

Thesis Track

- All M.A. students must take HIS 5060 (The Historical Experience), a basic course that deals with historiography and changing patterns of historical interpretation, as well as with research techniques and methodologies. Students should take this course as early in their program as possible.
- All M.A. students must take HIS 5944 (Teaching and Professional Practice), a course that introduces students to careers and professional activities within the broad umbrella of history. (Addition effective Fall 2026)
- To assure a proper distribution of courses by field, graduate students must take a minimum of 12 credits of graduate coursework in their major/thesis field (European, U.S., or World History) and a minimum of 6 credits in non-major/non-thesis fields.
- All M.A. students must complete a minimum of 6 credits of thesis research (HIS 6971) and complete an acceptable master's thesis.
- Graduate students may not take undergraduate courses for graduate credit.

Application for the M.A. Thesis option

All students admitted to the M.A. program in History will be on a non-thesis trajectory. Students may switch to the M.A. thesis option under the following conditions:

1. Students must have achieved a minimum overall GPA of 3.75 in their graduate program by the end of the second semester of full-time study (or after completing 15 credits studying part time);
2. Students must submit the following to the Director of Graduate Programs prior to the last day of class of the second semester of full-time study (or the last day of class of the semester when the student will have completed 15 credits studying part time):
 - a. A brief paragraph indicating which professor ideally would serve as thesis advisor and explaining why the student would like to work with that particular professor;
 - b. A 3-5 page overview of the thesis (explaining what the thesis is about, how existing literature on the topic is deficient, and what the thesis is proposing that is new) and a preliminary bibliography.

After grades are in for the semester during which the student is applying for the thesis option, the Director of Graduate Programs will verify the applicant's overall GPA; if this falls below 3.75, the student must pursue the non-thesis option.

If the student meets the GPA requirement, the Director of Graduate Programs will forward the application to the graduate committee members. The committee will communicate its decision to the Director of Graduate Programs, who will inform the student whether the project is accepted and, if so, under what conditions the student may proceed to write the thesis. If the application is not approved, the student must pursue the non-thesis option.

If approved for a thesis, the student's thesis advisor will put together a three-member thesis committee to oversee the research and writing of the thesis. This proposal and determination of the thesis committee must be submitted and approved by the Director of Graduate Programs and Department Chair before the student can register for thesis credits.

Procedure Required of Master's Students Engaged in Writing Theses

Early in the writing stage, each student should obtain from the Dean of the Graduate College a copy of the [Requirements and Guidelines for Graduate Theses and Dissertations](#) which provide important information on how to prepare the final thesis manuscript.

Mechanics and Procedures for the Thesis

1. Thesis chapters are normally submitted to the thesis director as they are written. After corrections and changes are completed by the student, the preliminary copy of the full thesis should be submitted to and read by the other members of the thesis committee, who will then provide their own comments for additional revision. It is the student's responsibility to see that each procedure is carried out according to these guidelines.
2. During the semester in which the thesis is to be defended, the student must be registered. Final copies of the thesis must be in the hands of the thesis committee at least ten (10) days prior to the defense and oral examination. If the student completes the defense and oral examination successfully, final revisions to the manuscript must be made immediately so the committee can sign the approval page. From here the student should submit the final thesis to the Graduate College in accordance with its procedures (see above).
3. It is important that students factor their research, writing, and thesis committee editing time into their graduation plans. In most cases, the thesis must be completed in the early weeks of the semester in which the student plans to graduate so as to have time for revisions to be made and a defense and oral examination scheduled. Thesis defenses and oral examinations are held only during the fall and spring semesters. For more specific thesis deadline dates see the graduate history bulletin board located outside the history graduate director's office.

Qualifying Exam for Thesis Students

In order to give history graduate students at Florida Atlantic University a higher-quality learning experience and to better prepare those who plan to enter Ph.D. programs, all students will take a qualifying examination in their last semester before obtaining the M.A. degree.

The qualifying examination for thesis-track students will be an oral examination consisting of a defense of the thesis along with questions related to the larger field in which the thesis is located. (For example, if the thesis is on a topic related to the Cold War, the larger field the student would be tested on might be U.S. History since 1945.) This examination will be given by all three members of the student's advisory committee and it will be sixty to ninety minutes in length. The student's advisor will continue to be responsible for scheduling the thesis defense, and students should contact all committee members in advance to see what they recommend in terms of adequate preparation, especially for the field questions. No notes or books may be used by students during the defense and field examination. In order to pass this exam students must receive a unanimous decision from the advisory committee. Should they not pass the first time, they will be able to revise their thesis and/or prepare further for the field questions, and then participate in another defense and examination but not less than one month later. If they do not pass the second participate in another defense and examination but not less than one month later. If they do not pass the second time they are dismissed from the program. Those students who achieve a superior performance in the defense and field exam will be designated as having passed "with distinction." Students must be enrolled at FAU during any semester in which they take the exam.

Degree Application

Early in the semester of your anticipated graduation you must complete an Application for Degree. Applications instructions and deadlines are available from the Registrar: [FAU - Application for Degree/Certificate](#).

If you have any questions, please contact the History Department's Director of Graduate Programs at afinucane@fau.edu and/or the FAU Graduate College (561-297-3624)