

Guide to the Comprehensive Qualifying Examination

Department of History

University of Texas at Austin

The Comprehensive Qualifying Examination is one of the chief milestones students in the University of Texas History graduate program must pass before being admitted to doctoral candidacy. Examinations are administered in each of the nine major fields offered by the History Department (United States, Latin America, Medieval Europe, Early Modern Europe, Modern Europe, East Asia, South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East). Each examination covers a list of about 150 books (or an equivalent total of books, articles, and other readings) appropriate to the field and to the particular interests of the student being examined.

The examination consists of two parts: a portfolio of written materials, and an oral examination. The reading lists are drawn up and the portfolio is evaluated by a committee of three faculty members, who also conduct the oral examination. The student's prospective supervisor normally serves as the chair of the examining committee and helps the student choose the other two members. Note that all examiners must be members of the History Department graduate faculty (that is, the History Graduate Studies Committee).

The Department's "Official Guide to Graduate Study in History" states that "The qualifying examination is intended to establish the student's competence in a broad field of history, such as might be required to teach core courses in the subject, as well as to test the student's command of material more closely related to his or her dissertation area." Examining committees have substantial flexibility in carrying out this directive; they are encouraged to tailor their reading lists and portfolio assignments to the needs and interests of individual students, and to provide opportunities for students to pursue thematic, transnational, and interdisciplinary projects within each major field.

Students should discuss their plans for the qualifying examination with both the Graduate Adviser and their prospective supervisors soon after entering the graduate program. In consultation with their prospective supervisors, they should then make plans to approach other potential examiners and begin to construct appropriate reading lists. Prospective supervisors are asked to convene a meeting of the full examining committee in the spring of the student's second year to coordinate plans for the examination. At that time, the supervisor is also asked to send the Graduate Adviser a brief report listing the members of the examining committee and the areas each member will cover.

The examination portfolio must include: (1) reading lists for each of the three components of the student's major field; (2) a set of historiographical essays or equivalent written work (e.g., short papers, lectures, etc.) on topics agreed in consultation with each examiner, all such work to be written expressly for inclusion in the portfolio; and (3) a vita. The portfolio may also include additional material chosen to reflect the student's previous work and future dissertation plans.

Two or more weeks after receiving the completed portfolio, the examining committee will conduct the oral examination. The oral examination is intended to allow the committee to probe the student's command of the major field; it is not restricted by the specific contents of the essays in the portfolio, but may range over any of the topics covered in the reading lists. The length of the oral examination is determined by each examining committee; most run about two hours.

After the oral examination, the members of the examining committee will jointly decide whether the student has or has not passed both parts of the qualifying examination. A decision to pass the student must be unanimous. The examining committee will then prepare and sign an evaluation of the student's performance on the examination, which will be placed in the student's file.

A student who fails the comprehensive qualifying examination may, at the discretion of the examining committee, be allowed to add materials to his or her portfolio and to take the oral examination one additional time, at a time to be designated by the examining committee.

All History graduate students who entered in fall 2005 or after will be expected to pass the comprehensive qualifying examination by the end of their sixth semester in the program. Those who do not do so will face possible loss of eligibility for departmental fellowships and teaching assistantships. Students may petition the Graduate Program Committee for an extension of this deadline, but such extensions will be granted only in light of unusual personal or programmatic circumstances.

The "Graduate Faculty" page on the History Department website includes links to lists of faculty who work in each of the nine major fields. Fuller lists of faculty members who are prepared to serve as examiners in the various major fields will be issued later. When appropriate, a student may petition to have a member of the History Department graduate faculty serve as an examiner for a field for which he or she is not already listed, but all such requests must be approved by the Graduate Program Committee.

Members of the faculty area committees have drawn up general guidelines for examinations in each of the nine major fields, and most members of the graduate faculty have also prepared brief accounts of their own approaches to the examinations, given below. Additional such materials will be issued as they come to hand.

(rev. August 2006)

United States History

The comprehensive qualifying examination for students in the United States field covers all of United States history. Ordinarily, one examiner covers the period before the Civil War and Reconstruction; another, the period from the Civil War and Reconstruction to the present; and the prospective doctoral supervisor covers the dissertation field. An alternative structure may be followed if approved by the examining committee, the Graduate Adviser, and the chair of the United States Area Committee.

In the following paragraphs, individual professors describe their areas of specialization and sketch their own approaches to preparing students for their examinations.

United States, pre-1865

Robert Abzug

My pre-Civil War research involves religion and reform movements and, more broadly, cultural and intellectual history, especially in the early republic and antebellum era. My reading lists, usually 50-60 books, focus on the general area of cultural and intellectual studies against a backdrop of key works in political and economic history. Students create a portion of the list to

reflect their own particular interests. I meet with students periodically both to discuss the content of the readings and their historiographical setting and to familiarize the student with the kinds of questions I am likely to ask them to address in their portfolio essays and in their oral exams.

Carolyn Eastman

My research is concerned primarily with the cultural, social, and intellectual history of early America with a focus on gender and political culture. I can supervise students in a range of fields including an overview of early American and Atlantic history; the comparative study of women, gender and sexuality; American cultural and intellectual history; the history of nationalisms; and the study of oral, print and visual media and its reception. I prefer to meet with students monthly to discuss their reading and to draw out important themes that will potentially appear on the exam. My main concerns in these meetings are to see that the student develops a sense of how this specific field has developed and how historians' questions have changed, as well as to find ways that this literature can assist the student in thinking about dissertation work and research.

George Forgie

I teach courses and can supervise students in the period from the origins of the American Revolution through the end of Reconstruction. I am interested particularly in the political and constitutional origins and development of the United States; in the politics of slavery; and in the origins, course, and aftermath of the American Civil War. I would be happy to help students from their earliest days in our program to identify the important books and articles addressing key questions of this period, and meet with them regularly as they master this historiography and define thesis and dissertation topics.

Neil Kamil

I am prepared to supervise examinations in the history of the Atlantic world from the fifteenth through the eighteenth centuries. Reading lists are compiled in consultation with each student to suit individual interests. These lists customarily separate 50-60 books into various categories and are usually characterized by a more or less equal distribution of European and American titles. I ask students to prepare essays each month to address historiographical questions that arise within each category. Ultimately, these questions form the basis of qualifying examinations.

Mark Lawrence

My specialty is the history of U.S. foreign relations, especially the history of U.S. policymaking with respect to decolonization and Third World nationalism during the Cold War. I am happy to supervise graduate fields in any era of U.S. foreign relations (from the eighteenth century down to the present). For students whose interests reach beyond the experience of the United States, I am also prepared to supervise fields in twentieth-century "international history" – the study of transnational interactions and trends that supercede a strictly national approach (i.e., the Cold War, comparative imperialism, or globalization). Students working with me will begin by assembling a reading list of approximately 50 books. Ideally, these choices will be clustered around three or four themes that will provide coherence to the entire exercise and result, at the end of the process, in exam questions. I require that students meet with me regularly while

preparing for their exams. Students may also opt to write occasional papers summarizing and analyzing their reading.

Howard Miller

As a specialist in religion in American culture, I work with students primarily in cultural and intellectual areas in the period before 1865. Students and I create a list of around fifty titles from books they have already read, books they know of and wish to read, and books from the extended bibliography I provide them. We meet regularly for a semester or two and in extended and frequent conversations formulate a list of issues and questions that will ultimately be the basis for the qualifying examinations.

Robert Olwell

I see the qualifying exams as laying a groundwork both for the student's later teaching career and for their dissertation. To this end, my reading fields typically consist of a list of 50-60 books that are drawn from a large bibliographic list that I have compiled as well as additional works that might be suggested by myself or the student. After consultation, we create a reading list that addresses both the larger subjects and themes of early American historiography as well as the student's individual research, subject, or methodological interests.

James Sidbury

My primary research interests are in early American history (to ca. 1820), and in slavery and race in the 18th century English Atlantic. Field reading lays one of the foundations for future scholarship, so I expect students preparing for exams to take an active role shaping their field. Students work with me to develop a list of roughly 50 books that will provide a basic overview of the historiography of the U.S. to 1865. We then tailor how often to meet and the nature of any writing assignments to individual preferences. We also decide together what kinds of questions will be asked in the exam.

Alan Tully

My research centers on the political culture of the eighteenth century British Atlantic colonies. I am pleased to supervise students whose interests focus on the seventeenth and eighteenth century colonies located in the Atlantic world of the extended British Empire and on the Revolutionary crisis that reshaped the constituent societies. Incoming students will immediately begin to work out a reading list for comprehensive examinations and potentially for dissertation work. This will be done in the context of regular meetings in which we will explore major historiographical issues and build areas of concentration.

United States, post-1865

Robert Abzug

My work in post-Civil War America is broadly in the area of cultural and intellectual history, with specializations in religion, psychology, as well as America and the Holocaust. My readings lists for this field usually are comprised of 50-60 books, ones that concentrate on cultural and intellectual history against the backdrop of political and economic history. In addition, I usually have students select books in psychology, anthropology, and sociology. I meet periodically with students to discuss the readings and familiarize them with the kinds of questions I ask on the exams.

Kimberly Alidio

My research and teaching fields include Asian American History, history of modern sexuality, U.S. imperialism, and transpacific cultural and diplomatic history. I also work with students in a wider variety of fields with comparative racial-ethnic and transnational approaches. I expect students to compile a reading list from which together we will choose fifty books and articles. We will meet regularly to discuss the readings and identify themes from which to formulate potential questions for the oral exam.

H. W. Brands

I write about and teach American history, broadly conceived. My books and articles cover topics from the eighteenth century to the twenty-first, and include works of narrative history, interpretive history, and biography. I examine politics and foreign policy, business and economics, society and culture. I recently completed writing a biography of Andrew Jackson and am now writing a general history of the United States during the Gilded Age. My graduate students have written dissertations and theses on diverse aspects of American politics and foreign policy.

Erika Bsumek

My research and teaching fields include Native American history, history of the U.S. West, and environmental history. I am prepared to supervise students in any of those areas. With my assistance, students who work with me will compile a bibliography of the most important books and articles in the field. We will then meet at monthly intervals over the year to discuss readings and themes in preparation for the exam. Students will present short essays and "think pieces" related to those themes at scheduled intervals.

Sally Clarke

I am primarily interested in questions of political economy for the history of the United States during the period since 1865. Students may find a range of topics to study within this rubric, including the social welfare of different Americans, the structure and power of the modern corporation, the role of the state, consumption, and technological change. Students will develop a reading list with me, and will meet regularly to discuss the readings. Exam questions will be based on the readings and discussions.

Tiffany Gill

My research interests concern the intersections of race, gender, business, and politics in modern America. For comprehensive exams, I like to work directly with students to compile a list of reading that highlights the impact of race, gender, and class on American identity and citizenship to lay a historiographical foundation that would be useful for any student of modern American history. Particular emphasis will be placed on helping students make connections between the readings and their own research. Students will be asked to meet with me monthly to discuss the readings and to formulate possible examination questions.

Laurie Green

My research and teaching fields lie most broadly at the intersection of cultural, social, and political history in the modern U.S., with specializations in race, gender, and sexuality, and in women's, African American, southern, urban, popular culture and labor history. In working with

graduate students to prepare for field exams, I help them develop a personally tailored list of books, merging titles that I recommend with those in which the student has a strong interest. We then meet on a regular basis over the course of a semester to discuss clusters of these books. In preparation for these meetings, I have the student write short papers (5-7 pages) that compare and contrast these works. On the basis of these meetings we develop themes that will become the basis for examination questions.

Mark Lawrence

My specialty is the history of U.S. foreign relations, especially the history of U.S. policymaking with respect to decolonization and Third World nationalism during the Cold War. I am happy to supervise graduate fields in any era of U.S. foreign relations (from the eighteenth century down to the present). For students whose interests reach beyond the experience of the United States, I am also prepared to supervise fields in twentieth-century “international history” – the study of transnational interactions and trends that supercede a strictly national approach (i.e., the Cold War, comparative imperialism, or globalization). Additionally, I will supervise fields in the basic historiography of the United States since 1865, particularly for students emphasizing political and diplomatic history. Students working with me will begin by assembling a reading list of approximately 50 books. Ideally, these choices will be clustered around three or four themes that will provide coherence to the entire exercise and result, at the end of the process, in exam questions. I require that students meet with me regularly while preparing for their exams. Students may also opt to write occasional papers summarizing and analyzing their reading.

John McKiernan-Gonzalez

My comprehensive exams focus on Latino History, the social history of medicine (with a primary focus on Modern U.S. and Latin America), U.S. after the civil war, Colonial Latin America and Modern Europe. My research commitments include Borderlands History, Latino History, ethnic studies, transnationalism, and medical history with a commitment across these fields to questions of gender, sexuality, and race. In field exams, I expect students to get a grasp on the historiography of a given field, a sense of current research trends, and to develop an ability to teach and potentially research in these fields. I consider comprehensive exams to be the bridge that will connect you and your research with other scholars in other fields.

Karl Hagstrom Miller

I am a student of late nineteenth and twentieth century US history. My work focuses on the history and politics of popular music. I have overlapping interests in cultural history and theory, comparative race and ethnicity, the US South, the history of the social sciences, consumer culture, the mass media and the cultural industries, globalization, and labor history.

David Oshinsky

My research interests are grounded in modern American social, cultural and political history. My most recent books include a biography of Senator Joe McCarthy, a study of race, crime and punishment in the post-Civil War South, and a history of polio as a disease that revolutionized American medicine and philanthropy. In the months leading up to the comprehensive exams, I work with students on a regular basis to discuss the major themes, from Reconstruction through the Reagan-Bush Revolution, that they will be responsible for pursuing.

Richard Pells

I specialize in modern American cultural history, and in the cross-cultural relations between the United States and Europe, Latin America, and Asia. I am the author of three books: Radical Visions and American Dreams: Culture and Social Thought in the Depression Years; The Liberal Mind in a Conservative Age: American Intellectuals in the 1940s and 1950s; and Not Like Us: How Europeans Have Loved, Hated, and Transformed American Culture Since World War II. I am currently at work on From Modernism to the Movies: The Globalization of American Culture in the Twentieth Century, to be published by Yale University Press. I am interested in directing dissertations on American popular culture (especially movies) and on the international impact of American culture and values

Michel Stoff

I teach and do research in U. S. history in the late 19th and 20th centuries. As a generalist, I've written in a wide range of fields within this chronological frame, though most of my scholarly work has focused on American political culture, domestic politics and public policy, and U. S. foreign policy between the onset of World War I and the end of World War II. I train graduate students across a broad range of subjects including economic, political, social, and diplomatic history as well as modern U. S. historiography. In preparing students for comprehensive exams, I meet with them every two weeks to discuss a list of some 50 books and focus their attention on key historiographic questions, broadly conceived. I then ask them to design an undergraduate survey course based on those questions. That course and those questions serve as the basis for both the written and oral portions of the exam.

Emilio Zamora

My research interests are working class history, Texas history, Mexican American history and oral history. I welcome the opportunity to work with students in Borderlands, Latino and Mexican American history. I believe in meeting regularly with the students for at least four months before the examination and in guiding them in the preparation of bibliographies on key themes and three or four general essays that correspond to possible questions on the examination. Although the portfolio and the oral examination that follow will determine whether students pass or not, I consider their diligence and effort during the preparation phase in my overall evaluation.

African History

For students of African history, the qualifying examination is an opportunity to meet two mutually reinforcing goals: to familiarize students with a large body of literature related to their research field as well as to topics closely connected to African history such as the African diaspora and other related themes. Students use exam preparation as a time to familiarize themselves with broad geographical and historical themes due to the nature of jobs in the field of African history, which often require them to teach courses on the African diaspora and survey courses on world history. In preparing lists, students often work with faculty members outside of the field of African history, and if need be, outside of the department. African history students divide their lists into typically three parts. The dissertation field comprises one list, which familiarizes students with the historiography on their dissertation topic. The second and third lists include the themes that may extend beyond the continent of Africa into the African diaspora

or other topics related to fields of interest. Many students, for example, use the second and third lists to explore themes such as imperialism, African diaspora, or religion. The preparation process involves regular meetings with committee members to discuss reading materials in order to draw out the important debates and perspectives within the body of literature on a topic.

Toyin Falola

My reading list introduces students to the seminal texts (roughly 40 books) in African historiography, while also providing enough flexibility for students to tailor the list to fit their needs (i.e. social or economic histories). Suiting the student's research interest, the list will have an emphasis on precolonial, colonial, or post-colonial eras.

East Asian History

The UT History Department offers graduate training in Chinese and Japanese history, from the earliest written records (ca. 1200 B.C.E) up to the contemporary period, in a broad range of specialties, including cultural history, economics, gender, memory, nationalism, philosophy, religion, and science in East Asia. Students should choose a period of concentration: in Chinese history, periods are roughly defined as early (up to 600 C.E.), pre-modern (600-1800), modern (1800-1950), or contemporary (1950-present); in Japanese history, they are defined as pre-modern (up to 1868) and modern (since 1868). The comprehensive qualifying examination will test the student's knowledge of primary and secondary literature in the specified field, in preparation for dissertation research, and also to provide a foundation for future teaching.

Roger Hart

I offer examinations in early and pre-modern Chinese history, history of science (methodological approaches and non-Western sciences), and interdisciplinary methodologies (contemporary critical theory). In Chinese history, readings will consist of primary sources (in translation), together with the most important recent secondary research, usually focusing on cultural history. In history of science, readings will usually focus on recent theoretical and methodological work in the history, sociology, anthropology, and philosophy of science. Examinations in interdisciplinary methodologies will usually focus on recent approaches to culture, thought, language, and science; readings will include seminal works from structuralism, post-structuralism, post-modernism, post-colonialism, science studies, and globalization. Reading lists will be adapted to the student's individual research interests. Students are encouraged to visit me or to see my website for more information and relevant syllabi: <http://uts.cc.utexas.edu/~rhart/>

Mark Metzler

I offer examination fields in Japanese history (modern and pre-modern), and in international political economy. In consultation with me, students will determine a list of approximately 40 books (or equivalent articles), designed to cover the best and most recent literature in the selected field as shaped by their own scholarly interests.

Nancy Stalker

I offer examinations in modern and pre-modern Japan; my research specialties include religious and cultural movements and their connections to issues of modern national identity. Students will

receive guidance in developing lists of both recent and classical works in these fields. Student lists will focus on their areas of interest.

South Asian History

The South Asian area includes a number of subfields that students can emphasize in their course work and as preparation for future teaching. For their comprehensive qualifying exams, students should work out a list of readings with the three professors on their examining committee. These readings will vary according to the interests of the students and the recommendations of the professors. Subfields include, for example, pre-modern and modern South Asian history, the British empire in India, Islam in South Asia, women in South Asia, and historiography.

Gail Minault

I offer training in Muslim and modern South Asia, with an emphasis on issues relating to Islam, women, nationalism, and British rule.

Cynthia Talbot

I offer training for the exams in all or a portion of the history of South Asia from prehistory to 1750, with an emphasis on non-Muslim sources and historiography.

Middle Eastern History

The UT History Department offers graduate training in Middle Eastern history from 600 to the present. Students can choose to concentrate in one or more of three general periods: medieval (600-1500), early modern (1500-1800), or modern (1750-present). They can also work out a period of concentration that cuts across these chronological lines, based on their desired specialization and research plans (e.g., Ottoman history, which spans all three periods). The reading for the comprehensive exam is intended to provide broad knowledge of the historiography in the student's main period of concentration, preparation for general teaching responsibilities, and familiarity with the more specialized literature related to the student's dissertation topic. The reading list as worked out with the student's committee thus represents a combination of the essential literature in the field and more individualized material on particular countries and themes of relevance to the student's research interests.

Kamran Aghaie

I offer training in modern Middle Eastern history with a focus on Iran, and Islamic history with a focus on Shi'ism.

Yoav Di-Capua

I offer training in modern Middle Eastern history with a focus on the intellectual history of modern Egypt and the Arab world.

Abraham Marcus

I offer training in the early modern and modern Middle East as well as in Ottoman history. The exam readings are broadly conceived to incorporate social, economic, and cultural history.

Denise Spellberg

I offer training in medieval Middle Eastern and Islamic history, with emphasis on intellectual and religious developments.

Latin American History

The comprehensive qualifying examination for students in the Latin American field covers all of Latin American history. Ordinarily, one examiner covers the colonial period; another, the national period; and the prospective doctoral supervisor covers the dissertation field. An alternative structure may be followed if approved by the examining committee, the Graduate Adviser, and the chair of the Latin American Area Committee.

Jonathan C. Brown

Quite simply, students should develop their comprehensive reading lists around the books that they read in their seminars, expanding the themes to different countries and different time periods. One should strive for depth of understanding rather than comprehensiveness, as no graduate student can cover all countries of Latin America and every major historiographical genre.

Virginia Garrard Burnett

Students should develop their reading lists around their own areas of theoretical and regional interest, but with the understanding that they should "stretch" beyond their usual intellectual comfort zones, using the opportunity to read books in related areas (i.e., theme, theory, or region) that they might not otherwise choose to read. In creating the list, I am not so much concerned with numbers of books (the constraint of "50 per category" seems artificial to me), but rather that the categories the students devise to organize the readings make serious sense. It is essential that each knows how all the books within a given category articulate with one another, and also that s/he understands how the different categories "talk" to each another.

Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra

Students are expected to be self-driven and entrepreneurial. Students will come up with their own lists, tailored according to their needs, in consultation with the instructor. The list should include literatures in languages other than English (Spanish and Portuguese, of course, but knowledge of the huge body of literature in French on colonial Latin America is also expected).

Susan Deans-Smith

I view comprehensive examinations as an intense exercise which provides a valuable opportunity for students to refine their skills in critical thinking and broad synthesis, and to develop their own voices. They also provide an important opportunity for students to think about themselves as teachers and to begin to think seriously about how to construct and develop syllabi for future courses.

Seth Garfield

Students preparing for the comprehensive exam should situate scholarly literature within the broader theoretical and historiographical debates in Latin American history. In this sense, students should focus not only on the data and methodology of a given monograph, but how an author's findings dialogue thematically with other texts and how they contribute to an understanding or reevaluation of broader historical processes. In addition, since the comprehensive exams should also serve an exercise to prepare graduate students for undergraduate teaching, students should evaluate how the information distilled from discrete texts can be arrayed to flesh out and illuminate larger themes in Latin American history.

John McKiernan-Gonzalez

My comprehensive exams focus on Latino History, the social history of medicine (with a primary focus on Modern U.S. and Latin America), U.S. after the Civil War, colonial Latin America and modern Europe. My research commitments include Borderlands history, Latino history, ethnic studies, transnationalism, and medical history with a commitment across these fields to questions of gender, sexuality, and race. In field exams, I expect students to get a grasp on the historiography of a given field, a sense of current research trends, and to develop an ability to teach and potentially conduct research in these fields. I consider comprehensive exams to be the bridge that will connect you and your research with other scholars in other fields.

Ann Twinam

I am less concerned about the precise works read than that the student demonstrate the ability to write about and to discuss the chosen works with a conceptual and an analytical sophistication that includes an appreciation of historiographical context. Such a demonstration would necessarily rest on a significant amount of reading, but need not include every major work or all of the latest revisionist pieces.

European History

European History at UT is divided into three chronological periods, each of which has its own examination requirements and expectations and its own core reading list. In any European history field students, will be expected to develop a grounding in the major historiographical debates of the field. A student may, in consultation with his or her examining committee, elect to be examined in one trans-national or trans-chronological field (gender, science, visual studies, religion, etc.).

Immediately after the student has identified the three members of his or her examining committee, the student's prospective supervisor should schedule a meeting to define the three sub-fields to be examined and to begin the process of compiling reading lists for each sub-field. Students will be expected to have read approximately 50 books for each sub-field. The list of books will usually be based at least partly on coursework the student has already completed and should represent major historiographic issues within the field. Where feasible and advisable, the student and the examining committee may agree to a combined list of 150 books rather than three individual lists of 50 books each. The members of the examining committee may

collectively approve the combined reading list and continue to consult with one another (in some form or another) during the student's reading period. After drawing up reading lists, the student should work out a schedule of meetings with each faculty member on his or her committee.

Medieval European history (Professors Frazier, Meisel, Newman, Morgan, Spellberg)

In medieval history, each student will ordinarily prepare one area that will demonstrate an ability to locate major historical and historiographical issues in the period 500-1500, and two areas (topical or national) that relate generally to the student's dissertation field.

Examples:

- Student A: 1) Medieval history 500-1500 -- with A. Frazier
 2) Medieval England 1066-1485 -- with J. Meisel
 3) Medieval Church -- with M. Newman
 supporting field: Legal Theory
- Student B: 1) Medieval history 500-1500 -- with M. Newman
 2) Medieval Spain /Medieval Islam -- with D. Spellberg
 3) Urban History -- with J. Meisel
 supporting field: Gender Studies
- Student C: 1) Medieval history 500-1500 -- with J. Meisel
 2) Italian Renaissance -- with A. Frazier
 3) Social history of medieval religion -- with M. Newman
 supporting field: Religious Studies

Early modern European history (Professors Boettcher, Canizares-Esguerra, D. Davis, Frazier, Hardwick, Hart, Hunt, Kamil, Levack, Martinich, Olwell, and Sidbury).

Students taking major field exams in early modern European history will be expected to develop a grounding in the major historiographical debates of the field by reading a core list of books, and two additional geographic or thematic areas of their choice. One of these will represent the broad topic of the dissertation. In practice, these expectations will play out in different ways depending on students' particular interests. For example student A would read the core list and might add specialties in Reformation (as a dissertation field) with Prof. Boettcher and English history with Prof. Levack. Student B would read the core list and add specialties in 17th century French History with Prof. Hardwick (as a dissertation field) and Renaissance with Prof. Frazier. Student C would read the core list and add specialties in Iberian history with Prof. Canizares-Esguerra (as a dissertation field) and in European expansion with Prof. Olwell, Prof. Kamil or Prof. Sidbury.

Modern European history (Professors Coffin, Crew, Hopkins, Hunt, Lawrence, Louis, Lustig, Matysik, Neuberger, Wynn)

Students taking major field exams in modern European history may combine two broad national or chronological or thematic fields with one more narrowly defined field that relates directly to the dissertation area. One of the broader fields will include ten or more books chosen from a core book list among the fifty books for that field.

In the following paragraphs, individual professors describe their areas of specialization and sketch their own approaches to preparing students for their examinations.

Susan Boettcher

I am prepared to supervise examinations in the history of the European Reformation and Counter-Reformation, early modern Germany (c. 1400-1806), early modern European urban history, and Christian theology 1300-1800. I expect students to have taken a course with me before the semester of the exam. For the Reformation exam, because this is frequently a teaching field, I will choose 20 titles in English intended to prepare students for a broad-spectrum command of the field and students will choose thirty titles. For the other areas, students will develop a list of fifty titles in consultation with me. I expect that students being examined in any field will show familiarity with at least one other relevant foreign-language historiography (probably German, but French, Italian, Dutch or Spanish as appropriate to your interests). As students work through the defined list, we will meet to determine areas of concentration that might be explored on the qualifying examination.

Judith Coffin

My own research fields are modern France and gender. I supervise students, however, in a wide range of fields, most of which can be customized to fit the student's interests and committee. Those fields have included the French empire, gender history (national or international), 20th century Europe, social history, cultural history, and comparative history. When a student asks me to serve on his or her major field committee, we sit down and jointly draw up a reading list and lay out a schedule for the student to read them. We then meet at roughly monthly intervals over the next semester or two to discuss the readings. We decide together which themes will be the basis for potential examination questions. All this is done in consultation with the student's other field examiners, so that the student gets as broad and thorough preparation as possible.

David Crew

I work primarily in the history of twentieth century Germany, with an emphasis upon Nazi Germany, the Holocaust and their aftermath, the history of memory and visual history. Students who decide to work with me to prepare for their major field exams will be asked to read a list of approximately fifty appropriate books, along with relevant articles. I usually meet with the student every two weeks during the semester preceding the comprehensive exams to discuss the readings and to develop themes and issues that will form the basis for potential examination questions.

Alison Frazier

I work primarily in European cultural and intellectual history of the medieval and early modern periods. My particular focus is on the Italian peninsula during the long Renaissance (c. 1250-c. 1550), with an emphasis on the intersection of politics, religion, education, and books in manuscript and print. I expect that students who wish me to serve on their examination committees will have taken one of my courses, completed their language requirements, and identified a dissertation topic [*alt.*: passed the prospectus defense]. After our initial meeting with the rest of the committee, the student and I usually work together to compile a list of about fifty books and articles; these may be sorted into groups according to a variety of mutually agreeable schemata. In a series of monthly meetings, the student presents short essays (7-10 pages) covering concepts and arguments related to those reading groups. During those meetings, our discussion aims to identify themes for potential examination questions.

Julie Hardwick

My research fields include early modern French History (16-18c), early modern gender history, and early modern social and/or economic history. Students who read with me will compile a bibliography of about 50 books in the specialty of their choice as one of the three areas in their early modern European major fields.

Bruce Hunt

I work primarily in the history of modern science and technology. These are intrinsically transnational subjects, and I have worked with students preparing for major field examinations in US, European, Latin American, and African history. When a student asks me to serve on his or her major field committee, we sit down and jointly draw up a list of about fifty appropriate books and articles and lay out a schedule for the student to read them. We then meet at roughly monthly intervals over the next semester or two to discuss the readings and draw out themes on which to base potential examination questions.

Brian Levack

Most students who work with me define one of their three major fields as early modern Britain (16th and 17th centuries). Students can also read with me in early modern European political thought, English legal history and the history of magic and witchcraft in Europe. Students reading for an exam in any of these fields should take at least one seminar and one conference course with me.

Abigail Lustig

I study the history of modern science, particularly the life sciences. These are intrinsically transnational subjects, and I am able to work with students preparing for major field examinations in US, European, and other area fields to draw up a list of about fifty appropriate books and articles both in the history of science generally and in the student's own particular focus, and lay out a schedule for the student to read them. We then meet at roughly monthly intervals over the next semester or two to discuss the readings and draw out themes on which to base potential examination questions.

Janet Meisel

My professional background has been in medieval Europe to 1300 and medieval England to 1485. My personal research has concentrated on 9th-12th century Anjou and Normandy and on England from the 7th to mid-14th centuries. I am particularly interested in the early Middle Ages, especially the Franks and Anglo-Saxons; political, institutional, and legal history, especially English legal history from the 11th to the late 13th centuries; and social history, particularly frontier history, including urban history, family history, and the impact of Papal interference on popular religious faith in England in the 13th and 14th centuries. When I serve as a member of a student's major field committee, I work with the student to come up with a reading list that includes both basic books in his or her field and books more specifically tailored to that particular student's professional interests. We then work out a reading and consultation schedule, and toward the end of the reading period discuss overall themes from the readings and possible examination topics and questions.

Tracie Matysik

My work resides at the intersection of modern European intellectual and cultural history with modern German history and the history of gender and/or sexuality. I will happily supervise graduate fields in any of those areas, as they pertain to a particular student's interests. When I agree to work with a student in one (or more) of these fields, I ask him or her to draw up a preliminary draft of a reading list, and then we jointly revise it to guarantee a list that is both broad and coherent. I encourage the student in this phase to think about the reading in terms of major themes. While the student is reading, I like to meet with him or her once every three or four weeks to discuss the readings. In our discussions, I ask the student to formulate potential essay questions around the themes on the reading list. We then revise those questions together, and in the end I choose one of those jointly fashioned questions for the written exam. Time permitting, we will likely discuss several of the other questions at the oral exam.

M. Gwyn Morgan

I offer training in Roman history. The exam readings are broadly conceived to incorporate both historiography and social, economic, and cultural history.

Joan Neuberger

My research and teaching fields include Modern Russia (19c-20c), and European film and visual cultures, but I work with students in a wider variety of fields, including Eastern and Central Europe. I encourage students to draw up their own bibliographies of important historiographical debates in the field, from which to choose 50 books. We meet regularly in the months preceding the exams to discuss the readings and to develop a set of approximately ten historiographic exam questions, one of which will be chosen for the written exam.

Mary Neuberger

My research and teaching interests revolve around modern Eastern Europe — both the Balkans and East Central Europe. I am interested in a variety of topics within these fields such as empire, nationalism, gender, identity, as well as material and consumer culture. I can supervise students in a variety of fields including modern Eastern Europe (generally with a focus on either the North or South), or thematic fields on my above listed interests. I also have supervised fields on the Balkans under Ottoman rule, and/or East Central Europe under Habsburg rule. I generally encourage students to draw up their own list of books (with my help) and then try to meet monthly if possible to discuss important themes and questions in the books. I hope that students come out with a general knowledge of the state and concerns of the field.

Martha G. Newman

I work primarily in European religious and cultural history of the medieval period. My particular focus is on the religious history of the eleventh through thirteenth centuries, with a special interest in monasticism and gender studies. Students who wish me to serve on their examination committees will ordinarily have taken at least one of my courses, completed their language requirements, and identified a dissertation topic. I will work with each student to compile a list of about 50 books and articles. We will then meet regularly to discuss the readings; I will often expect the student to write short essays that identify themes and debates. Through these discussions, we will identify themes for the examination questions.

Charters Wynn

My research and teaching field is the history of the Soviet Union, with a focus on labor and political history. Most students who ask me to serve on their committee have taken my graduate courses on "Revolutionary Russia" and "Stalinist Russia." I expect them to have begun preliminary research on their dissertation topic. After a student has drawn up a fifty book reading list, we jointly make changes to ensure the list covers all the central historical developments and historiographic debates and includes major works in the field. Part of the list is devoted to books in the student's own particular research area. During the semester preceding the comprehensive exam we meet regularly to discuss the readings and possible examination questions.