instructions and current deadlines are available through the [Office of the Registrar](#).

Thesis Requirements and Process

The master's thesis is the culminating experience of the MA in History program. By completing an original research project, students demonstrate their ability to formulate a historical question, conduct research using primary and secondary sources, engage with existing scholarship, and communicate their findings through a well-written, evidence-based argument. The completed thesis is approximately 30–40 pages in length—the typical length of a scholarly journal article—and is intended to prepare students for professional historical research and writing.

Before HI 691

The thesis process begins before students enroll in HI 691 – Research Design. Prior to the fall semester, students must identify a thesis advisor (First Reader) and submit a thesis proposal that outlines their research topic and includes a preliminary bibliography. Once the proposal has been approved, the department administrative assistant registers students for HI 691.

Beginning this planning process before the semester allows students to enter HI 691 with a clearly defined research direction and sufficient time to develop a successful thesis project.

HI 691 – Research Design (Fall)

HI 691 – Research Design is the first course in the thesis sequence and provides the foundation for the research and writing process. During the semester, students refine their research question, develop a research methodology, identify and evaluate relevant primary and secondary sources, complete an annotated bibliography and historiographical essay, prepare a detailed thesis outline, and submit a rough draft.

HI 695 – Thesis (Spring)

HI 695 – Thesis is the second course in the thesis sequence and focuses on writing, revision, and completion of the thesis. Building on the work completed in HI 691, students conduct any remaining research, compose a 30–40-page thesis grounded in original primary source research and informed by relevant historiography, and revise multiple drafts in consultation with their thesis advisor and committee. HI 691 is a prerequisite for enrollment in HI 695, which is offered each spring. The [Master of Arts in History Thesis Rubric](#) is included in the Appendix.

Thesis Committee

Each student works with a three-member thesis committee consisting of:

- First Reader (Thesis Advisor): Serves as the primary mentor throughout the research and writing process and provides detailed feedback on all drafts.
- Second Reader: Provides additional expertise based on thesis topic or method (determined at the conclusion of HI 691).

- Third Reader: The HI 695 instructor; provides guidance throughout the thesis writing process.

Draft Review Process

The department follows a structured review process to ensure that students receive feedback throughout the development of their theses.

Draft	Submitted To
Rough Draft (completed in HI 691)	First Reader and HI 691 Instructor
Second Draft (completed in HI 695)	Full Thesis Committee
Final Draft (completed in HI 695)	Full Thesis Committee
Final Thesis (completed in HI 695)	Full Thesis Committee, submitted and approved prior to the defense

Students should expect to revise their work multiple times throughout the thesis process. Revision is an essential part of historical scholarship and is an expected component of graduate-level research and writing. At each stage of the process, students are expected to carefully consider and address faculty feedback in subsequent drafts. If comments or recommendations are unclear, students should consult with their thesis advisor or committee members for clarification. Faculty invest significant time and expertise in reviewing each draft, and thoughtful engagement with their feedback is an important part of the scholarly process and professional development.

HI 699 – Thesis Defense

During the same semester that students complete HI 695 – Thesis, they also enroll in HI 699 – Thesis Defense. The oral defense is typically scheduled during the final month of the semester and lasts approximately one hour. All members of the thesis committee participate in the defense.

The defense begins with a 10–15-minute presentation in which the student summarizes the development of the project, explains the central argument and research methodology, and highlights the major findings and contributions of the research. Following the presentation, members of the thesis committee ask questions about the thesis, its methodology, sources, conclusions, and significance. After all questions have been addressed, the student is excused while the committee deliberates and determines the outcome of the defense.

Students are expected to submit a thesis that is substantially complete and ready for defense during the semester in which they enroll in HI 695 and HI 699. In some cases, however, additional revision may be necessary before the thesis is ready for defense. If this occurs, the HI 695 instructor, the thesis advisor, and the student will work together to develop a plan for completing the remaining revisions and scheduling the defense during the subsequent semester.

Distance students may participate in the thesis defense remotely through Microsoft Teams, while students on campus typically defend in person. [The Master of Arts in History Thesis Defense Rubric](#) is included in the Appendix.

After the Defense

Following the successful defense, students complete any final revisions required by the thesis committee before submitting the final approved thesis to the [UNA Institutional Repository](#). Once the thesis has been submitted and all other university graduation requirements have been satisfied, students are eligible to graduate.

Non-Thesis Requirements and Process (catalog years 2024–2025 and prior)

Students entering the MA in History under the 2024–2025 Graduate Catalog or earlier may choose to complete the non-thesis option. Rather than writing a master's thesis, students complete two HI 640 – Directed Research and Study courses (6 credit hours total) followed by HI 698 – Comprehensive Examination. This option allows students to pursue advanced independent research while demonstrating mastery of areas of study completed during the program.

HI 640 – Directed Research and Study

HI 640 provides students with the opportunity to complete individualized research projects under the supervision of a faculty member. Before enrolling, students must identify a faculty member who is willing to direct the project and work with them throughout the semester.

Directed research projects are flexible and may:

- Expand upon research begun in a previous graduate seminar.
- Support a public history initiative or community-engaged project.
- Explore a new area of historical research related to the student's professional or academic interests.

Students complete 6 credit hours of HI 640, which may consist of two separate directed research projects or one larger project divided into two clearly defined components. Because HI 640 is individualized, students must work closely with their faculty supervisor to establish project goals, expectations, deadlines, and final deliverables before the semester begins.

HI 698 – Comprehensive Examination

HI 698 is the culminating experience for students completing the non-thesis option and must be taken during the student's final semester. The comprehensive examination is designed to assess a student's ability to synthesize graduate coursework, engage with historiography, and communicate historical knowledge in written form.

Prior to registering for HI 698, students must assemble a committee of three faculty reviewers. Each reviewer prepares one examination question based on a graduate course the student previously completed with that faculty member.

When asking faculty members to serve on the committee, students should indicate:

- The graduate course they completed with that faculty member.
- When the course was taken.
- Which course should serve as the basis for the examination question if multiple courses were completed with the same faculty member.

Once all three faculty members have agreed to serve, students must provide the reviewers' names to the Graduate Coordinator before the department assistant enrolls them in HI 698.

Preparing for the Comprehensive Examination

Students are encouraged to begin planning for the comprehensive examination well before their final semester. Maintaining organized course notes, reading lists, research papers, and historiographical essays from previous courses will provide valuable study materials. Students should also consult with their faculty reviewers regarding the scope of the examination and expectations for successful performance.

Because the comprehensive examination serves as the capstone experience for the non-thesis option, students should view it as an opportunity to demonstrate the breadth and depth of the historical knowledge and analytical skills they have developed throughout the MA program.

Format of the Comprehensive Examination

The comprehensive examination is administered through Canvas during the student's final semester. The exam is designed to assess your ability to synthesize the knowledge and analytical skills developed throughout the MA program rather than your ability to memorize facts.

Students receive three essay questions, one from each member of their comprehensive examination committee. Once the exam is made available in Canvas, students have 48 hours to complete all three questions and submit their responses. Students will submit their preferred dates for the exams to the Graduate Coordinator at the start of the semester.

Comprehensive examinations must be completed at least two weeks before the end of the semester. This deadline provides sufficient time for faculty to evaluate the examinations and, if necessary, for students to complete any permitted retake before the semester concludes.

Each response should:

- Be 5–7 pages in length (approximately 15–21 pages total).
- Be prepared in Microsoft Word and uploaded to Canvas before the submission deadline.
- Include appropriate Chicago Manual of Style (Notes and Bibliography) citations.
- Demonstrate a clear historical argument supported by evidence drawn from course readings, historiography, and primary sources where appropriate.

Although students have access to their notes, books, and course materials during the examination period, responses are expected to reflect thoughtful analysis, synthesis of graduate-level coursework, and original historical interpretation rather than simply summarizing readings.

Students should write in a clear, professional academic style and carefully proofread their work before submission.

Evaluation and Retake Policy

After the comprehensive examination has been submitted, members of the examination committee have one week to evaluate the responses. Each faculty member scores the question they submitted using the department's comprehensive examination rubric, and scores are released to students through Canvas once all evaluations have been completed.

To successfully complete HI 698, students must earn a passing score on all three examination questions.

Additional Program and University Requirements

Graduate students must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 to remain in good academic standing. In accordance with Graduate School policy, students are academically dismissed after earning three grades of C or two grades below a C.

Only graduate-level coursework may be applied toward the degree. 500-level courses may count only as elective credit, and students may not receive graduate credit for coursework previously completed for undergraduate credit. Students are responsible for complying with all policies outlined in the [UNA Graduate Catalog](#).

Time to Completion

The MA in History may be completed on either a full-time or part-time basis. All degree requirements must be completed within eight years of beginning the program. Students are encouraged to work closely with the Graduate Coordinator to develop a Plan of Study, monitor their progress, and ensure timely completion of the program.

Course Load

One of the biggest adjustments students make when beginning graduate school is understanding the time commitment required for each course. Graduate courses generally involve significantly more reading, writing, and independent research than undergraduate courses. As a result, graduate students typically enroll in fewer credit hours each semester.

Before registering for classes, carefully consider the amount of time you have available to devote to coursework. In addition to attending class and completing assignments, graduate students should expect to spend substantial time each week reading scholarly books and articles, conducting research, and revising written work. If you are balancing graduate school with full-time employment and/or family responsibilities, you may find that taking fewer courses each semester allows you to be more successful.

For enrollment purposes, graduate student course loads are defined as follows:

Fall and Spring (16-week Semester)

Enrollment Status	Credit Hours
Full-Time	9 hours
Three-Quarter Time	7 hours
Half-Time	5 hours
Less than Half-Time	1 hour

Fall and Spring (8-week Session)

Enrollment Status	Credit Hours
Full-Time	4 hours
Three-Quarter Time	3 hours
Half-Time	2 hours
Less than Half-Time	1 hour

Summer

Enrollment Status	Credit Hours
Full-Time	6 hours
Three-Quarter Time	5 hours
Half-Time	3 hours
Less than Half-Time	1 hour

Mini Sessions

Enrollment Status	Credit Hours
Full-Time	1 hour

Students with federal student loans should be aware that enrollment status may affect loan deferment and financial aid eligibility. Students must maintain at least half-time enrollment during the fall and spring semesters to keep eligible federal loans in deferment. Because financial aid regulations may change, students should consult the Office of Student Financial Services with questions about their individual circumstances.

As you plan your schedule, remember that success in graduate school is not determined by the number of credit hours you take each semester. A manageable course load allows you to engage more deeply with the material, produce higher-quality research and writing, and make steady progress toward your degree.

Graduate Writing Expectations

Writing is at the heart of graduate study in history. Throughout the MA program, students will develop the ability to analyze historical evidence, engage with scholarly debates, and communicate original historical arguments through clear, persuasive writing. Graduate-level writing differs from most undergraduate writing in both its purpose and expectations. Rather than simply summarizing historical events or describing existing scholarship, graduate students are expected to make original arguments that contribute to historical conversations and support those arguments through careful analysis of primary and secondary sources.

Chicago Manual of Style

All written work in the MA in History program must follow the *Chicago Manual of Style* (Notes and Bibliography format), the standard citation style used by professional historians. Students are expected to use:

- Footnotes/endnotes to document all sources.
- A complete bibliography.
- Proper formatting for both primary and secondary sources in both notes and bibliographies.

Because consistent citation practices are essential to historical scholarship, students should become familiar with the *Chicago Manual of Style* early in the program. Students can access the [full manual](#) through Collier Library. There are also plenty of shorter guides available online to help students format citations properly.

Managing Your Research

Graduate students quickly accumulate dozens—if not hundreds—of books, articles, archival documents, and other sources. Developing an organized research system early in the program will save considerable time and frustration as you move into larger research projects and the thesis.

Many students find it helpful to use a reference management program such as [Zotero](#), which is available free of charge. Zotero allows you to organize books, articles, websites, archival materials, and other sources in a searchable library. It can also generate citations and bibliographies in *Chicago Manual of Style* format and integrates with Microsoft Word to simplify the citation process.

While reference management software can be a valuable organizational tool, students are ultimately responsible for ensuring that all citations and bibliographies conform to the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Automatically generated citations should always be reviewed for accuracy and completeness.

In addition to organizing citations, students are encouraged to develop a consistent system for managing research notes, PDFs, photographs, archival documents, and writing drafts. Whether you use Zotero, OneNote, Notion, Obsidian, Google Drive, Microsoft OneDrive, or another organizational system,

the key is to develop a workflow that allows you to quickly locate sources and notes throughout the research and writing process.

The best research system is one that you will use consistently. Establishing good organizational habits early in the program will make coursework, thesis research, and future professional projects much more manageable.

Faculty Tip: Begin using a reference manager with your first graduate course—not just your thesis. Building and organizing your personal research library over time will save countless hours when writing seminar papers, conference presentations, and your master’s thesis.

Expectations for Graduate-level Writing

Graduate-level writing requires more than strong grammar and organization. Successful historical writing demonstrates critical thinking, careful research, and sustained engagement with historical scholarship. Throughout the program, students will be expected to:

- Develop clear, original, and well-supported historical arguments.
- Engage thoughtfully with historiography and scholarly debates.
- Analyze and interpret primary sources rather than simply describe them.
- Integrate primary and secondary evidence effectively.
- Write in a clear, organized, and professional academic style.
- Revise extensively in response to instructor feedback.

The Writing Process

Writing is an iterative process and an essential component of every graduate course. Drafting, receiving feedback, and revising are expected parts of graduate study and are critical to producing strong historical scholarship.

Many courses include phased projects involving multiple stages of writing, allowing students to refine their ideas and strengthen their arguments over time. Students should expect to revise assignments after receiving instructor feedback and are encouraged to view revision as an opportunity to strengthen their historical arguments and improve the clarity of their writing rather than as criticism of their writing ability.

Graduate students are also encouraged to take advantage of the [UNA Center for Writing Excellence](#), which offers both in-person and online appointments. Whether you need assistance with organization, clarity, grammar, or citation style, having another reader review your work can strengthen your writing and improve the quality of your final submission.

Research Assistance

Strong historical writing begins with strong research. Students are encouraged to schedule [research consultations](#) with the history librarian, meet regularly with faculty, and take advantage of the Collier Library’s [databases](#), the [UNA Archives and Special Collections](#), and [Interlibrary Loan](#) services throughout the research and writing process.

A Final Word About Writing

Writing is a learned skill that develops through practice, feedback, and revision. Even experienced historians revise their work multiple times before it is published. Faculty recognize that students enter the program with different levels of writing experience and are committed to helping every student grow as a historian and writer throughout the program. Ask questions, seek feedback, and embrace the revision process—it is through revision that strong historical scholarship is developed.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is fundamental to historical scholarship. All submitted work must represent a student's own research and writing and must properly acknowledge the ideas, words, and work of others through accurate citation. Plagiarism, fabrication, falsification, or other forms of academic dishonesty violate both professional standards and university policy and may result in disciplinary action. Please review the university's [Academic Dishonesty Policy](#).

The Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools have become increasingly common in higher education and the historical profession. The Department of History recognizes that AI can serve as a useful tool for brainstorming, improving clarity and grammar, and organizing ideas. However, AI should support—not replace—the work of historical research, analysis, and writing.

The primary goal of graduate education is to develop your ability to think critically, evaluate evidence, engage with historiography, and construct original historical arguments. These intellectual skills cannot be delegated to AI. Students are therefore expected to complete all research, analysis, interpretation, and historical argumentation independently unless an instructor explicitly authorizes a different use of AI for a specific assignment.

Because faculty may have different expectations depending on the goals of a particular course or assignment, students should always follow the AI policy outlined in the course syllabus and consult the instructor if they are uncertain whether a particular use is appropriate.

Regardless of whether AI use is permitted for a given assignment, students remain fully responsible for the accuracy, originality, and integrity of all submitted work. AI-generated content may contain factual errors, fabricated quotations or citations, incomplete interpretations, or biased conclusions. Students are expected to verify all information, accurately represent all sources, and ensure that submitted work reflects their own understanding and scholarly judgment.

Using AI to generate historical analysis, summarize assigned readings in place of completing them, write substantial portions of an assignment, fabricate citations, or otherwise misrepresent AI-generated work as one's own constitutes academic misconduct and will be addressed in accordance with university and departmental policies.

Graduate Assistantships

The Department of History offers five graduate assistantships each academic year. Assistantships provide students with valuable professional experience while supporting the department's teaching, research, and public history mission. In addition to receiving a monthly stipend and tuition remission (9 hours fall/spring), graduate assistants develop practical skills that prepare them for careers in higher education, museums, archives, public history organizations, and other professional settings.

Applying for Graduate Assistantships

Graduate assistantships are awarded through a competitive application process. Applications for assistantships beginning in the fall semester open February 1 and are due on March 15. To be eligible, students must first be admitted to the MA in History program.

Open assistantship positions are posted through [Lion Jobs](#), the University's online employment system. Application deadlines, required materials, and position descriptions will be included in each posting. Students are encouraged to apply early and should contact the Graduate Coordinator with any questions about available positions or the application process.

Graduate assistantship opportunities include positions in the following areas:

- UNA Public History Center – One graduate assistant works on public history initiatives, community partnerships, digital projects, and exhibits.
- Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area (MSNHA) – One graduate assistant works on heritage tourism initiatives, historical research, grant-funded projects, public programming, and partnership development throughout the MSNHA's six counties.
- Departmental Publications – One graduate assistant contributes to the production of departmental publications, including the History Department Newsletter and The Willingham, gaining experience in editing, writing, graphic design, and publication management.
- Faculty Research Assistantships – Two graduate assistants are dedicated to supporting faculty research. Students work closely with faculty members on historical research projects, which may include archival research, primary source analysis, transcription, database development, digital humanities projects, and other scholarly activities.

Graduate assistants are supervised by one or more faculty members and should expect to communicate regularly about assignments, priorities, and project deadlines. Although responsibilities differ among assistantships, all positions are designed to provide meaningful professional experience while supporting the mission of the Department of History.

Expectations

Graduate assistantships are professional appointments. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects positively on both the Department of History and the University of North Alabama.

Graduate assistants are expected to:

- Work an average of 20 hours per week during the academic year.
- Meet regularly with their faculty supervisor(s) to discuss assignments, priorities, and progress.
- Complete assigned projects accurately and on time.
- Communicate promptly regarding scheduling conflicts, questions, or concerns.
- Maintain professional conduct when interacting with faculty, staff, students, community partners, and the public.
- Submit required departmental and university timesheets by established deadlines.

Because graduate assistantships are intended to complement students' academic work, assistants should balance their employment responsibilities with their coursework and thesis progress. Effective time management and regular communication with supervisors are essential to success in both roles.

Graduate assistants are expected to meet the responsibilities outlined by their faculty supervisor and the department. If a graduate assistant is not meeting these expectations, the supervisor will discuss the concerns with the student and provide guidance for improvement whenever appropriate. Depending on the nature and severity of the issue, students may receive additional supervision, a written improvement plan, reassignment of duties, or other corrective measures. Continued failure to meet the expectations of the assistantship, including excessive absences, failure to complete assigned work, failure to submit required timesheets, or unprofessional conduct, may result in the termination of the assistantship. Students whose assistantships are terminated also forfeit the financial benefits associated with the assistantship. They become responsible for tuition and fees for the remainder of the semester and will no longer receive their graduate assistant stipend.

Graduate Assistant Meetings

Graduate assistants participate in a departmental graduate assistant orientation at the beginning of the academic year and meet periodically with the Graduate Coordinator and faculty supervisors throughout the semester. These meetings provide an opportunity to discuss assignments, coordinate projects, share updates, address questions, and learn about upcoming departmental activities and professional development opportunities.

Time Reporting

Graduate assistants are required to document their work each pay period by completing both the [department's timesheet](#) and required university reporting through UNA Portal. Timesheets must be submitted by the published deadlines to ensure timely processing of stipend payments.

Professional Development

Graduate assistantships are intended to be more than campus employment—they are an integral part of your graduate education. Through these positions, students develop transferable skills in historical research, archival practice, project management, public programming, professional communication, digital history, editing, grant-funded projects, and collaborative problem-solving.

Students are encouraged to approach their assistantship as an opportunity to build a professional portfolio, develop mentoring relationships with faculty, and gain experiences that will strengthen future applications for employment or doctoral study.

Professional Development and Student Resources

Graduate school is about more than completing coursework and writing a thesis. It is also an opportunity to develop as a professional historian by gaining research experience, expanding your professional network, and leveraging the many academic resources available at UNA. The Department of History encourages students to seek out opportunities that strengthen their research, writing, teaching, and public history skills while preparing them for careers in education, museums, archives, government, nonprofit organizations, and doctoral study.

Professional Development

Professional development begins in the classroom but extends far beyond it. Students are encouraged to participate in research projects, public history initiatives, internships, conferences, and departmental activities throughout their graduate careers.

The department maintains strong partnerships with museums, archives, historical societies, government agencies, and cultural organizations throughout the Shoals region and beyond. These partnerships provide opportunities for students to gain practical experience in historical research, interpretation, exhibit development, oral history, historic preservation, digital history, heritage tourism, and community engagement.

Students are also encouraged to become active members of the department by attending guest lectures, workshops, and special events, participating in the History Graduate Student Association (HGSA), and collaborating with faculty and classmates whenever possible. The relationships developed through these experiences often become one of the most valuable aspects of graduate school.

Joining professional organizations is another excellent way to build your professional network and remain engaged with the historical profession. Students may wish to explore organizations such as the [American Historical Association](#) (AHA), [National Council on Public History](#) (NCPH), [Organization of American Historians](#) (OAH), [Southern Historical Association](#) (SHA), [Alabama Historical Association](#) (AHA), and the [American Association of State and Local History](#) (AASLH).

Graduate school is also an ideal time to begin developing your professional identity. Students are encouraged to maintain an up-to-date [curriculum vitae](#) documenting coursework, conference presentations, publications, assistantships, internships, awards, and professional service. Creating a LinkedIn profile and connecting with faculty, classmates, alumni, and the [Department of History](#) can also help students build a professional network and identify future career opportunities.

Research Funding and Conference Opportunities

Students are encouraged to share their research beyond the classroom whenever possible. Presenting seminar papers or thesis research at professional conferences allows students to receive valuable feedback, build professional connections, and strengthen their résumé or curriculum vitae. Faculty are happy to help students identify appropriate conferences, prepare presentation proposals, and locate funding opportunities to support research and travel.

The Department of History and the University of North Alabama offer several sources of funding to support student research and professional development, including:

- Department of History Scholarships and Research Awards – Through the generosity of alumni and donors, the department awards several scholarships each year and funds four annual research awards to support student research.
- CASE Student Research Grants – Competitive grants that support research expenses such as archival travel, research materials, and project-related costs.
- QEP Student Project Grants – Funding for experiential learning, research, conference participation, and other professional development opportunities.

Students planning archival research, conference travel, or other research-related activities are encouraged to discuss funding opportunities with the Graduate Coordinator or their thesis advisor as early as possible. Many grants are intended to support research during the thesis process and planning ahead is essential.

Student Resources

The University of North Alabama provides numerous academic resources to support graduate students throughout the research and writing process.

The [UNA Center for Writing Excellence](#) offers free in-person and online consultations to assist students with organization, grammar, clarity, and Chicago-style citations. Even experienced writers benefit from having another reader review major research papers and thesis chapters.

[Collier Library](#) is one of the department's most valuable resources. Students should become familiar with [Interlibrary Loan](#), the [History Research LibGuide](#), [primary and secondary source databases](#), and [research consultations](#) with librarians. These services will become essential as coursework progresses into independent thesis research.

Graduate students are also encouraged to make use of [UNA Archives and Special Collections](#), which houses manuscripts, photographs, maps, newspapers, oral histories, and other unique materials documenting both the university and the Shoals region. Many successful master's theses have originated from these collections.

Additional primary and secondary sources are also available in the Shoals through the local history collections at the Muscle Shoals, Tuscumbia, Sheffield, and Florence-Lauderdale Public Libraries. The Florence-Lauderdale Public Library's [Local History and Genealogy Department](#), is an especially valuable resource for graduate researchers, as is the library's [Digital Archive](#).

Study Abroad

The Department of History believes that some of the best places to study history are the places where it happened. Study abroad and study away programs allow students to engage directly with historical landscapes, archives, museums, and cultural institutions while earning graduate credit.

- Depending on the course, study abroad experiences may:
- Count toward elective coursework.
- Satisfy the Research Literacy Requirement with departmental approval.
- Support seminar papers or master's thesis research.
- Introduce students to archives, museums, and historic sites that become valuable research resources.

The department's Scotland Study Abroad program is one of its signature experiences. Through partnerships with heritage organizations and cultural institutions, students explore Scottish history while gaining practical experience in public history, cultural heritage preservation, historic site documentation, and field-based historical research.

Students interested in studying abroad should begin planning early. Because these courses are offered on a rotating basis, discussing study abroad with the Graduate Coordinator early in the program allows the experience to be incorporated into a student's Plan of Study and ensures it supports both degree requirements and long-term research goals.

The Willingham

The Willingham is the official digital publication of the History Graduate Student Association (HGSA) at the University of North Alabama. The publication serves as an open-access, peer-reviewed venue for sharing historical scholarship, public history projects, book reviews, interviews, and other work produced by graduate and undergraduate students. Building on the legacy of the *North Alabama Historical Review*, *The Willingham* provides students with opportunities to publish their work, gain editorial experience, and participate in the peer-review process.

Students are encouraged to submit seminar papers, thesis research, public history projects, and reflective essays for publication. Serving on the editorial staff also provides valuable professional experience in academic editing, peer review, digital publishing, and scholarly communication. Whether as an author, editor, or reviewer, involvement with *The Willingham* is an excellent way to build a publication record, strengthen professional skills, and contribute to the department's scholarly community.

Graduate Certificate Programs

In addition to the Master of Arts in History, the Department of History offers two stand-alone graduate certificate programs that provide specialized training for students with specific professional goals. These certificates have separate admission requirements and are designed to serve students who may not be seeking a master's degree but who wish to develop expertise in a particular area of history. Information about admission requirements and curriculum is available through the Department of History and the Office of Graduate Admissions. Students enrolled in these programs are encouraged to schedule a meeting with the Graduate Coordinator to discuss their course of study before they begin their coursework.

Graduate Certificate in Public History

The [Graduate Certificate in Public History](#) is a 12-credit-hour post-baccalaureate program designed for individuals who already hold a bachelor's degree and wish to develop practical skills in public history. The certificate is particularly well suited for professionals working in museums, archives, historic sites, government agencies, historical societies, or other cultural organizations who are seeking additional training.

Coursework emphasizes experiential learning through projects in areas such as digital history, museum and archival management, oral history, historic preservation, cultural resource management, and heritage tourism. Students may also complete a 140-hour internship with a historical organization, and distance-learning students may arrange internships in their local communities. The certificate may be completed entirely online.

Graduate Certificate in History Pedagogy

The [Graduate Certificate in History Pedagogy](#) is an 18-credit-hour graduate certificate designed for individuals who already hold an M.A., M.A.Ed., or M.Ed. in a field other than history and wish to qualify to teach Dual Enrollment or Early College history courses. Students may choose either a U.S. History or Non-U.S. History track, with all coursework completed through 600-level graduate seminars. The certificate may also be completed fully online.

Frequently Asked Questions

When should I start thinking about a thesis topic?

Immediately! You do not need to have a fully developed thesis topic when you begin the program, but you should begin paying attention to topics that interest you in your seminar courses. Seminar papers often serve as the foundation for a future thesis, so think of each research project as an opportunity to explore potential ideas. By the end of your first year, you should have a general sense of the area you would like to research.

How do I choose a thesis advisor?

Your thesis advisor should be a faculty member whose research interests and expertise align with your proposed thesis topic. As you move through the program, talk with faculty about your research interests and take note of whose scholarship and teaching best fit your project. Before enrolling in HI 691 – Research Design, you must identify a thesis advisor and submit your thesis proposal.

Can I repeat a seminar course?

Yes. Courses such as HI 611, HI 612, HI 621, and HI 622 are topical seminars. Although the course numbers remain the same, the topics change from semester to semester. You may repeat these courses for graduate credit as long as the topic is different each time you enroll.

Can I take 500-level courses?

Yes. Graduate students may take both 500-level and 600-level history courses. However, 500-level courses may only count toward your elective hours. Core degree requirements are completed through the required 600-level seminars.

How many classes should I take each semester?

That depends on your schedule and other responsibilities. While full-time graduate students typically enroll in 9 credit hours during the fall and spring semesters, many of our students balance graduate school with careers and family responsibilities and choose to enroll part-time. Remember that graduate courses require substantially more reading, writing, and independent research than undergraduate courses. Taking fewer courses often allows students to engage more deeply with the material and produce stronger work.

Can I take classes during the summer?

Yes. Summer courses provide an excellent opportunity to make progress toward your degree, particularly for part-time students. Many students use summer courses to complete electives or participate in study abroad programs.

Course offerings vary each summer, so consult the Graduate Coordinator when planning your schedule.

What is the Research Literacy Requirement?

All MA students must complete the Research Literacy Requirement before graduating. Students may satisfy the requirement by passing the graduate foreign language reading examination or by successfully completing one of the approved public history courses. Certain department-led study abroad courses may also satisfy the requirement with departmental approval.

Do I have to write a thesis?

Students entering under the 2025–2026 Graduate Catalog or later complete a master's thesis as the culminating experience of the MA program. Students with earlier catalog years may still complete the former non-thesis option if they remain eligible under their catalog.

How long is the master's thesis?

The master's thesis is typically 30–40 pages in length, approximately the length of a scholarly journal article. More important than length, however, is that the thesis demonstrates original research using primary sources, engages relevant historiography, and presents a clear, well-supported historical argument.

When do I register for HI 691?

Before enrolling in HI 691, you must identify a thesis advisor and submit an approved thesis proposal that includes a description of your research topic and a preliminary bibliography. Once your proposal has been approved, the department will register you for HI 691.

Why can't I register for HI 691, HI 695, HI 699, HI 640, HI 679, or an independent study through Portal?

These courses require departmental approval and are not available through standard online registration. Contact the Graduate Coordinator and the department's administrative assistant, and they will register you once all requirements have been met.

Can I complete the program entirely online?

Yes. The MA in History can be completed entirely online. Distance students also complete the thesis process remotely and may defend their thesis through Microsoft Teams.

Do I have to come to campus for my thesis defense?

No. Distance students may participate in the thesis defense remotely using Microsoft Teams. On-campus students typically defend in person.

What if I want to change my thesis topic?

Research projects often evolve as students discover new sources or refine their questions. Minor changes are common and should be discussed with your thesis advisor. If your project changes substantially, you should consult both your advisor and the Graduate Coordinator to determine whether additional time is necessary to complete your project.

Can I use a seminar paper as the basis for my thesis?

Often, yes. Many students develop a seminar paper into a master's thesis by expanding the research, engaging additional historiography, incorporating more primary sources, and refining the argument. Students interested in doing so should discuss this possibility with their thesis advisor early in the research process.

How do I find primary sources?

The best place to start is with your faculty advisor and the history librarian. The UNA Library provides access to numerous primary source databases, and Interlibrary Loan can help you obtain materials

unavailable through UNA. Depending on your topic, physical and digital archives, museums, government repositories, and local history collections may also be valuable sources.

Should I use Zotero or another citation manager?

We strongly recommend developing an organized research system as early as possible. Many students use Zotero, a free reference management program that organizes sources, stores PDFs, and integrates with Microsoft Word to create citations and bibliographies. Whatever system you choose, consistency is far more important than the specific software you use.

Can I use artificial intelligence (AI) in my graduate coursework?

Students should follow the AI policy outlined in each course syllabus. Faculty have different expectations depending on the nature of an assignment. In general, AI should never replace your own historical analysis or research. When permitted, AI may be useful for brainstorming, editing, or improving clarity, but students remain fully responsible for the accuracy, originality, and integrity of all submitted work.

How do I find a graduate assistantship?

History Department graduate assistantships are posted through [Lion Jobs](#) during the spring semester for appointments beginning the following fall. Students must first be admitted to the MA in History before applying. Assistantships are competitive, so students are encouraged to apply early. There are also [graduate assistantships](#) available through Housing and Residential Life, which provide housing in addition to tuition remission and a stipend.

Can I present my research before I graduate?

Absolutely! Students are encouraged to present seminar papers and thesis research at local, regional, and national conferences. Faculty are happy to help identify appropriate conferences, review proposals, and locate funding opportunities to support conference travel.

Are there funding opportunities for research?

Yes. The Department of History, the College of Arts, Sciences, and Engineering, and the University all offer funding opportunities to support research, conference travel, and other professional development activities. Students should discuss funding opportunities with their faculty advisor as early as possible in the research process.

Do I have to apply for graduation?

Yes. Graduation is not automatic. Every student must apply for graduation by the published university deadline, even if they do not plan to participate in the commencement ceremony.

Who should I contact if I have questions?

Your first point of contact for most questions should be the Graduate Coordinator. Questions about registration, forms, and departmental procedures can often be answered by the department's administrative assistant. Faculty, librarians, and other university staff are also happy to help, so never hesitate to ask questions.

I'm not sure who to ask. What should I do?

Ask anyway.

Graduate school comes with a steep learning curve, and no one expects you to know everything when you begin the program. One of the strengths of the Department of History is its collaborative and supportive environment. If you are unsure where to start, contact the Graduate Coordinator. If someone else is better equipped to answer your question, we'll help connect you with the right person. Asking questions early almost always prevents larger problems later.

Appendix

- Master of Arts in History Plan of Study
- Master of Arts in History Thesis Template
- Master of Arts in History Thesis Rubric
- Master of Arts in History Thesis Defense Rubric
- Master of Arts in History Comprehensive Exam Rubric

Master of Arts in History Plan of Study



DEPARTMENT of HISTORY

UNA Box 5019, One Harrison Plaza, Florence, AL 35632-0001 P:

256.765.4306 | www.una.edu/history

Equal Opportunity / Equal Access Institution

Plan of Study (M.A.-History)

Student Name	
Student I.D. #	
UNA Email	
Program Track	☐ On campus ☐ Online
Faculty Advisor	
Major Area of Focus	☐ U.S. ☐ Non- U.S. ☐ Public History
Thesis or Non-Thesis (non-thesis option only available to students with a catalog year of 2024-2025 or prior)	☐ Thesis ☐ Non-Thesis
First Semester Attended	
Anticipated Date of Graduation	

Course Requirements

Core Courses – 15 Hours					
Course	Course Title	Planned Term	Completed Term	Credits	Grade
HI 605	Historiography and Methodology			3	
HI 611	Seminar in U.S. History to 1877			3	
HI 612	Seminar in U.S. History Since 1877			3	
HI 621	Seminar in World History to 1815			3	
HI 622	Seminar in World History Since 1815			3	

Elective Courses – 12 Hours					
Course	Course Title	Planned Term	Completed Term	Credits	Grade
				3	
				3	
				3	
				3	

Thesis Option – 6 hours required which includes 3 hours of HI 691 (Research Design) & 3 hours of HI 695 (Thesis)					
Course	Course Title	Planned Term	Completed Term	Credits	Grade
HI 691	Research Design			3	
HI 695	Thesis			3	
HI 699	Thesis Defense			NC	

Non-Thesis Option – 6 hours HI 640, Directed Research plus HI 698, Comprehensive Exam. The non-thesis option only available to students with a catalog year of 2024-2025 or prior.					
Course	Course Title	Planned Term	Completed Term	Credits	Grade
HI 640				3	
HI 640				3	
HI 698	Comprehensive Exam			NC	

Research Literacy: This requirement may be satisfied in one of two ways: by passing a language proficiency examination administered by UNA's Department of Foreign Languages in a language in which they offer instruction, or by completing one of the following public history courses. These courses will satisfy the Research Literacy requirement and may also be counted as an elective: HI 511 (Material Culture), HI 512 (Collections Management), HI 513 (Historical Archaeology), HI 514 (Fieldwork Methods), HI 515 (Digital Collections Management), HI 576 (Oral History), HI 580 (Digital History).

Research Literacy Course – 3 hours					
Course	Course Title	Planned Term	Completed Term	Credits	Grade
				3	

Or

Language Exam				
Language	Planned Term	Completed Term	Credits	Grade
			NC	

Additional Comments:

In order to receive an M.A. degree in History, the thesis-option student must successfully complete HI 699 Thesis Defense with a grade of S (Satisfactory). Non-thesis option students must successfully complete HI 698 with a grade of S. Completion of 33 hours of coursework only will not lead to graduation.

Master of Arts in History Thesis Template

TITLE

by

Your Name

A Thesis

Presented to the Faculties of the University of North Alabama in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in History

YEAR

Supervisor of Thesis (Dr. Name)

Second Reader (Dr. Name)

Third Reader (Dr. Name)

Chair, Department of History (Dr. Name)

ABSTRACT

Text here, double-spaced, not more than 500 words.

DEDICATION

Text here, double-spaced. You may omit this page if you wish.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Text here, double-spaced.

THESIS TITLE

Thesis text here, double-spaced.²

² You should discuss with your advisor if you will use footnotes or endnotes. Parenthetical documentation is not acceptable. If you use footnotes, you will not have a “NOTES” Section.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources – Archival

List here according to the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Single-space citations and double-space between entries, as below.

Primary Sources – Printed

List here according to the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Single-space citations and double-space between entries, as below.

Secondary Sources

List here according to the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Single-space citations and double-space between entries, as below.

BIOGRAPHY

Completion of this section is optional. If included, provide only the information you wish to share, such as your undergraduate education or employment history. Double-space your response.

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Master of Arts in History Thesis Rubric

HI 695 – Thesis

Thesis components	A	B	C	D	Score
	90-100 %	80-89%	70-79%	60-69 %	
1. Argumentation					
Argument	Argument well supported	Main argument valid and systematic	Argument sporadically valid and well-supported	Weak, invalid, or no argument, perhaps a simple assertion	
2. Understanding of historical literature and context					
Historiographical Awareness and Scholarly Context	Historiography is discussed thoughtfully and relates to the thesis	Author demonstrates broad awareness of the literature, including works presenting other perspectives and understands historiographical differences in cited sources	Author demonstrates some awareness of a range of relevant literature, but does not place thesis in historiographical context	Author over-relies on too few sources or inappropriate sources or sources without proper citation and reference (e.g. leans heavily on Wikipedia or one or two basic textbooks without acknowledgement)	
3. Primary Sources					
Quality of primary source research	Has located and read a great variety of primary sources	Has used a good number of primary sources	Has used some primary materials, but over-relies on secondary sources or general characterizations	Has used very few or no primary sources	
4. Analysis					
Analytical Insight	Develops insightful connections and patterns that demonstrate intellectual creativity	Brings together related data or ideas in productive ways, discusses implications of material	Begins to establish connections and perceive implications of the material	Treats related ideas or data as unrelated, or vice versa, or draws weak or unfounded connections	
5. Organization/grammar/reference/style					
Organization and structure	Structure enhances the argument; strong sections; seamless flow	Structure supports the argument, clearly ordered sections fit together well	Structure is of inconsistent quality, may have choppy transitions, redundancies, or discontinuities	Needs significant reorganization	
Grammar and spelling	Virtually no errors	Some minor errors	Frequent or serious errors	Significant errors that impair readability	
Clarity and Style	Mastery of the genre, including elegant style, including elegant style, established voice	Effective prose style, follows relevant scholarly conventions, emergence of voice	Style is inconsistent or uneven	Style or lack of style impedes reading for content	
6. Use of CMS					
Documentation and citation	All sources clearly and fully cited, carefully distinguishing primary sources vs the quoting of primary sources in other secondary sources; all sources cited in notes appear in bibliography; bibliography may include more works than those specifically quoted or cited in text; images, tables, charts, and maps properly captioned and sourced	All quotes, claims based on readings or other data, pictorial evidence, charts, etc. are cited in notes and/or bibliography	Materials all cited, but perhaps without precision, specificity, or consistent citation styles	Mistakes or absences in citations; improper or inconsistent citation style	

Master of Arts in History Thesis Defense Rubric

HI 699—Thesis Defense Rubric

Evaluation of Thesis Defense

Thesis Defense	A 90-100 %	B 80-89%	C 70-79%	D 60-69 %	Score
1. Explanation of Thesis/Argument					
Clear explanation of original thesis/argument	Clear, coherent explanation of thesis/main argument & its significance.	Good explanation of thesis/main argument & its significance.	Acceptable explanation of thesis/main argument & its significance.	Does not clearly explain thesis/main argument or significance.	
2. Review of Primary & Secondary Sources					
Knowledge & familiarity with primary & secondary sources	Excellent discussion & analysis of primary & secondary sources.	Good discussion & analysis of primary & secondary sources.	Adequate discussion but limited analysis of primary & secondary sources.	Limited discussion & inadequate analysis of primary & secondary sources.	
3. Questions & Answers					
Quality of responses to thesis committee members' questions	Confident, precise responses that reflect depth & extensive knowledge of topic.	Responses are appropriate but reflect a basic, fundamental knowledge of the topic.	Responses are tenuous with some inaccuracies; responses reflect limited knowledge of topic.	Responses are vague & confused; responses reflect insufficient knowledge of topic.	

Master of Arts in History Comprehensive Exam Rubric

Question		Question		Question	
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HI 698—Comprehensive Exam Rubric

Comprehensive Exam Components	A	B	C	D	Score
	90-100 %	80-89%	70-79%	60-69	
1. Argumentation					
Thesis Statement/Argument	Thesis statement/main argument is clearly identified in response.	Thesis statement/main argument is present in response.	Thesis statement/main argument is ambiguous or confusing.	The thesis statement/main argument is invalid or perhaps a simple assertion.	
2. Organization of Response					
Organization & Structure	Organization & structure of the essay enhances the argument.	Organization & structure support the argument.	Organization & structure of the essay are of inconsistent quality; essay is difficult to follow in places due to redundancies & discontinuities.	Structure needs significant reorganization.	
3. Original Historical Analysis					
Inclusion of original historical analysis	Response reflects insightful connections that demonstrate intellectual curiosity.	Response brings together related ideas in productive ways; discusses implications of material.	Response begins to establish connections & perceive implications of the material.	Response treats related ideas as unrelated, or vice versa, or draws weak, unfounded connections.	
4. Content Knowledge					
Comprehension of Course Content	Response reflects author's comprehension of course content, & historical texts.	Response reflects author's understanding of course content & historical texts.	Response reflects author's limited understanding of course content & historical texts.	Response reflects author's minimal understanding of course content & historical texts.	
5. Historical Texts					
Use & relevance of sources to Comprehensive Exam question.	Has utilized & cited an extensive variety of sources that are directly relevant to the exam question.	Has utilized & cited the required number of sources that are directly relevant to the exam question.	Has utilized & cited some sources that are related to the exam question, but there is overreliance on one or two sources.	Has utilized & cited an insufficient number of sources.	
6. Mechanics					
Grammar and spelling	Virtually no errors	Some minor errors	Frequent or serious errors	Significant errors that impair readability	
Documentation and citation	All sources are clearly & correctly cited according to the <i>Chicago Manual of Style</i> .	Sources are cited according to the <i>Chicago Manual of Style</i> with a few minor mistakes.	Sources are cited but with errors—citations inconsistently follow the <i>Chicago Manual of Style</i> .	Mistakes or absences in citations; citations reflect lack of familiarity with the <i>Chicago Manual of Style</i> .	
Clarity and Style	Exam is well written, reflecting clear & precise prose.	Writing style is generally good but includes some minor problems with clarity.	Style is inconsistent or uneven.	Style or lack of style impedes reading for content.	

Master of Arts in History Thesis Proposal



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Master's Thesis Proposal Form

Name:

ID #:

Date:

Working Title of Thesis:

Topic Description (please include at least a paragraph overview of your subject):

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****Please attach a working bibliography of the secondary sources and primary sources you plan to use for your project. Your advisor must review and approve this bibliography before signing off on the proposal. The bibliography should demonstrate your familiarity with the relevant secondary literature and indicate the location of the primary sources you intend to use (e.g., digital collections and/or a specific archive).****

Signatures:

Thesis Advisor: Click or tap here to enter text.

Coordinator of Graduate Studies: Dr. Carolyn Crawford