

Brock University

Department of History

Master of Arts

Graduate Program Handbook



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1. Program Description

The Master of Arts in History provides students with training in the various fields of history through course work and research experience. Our program has no specified fields of concentration, but offers a high-quality, general Master's degree in History consistent with the excellence and dedication of the faculty who teach it. A distinctive feature of the program is courses with an emphasis on theme, rather than on region or timeframe. Those themes are Imperialism, Gender History, Intellectual History, Revolutions, Labour Systems, Migration/Ethnicity/Identity, History of Science and Medicine, and History and Computing. A central focus is on developing students' critical analysis of both primary and secondary sources. Another goal is to give students the opportunity to explore historiography and methodology and encourage them to engage in vibrant debates in their study of history.

2. Governance and Administration of the Graduate Program

Graduate Program Committee

The Graduate Program Committee is chaired by the Graduate Program Director (GPD). It meets regularly through the academic year. The Graduate Program Committee assists the GPD in the running of the graduate program and plans for further program development.

Specific tasks include responsibility for recruitment and admissions, preparation of the Graduate Calendar submission, course offerings, teaching allocations, scholarship adjudication, student progress, community liaison, responding to student concerns, changes to the structure of the program and the selection of a new GPD.

Graduate Program Director

The GPD oversees the graduate program, and is appointed by the department as outlined in departmental procedures. The GPD carries out all duties in regular consultation with the Graduate Program Committee. The Director has the support of the Graduate Administrative Assistant and receives an administrative course relief of one half-course per year. The usual term is three years. Specific duties include:

1. Serving as the Chair of the Graduate Program Committee. This includes initiating procedures for staffing the committee each year.
2. Consulting with the Faculty of Graduate Studies, Dean of Graduate Studies, Dean of Humanities, other Deans and GPDs, Chairs of other units as needed.
3. Serving as a member of the Graduate Council.
4. Overseeing the preparation, maintenance and distribution of program publicity material, the web page, the Graduate Studies Calendar entry and the Graduate Faculty and Student Handbook.
5. Ensuring the provision of information about the program to potential applicants.
6. Informing all members of the Graduate Program Committee when applicant files are ready to be considered for admissions, and overseeing the admissions process (including ensuring that a faculty member is

identified as a liaison person for each incoming graduate student as part of the admissions process).

7. Organizing a reception and orientation to welcome incoming students. Reviewing graduate policies and expectations and distributing a copy of the Handbook to incoming students.
8. Facilitating allocation of Graduate Student Teaching Assistantships for full-time graduate students in conjunction with relevant departments.
9. Overseeing students' progress in conjunction with the Graduate Program Committee. This includes ensuring the timely formation of Supervisory Committees, reviewing progress reports, meeting with students following the submission of these reports and providing a brief feedback letter to students and supervisors.
10. Ensuring that course evaluations are conducted. Ensuring that program issues (including student concerns) are brought to the attention of the Graduate Program Committee.

Graduate Faculty

Professors

Robert Dimand (Economics), Jack N. Lightstone, R. Andrew McDonald, Carmela Patrias, Elizabeth Sauer (English), David Schimmelpenninck, Behnaz Mirzai

Associate Professors

John Bonnett, Michael Driedger (History and Great Books/Liberal Studies), Tami Friedman, Renée Lafferty (History and Canadian Studies), Maureen Lux, Jane McLeod, Dan Malleck (Health Sciences), Elizabeth Neswald, Olantunji Ojo, Daniel Samson, Mark Spencer, Maria Del Carmen Suescun Pozas, Elizabeth Vlossak, Ning Wang, Murray Wickett

Assistant Professor

Gregor Kranjc, Jessica Clark

[History Faculty Research Interests](#)

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3. Admissions Procedures

Applications for admission to the M.A. program, on either a full-time or a part-time basis, are accepted from students holding an honours degree in History, with an overall average not less than B+. Applicants must supply a personal statement of interest and goals, and three letters of reference from referees who can attest to the applicant's suitability for graduate studies. Students will be expected to be proficient in English, as specified in the section titled "Proof of English Language Proficiency" in the Brock University Graduate Calendar.

[Brock University Graduate Calendar](#)

The Faculty of Graduate Studies receives all applications and accompanying materials and will inform applicants of incomplete files. Once the files are complete and the deadline has passed (usually early February), the Faculty of Graduate Studies forwards the files to the Graduate Administrative Assistant.

The Graduate Committee reviews the applications and directs the Faculty of Graduate Studies to make offers to selected candidates.

4. Degree Requirements

While the program offers both a Major Research Paper stream and a thesis stream, most students will be encouraged to pursue the Major Research Paper stream, as the additional coursework required by this choice provides a broader foundation for future studies. The thesis stream is by invitation only, on the recommendation of the Graduate Committee.

All students in the Major Research Paper stream will take Historiography and Historical Method ([HIST 5F01](#)), four half-course electives (HIST 5V00-HIST 5V79), and the Major Research Paper ([HIST 5F80](#)). Students invited to the thesis stream will take Historiography and Historical Method (HIST 5F01), two half-course electives ([HIST -HIST 5V89](#)), and the thesis ([HIST 5F90](#)). Each student enrolled in HIST 5F90 must defend his/her thesis at a public oral examination.

Under exceptional circumstances, students in either the Major Research Paper stream or the thesis stream may be permitted to substitute a directed reading course (taken as HIST 5P80), or a course offered by another graduate program, in lieu of one of their elective courses. Students who wish to exercise this option must submit a letter to the GPD and the proposed instructor, outlining the nature of the reading course, the necessity of the substitution, and notification of which course is to be substituted. This application must be approved prior to the beginning of the term.

The Major Research Paper stream is designed normally to be completed in twelve months (three terms). The thesis stream is designed normally to be completed in twenty months (five terms). The completion time for part-time students will vary with the candidate's circumstances.

Degree Requirements ([Co-op Stream](#))

Program requirements for the Co-op stream are identical to those for other students with the following exceptions: All Co-op students write a Major Research Paper (MRP). The thesis option is not open to Co-op students. Students in the Co-op stream take work-placements in their third and fourth terms. Students in the Co-op stream are required to take work-placement seminars (HIST 5N90), comprised of lectures, presentations and industry specific information, for two hours each week prior to the first co-op work term. Attendance is mandatory. Thus, one course, which standard stream students would take second term, will be delayed until the final (fifth) term.

All Co-op students will take Historiography and Historical Method ([HIST 5F01](#)), four half-course electives (HIST 5V00-HIST 5V79), two work placements ([HIST 5N01 and 5N02](#)), and the Major Research Paper HIST 5F80 ([HIST 5F80](#)). Under exceptional circumstances, students may be permitted to substitute a directed

reading course (taken as [HIST 5P80](#)), or a course offered by another graduate program, in lieu of one of their elective courses. [Request for substitute course](#) The work placement is normally eight months, though two four-month placements may be approved; in either case, students must register for and pass both work placement courses (HIST 5N01 and HIST 5N02).

In addition to the current fees for courses in academic study terms, Co-op students are assessed an administrative fee ([Fees](#)).

5. Registration Procedures

Registration Procedures can be found at:

[Registration Procedures](#)

Inactive Students

If, for some acceptable reason, a student is unable to take courses in a specific term, inactive status may be approved by the GPD. Permission must be obtained before the start of the academic term for which the student is seeking inactive status (via the Request for Inactive Term Form found at: [Forms](#)). During an inactive term, the student pays the inactive fee and retains library privileges. Inactive terms do not extend the final completion date by which degree requirements must be completed. Normally, inactive terms may not be consecutive and no more than two inactive terms may be taken during any graduate degree program.

Leave of Absence Students

A leave of absence from a graduate program will be granted only in exceptional circumstances which will include parental and maternity leave, medical leave, work leave which requires the student to leave the geographic area or compassionate grounds. Cases will be considered on an individual basis and must have the approval of the Graduate Supervisor (if applicable) and the GPD before they are submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for approval. A graduate student granted a leave of absence will not be registered and will not be required to pay fees for the duration of the leave. Students on leave will not be eligible to receive University fellowship support or other financial support from the University. In the case of funding by an external agency, the regulations of the granting agency will apply. The length of time for completion of the degree will be extended by the duration of the leave. While on leave students will not normally be entitled to use University facilities and resources or receive supervision. Leaves of absence are for a minimum of two consecutive terms and a maximum of three consecutive terms. Normally, a student will not be granted more than one leave of absence during a graduate degree program. A leave of absence cannot be followed by an inactive term.

Request for Leave of Absence Forms are available from the Faculty of Graduate Studies or the Graduate Studies website. [Forms](#)

Part-time Studies

The program is intended primarily for full-time students. However, provision is made for qualified part-time students, with the possibility of one or two being admitted each year. Part-time students must meet with the GPD to plan their program of study. Part-time students are advised that courses are generally scheduled during the day and therefore the program cannot be completed through evening/Spring courses alone. Part-time students, with the permission of the GPD, also have the option of enrolling in graduate courses in other programs.

Part time students must submit a plan for their program, approved by their supervisors and the GPD by the beginning of their first term.

6. Academic Progress

The intellectual development and progress of students in the Graduate Program Committee will be monitored and fostered on an ongoing basis by the GPD and individually-constituted Supervisory Committees.

The GPD will appoint (in consultation with the Graduate Program Committee, the student, and participating faculty) a program Supervisor for each graduate student. The GPD will appoint a Supervisory Committee for each graduate student, consisting of the program supervisor, the GPD (or his/her designate), and one other faculty member. Each full-time student's progress in the program will be reviewed by the Supervisory Committee at least twice per year. Additional meetings may be called at the request of the GPD, a member of the Supervisory Committee, or the student. In the case of unsatisfactory progress, the Supervisory Committee may recommend withdrawal from the program.

Each full-time student will submit to his/her Supervisory Committee a Major Research Paper proposal by the last week of January. The proposal, worth 20% of the Major Research Paper or thesis grade, will outline the principal argument to be pursued in the Major Research Paper or thesis, a preliminary outline, a plan of work, a brief description of the primary research material, and a working bibliography. The proposal must be approved by the Supervisory Committee for the student to proceed on to the Major Research Paper or thesis. It will be directed to supervisors and the Graduate Program Director. They are to be returned within 2 weeks, graded and with a report.

Supervisors should get the proposals to their committee members promptly. Supervisors should consult with the committee members and arrange a reading and meeting schedule in advance.

The committee members will meet, offer their assessments, and arrive at a consensus on proceeding. Should the committee fail to arrive at a consensus the GPD will attempt to bridge any differences and may override the committee. In general, as in other instances, this will only happen in extraordinary circumstances, and will usually be biased toward the views of the majority and the supervisor. The report will outline both the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed project and offer direction on how best to proceed.

The proposals will be assessed on the clarity of the proposed work, its relationship to existing work in the area, its viability (particularly as to availability

and suitability of primary sources and methodology), and its originality.

In the event that a proposal does not pass, the candidate will be asked to revise the proposal, taking into account the supervisory committee's suggestion, and re-submit in two weeks' time.

Should a supervisor leave the University or go on sabbatical leave, the GPD will be responsible for the following.

The GPD will appoint a substitute from among the permanent faculty associated with the program (having first consulted with the student and with other members of the Supervisory Committee). The GPD will endeavour to ease, for the student, the transition from one Supervisor to the other.

Student Course Evaluations

It is hoped that students and instructors will provide each other with feedback throughout the course. Nevertheless, students are invited to submit a more formal course evaluation once a course is completed. Where the small number of students in a group may make anonymity difficult to maintain, students have the option of preparing a group assessment, including minority opinions where applicable. Evaluations will be submitted to the Graduate Administrative Assistant for forwarding to the History Department Chair.

Appeals

All graduate students have the right to appeal graduate decisions. In all matters regarding graduate appeals concerning grades, requirements and withdrawal, the program will follow standard University regulations as detailed in the section titled "Graduate Student Appeals" in the Brock University Graduate Studies Calendar [Graduate Calendar](#) Opportunities for graduate students to communicate usefully and safely about their experiences and concerns include access to the Office for Human Rights and Equity Service. [Human Rights and Equity Service](#), Ext 5657, and an Ombuds Officer for Students [Ombuds Officer for Students](#), Ext. 4195). Students also have the opportunity to submit anonymous course evaluations, articulate any concerns to the GPD, ask their graduate student representative to raise issues at Graduate Program Committee meetings, and contribute to a program review through the Graduate Student Representative. See also the document, Graduate Students Rights and Responsibilities [Graduate Students Rights and Responsibilities](#)

7. Supervision

Students and supervisors should meet regularly during the academic year. Minimally that should entail a meeting early in the Fall term another in December, another before the submission of the proposal, shortly after, and in April, to ensure a smooth process to the MRP.

The deadline for candidates to submit the final draft of their Major Research Paper is the last Monday in July. The final thesis draft should be submitted in mid-March (term 5). It is strongly recommended that candidates provide their supervisor with rough drafts of their paper or thesis long before the final draft deadline. This is important because their supervisor is likely to ask for revisions. These internal deadlines should be worked out between candidates and their supervisors. The Graduate Committee strongly recommends that candidates keep in touch with all members of their supervisory committees as the candidate works towards producing their final draft.

Co-op Stream students must submit a final draft of their Major Research Paper by mid-March (term 5). It is strongly recommended that candidates provide their supervisor with rough drafts of their paper long before the final draft deadline. This is important because their supervisor is likely to ask for revisions to the MRP. These internal deadlines should be worked out between candidates and their supervisors. The Graduate Committee strongly recommends that candidates keep in touch with all members of their supervisory committees as the candidate works towards producing the final draft of the MRP

The final draft of the MRP will be graded by all members of the candidate's supervisory committee. Committee members have two weeks in which to read, comment upon, and offer a grade for the MRP. As stipulated in the Faculty Handbook Regulations:

A. MRP and project grades shall be reported to the Faculty of Graduate Studies in the usual fashion with letter and numerical grades

B. If a failing grade is awarded for a Major Research Paper or project; the student will be withdrawn from the program.

The numerical values of the assignable letter grades are:

A+ - 90-100

A - 80-89

B - 70-79

F - 69 or lower

Grades of 69 and lower are considered to be failing grades.

If possible (acknowledging that in summer a face-to –face meeting may not be possible), the committee should meet to discuss the final grade. Revisions are possible, mindful always of the final deadline (late August) and the interest of the student. Co-op students will meet regularly with the committee throughout their 5th term. The Graduate committee suggests that each committee arrive at a consensual grade. If consensus is not possible, each supervisor committee member will submit a grade to the administrative assistant and the GPD will assign the grade.

All MRP grades are to be submitted via the MRP grade form.

In order for a candidate to be eligible to graduate on time a passing grade for the MRP must be submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies by the first Friday in September. Therefore, candidates should keep themselves as free as possible for the last two weeks of August in the event that their supervisory committee requests them to revise their MRP.

For Co-op students to be eligible to graduate in June, a passing grade for the MRP must be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies by the last week of April. Therefore, candidates should keep themselves as free as possible for the first two weeks of April in the event that their supervisory committee requests revisions to their MRP.

Note: Please submit both a paper copy and an electronic copy of the final draft of your MRP to both your supervisor and the Graduate Program Director.

Responsibilities of Research Paper for Supervisors

When faculty members agree to supervise a graduate student, they thereby assume a number of responsibilities. Supervisors are expected to be actively engaged in scholarly activity and linked to a wider scholarly network. The student has the right to expect from the supervisor scholarly expertise, accessibility and assistance with the design, planning and conduct of feasible research projects.

Additional guidelines for Supervisors

1. Be reasonably accessible to the student for consultation and discussion of academic progress and research problems and give timely response to written work with constructive suggestions for improvement.
2. Offer supervision and advice appropriate to the stage of the student's work (proposal stage, research stage, analysis and writing stage, oral defense stage if necessary and if appropriate, with the publication of results).
3. Help the student establish and maintain a suitable timetable for completion of the various stages of the Major Research Paper/thesis requirements (i.e. selection of Supervisory Committee, approval of Major Research Paper/Thesis Proposal, REB approval if required, preparation for defense if required, etc.). The Supervisor should be aware that full-time students receive a significant reduction in fees if both the Supervisor and GPD agree that the write-up of a Major Research Paper or thesis is at a stage that could be considered a "[Final Stage Status](#)" prior to the payment of fees for an additional term (e.g. fourth term for Major Research Paper, sixth term for thesis).
4. Review the student's progress in preparation for the mid-January, and mid-April progress reports.

5. Ensure the student is aware of University and Faculty requirements and standards for the graduate program as available in this document and in the Graduate Studies Calendar. Ensure that regulations on Intellectual Property and Research with Human Participants (if necessary) are followed before a student is permitted to begin working in any research capacity associated with the University. See web pages:

[Research Services Forms](#), [Faculty Handbook Information](#)

[Research Ethics & Safety](#)

6. Conform to basic principles of academic integrity and professionalism in the supervisory role.
7. Make a suitable alternative arrangement for supervision when on extensive leave or absence from the university.

The Supervisor, as an active member of a research community within Brock University and beyond, necessarily serves as a role model for students, and must be prepared to devote the time required to share his or her knowledge and skills with students and other colleagues. For this to happen, the Supervisor must undertake to be available as a resource person for students interested in his or her areas of expertise, and endeavour to attend academic and social activities organized by the program.

Responsibilities of Students

By engaging in a Graduate Program, the student has made a commitment to devote the time and energy necessary to complete courses and complete a Major Research Paper or thesis. The Supervisor and Supervisory Committee have the right to expect that the student demonstrate ability, initiative, and receptivity. Additional guidelines for the student are as follows. The student should:

1. Conform to University and Faculty requirements and procedures with regard to registration, graduation requirements, and to Major Research Paper/thesis style and standards.
2. In co-operation with the Supervisor develop and maintain a timetable for completion of all stages of course and Major Research Paper/thesis work.
3. Meet regularly with the Supervisor to review progress, and interact with the other member of the Supervisory Committee as appropriate.
4. Give serious consideration to and respond to the advice and criticism received from the Supervisor/Supervisory Committee.

5. Recognize that Supervisory Committee Members have other teaching, research and administrative obligations that may preclude an immediate response to queries or the immediate provision of feedback.
6. Familiarize themselves with University and Faculty requirements and standards for graduate studies as available in this document, in the Graduate Studies Calendar, the University's policy on Intellectual Property and Research with Human Participants. See web pages:

<http://Program.brocku.ca/research/policies-and-forms>

http://Program.brocku.ca/researchservices/Ethics_Safety/Humans/Index.php

7. Conform to provisions regarding hours of employment at Brock University.
8. Conform to basic principles of academic integrity and professionalism with respect to the handling of data and in the development of a mature and professional relationship with the Supervisor, Supervisory Committee, other scholars, as well as fellow students and staff at the University. Students should also familiarize themselves with the Universities polices on Academic Integrity and Academic Misconduct at: [Academic Misconduct](#)
9. Consult with their Supervisor/Supervisory Committee if major changes are required during the conduct of the research, and submit a revised Major Research Paper/thesis proposal if necessary.
10. Participate in the academic life of the program, including attendance at program-sponsored events, including department colloquia.
11. Maintain open lines of communication between themselves and the faculty. This can be facilitated through the election of a Graduate Student representative.

8. THESIS SUBMISSION

1. Theses must be prepared according to current scholarly style guidelines, and should fall within the range of 80-100 pages inclusive of notes, references, appendices etc. Normally theses will be submitted in the fifth term of the student's program.

2. Students will provide one copy of the thesis for each Supervisory Committee member and provide the GPD with 3 copies of the thesis, two of which will be delivered to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for distribution to the External Examiner and the Dean (or designate). The thesis must be presented at least four weeks in advance of the anticipated date of the oral defense so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

3. Where thesis research involves non-archival quantitative or oral data the student will submit a copy of all data to the supervisor for access by committee members, subject to commitments to protect participant identification and privacy. After the thesis defense, data will be returned to the student for deposit (if applicable) according to Tri-Council regulations.

THESIS EXAMINING COMMITTEE

1. The thesis will be assessed by an Examining Committee consisting of at least the GPD (or nominee), the Dean of Humanities (or nominee), either of whom may chair the Committee, an External Examiner and the Supervisory Committee.

2. The External Examiner will be principally responsible for provision of an independent and objective evaluation of the academic quality of the thesis. The External Examiner will be appointed by the Dean of Graduate Studies on the advice of the Dean of Humanities and the GPD (after consultation with the Supervisory Committee) from a list of names supplied by the Supervisory Committee.

3. The Supervisor and student should not contact potential external examiners to discuss availability, and any contact with an External Examiner prior to the thesis defense should be brought to the attention of the GPD.

THESIS DEFENSE

1. As drawn from the regulations of the *Faculty Handbook*:
 - a. The Chair of the Examining Committee directs the proceedings of the thesis defense. Typically the candidate will present a public seminar outlining the study (limited to 30 minutes). This will be followed by a period of "open" questioning in which all present may participate. Immediately following, the Examining Committee may meet with the candidate in camera for a further period of "closed" questioning.

The Examining Committee will then evaluate the thesis and defense. Approval of the thesis will require acceptance by two-thirds of the committee and must include approval by the External Examiner.

b. If revisions are necessary, the Committee will specify the areas for revision and the date by which the revised thesis is to be returned (to the GPD). This date will normally be within three months of the examination or six months if additional research is required. The GPD will approve the revisions or, in consultation with the Supervisor, specify the revisions not satisfactorily completed.

c. In the instance of a failed defense, the candidate may, at the discretion of the Examining Committee, be permitted a second and final thesis submission and defense. This will be scheduled for no later than one calendar year after the original presentation and defense. In the preparation of the thesis for resubmission, the student will be guided by the written criticisms of members of the Examining Committee. Under normal circumstances the composition of the Examining Committee of the second thesis defense will be identical to that of the original Examining Committee. A fee may be charged for re-examination. Appeals relating to the procedures followed in a thesis examination or to the grade assigned shall be considered by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

d. As per the *Faculty Handbook* (14.10.2.C-G): Thesis grades shall be reported to the Faculty of Graduate Studies as either Pass or Fail. A Pass grade must be further differentiated as one of: Acceptable as is; Acceptable with minor revisions; Acceptable with major revisions. All aspects of the written work, as well as the student's performance during the defense, must be taken into consideration when determining the grade. Normally, if all but one member of the committee agree on a decision, the decision shall be that of the majority, except when the single dissenting vote is that of the External Examiner. In that case, the Dean of Graduate Studies in consultation with the Faculty Dean will determine an appropriate course of action. A failing grade will be awarded if two or more committee members find the thesis unacceptable or if the External Examiner does not approve the thesis. If a failing grade is awarded for a thesis, the student will be withdrawn from the program.

9. Financial Support

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