

2024-2025 GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

# MASTER OF ARTS IN PUBLIC HISTORY

NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY

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Headstone found on enslaved burial ground in Wendell, North Carolina, June 2024.

**The departmental policies described in this handbook supplement university policies and academic regulations as articulated in The Graduate Catalog.  
Assembled by the Director of Public History and the History Department**

# Table of Contents

Introduction

Administration

- Director of Graduate Programs
- Director of Public History
- Graduate Student Services Assistant
- How Do I Address a Professor?
- Faculty

Student Resources

- Teaching
  - Working With a Supervisor
  - Teaching & Communication Certificate
- Student Funding
  - Conference & Research
  - Study Abroad
  - Graduate Study
- Registration & Residence Requirements
- Admission with Transfer Credits

Curriculum

- Types of Courses
  - Internship
  - How Do I Find an Internship?
  - History Colloquia
  - Inter-institutional Courses
  - Dual-level Classes
- Fields of Study
  - Public History & Portfolio
  - Public History & Thesis
  - Dual Degree Option
- Graduate Plan of Work
- Grades and Incompletes
- Time to Degree

Portfolio/Thesis Defense

- What to Expect
- Portfolio
  - Portfolio Composition
  - Oral Defense

Thesis

- Oral Defense
- Thesis Filing

Graduation

Appendix A: Curriculum Checklist

**Introduction**

## HOW DO I ADDRESS A PROFESSOR?

If you are unacquainted with a faculty member, it is appropriate to address them by “Professor LastName.” Some faculty find “Doctor LastName” too formal or pretentious, and “FirstName” familiar and presumptuous. “Professor” is a safe, happy medium that you can generally rely upon, until individuals indicate that they would prefer to be addressed in a different way.

Just as in conversation, written communications with professors whom you are unacquainted, should follow the same format. Once the professor replies, you can generally gauge the most appropriate future form of address based upon how your correspondent has signed his or her own e-mail reply.

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Excerpted from Nate Kreuter, “Doctor, Professor, or ‘Hey, You?’” *Inside Higher Ed*, 3 June 2011, <https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2011/06/03/doctor-professor-or-hey-you>

14  
15  
16  
17

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This handbook is designed to help students navigate the master's program in Public History. It contains key information on course requirements, life in the History Department, and graduation specifications. Importantly, if you ever have questions unanswered in this handbook, the Director of Public History is always available as a resource to you.

## **Administration**

The **Director of Graduate Programs (DGP)** administers the department's graduate program: the MA in History, the MA in Public History, and the PhD in Public History. The DGP coordinates the functions of the Graduate Committee, supervises graduate teaching assistants, and has signatory power over graduate admissions, waivers of requirements, leaves of absence, examination committees, and various forms from the Graduate School. Students should consult with the DGP about questions which are not answered by the Graduate School catalog or problems they may encounter in the program.

The **Director of Public History (DPH)** oversees the academic aspects of the MA and PhD programs in Public History. The DPH advises all Public History master's students, directs students in selecting examination committees, and assists students' progress toward their degrees. Students consult with the DPH on curriculum, portfolio and/or thesis schedules, and other issues concerning degree requirements.

The **Graduate Studies Coordinator** provides support for the graduate program, assisting the DGP and the DPH in monitoring students' progress toward their degrees, providing information about departmental and Graduate School policies and procedures, and scheduling defenses and exams.

The **Internship Coordinator** helps students identify, apply for, and participate in internships. The coordinator also teaches HI 642, manages all forms related to internships, and serves as a liaison and advocate for interns.

The **Portfolio Adviser** is the chair of the student's portfolio committee. Students who pursue this option should select a member of the Public History faculty as a portfolio adviser no later than the start of the second academic year. The adviser must be a member of the graduate faculty (a status endowed by the Graduate School).

The **Thesis Adviser** is the chair of the student's thesis committee, if a student opts to write a thesis. Students who pursue this option should select a member of the History faculty as a thesis adviser no later than the start of the second academic year. The adviser must be a member of the graduate faculty (a status endowed by the Graduate School).

### **Faculty**

Faculty are tenured or teaching members of the Department of History. Associate and Full Professors have tenure (permanent appointment) and Assistant Professors are early-stage academics with long-term appointment until tenure. Professors are entitled to direct graduate work, serve on examination and thesis committees, and chair those committees.

*Professors* are faculty who are entitled to direct graduate work, serve as members of examination and dissertation committees, and chair those committees. Associate professors and professors have tenure (i.e., permanent appointment). Assistant Professors are in the early stages of their academic careers and do not have permanent appointment. They are reviewed for tenure during

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their sixth years of employment. All faculty whose academic appointment includes the title “professor” may be called by that title.

***Emeriti Faculty*** have retired from regular faculty duties but may continue to teach for a limited period. They cannot serve as chairs for students new to the program, although they may serve as members of examination and dissertation committees.

***Special Faculty*** are temporary and visiting faculty. They may teach graduate courses, but they may serve on examination and dissertation committees only as external members.

***Inter-institutional Faculty*** from Duke, UNC-Chapel Hill, or UNC-Greensboro who already have graduate faculty status at their institutions are considered graduate faculty at NC State as well and may sit on examination and dissertation committees. They may not, however, chair a committee.

All faculty have subject matter specialization. However, faculty who regularly teach courses in public history include:

- David Ambaras: *spatial history*
- Katherine Mellen Charron: *US public memory*
- Frederico Freitas: *digital history*
- Craig Friend: *US public memory, family & community studies*
- Tammy Gordon: *international public history, interpretation, US public memory*
- Verena Kasper-Marienberg: *European public history, museum studies (Internship Coordinator)*
- Alicia McGill: *cultural heritage, cultural resources management*
- David Zonderman: *museum studies*
- Nishani Frazier: *archives, oral history, digital history, cultural heritage*
- Megan Cherry: *queer cultural heritage*
- Ajamu Dillahunt-Holloway: *African American cultural heritage*

Faculty who have professional training and experience in public history and/or who regularly serve on PH committees are:

- Xiaolin Duan: *material culture*
- Ebony Jones: *public memory of slavery*
- Akram Khater: *Arab American public history*
- Susanna Lee: *Civil War & Reconstruction and public memory, digital history*
- Tate Paulette: *public history of the Ancient world, material culture*
- Noah Strote: *European public memory*

Faculty who have professional training and experience in history, with specialization in a particular subject matter are available for PH committees as well. These faculty include:

- Kristin Alff: *Middle East and North Africa*
- Matthew Booker: *environmental history*

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- David Gilmartin: *British Imperialism in South Asia*
  - Xiaolin Duan: *Medieval to Early Modern Chinese History*
  - Ebony Jones: *19<sup>th</sup> Century US History, African American History*
  - Julia Rudolph: *Early Modern Europe*
  - Brent Sirota: *Religious and Political History in Great Britain*
  - Ross Bassett: *History of Engineering and Technology*
  - Julie Mell: *Medieval and Jewish History*
  - William Kimler: *History of Biology*
  - Traci Voyles: *Historian of Colonialism, Race, Gender, and Environment*

## Student Resources

### Teaching

Full-time master's students on teaching assistantships receive two years of financial aid. During the two years, students are assigned to faculty to facilitate discussion sections, hold office hours for individual students, grade papers, help proctor and grade exams, monitor student activities during lectures, provide critical feedback to faculty about all aspects of the course, and/or report grades to the supervising faculty.

*Working with a Faculty Supervisor:* Faculty ensure that teaching assistants are employed for a full twenty hours per week; those hours should include professional development if the student is interested. Faculty may also devise teaching assistantship duties that match students' career objectives, including asking TAs to design assignments or lecture on a topic. Faculty observe and evaluate their teaching assistants each semester.

*The Teaching and Communication Certificate program* offers graduate students a chance to learn the fundamental components of pedagogy, enriching their personal growth and professional development in teaching and learning. Participants complete 100 hours of professional development activities and prepare a portfolio. For details, see [the Graduate School's FAQs page](#) on the program.

### Student Funding

*Support for Conference Travel and Research:* The Department of History and the Sorrell Public History Grant Fund allocates a portion of its annual operating budget for student travel for research and conferences. These funds subsidize travel for master's students who received acceptance of their presentation in a conference program. If funds are available, the department also subsidizes travel for thesis research or conference attendance for more general purposes of educational and professional development.

*Study Abroad:* The Department of History Public History program regularly runs a study abroad program on public history. Students visit key historical sites in countries like Japan, Belize, and Czech Republic. Funding is available through two different sources. The first is via department grants. Department grants are small and should be combined with other funds. Students can supplement department grants with an external grant through the study abroad office. You can find more information about the grant process on the [study abroad](#) website.

*Graduate Study:* North Carolina State University has university-wide grants available for graduate study. Students regularly receive notices regarding the application process from the



Director of Public History. However additional information can be found on the graduate study page on [fellowships and grants](#).

*Please note that all funding opportunities, whether internal or external, will require an application process.*

**Registration and Residence Requirements:** Students may enroll in most classes themselves through MyPack Portal. Students must see the Graduate Administrative Assistant to submit paperwork for restricted classes like HI 599: Independent Study and inter-institutional classes.

The History Department considers nine hours a full load. NCSU enforces a continuous registration policy. After students are admitted to the Graduate School and enroll for the first time, they are required to be enrolled each semester excluding summer sessions until they have either graduated or terminated the program. Students on the Graduate Student Support Plan (GSSP) *must* be full-time students.

In cases of emergency, leaves of absence may be requested for one semester or one academic year, arranged with the DPH and approved by the DGP. A leave of absence does not stop the six-year “clock” for students to complete the master’s degree. In all cases, students must be registered in the semester they defend their portfolios or theses and intend to graduate.

**Admission with Transfer Credits:** Students who have taken graduate-level courses elsewhere or as non-degree students at NCSU may request the Graduate Committee to review and consider those courses towards credit in the master’s program. No more than twelve credit hours may be brought into the program.

## Curriculum

The master’s program in Public History is designed to train historians for careers in public-facing history, with courses selected from groups embracing a primary field in Public History and a minor field in History.

### Types of Courses:

Student courses encompass a wide variety of learning and education modalities. Core courses and electives provide introductory, intermediate, and advanced study about the public history field. Internships offer practical skills, while colloquia, dual-degree, and inter-institutional courses allow students an opportunity to expand and grow their intellectual foundations in public history.

*Core Courses and Electives:* While there may be an occasional change, typically Public History courses will be taught on the following rotation. Core requirements are in bold italics.:

EVEN FALLS	ODD SPRINGS	ODD FALLS	EVEN SPRINGS
<b><i>HI 596: Introduction to Public History (1<sup>st</sup> yr)</i></b>	HI 535: Spatial History	<b><i>HI 596: Introduction to Public History (1<sup>st</sup> yr)</i></b>	HI 533: Oral History
HI 591: Museum Studies	HI 589: Interpretation at Hist. Sites & Parks	HI 591: Museum Studies	HI 593: Material Culture
HI 594: Cultural Heritage	HI 593: Material Culture	HI 594: Cultural Heritage	HI 594: Cultural

**HOW DO I FIND A PAID INTERNSHIP?**

<p><b>HOW DO I FIND A PAID INTERNSHIP?</b></p>	<p><b>8: Historical Writing (1<sup>st</sup> yr)</b></p>	<p><b>HI 597: Historiography and Historical Method (1<sup>st</sup> yr)</b></p>	<p>Resource Management <b>HI 598: Historical Writing (1<sup>st</sup> yr)</b></p>
<p>If you are unacquainted with how to locate a paid internship, there are multiple tools and approaches you may take.</p>	<p>HI 787: African American Public History</p>	<p>HI 534: Digital History</p>	<p>HI 789: Public History in International Contexts</p>
<p>Students will regularly receive internship notices from faculty and the Director of Public History. It behooves each student, to file these emails under an internship folder to ensure later access.</p>		<p><b>HI 642: Internship (2<sup>nd</sup> yr)</b></p>	<p>HI 795: Special Topics (Queer Public History)</p>

Students will regularly receive internship notices from faculty and the Director of Public History. It behooves each student, to file these emails under an internship folder to ensure later access.

Local internships are available through the NC Cultural Resources Online Jobs Portal. You may also contact historical sites individually, if you have a particular regional area of interests. Some sites may have funding, even though not advertised.

National internships can be found through the National Council of Public History, USA Jobs, Smithsonian, and National Park Service Job Portals. Some locations even provide housing due to their remote nature.

Most importantly, each student should take an aggressive approach to searching for an internship at the start of their first semester in the program. Well paid positions are competitive. The sooner you act, the sooner you can secure a position!

...te an internship in their own special areas of interest. Designed ...sional Public History experience, the internship requires 140 ...stitution agreed upon by the student and the Internship ...ship should come with a stipend. Students should begin ...ne first semester of their entering year. This ensures students ... internship requirement as soon as possible.

...HI 642 in the fall semester of the second year, following the ... internship may be completed at any time- if approved by the ...hip Coordinator.

...visor and the *Internship Coordinator* to identify an appropriate ...ternships should reflect professional and career intention or ...of study. Unless the student is place-rooted, she/he should ...cticum outside the region. In some circumstances, it may be ...at an institution where the student already works or ...must be a separate and distinct work experience.

...ternships like professional jobs with regular hours, observing ...llines, and ideally attending staff meetings, allowing them to ...essionals and to see how their work fits into host institutions'

...stone project. The experience must include a specific, well-...ne student's professional training and meets the programmatic ...oon selecting a host institution in which to intern, the student

...onsultation with her or his supervisor, providing an overview of ...the project, its rationale, and a preliminary bibliography of ...resources. The proposal must be reviewed and approved by ...the Internship Coordinator and the practicum supervisor ...prior to beginning the practicum.

2. Define, execute, and produce a final project outcome. Projects may take many forms, such as oral or visual histories, exhibit catalog descriptions, finding aids, research papers, walking tours, institutional histories, grant

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applications, cultural resource surveys, museum exhibits, public relations documents, or a combination thereof. Ideally, this is a project prepared specifically for the host institution. Projects that lack a written component must provide documentation which include: images, summation of process, and other forms or methods of illustration.

3. Provide a midterm evaluation from the supervisor and a final evaluation of the student's performance. The student should provide the appropriate forms to the supervisor and facilitate their return to the Internship Coordinator.
4. Evaluate internship experience, including strengths and weaknesses, along with learning outcomes. Forms for proposals and evaluations may be found on the [HI 642 Internship Resources Page](#). Students will receive a grade of satisfactory or unsatisfactory for HI 642 based upon successful completion of the internship, the internship project, the student's evaluation, and the supervisor's evaluations.

The internship should provide opportunities to gain experience and make professional decisions under the guidance of an experienced professional in an environment of mutual respect.

*If you experience harassment on the job*, contact the Director of Public History who will provide guidance and advocacy and will direct you to university resources to help you navigate through [options for reporting](#).

HI 642 meets for about ten hours throughout the fall semester. This time will be devoted to professional development, reflection, and reporting on the internship. HI 642 requires you to write a 10-12 page rigorous analysis that contextualizes the internship within the context of scholarship on public history. Scholarship should incorporate both historical approaches and current theories in Public History, which speak to the internship experience. This paper will be part of your portfolio, so it is imperative that students think critically, write professionally, and delve deeply into the philosophies and theories that undergird public history.

*Colloquia in History (HI792)*: Students are required to take two HI 792: Colloquium in History. A colloquium is a readings-based course that emphasizes historiography and historical method on a broad topic. A student may desire to select colloquia based on topical relevance to her or his interests, but that may not always be possible. Most critical, each course introduces students to historiographical, methodological, and content lessons that can shape, influence and enhance student capabilities to engage history from various vantage points.

*Inter-institutional Courses*: In consultation with the DPH and with approval of the DGP, students may take graduate-level course(s) inter-institutionally at Duke University, North Carolina Central University, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, or University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. If students find a graduate-level course offered at one of these institutions *that is not offered at NCSU*, they should email the instructor for permission to enroll in the class. When the instructor grants permission to take the course, the student must submit the instructor's email to the DPH for final advisory approval. Once approved, the Graduate Studies Coordinator will assist in completing appropriate paperwork.

*Dual-Level Classes*: Note that many history graduate courses are "dual-level" and include undergraduates taking 400-level credit and graduate students taking 500-level credit. Students who attended NCSU as an undergraduate may not receive credit for a 500-level course previously taken at the 400-level.

**Fields of Study**: The master's curriculum consists of 36 credit hours of graduate work, with courses selected from groups embracing a primary field in Public History and a minor field in



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History. Students may select one education track, including: public history and portfolio, public history and thesis, and/or public history & MLIS dual-degree. Each track includes all core courses, but also varies based on direction of study.

*I. Public History & Portfolio (36 hours total):*

Core Requirements (18 credit hours):

- HI 596 Introduction to Public History (First Year, Fall Semester)
- HI 597 Historiography and Historical Method (First Year, Fall Semester)
- HI 598 Historical Writing (First Year, Second Semester)
- HI 642 Internship in Public History (Second Year, Fall Semester)
- HI 792 Colloquium in History (2 courses during First and/or Second Years)

Public History Courses (9 additional credit hours):

Students are expected to demonstrate mastery of the literature and theory of Public History and its constituent disciplines. In consultation with the DPH, students develop a curriculum in Public History: it may be a coherent “track” in museum studies or cultural heritage, or a more “general” curriculum. Students are required to take core courses HI 596: Introduction to Public History and HI 642: Internship in Public History (see above).

Each student will also complete an additional 9 hours of 500-, 600-, and 700-level course work in Public History, including.

Sample Public History Individual or Combined Tracks:

- Museum Studies (HI 591, 593, and either 588, 589, 633, 787, or 788)
- Cultural Heritage (HI 594, 595, and either 588, 589, 633, 787, or 788)
- Public Memory (HI 563 and two of 533, 534, 787, and/or 788)
- Community History (HI 588 and two of 533, 594, 787, and/or 788)
- Archives and Records Management (any three courses; this track must be completed as part of the credit transfer agreement with UNC SILS)

Sample Public History Course Titles:

*May select from any history courses 500-level or above, or from other Public History courses:*

- HI 533 Theory and Practice of Oral History
- HI 534 Theory and Practice of Digital History
- HI 535 Spatial History
- HI 563 Topics in History and Memory
- HI 587 Cultural Resource Management
- HI 588 Family and Community History
- HI 589 Interpretation at Historic Sites and Parks
- HI 591 Museum Studies
- HI 593 Material Culture
- HI 594 Cultural Heritage
- HI 595 Cultural Resource Management
- HI 633 Internship in Public History
- HI 787 African American Public History
- HI 788 Native American Public History

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History Courses (3 additional credit hours): To practice effectively in any area of Public History, graduates of the master's program must be able to demonstrate competency as historians. The History field consists of 12 hours of core requirements, which include HI 597: Historiography and Historical Method, HI 598: Historical Writing, 6 hours of HI 792: Colloquium in History (see above), and an additional graduate elective course of 3hrs of the student's choice.

Sample History Course Titles:

- HI 555/AFS 555/HI 455/AFS 455 History of the Civil Rights Movement
- HI 559/HI 459 The Early American Republic
- HI 561/HI 461 Civilization of the Old South
- HI 562/HI 462 Southern History since the Civil War
- HI 563/HI 463 Topics in History and Memory
- HI 568/HI 468 Slavery in the Americas
- HI 569/HI 469 Latin American Revolutions
- HI 570/HI 470 Exploring World History
- HI 571/HI 471 Revolutionary China
- HI 573/HI 473 Japan's Empire in Asia, 1868-1945
- HI 576/AFS 576/HI 476/AFS 476 Leadership in Modern Africa
- HI 579/AFS 579/HI 479/AFS 479 Africa (sub-Saharan) in the Twentieth Century
- HI 583/HI 483 Science and Religion in European History
- HI 584/HI 484 Science in European Culture
- HI 585/HI 485 History of American Technology
- HI 586/HI 486 Science and Empire
- HI 595 Special Topics in History
- HI 599 Independent Study
- HI 787 African American Public History
- HI 788 Native American Public History
- HI 789 Public History in International Context
- HI 795 Special Topics

or another course that the student may identify and approve with the DPH

*Elective Courses (6 credit hours):* Elective courses operate to expand student learning in other educational areas of relevance to Public History. Courses can incorporate education in grant writing, non-profit administration, documentary production, and other key areas which expand or deepen the student's intellectual breadth within Public History. Students often take elective courses in other departments or institutions. However, elective courses chosen outside North Carolina State University can only be selected in consultation with the Director of Public History.

Sample Elective Courses:

- ANT 531 Tourism, Culture, and Anthropology
- ANT 533 Anthropology of Ecotourism and Heritage Conservation
- ARC 451 Architecture, Culture, and Meaning
- ARC 544 Architectural Conservation
- ARC 545 Methods of Interpretation in Architectural History
- ARC 548 Vernacular Architecture
- COM 537 Gaming and Social Networks
- COM 546- Nonprofit Marketing and Public Relations

- COM 581 Visual Rhetoric: Theory and Criticism
- NR 548 Historical Environments
- PA 531 Human Resources Management in Public & Nonprofit Organizations
- PA 535 Problem Solving for Public and Nonprofit Managers
- PA 536 Management of Nonprofit Organizations
- PA 538 Nonprofit Budgeting and Financial Management
- PA 539 Fund Development
- PA 640 Grant Writing

*or another course that the student may identify and approve with the DPH*

*II. Public History and Thesis (36hrs total):*

Public History and History course requirements remain the same as above and consists of 30 credit hours. However, elective courses in the portfolio track are omitted. Instead, students take 2 required courses in research-based preparation.

Thesis (6 hours):

Course Titles:

- HI 693 Master's Supervised Research
- HI 699 Master's Thesis Preparation

*III. MAPH/Master of Information and Library Science (36hrs total):*

For this option, you must be admitted to the MILS program at UNC Chapel Hill. You will defer your full-time enrollment in MILS while working on your MAPH. Six credits of your MILS credits will be applied to your MAPH degree.

Public History and History course requirements remain the same as above, and consists of 30 credit hours. However, elective courses in the portfolio track are omitted. Instead, students take 2 required courses from the UNC archives and records management field (ARM). These courses must be taken as Inter-Institutional Courses or as Transfer Credits.

Dual degree students who are not on the Graduate Student Support Plan (GSSP) often choose to begin full time in their MILS program during their fourth semester at NC State. During this time, the student enrolls for one credit of HI 599 to maintain eligibility for graduation. Students on the GSSP often choose to take Inter-Institutional Courses. Consult your MILS advisor on the option that is best for you.

UNC-CH ARM Field (6 hours): For more details on ARM course requirements see, [UNC-CH student course grid](#).

Sample UNC-CH ARM Course Titles:

- INLS 777 Perspectives (required in Fall)
- INLS 776 Ethics (required in Spring)
- INLS 755 Archival Appraisal
- INLS 757 Principles and Practices of Archival Description
- INLS 525 Electronic Records Management
- INLS 556 Introduction to Archives and Records Management
- INLS 752 Digital Preservation and Access
- INLS 753 Preservation of Library Materials
- INLS 754 Access, Outreach, and Public Services in Cultural Heritage Repositories

- INLS 890 Digital Curation Workflows

**Graduate Plan of Work (Degree Audit):** The Graduate School requires master’s students to complete a Plan of Work (POW). In consultation with the DPH, the student develops a POW and submits it online through MyPack Portal, listing completed courses and those that still must be taken to graduate. The POW should be rationally unified, with all constituent parts contributing to an organized plan of study and research. The POW lists members of students’ examination committee and the courses that they plan to take to fulfill degree requirements. Students should choose both their committee and their courses in consultation with the DPH.

The Graduate School has also instituted a new system called Degree Audit. Degree Audit allows students to easily ascertain the number of courses completed or yet to be fulfilled. Students will be able to monitor progress for each semester, and determine their status toward the completion of the degree.

**Grades and Incompletes:** To receive credit for a graduate course, a grade of C- or higher is required. Grades on courses taken for graduate credit as an undergraduate at NC State, in non-degree classification, or transferred from other universities must have a grade of B or better to be counted toward the master’s degree. All grades on courses for graduate credit are included in the graduate GPA. To graduate, a student must have a minimum 3.000 average on all graduate course work as well as all courses on his or her POW. This policy is strictly enforced.

The grade of Incomplete (“IN”) may be given in any course at the discretion of the instructor for work not completed because of a serious interruption in the student’s work not caused by her or his own negligence. A student who receives an “IN” must complete the unfinished work *by the end of the next semester* to have the “IN” converted to a final grade. Otherwise, the “IN” will be automatically converted to “F” or “U.”

**Time to Degree:** Whether taken full-time or part-time, all degree requirements must be completed within six years. In extremely unusual circumstances, extensions may be appealed to the Graduate School, but extensions are extremely rare. To complete the program, students should manage their time wisely, balancing academic demands with those of teaching or other work, family and other personal relationships, and leisure. The following timeline is intended as a guide for students and not an absolute schedule. Students who enroll with credit toward the degree can estimate a deduction of one semester for each 9 hours of credit. Each student’s progress will depend on her or his individual motivation and progress.

First Year: Fall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 credit hours, inc. HI 596 and 597</li> <li>• Begin internship search</li> <li>• Submit Study Abroad fellowships</li> <li>• Submit late fall internship applications</li> </ul>
First Year: Spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 credit hours, inc. HI 598</li> <li>• Plan of Work</li> <li>• Submit early spring internship applications</li> </ul>
First Year: Summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perform internship</li> </ul>
Second Year: Fall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 credit hours, inc. HI 642</li> <li>• Choose portfolio or thesis committee members</li> <li>• Schedule Portfolio or thesis defense</li> </ul>

Second Year: Spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 credit hours</li> <li>• Portfolio or thesis defenses of April</li> <li>• Graduation procedures</li> </ul>
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## WHAT TO EXPECT IN ORALS

### Portfolio/Thesis Defense

The portfolio and thesis are the culmination of your studies in the public history program. All Public History students must complete a portfolio or thesis to graduate from the program. The portfolio constitutes a collection of your public history production during the program and a summation of the student's theoretical understanding of public history. The thesis is a research-based product that incorporates a document supported argument. Both the portfolio and thesis defenses are designed to engage the student in an oral exam and conversation which allows the student to defend their product or project.

The timeline for the defense begins in the final weeks of the student's first year. Students should consider potential members for the thesis or portfolio committee and the lead chair for the committee. In the early weeks of the second year, students must select a committee chair and set an appointment to review expectations. By the fall semester end of the second year, both committee member requests and defense scheduling must be complete.

Students are encouraged to select a defense time in early April. Faculty serve on multiple committees, and dates for defense can conflict without early arrangement and organization. Thesis students are particularly encouraged to defend early, in order to allow thesis editing in time for submission for graduate filing.

#### Portfolio

Students should retain all projects, proposals, and papers produced during their tenure as a master's student. Portfolios should be professional and appropriate for presentation to potential employers, as evidence of your public history experience as well as your historical research and writing skills.

#### *Portfolio Composition:*

1. A table of contents
2. A short essay (no more than ten pages) presenting your "philosophy of Public History"—your approach

Oral exams for MA in Public History will usually be about seventy-five minutes long. It is based on your portfolio and, if applicable, thesis, your course work in the MA Program, your internship, and your professional interests.

You should prepare for this exam, but you should not "cram" for it. Your preparation should include reviewing your portfolio and material (books, notes, papers, projects) from your courses.

Professors will usually ask questions that prompt you to offer explanations and arguments.

If you do not understand a question, ask for it to be rephrased or clarified.

Try to relax before and during the exam (easier said than done). Bring a bottle of water and maybe a hard candy to keep your mouth from drying out.

Do not bring cookies or treats to the exam.



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to Public History, how your courses and internship impacted this approach, and how it will reflect in your professional goals.

3. A current resume
4. Materials from your internship that reflect the work that you performed as well as your evaluations. The internship packet should also include your HI 642 course paper.
5. Two scholarly papers: a.) an argument-based traditional history paper, and b.) a public history document from a course other than HI 642. These papers should evidence your skill at researching and writing about history, and its application in the public space.
6. Other materials that evidence Public History work while enrolled at NCSU. These may include projects from part-time jobs or volunteer situations, grant applications to which you contributed, and links/printouts of websites developed.

In your final semester, you will present your portfolio to your committee. At least two weeks prior to the presentation, you should provide each member of your committee with a copy of the portfolio. You will begin your oral exams with a *brief* presentation on your internship experience. Your presentation should not exceed ten to fifteen minutes, so be succinct. Following the presentation, the student will field questions from the committee.

*Oral Defense:* Students must submit an oral examination request form to the Graduate Administrative Assistant. This step must be completed at least three weeks prior to the proposed examination date. The oral examination should be completed during the semester of graduation, preferably by the start of November for fall graduations and by early April for spring graduations.

Students should meet with each committee member to discuss the nature of the exam and what will be covered. The oral examination focuses on students' major concentration as well as their portfolios. The committee will ask questions to gauge students' knowledge of themes, issues, and events in the coursework and portfolio. Students should be able to give an oral summary of their internships, relating their practical experiences with their theoretical training. Under university policy, all oral examinations are open to the public. Students should bring a copy of their portfolio to consult during the examination.

## **Thesis**

Theses are original works of research, which offer a cogent argument and contribution to the intellectual foundations of public history theory and practice. Public History students are not required to write a thesis, but may do so if they wish. Theses should follow the expected essay format of the history field, though students may also incorporate other public history based methodological components with the essay.

A student who elects to write a thesis must select a thesis adviser and committee, in consultation with the DPH. One member, along with the adviser, represents the Public History field. The other member represents the History field. In addition to the department's full-time faculty, special faculty (part-time or adjunct faculty) who are members of the NCSU graduate faculty may serve on committees. Other part-time and adjunct faculty may also serve on committees with Graduate School approval. Faculty from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Duke University, North Carolina Central University, and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro may serve as members if they are on the graduate faculty at their respective institutions. At least two of the three faculty on the committee must be history faculty at NCSU.

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In most cases, the thesis is a “case study” limited to a specific time and geographical area. Students are expected to demonstrate in-depth knowledge of relevant events and issues. They should also show an understanding of the historiographical context for their work. Students might consider the following questions: Does your research revise or challenge major historical interpretations? Are your sources or approach innovative? How does your study complement similar works? Students may examine copies of past theses in the departmental conference room (Withers 358).

The thesis adviser will help the student develop a research and writing plan, and the thesis committee will review thesis chapters and recommend changes while the work is in progress. Students who have fulfilled all degree requirements except the thesis must enroll in at least one hour of Master’s Thesis Preparation (HI 699) to meet the university’s continuous registration requirement.

*Oral Defense:* When the thesis is approved by the committee, the candidate will be asked to appear for a final oral defense of the thesis. The student should submit a complete thesis to each committee member at least two weeks in advance of the defense. The student should also provide a copy of the portfolio at the same time. The thesis defense format is:

- The candidate presents the methodology, research results, and conclusions of the thesis. It is required that this part of the defense be open to the university community.
- Anyone attending the thesis defense can ask questions of the candidate.
- The defense will include discussion of the student’s portfolio.
- After the questioning of the candidate, only the advisory committee remains to deliberate and decide upon the candidate’s performance.
- Throughout the process, the primary adviser is obligated to maintain a scholarly atmosphere and to keep academic integrity and the candidate’s best interest foremost.
- A unanimous vote of approval by the candidate’s committee is required for passing the defense. Approval may be conditioned on the candidate meeting specific requirements prescribed by the committee. Although the thesis is considered complete, the thesis defense may result in some revisions as recommended by the committee.
- Failure to pass the thesis defense terminates the candidate’s work, unless the committee recommends a re-examination. Re-examination cannot be held until one full semester has lapsed. Only one re-examination is permitted.
- Oral exams for MA in Public History will usually be about ninety minutes long—it is based on your thesis, portfolio, course work in the MA Program, Internship experience, and professional interests.

**Thesis Filing:** The Graduate School Thesis Editor strongly recommends that students attend at least one session of the [ETD Workshop](#) on thesis preparation. Students must follow the formatting procedures exactly. To save themselves some formatting headaches, students may use the Graduate School’s [ETD Template](#).

Once students receive an unconditional pass in the thesis defense, they may then begin the process for the Graduate School-required Electronic Thesis & Thesis (ETD) Review. After receiving an unconditional pass, students have 24 hours to submit the completed thesis, as a PDF, through the ETD Submission System. This step must be completed before the No Registration Required ETD Review Deadline or Registration Required ETD Review Deadline, depending on the semester the student intends to graduate. The ETD Editor will review the ETD file and provide required corrections within three to five business days from draft submission,

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but the turnaround may be longer during deadline times. The ETD Review is required by the Graduate School in order to be cleared for graduation. After the ETD Review, students must also make any revisions required by the committee before they submit the Final Error-Free ETD for graduation. Students must complete the final thesis submission, with all corrections, ideally within two weeks of the final oral examination but absolutely before the Final Error Free ETD Deadline. For further information, consult the Graduate School's pages on [Electronic Theses and Dissertations](#).

Students may purchase bound copies of the thesis from [Wolf Xpress](#). Students are not required to provide a bound copy of the thesis to the Graduate School or the Library, but they are required to provide a bound copy with an original signed title page to the History Department. Students should ask their adviser and other committee members their preferred format for copies of the thesis.

## **Graduation**

NCSU has three official graduations per year: at the end of the fall and spring semesters and after the second summer session. The History Department holds commencement ceremonies at the end of the fall and spring semesters and incorporates summer graduates into the fall commencement ceremony.

By the end of the third week of the semester in which they intend to graduate, students must apply for graduation through MyPack Portal. Students who need corrections to their name must fill out the [Name Change/Marital Status Change form](#). Students who wish to have the diploma sent to an address other than their Home/Mailing address must select the "Create Diploma Address" button. Students who have a privacy block on their account must check the "privacy settings" on MyPack Portal to make sure that their name will or will not appear in the graduation program per their preferences. Finally, students who would like to walk at graduation should purchase academic apparel. For further information, see the Registrar's [help guide](#).

Students who successfully complete their oral examination after the Graduate School deadline for graduation that semester may still walk that semester, but they will officially graduate in the following semester. If relevant, these students must be sure to submit the final error-free version of their thesis before classes start the following semester to avoid incurring tuition and fees; this is called the "No Registration Required ETD Review Deadline."

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**Appendix A: Curriculum Checklist**

**MA Curriculum (36 credit hours)**

This is a typical curriculum for a student who enrolls without an MA. The Graduate Committee may alter requirements or grant transfer credit toward requirements.

**Public History Field (15 cr. hrs.)**

HI 596 Introduction to Public History (3 cr. hrs.)

HI 642 Internship in Public History (3)

HI \_\_\_\_\_ (3)

HI \_\_\_\_\_ (3)

HI \_\_\_\_\_ (3)

**History Field (15 cr. hrs.)**

HI 597 Historiography and Historical Method (791 for the thesis option) (3)

HI 598 Historical Writing (3)

HI 792 Colloquium in History (3)

HI 792 Colloquium in History (3)

HI \_\_\_\_\_ (3)

**Portfolio Option: Electives (6 cr. hrs.):**

\_\_\_\_\_ (3)

\_\_\_\_\_ (3)

**or**

**Dual Degree Option (6 cr. hrs.):** MILS transfer or inter-institutional courses

\_\_\_\_\_ (3)

\_\_\_\_\_ (3)

**or**

**Thesis Option (6 cr. hrs.):**

HI 693 Master's Supervised Research

HI 699 Master's Thesis Preparation