

History

Program Mission Statement

The M.A. program in history at the University of North Florida is designed to meet the needs of students with varied goals: some pursue further graduate work; many are already teachers or plan to become teachers; others seek professional employment as librarians and archivists or as public historians. Students may choose either a thesis or a non-thesis program, and to specialize in either U.S. or European history. Students who choose the non-thesis option are able to enroll in enough out-of-specialty courses to achieve an understanding of non-western history - a benefit for prospective teachers. As the department's faculty increases in numbers and breadth of coverage, other specializations will be added. Faculty in the Department of History are committed to the study, interpretation, and teaching of the human past. We provide graduate students with classroom and field experiences that examine the cultural, economic, intellectual, political, and social forces that have shaped the human experience. Our goal is to provide a course of study that enables students to develop a life-long appreciation of the importance of change over time, as well as the significance of continuity in human history. Faculty strive to inspire creativity and imagination by training students to objectively analyze and interpret historical documents and data, and to present their conclusions in concise and well-reasoned oral and written expressions. The historians in this department believe it is vital to pursue active research agendas to maintain proficiency in their craft, to continue to be enlightened by developments within their specialized fields of study, and to use their skill and research findings to charge their classroom presentations with meaning and excitement. Teaching and research are the most important aspects of our professional activities. Whenever possible, graduate students are invited to participate in research activities with faculty mentors. However, history faculty also routinely provide professional service in the form of lectures and educational opportunities for the community and the general public that are intended to increase understanding of human history. For students, participation in these service activities prepares them for the work activities that will become part of their professional lives after graduation.

Student Learning Outcomes

Graduates will be able to:

Knowledge of Literature of Discipline (req)

- Research and present advanced knowledge of the major historical themes, events, and factual content in the specialty areas of study.

Independent Research/ Professional Practice (req)

- Choose appropriate research methods: in particular, locate and critically analyze primary sources, and select appropriate library finding aids (both print and electronic).

Communication (opt)

- Express historical arguments in extended research papers based on the analysis of primary and secondary sources. The essays will be written clearly, using correct grammar and a style appropriate for the subject matter and audience, and with evidence appropriately cited (including correct use of the conventions of documentation).

Critical Thinking (opt)

- Demonstrate an advanced knowledge of historiography by being able to identify and integrate and synthesize the principal trends and schools of historical writing as they apply to the subject matter being studied.
- Gather and evaluate critically a wide range of appropriate evidence. Make judicious use of evidence in support of an argument.

Assessment Approaches

Graduate learning outcomes are embedded in M.A. course evaluations:

- * Evaluation of UNF graduate students consists of oral presentations, essay examinations, historiography papers, and research papers.

Graduate learning outcomes are also assessed by examination of the research work submitted for the degree:

- * Thesis students prepare and defend a thesis before a committee of three faculty. Advanced knowledge of the major historical themes, events, and factual content in the specialty areas of study is also demonstrated by the thesis, and is assessed by the three-member faculty committee. The thesis committee also assesses the student's ability to find, access, evaluate and use a variety of sources, including primary sources. Finally, the committee assesses the extent to which a student is able to relate their thesis to major historiographical approaches and trends.

* Non-thesis students who entered the graduate program before the fall of 2008 submit two research papers of at least 20 pages each, based on primary sources. Advanced knowledge of the major historical themes, events, and factual content in the specialty area of study is assessed via two culminating examinations (written) composed and graded by two different faculty members. Through these examinations, the student's ability to find, access, evaluate and use a variety of sources, including primary sources is assessed. Finally, the student's ability to identify major historiographical approaches and trends is also assessed.

* For non-thesis students who entered the graduate program from the fall of 2008 onward, these embedded assessments are completed in a slightly different manner. Rather than using two exit exams, the student is asked to defend a major research paper of at least 20 pages in length. A defense committee of at least three faculty members will then ask the student a series of questions about the paper, including questions about primary sources, major themes, and the ability to relate the overall thesis to historiographical trends.