

Master of Arts in History General Information

The Master of Arts degree in History is designed to provide a course of study and useful skills for those whose interests lie in a wide range of career opportunities and personal development. Graduates from our MA program have entered extremely diverse professions such as: education, business and government service, arts and entertainment, museum curation and archiving, and non-profit work. Our program also offers the basic requirements for those who intend to pursue a doctoral degree upon completion of their study at California State University, Fullerton.

I. Application Deadlines: Spring admission - October 31st Fall admission- March 1st

Applying is a two-step process. **First**, apply to the university online at calstate.edu/apply. If you do not complete the university application by the above dates, you will need to wait until the next application cycle. Note that this application will be reviewed by CSUF Office of Admissions and results regarding eligibility will then be sent to the Department of History.

Second, you must apply to the Department of History M.A. program. This step in applying requires the following materials:

1. Your statement of purpose. See FAQ tab on program website or pp. 3-4 of this document for guidelines.
2. Two letters of recommendation, on official letterhead, from professors who are familiar with your academic work. Please ask faculty to send letters to the Graduate Coordinator. See FAQ tab on program website or p. 4 of this document for additional information.

Above items must be sent to: Rachael Amaro, Graduate Coordinator, via email (raamaro@fullerton.edu) or via USPS at Department of History, CSUF, 800 N. State College Blvd., Fullerton, CA 92834.

For Non-History majors: If an applicant received their undergraduate degree in a subject other than History, we strongly encourage them to submit a writing sample in addition to the required items.

All required materials must be received by the October 31st and March 1st deadlines. Otherwise, your application will be incomplete. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

II. Admission to the Master's Degree Programs – Taken from the University Catalog

The minimum requirements for admission to graduate and post-baccalaureate studies at a CSU campus are in accordance with university regulations as well as Title 5, Chapter 1, Subchapter 3 of the California Code of Regulations.

Master's students should: 1) have completed a four-year college course of study and hold an acceptable baccalaureate degree from an institution accredited by a regional accrediting

association, or shall have completed equivalent academic preparation as determined by appropriate campus authorities; 2) be in good academic standing at the last college or university attended; 3) have earned a grade-point average of at least 2.5 on the last degree completed by the candidate or have attained a grade-point average of at least 2.5 (A=4.0) in the last 60 semester (90 quarter) units attempted; and 4) satisfactorily meet the professional, personal, scholastic and other standards for graduate study, including qualifying examinations, as appropriate to the program of study. (See more in the [University Catalog](#) section titled “Graduate Admissions.”)

III. Culminating Experience Plan

As they begin their graduate program, each student needs to consider a culminating experience plan for their studies. With guidance from the graduate program advisor and documented with a faculty mentor in the area of specialization, this should be done soon after beginning coursework.

Three main plans are offered:

PLAN I, in which the student must pass written comprehensive examinations in two of the following fields:

- (1) American history;
- (2) European history;
- (3) Latin American, Asian, African, or Middle Eastern history;
- (4) World history.

PLAN II, in which one specific field of interest is developed and requires a written thesis, with an oral examination taken before the final draft. Only those who have demonstrated superior writing and research skills are allowed into the thesis track (3.4 GPA after completing 15 units of coursework excluding internship and editing classes).

PLAN III, in which one specific field of interest within the area of Oral, Public, or Digital History is developed. This plan requires the creation of an original research project which can take several forms (including digital, written, or visual). Those who wish to complete their degree with an emphasis in Public History must follow this plan.

Any questions not addressed in the following pages or on the program’s web page should be directed to the Department of History Graduate Coordinator, Rachael Amaro, at raamaro@fullerton.edu or (657)278-3475. (Emails preferred)

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Find more on our program web page [here](#).

Is the M.A. in History right for me?

The master's program in history is best suited for individuals who:

- (1) have or are working toward a social studies credential.
- (2) are planning on pursuing a PhD after the master's degree.
- (3) would like to work in oral/public history, i.e. an archival or museum setting.
- (4) are interested in their own personal accomplishment. Often, this would be someone who is a non-traditional or "returning" student.
- (5) would like to teach at the community college level. NOTE: it is very difficult to get a full-time teaching position at that level with a master's degree for two main reasons: (a) community colleges would rather hire one of the many underemployed History PhDs, and (b) they tend to hire on a part-time basis to avoid paying benefits or full salaries.

What are the deadline dates to apply to the program?

The deadline dates for our program are: March 1st for fall admission and October 31st for spring admission.

Do I need to send transcripts to the History Department?

No. Please send all official transcripts to CSUF's Office of Admissions. See details on their website [here](#). After your application and transcripts have been reviewed, a copy of your transcripts will be forwarded to the History department. If you completed your bachelor's degree at CSUF, you do not need to send in transcripts.

Can I be admitted into the program if I did not get my bachelor's degree in History?

Yes. We welcome applicants from all disciplines who are interested in pursuing History for their master's degree. If you received your undergraduate degree in a subject other than history, we highly encourage you to submit a writing sample in addition to your Statement of Purpose. Non-History majors may be conditionally admitted and asked to complete one or more specified courses prior to beginning graduate level work.

Is the GRE required?

No.

What are the GPA requirements?

You should have at least a 3.0 GPA in your last 60 units of coursework and a 3.0 in your upper-division history courses or in the upper-division courses in your major.

What should be included in the Statement of Purpose?

You should submit a Statement of Purpose directly to the History Department. Please discuss the following carefully and thoughtfully, in 600-1,000 words or about 2-4 pages:

1. What are your goals in pursuing an M.A. degree at CSUF? Do you want to enhance existing social studies teaching credentials or work toward teaching at the community college level? Are you more interested in Public and Oral history where you would work

in a museum or archival setting, or is this more of a personal goal that you hope to accomplish?

2. What are your areas of interest geographically (U.S., European, Asian, World), chronologically (ancient, medieval, modern), and/or topically (women's history, military history, etc.)? How did you become interested in the field? You may want to mention books that have been especially influential in shaping your interests.
3. Alert us of any anomalies in your record. For example, if your GPA is below a 3.0 you should explain why the graduate advisor should still consider your application. Alternately, let us know if you have any academic awards or honors.

Do I need letters of recommendation?

Yes. You should submit two letters of recommendation on official letterhead. We strongly prefer letters of recommendation written by college or university faculty who are familiar with your academic work.

If you have been out of school for several years, we will accept letters of recommendation written by employers or others who are familiar with your work performance and/or academic potential.

If you received your bachelor's degree from the Department of History at California State University, Fullerton, you may ask faculty to submit short memoranda of recommendation in place of formal letters.

All recommendations must be sent directly to the department's Graduate Coordinator. Applicants should not handle their recommendation letters.

How long does it take to complete the program?

Our program is designed to be completed in 2 ½ years or 5 semesters if a student enrolls in a minimum of 6 units per semester.

Can I attend part-time or must I attend full-time?

You may attend full-time or part-time. Part-time is defined as taking 3-6 units per semester and full-time is defined as taking 9-12 units per semester. It is strongly recommended that you take no more than six units per semester if you are working while attending school.

Do you offer courses in the evening?

Yes. Most of our 500-level courses are offered in the evening and a variety of our 400-level courses begin at 4:00 p.m. or 7:00 p.m. Our program is well designed for students who work full-time or have other commitments during the day.

Are there any concentrations available?

Yes. Our program offers two concentrations: Public History (which includes digital and oral history focuses) and Chicana/o Studies.

What is the total number of units for the Master's degree in History?

The Master's Degree consists of thirty (30) units or the equivalent of ten courses. This includes 18 units (6 classes) of 500 level graduate coursework and about 12 units (4 classes) of electives. Electives are completed by taking a mix of 400-level courses with graduate augmentation and additional 500 level courses. Below information is generalized for conciseness.

Everyone must take the following 500 level courses:

- (1) History 501, History and Theory.
- (2) Two of the following Readings courses in which you explore major historical themes:
History 521T (Readings in European History), or
History 541T (Readings in Non-West History), or
History 551T (Readings in World History), or
History 571T (Readings in American History)
- (3) One of the following history research seminar courses in which you use primary sources to write a well-crafted research paper:
History 522 (Seminar in European History), or
History 542T (Seminar in Non-West History), or
History 552T (Seminar in World History), or
History 572 (Seminar in American History)
- (4) An additional two 500-level courses, which are usually attached to the student's exit option. There is a slight course variation in the Public History and Chicana/o Studies concentrations, see p.7 for more information.

How do I complete my M.A. in History?

Each student will choose one of four tracks to complete their degree requirements. Below information is provided to give prospective students a general idea of the various options. Details regarding degree requirements and specific courses will be discussed with the program advisors and/or Graduate Coordinator.

Option I: Master's with comprehensive exams

This is the most versatile option, preparing students for careers in academia, education, journalism, business, law, government, publishing, and non-profits. For this option you develop and demonstrate your mastery of two distinct, historical fields by taking two exams as you near completion of your coursework. This is an especially fitting culminating experience for our graduate students who are teaching at primary and secondary levels. The plan of study follows this format:

HIST 501(Theory & History)	3 units
One 500 level Seminar course	3 units
Two 500 level Readings courses	6 units
Two 400/500 level Public/Digital/Oral History courses	6 units
Four 400/500 level electives	<u>12 units</u>
Total:	30 units

Option II: Master's with a thesis

The thesis is a substantial research project that may also take the form of a scholarly article appropriate for journal submission. The topic will be mutually agreed upon by you and your thesis supervisor (also known as your thesis committee chair). Your last 6 units of 500 level courses (History 598 Thesis) are of a “phantom” nature. You do not meet in a formal classroom setting. Rather, you work independently on your thesis while meeting periodically with your thesis committee chair.

The thesis track is reserved for M.A. students who have attained **at least a 3.4 GPA** after the completion of 15 units and any relevant language training. History 596 (Internship) may not be used in calculating GPA for the thesis track. The GPA requirement may be waived by a formal written request from the history faculty member who will chair the student's thesis committee

Those who are self-driven and disciplined have the best chance of completing a thesis in a timely and scholarly manner. If you already have a possible topic you should gear your coursework towards that topic so you can build a body of material that will fit into your thesis down the road. In essence, you are working on your coursework and your thesis at the same time.

If you hope to enter the thesis track you should first make sure that there is a faculty member in the History department with expertise in your area of interest. Contact that professor prior to applying and make sure that new M.A. candidates for that field are being accepted. In some cases the professor with expertise may either have a full complement of students or be on faculty sabbatical. As noted above, only those who have demonstrated superior writing and research skills are allowed into the thesis track. The plan of study follows this format:

HIST 501(Theory & History)	3 units
One 500 level Seminar course	3 units
Two 500 level Readings courses	6 units
Two 400/500 level Public/Digital/Oral History courses	6 units
Two 400/500 level electives	6 units
HIST 598 (Thesis)	<u>6 units</u>
Total:	30 units

Option III: Master's with Public History Concentration

This option prepares students to practice history in more public settings such as museums, libraries, archives, and classrooms. The coursework is more specialized and can culminate in a final project, thesis, or exams. Students have particular access to and support from CSUF's distinguished Center for Oral and Public History.

HIST 501(Theory & History)	3 units
HIST 506 (Seminar in Public History)	3 units
Two 500 level Readings courses	6 units
Two 400/500 level Public/Digital/Oral History courses	6 units
HIST 596 (Graduate Internship)	3 units
One or Two 400/500 level elective(s)	3-6 units
<u>and</u>	
HIST 597 (Project)	3-6 units
<u>Or</u> HIST 598 (Thesis)	3-6 units
<u>Or</u> two additional 500 level courses*	<u>6 units</u>
Total: 30 units	

**These courses are required if Comprehensive Exams are the chosen culminating experience.*

Option IV: Master's with Chicana/Chicano Concentration

This option allows students to develop a deep understanding of the histories of ethnic Mexicans. Students may write a thesis, produce a project, or take comprehensive exams as their culminating experience. It is possible to pursue concentrations in Chicana/Chicano *and* Oral/Public/Digital History simultaneously (not demonstrated in unit summary below).

HIST 501(Theory & History)	3 units
One 500 level Seminar course	3 units
Two 500 level Readings courses	6 units
Two 400/500 level Public/Digital/Oral History courses	6 units
CHIC 500 (Chicana/o Studies Paradigms)	3 units
One or Two 400/500 level elective(s)	3-6 units
<u>and</u>	
HIST 597 (Project)	3-6 units
<u>Or</u> HIST 598 (Thesis)	3-6 units
<u>Or</u> two additional 500 level courses*	<u>6 units</u>
Total: 30 units	

**These courses are required if Comprehensive Exams are the chosen culminating experience.*