



SAINT MARY'S UNIVERSITY

Department of History Graduate Handbook



Department of History

Master of Arts (M.A.) Program

The Saint Mary's History Department has particular strengths in:

- Public, Community & Applied History
- Migration & Settlement History
- History of Culture & Memory

Our one-year M.A. Program is small and collegial, catering to both full and part-time students. Enrolments are limited, allowing faculty members to devote time and energy to fostering the research skills of each M.A. student. Generous fellowships are available, and opportunities also exist for working as Teaching Assistants. The core graduate seminar surveys the theories and methods of the discipline of History. Students can choose among a range of seminar courses to further broaden their knowledge. In special circumstances, some students may be offered the opportunity to work one on one with an individual faculty member in directed studies.

Requirements for the M.A. in History

Prerequisites

- Applicants to our M.A. program should have an Honours Degree or its equivalent. Students without an Honours BA should consult the Coordinator to establish whether they have the equivalent to this degree. We look for students who have had at least some experience conducting research with primary sources and have acquired a solid base in historiography.
- For those who do not have an honours degree or its equivalent, the University offers a Certificate of Honours Equivalency which allows students to complete SMU's honours History degree requirements in one year making them eligible to apply to our MA program the following year. (See details below).
- A minimum GPA of 3.00, preferably higher. If students do not meet this requirement, the University offers the opportunity to up-grade. Up-grading students must register through the Admissions Office and meet a credit hours limit set by the Faculty of Arts (no more than 30 credit hours). The choice of courses should be done in consultation with the Department's Honours Coordinator to ensure the equivalent to a SMU Honours degree.
- To apply, go to: <https://smu.ca/academics/apply-to-grad-studies.html>

Certificate of Honours Equivalency

This certificate is designed for students with a History Major BA who wish to obtain the equivalent to an Honours degree. Students are required to complete the same requirements as Saint Mary's Honours History students.

Prerequisites to be admitted to the Certificate Program:

- Must have a Major BA in History (42 credit hours in History)
- A minimum 3.00 GPA

To obtain the Honours Equivalency Certificate:

- Total credit hours required of History Honours students is at least 24 credit hours in History and an additional 6 credit hours that may be taken either in History or in a cognate area. The required 24 credits in History must include the following in addition to the credit hours already taken for a Major:
- An additional six (6.0) credit hours in History courses at the 2000 or 3000 level
- An additional nine (9.0) credit hours in History courses at the 4000 level
- History 4500 (6.0 credit hours): the Honours Seminar, which includes attendance at a weekly seminar as well as researching and writing a 50-60 page thesis under the direction of a supervisor.
- Graduate with a GPA of 3.3.

****We recommend that the applicant consult with the Coordinator for course selection to ensure that the proper requirements are met.*

M.A. Application Process

Go to: http://smu.ca/academics/graduate-application-forms-and-requirements.html#MA_History

Students apply to the History MA program by sending their application to the University's Faculty of Graduate Studies by **February 1** in order to qualify for funding. For those **not** requesting funding, the final deadline for applications is **May 15**.

The application should include:

- A completed application form: http://smu.ca/webfiles/SF_History_web.pdf
- A current CV
- Statement of Research Interests: in a covering letter include a summary of the topic you would like to research for the MA thesis. This may be in the form of a very general description of what area/s students wish to explore. The reason we ask for this

information is to ensure that we can match students with a supervisor in their general field of interest. Students can consult our website in order to get the list of our faculty members with a description of their general fields of expertise. We also encourage students to contact potential supervisors directly.

- Official University transcripts
- The names of three referees who have been requested to send letters of reference on your behalf- preferably former History professors.
- Applicants should also include a writing sample (preferably a History essay based on primary source research).
- The non-refundable Canadian processing fee.
- If relevant: a residence application form including fee.

Once FGSR has received the application, they will verify that it is complete. The file is then sent to the History Department, and the Program Committee makes the decision whether to accept or reject the application.

Graduate Awards and Fellowships

History Department/ Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research Funding

The Faculty of Graduate Studies & Research (FGSR) provides funding to students admitted to the History MA program. The amount of funding varies from year to year. (See above for deadlines.) FGSR is located in Atrium 210 and at: <http://fgsr.smu.ca> , or fgsr@smu.ca

The Patrick Power Fellowship in Applied History

The Patrick Power Fellowship in Applied History is awarded to a highly qualified graduate student who is committed to applying the skills and knowledge they have learned in and outside the classroom to the wider world. The recipient of the Patrick Power Graduate Fellowship in Applied History will be a full-time student entering the Master of Arts in History Program at Saint Mary's University who intends to conduct research in Applied History. The award holder will contribute to the public presentation of the past in the Halifax Region by working closely with professional practitioners in Applied History in such institutions as the Nova Scotia Museum, the Halifax Citadel National Historic Site, and Pier 21: The National Immigration Museum, as well as a number of other educational and non-profit organizations in the Halifax Regional Municipality.

The fellowship is designed to cover tuition and assist with research and living costs for a student entering the Master of Arts program. It may be held in conjunction with other graduate awards offered by Saint Mary's. The award recipient will be determined by the History Department in consultation with the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research.

Research Assistantships and Teaching Assistantships

Some employment opportunities arise when professors in the Department of History need research assistants to help them with bibliographical work, finding secondary sources or working in the archives, or to assist with teaching courses and marking essays, tests and exams. Outside agencies and archives also contact us occasionally seeking Honours or Graduate students in History.

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Funding

For information about SSRC Master's Program Funding see:

http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/students-etudiants/pg-cs/cqsm-bescm_eng.asp

Conference Funding

We strongly encourage our graduate students to present their findings at one of several graduate student conferences that take place in the region or beyond. The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research provides one-time grants of up to \$500 to assist graduate students with travel and accommodation expenses. Completed application forms are to be submitted to the Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, fgsl@smu.ca. There are two competitions per fiscal year with deadlines for submissions of April 1 and October 1. Applications will be vetted and decisions on funding will be made by the FGSR Awards Committee. Forms are available at:

http://smu.ca/webfiles/ApplicationFormforConferenceTravelFunds_sc1_WEB.pdf

To Graduate with a History M.A. Degree

1. All students, whether studying on a full or part-time basis, must take the full year (6.0 credit hours) HIST 6650.0 Seminar in Advanced Historiography **and**
2. register in HIST 6690.0 - The Thesis. To fulfill the requirements of this course, students are expected to provide the supervisor with regular reports on ongoing research and with regular drafts of the thesis.
3. In addition, to HIST 6650.0 and HIST 6690.0 candidates must complete 9 credit hours at the 6000 level.
4. Language requirement: a thesis supervisor may require his/her student to pass a second language reading proficiency test if the supervisor considers that such language skills are relevant for the proposed thesis research. The test would be a translation test, during which students may make use of a dictionary.
5. Completion and Defense of a 100-120 page thesis.

6. The University's general requirements for the Master of Arts degree apply to the graduate students in the Department of History. Please see the Faculty of Graduate Studies Calendar for these regulations.

Compulsory Courses and Thesis

HIST 6500.0: The Seminar in Advanced Historiography

Each student in the MA program, whether full-time or part-time, enrolls in the full year Seminar in Advanced Historiography taught by the Graduate Coordinator. The class is intended to familiarize students with research skills, historical methods and approaches, as well as a variety of theories of history. The Seminar in Advanced Historiography also provides a framework to assist each student in the preparation of the MA thesis in collaboration with the supervisor. Students are evaluated on their participation, coursework and presentations.

HIST 6690.0: Thesis Course

In order to fulfill the requirements of this course, students are expected to meet regularly with their supervisor and provide regular reports on ongoing research and with drafts of the thesis. Make sure to establish a plan of research and set a timetable for writing up and completion of the thesis. Students are encouraged to combine researching and writing whenever possible. Writing up research in incremental stages, chapter by chapter is often easier than tackling the whole thesis at once.

- Length of MA Thesis: approximately 100 pages but no longer than 120 pages

Guidelines for writing the thesis

In order to give students a better sense of what they can expect to do in the compulsory Advanced Historiography seminar we provide here a summary timeline for the course assignments:

- By **mid-October** - submit a preliminary draft of the thesis proposal to the supervisor and graduate coordinator
- By the **end of October** - submit a revised thesis proposal and annotated bibliography to the supervisor and graduate coordinator.
- **November** - present the thesis proposal to the Department for discussion and defense.
- **December** - submit a literature review.
- **end of March** - hand in one chapter based on primary source research and present these research results to the class and to faculty members of the History Department.

Late completion

Full time students have one year to complete the course requirement for the M.A. Part time students have two years. Students who complete the required numbers of courses by the end of the winter semester but are still working on their theses must enroll each semester in FGSR 9000 beginning with the summer semester. FGSR offers students various options for obtaining time off in special circumstances including for medical reasons. See FGSR for details.

Thesis Defense

The student must satisfy the supervisor that the research, writing, and all other methodological and disciplinary preparation for the successful handling of the thesis topic have been completed. When the student completes the M.A. thesis, an open meeting is arranged for the thesis defense.

The Thesis Supervisory Committee will consist of the supervisor who will oversee the student's research project providing guidance and supervision and another member of the History Department who will accompany the student during the period in which the project is being defined and carried out making himself/herself available to provide feedback. This second member could be the Honours and Graduate Coordinator who, in his/her capacity as professor of the compulsory Seminar in Advanced Historiography (HIST 6650), assesses each student's research proposal, literature review and sections of the thesis. Alternately, this second member of the Supervisory Committee could be an appointed internal reader selected among members of the History Department in consultation with the Supervisor. Decisions regarding the composition of the Supervisory Committee will be finalized by the beginning of the Winter semester of the student's starting year.

Defense

The thesis defense includes the members of the Supervisory committee as well as interested students and faculty from the History Department and other departments at Saint Mary's or other universities. Friends and family are also welcome. The M.A. candidate presents his or her research findings to the meeting, and fields questions from the examiners.

At the conclusion of a successful defense it is the responsibility of the student to supply the university with a copy of the thesis for the archives, the library and the department. Students may also choose to provide their supervisors with a bound copy. Details about the requirements for binding theses can be found on the University archives website:

<https://www.smu.ca/academics/archives.html>

Role and Responsibilities of Graduate Students

The students are responsible for attending their chosen courses including the Seminar in Advanced Historiography. Students should make a commitment to keep up with any assigned readings, contribute regularly to discussion, and present their research to the seminars for which they are registered. The student is also responsible for providing the supervisor with regular reports on ongoing research and with regular drafts of the thesis as part of the fulfillment of the requirements of HIST 6690.0.

Role and Responsibilities of the Supervisor

The supervisor should have some background in the time period, region or historical theme that the student hopes to research. The supervisor should meet with the student on a regular basis to direct and help in the research process. A supervisor should also provide written and oral feedback on the thesis proposal, reports of research progress, and drafts of the thesis.

Role of Graduate Coordinator

The Graduate Coordinator is the first point of contact for the MA in History at Saint Mary's. They may already have advised the student during the application process and will continue to do so once students have been accepted into the program. The Graduate Coordinator runs the Seminar in Advanced Historiography (HIST 6650), which allows students to share their research experiences as well as provides practical information about research, writing and how to draft a thesis proposal. The Graduate Coordinator assesses the student's performance in the Seminar on the basis of course assignments, the thesis proposal, seminar presentation and contributions to the seminar.

Role and Responsibilities of the Advisor

In the event that the Graduate Coordinator is also the supervisor, then a Faculty member in a related field will be appointed to act as Advisor to the student (and would have consented to act as Advisor through participation in the Admissions process).

Elective Courses

The Department offers both full year (6 credit hour) and semester (3 credit hour) courses at the 6000 level. In addition to HIST 6650.0 and HIST 6690.0, graduate students need to complete 9 credit hours chosen from the 6000 level seminars (For a list of current seminars please consult the relevant section in the history department

website: <http://smu.ca/academics/departments/history-programs-current-courses.html#6000>

Evaluation and Grading Scheme

Courses

A+ = 4.30 = Excellent

A = 4.00 = Excellent

A- = 3.67 = Very Good

B+ = 3.33 = Good

B = 3.00 = Satisfactory

B- = 2.67 = Below graduate standard

C = 2.00 = Marginal Pass

F = 0.00 = Failure

Theses

P = Pass (with or without corrections) F = Fail

Courses and Theses

IP = In Progress

(For graduate theses and dissertations this grade can remain in effect until the expiration of the timeline for the completion of the individual student's entire graduate program. The IP grade is not calculated in quality point averages. Thereafter, it becomes an F ("failure") that is calculated in a student's quality point averages. For all other graduate courses, the IP grade is valid only for a maximum of twelve months beyond the last day of classes in the semester in which the course was taught.)

Resources

- Workspace is available in the Arts Graduate Student Commons (MM 206)
- Through the Patrick Power Library at Saint Mary's, students have access to Novanet (university libraries in Nova Scotia), and Interlibrary Loans free of charge.
<https://smu.ca/academics/the-patrick-power-library.html>
- Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management, 6016 University Ave (corner Robie St & University Ave). Saint Mary's University is two city blocks from the Nova Scotia Archives and its rich collection of French and Acadian records, British Colonial Office papers, immigration and census data, wills, probate records, maps and photos.
<http://www.gov.ns.ca/nsarm/>

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