History Department

Chairperson
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Degrees Awarded
M.A. in History; Ph.D. in History

Web Site
http://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/history/

Application
https://graduateadmissions.stonybrook.edu/apply/

Description of the History Department

While strong in many conventional geographical fields of historical study, our graduate program takes an innovative thematic approach to encourage comparative, transnational, interdisciplinary, and theoretically-informed scholarship and teaching. Working closely with our award-winning faculty, our graduate students develop expertise and teaching experience in both thematic areas and geographical fields, while pursuing extensive original research. In the process, they learn how to apply important concepts—such as class, gender, race, culture, power, and environment—to the study of the past. By emphasizing active engagement, discussion, and collaboration, our program fosters a dynamic, collegial learning environment where graduate students receive substantial mentorship. The program is designed so individual students may customize their course of study to their own intellectual interests and career objectives. All graduate students are welcome and encouraged to participate in university and departmental events and programs.

The graduate program is structured around five areas of thematic inquiry: 1) Global Connections, Empire, Capitalism; 2) Health, Science, Environment; 3) Race, Citizenship, Migration; 4) Religion, gender, cultural identity; and 5) States, nations, political cultures. Courses developed around these expansive themes are the heart of the department’s commitment to the theoretically informed, interdisciplinary study of history.

The History Department has a faculty of 25 distinguished scholars with outstanding records in research, education, and public service. In addition, it has close ties with many other departments, including Affiliated Faculty in: Africana Studies; English; Hispanic Languages and Literature; Cultural Studies and Comparative Literature; Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies; Sociology; Music; Economics; and Technology and Society. We collaborate regularly with the Stony Brook Humanities Institute, the Latin American and Caribbean Studies Center, and the Institute for Globalization Studies, among others.

Each year we admit 6-8 students to the doctoral (Ph.D.) program and 5-10 students to the terminal master’s (M.A.) and joint B.A./M.A. programs. The department currently has approximately 60 full- and part-time graduate students.

Master’s Degree: Our M.A. program includes two separate paths to the degree—Professional Track or Academic Track—designed to meet our diverse students’ varied needs and goals. To secure the M.A. degree, students must complete 30 credits of graduate study (with a grade of B or higher) and pass an oral examination. When pursued full-time, the program can be completed in approximately 4 semesters; part-time options are also available.

Ph.D. Program: Our Ph.D. program prepares students to undertake original research and ultimately to pursue a career in higher education or a wide range of other history-related fields. Doctoral students may focus their study on a particular region and period and/or concentrate on one of the thematic areas described above. While students interact most closely with History faculty, they are encouraged to work with faculty from other departments as well. Full-time Ph.D. students typically concentrate on coursework for Years 1-2, take an Oral Examination and prepare a Dissertation Prospectus during Year 3, and commence with dissertation research and writing during Year 4.

Admission Requirements for the M.A. and Ph.D. Programs

A. Bachelor’s degree in History, or equivalent, with minimum grade point average of 3.0 (B) in all undergraduate coursework and History courses.

B. 3 Letters of Recommendation for Ph.D. applicants; 2 Letters of Recommendation for M.A. applicants. Letters should address student’s potential to succeed in a rigorous course of graduate study.

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C. All students who are not native or primary speakers of English must demonstrate proficiency in English to be admitted to the Graduate School by submitting scores from the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). Required minimum scores: IELTS overall score of 6.5, with no subsection below 6; TOEFL score of 80 for M.A. and 90 for Ph.D. and to be eligible for TA/GA support. See the relevant Graduate Bulletin section for more detailed explanation: https://www.stonybrook.edu/sb/graduatebulletin/current/admissions/requirements/english.php

D. Writing sample (12 pages for M.A.; 20 pages for Ph.D.) that exemplifies the applicant's writing skills and capacity for research, analysis, and creative thought.

E. Any additional requirements of the Graduate School.

With approval from the dean of the Graduate School and the History Department, a student with an M.A. degree from another accredited institution may be admitted directly to the Ph.D. program at Stony Brook. In special cases, students whose GPA does not meet the requirements stated above may be admitted on a provisional basis for M.A. study only.

Degree Requirements

Requirements for M.A. Tracks (Academic or Professional)

Our M.A. program offers two separate paths to the degree—Professional Track and Academic Track—that are designed to meet our diverse students' varied needs and goals. If in doubt about which option is best suited to your needs, confer with the Graduate Program Director.

1. Professional Track

This option allows students maximum flexibility to design their own curriculum. It is especially suitable for Social Studies teachers who need an M.A. degree for professional certification; persons seeking advanced study or preparation for careers involving research, writing, and historical knowledge; and interested individuals seeking personal enrichment, whether or not history is related to their occupation.

On this track, students must earn 30 credits (see chart below), in addition to fulfilling any Graduate School requirements. Credits may be from coursework alone—including, if desired, up to 6 credits of content-based pedagogy courses—or may include writing an optional M.A. thesis (6 credits). Lastly, students must pass an Oral Examination as the culmination of their studies. Students may enroll on a full- or part-time basis, beginning usually in the Fall semester.

2. Academic Track

This option is designed for individuals aspiring to a career in higher education or advanced historical scholarship, but who are not yet ready to enter a Ph.D. program. Students on this track are encouraged to develop a concentration in a region, period, or interdisciplinary field. They are also required to take the Core Seminar to develop a strong foundation in historical methods and theory and applied research.

On this track, students must earn 30 credits (see chart below), in addition to fulfilling any Graduate School requirements. Credits may be from coursework alone—including the required Core Seminar—or may include writing an optional M.A. thesis (6 credits). Lastly, students must pass an Oral Examination as the culmination of their studies. Students may enroll on a full- or part-time basis, beginning in the Fall semester.

A. Coursework for M.A. Program (Academic or Professional Track)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Track</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Academic Track</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core Seminar I and II (HIS 524 &amp; 525)</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Field Seminars</td>
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<td>2 Theme Seminars</td>
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<td>1 Directed Reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elective Courses</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>M.A. thesis (optional; 6 credits)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral Examination</td>
<td>Oral Examination</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Credits</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
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| **Core Seminar I and II** (HIS 524 and HIS 525; 3 credits each): This year-long course provides an intensive introduction to historical methods and theory based around the graduate program’s themes. The second semester includes the immersive experience of completing a major research project under close faculty supervision. The Core Seminar is offered as a Fall/Spring sequence only. Students on the M.A. Academic Track are required to take it during their second year (or first year, with permission from the Graduate Program Director).

Field Seminars (3 credits each): Designed to familiarize students with the history and historiography of specific regions and periods, these courses include: Medieval and Early Modern Europe (HIS 501); Modern Europe (HIS 502); Early American History (HIS 521); Modern American History (HIS 522); Colonial Latin America (HIS 541); Modern Latin America (542); Introduction to African History (HIS 562); Introduction to Asian History (HIS 562); South Asian History (HIS 563); Chinese History (HIS 564); and Japanese History (HIS 565). While some of these courses are offered on a one- or two-year cycle, others may be offered slightly less frequently. Students concentrating on a specific

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A. Graduate School rules, the students are required to defend their dissertation orally before their Doctoral Defense Committee at the end of their course of study. In accordance with

The dissertation is to be a substantial piece of original research that makes a significant contribution to the historical literature. All students planning and preliminary research for their dissertation. Students are “advanced to candidacy” when they’ve fulfilled all requirements but the dissertation (i.e. ABD status).

During the dissertation (Year 3), students continue to take classes, delving more deeply into research; take their Oral Examination (end of Fall semester); and enroll in the Dissertation Prospectus Seminar (Spring semester) to initiate planning and preliminary research for their dissertation. Students are “advanced to candidacy” when they’ve fulfilled all requirements but the dissertation (i.e. ABD status).

In the third phase (Year 4 -7, max.), each student researches and writes a dissertation, under the supervision of their advisor and other key faculty. The dissertation is to be a substantial piece of original research that makes a significant contribution to the historical literature. All students are required to defend their dissertation orally before their Doctoral Defense Committee at the end of their course of study. In accordance with Graduate School rules, the maximum time limit is 7 years from “advancement to candidacy” to dissertation defense and submission.

A. Coursework

1. Core Seminar I and II (HIS 524 and HIS 525; 3 credits each): This year-long course provides an intensive introduction to historical methods and theory based around the graduate program’s themes. The second semester includes the immersive experience of completing a major research project under close faculty supervision. this year-long course provides an intensive introduction to historical theory and applied research based around the program’s themes. In addition to reading and discussing a wide range of historical works, students in this foundational seminar embark on a major research project under close faculty supervision. The Core Seminar is offered as a Fall/Spring sequence only. All full-time students in the Ph.D. program are required to take it during their first year.
2. **Two Field Seminars** (3 credits each): Designed to familiarize students with the history and historiography of specific regions and periods, these courses include: Medieval and Early Modern Europe (HIS 501); Modern Europe (HIS 502); Early American History (HIS 521); Modern American History (HIS 522); Colonial Latin America (HIS 541); Modern Latin America (542); Introduction to African History (HIS 562); Introduction to Asian History (HIS 562); South Asian History (HIS 563); Chinese History (HIS 564); and Japanese History (HIS 565). While some of these courses are offered on a one- or two-year cycle, others may be offered slightly less frequently. Students concentrating on a specific region are encouraged to complete both parts of the Field Seminar chronological sequence where available. These seminars are also open to Master of Arts in Teaching students. If an area of interest is not offered, Ph.D. students may take a comparable course in another department or institution, with permission from the Graduate Director and their Advisor.

3. **Three Theme Seminars** (3 credits each): While specific topics and approaches vary, these seminars generally fall within the framework of our program’s themes (discussed above). If a subject of specialized interest is available elsewhere, students may request permission to take a comparable course in another department or institution. On occasion, students may “convert” a Theme Seminar into a Research Seminar by completing an additional research paper with the prior arrangement with the professor, if approved by the student’s Advisor.

4. **Two Research Seminars** (3 credits each): A Research Seminar is offered every semester which gives students the opportunity to pursue individual research projects, using primary sources related to their developing scholarly interests. Research seminars are generally taken during the second and third years, and may be used to begin preliminary dissertation work.

5. **Teaching Practicum (HIS 582, 3 credits):** Generally taken during Ph.D. students’ first semester, this course helps them develop effective teaching strategies grounded in sound pedagogical practice. The class typically includes such activities as developing a sample syllabus, lesson plans, classroom presentations, and student assessments. To aid new Teaching Assistants, it also includes orientation to SBU’s extensive educational resources, technical support, and undergraduate support services. Students may occasionally be required to attend teaching workshops offered by the Graduate School as well. While Teaching Practicum is open to all Ph.D. students, it is required for those serving as Teaching Assistants.

6. **Supervised Teaching (HIS 581, 3 credits):** All students who hold teaching assistantships and are not enrolled in Teaching Practicum (HIS 582) are expected to register for this course; if it is not possible, the student should notify the Graduate Director.

7. **Directed Readings (HIS 682, 3 credits each):** Customized to student’s individual interests, a Directed Reading involves independent study under the supervision of a faculty member. During their first and/or second semester, students entering the Ph.D. program without an M.A. are advised to take a Directed Reading with their Advisor so they can meet regularly and receive academic support. In later semesters, if their needs cannot be met by the scheduled Field and Theme seminars, students may—with their Advisor’s approval—arrange a Directed Reading with an individual faculty member to undertake a specific set of readings on a topic of mutual interest.

8. **Orals Workshop (HIS 684, 3 or 6 credits):** To prepare for their Oral Examination, students may enroll in this workshop to work semi-independently on reviewing the scholarly literature of their developing fields of specialization. Students usually enroll for 3 or 6 credits, depending on credits still needed, in the Fall semester of Year 3. Prior to the Workshop, students should define 3 areas of specialization (2 in their major geo-political field, and 1 in a thematic field) and convene an Orals Committee, comprised of the Advisor and two relevant History or Affiliated faculty. In consultation with each committee member, the student then compiles 3 reading lists—one for each subject area—drawing primarily from readings completed during coursework. Students may use the Orals Workshop to read independently or in small groups, to meet periodically with Orals Committee members, and importantly, to do a dress rehearsal prior to actually taking the exam. See also section on Oral Examination below.

9. **Dissertation Prospectus Workshop (HIS 695, 3 credits):** In this class, students participate in activities geared towards helping them develop a viable dissertation proposal. Working in close consultation with the instructor and their Dissertation Committee (Advisor plus 2 other faculty members), students formulate research questions, compile historiographical and archival resources, prepare a dissertation plan and grant proposal. At the end of the course, they present their Dissertation Prospectus (15-20 pages) to the History Department. Successful completion of the workshop and written approval of their Prospectus by all Dissertation Committee members is required for advancement to candidacy. The course grade is S/U and must be completed in the Spring semester of Year 3.

10. **Electives** Students are encouraged to take courses in other departments or at other institutions in order to enhance their skills and gain an interdisciplinary perspective on their fields of interest. Many of our students take courses in such departments as Sociology, English, Art History, and Cultural Analysis and Theory, as well as such interdisciplinary programs as Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, and Latin American and Caribbean Studies. Such courses should be selected in consultation with the student's Advisor.

If a particular subject is unavailable at Stony Brook, Ph.D. students may also take graduate courses through the Inter-University Doctoral Consortium. Offering a vast array of courses and faculty with specific expertise, member institutions include New York University, Columbia University, Teacher's College of Columbia University, Fordham University, Rutgers University, CUNY Graduate Center, the New School, and Princeton University. To take a class through the Consortium, students must submit a request form, signed by their Advisor and the Graduate Director, to the Graduate School for approval. Whether it can be used to fulfill a requirement as a Field, Theme, or Research course is decided on a case-by-case basis by the Graduate Director, in consultation with the student's Advisor.

Below is a sample course of study that might be followed by a first-year Ph.D. student without an M.A. degree who also holds a teaching assistantship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core Seminar I (HIS 524)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Core Seminar II (HIS 525)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Practicum (HIS 582)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Supervised Teaching (HIS 581)</td>
<td>3</td>
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B. Full-time Status

Students entering the program without an M.A. degree (or less than 24 graduate-level credits) must register for 12 credits to maintain full-time status. Students entering with an M.A. (or with 24 graduate-level credits) are considered G4 status and must register for 9 credits only. Students serving as Teaching Assistants must be full-time load (including, if possible, Supervised Teaching, HIS 581). Once a student advances to candidacy, s/he must maintain full-time status by registering for 9 credits of dissertation research (HIS 699, HIS 700, HIS 701) each semester until the degree is awarded.

C. Award of Master’s Degree to Doctoral Students

Upon completing the M.A. requirements, Ph.D. students may petition the Graduate School to be awarded the M.A. degree, while continuing in the doctoral program.

D. Foreign Language Requirement(s)

All students must demonstrate proficiency in at least one relevant foreign language before being advanced to Ph.D. candidacy. This is a Graduate School requirement that may not be waived, except for students who are native speakers in the language of their field of specialization. Note: Americanists who are native English speakers are not exempted and must fulfill the language requirement. Relevant language(s) are determined according to the student's area(s) of specialization. To demonstrate proficiency, students may either pass a written exam or earn a satisfactory grade in a graduate language course (e.g., French 500). Administered and evaluated by an appropriate faculty member, the language exam consists of translating a passage from a scholarly work with the aid of a dictionary. At the discretion of the Advisor, a student may be required to study additional languages as part of his or her degree program. Students are responsible for establishing with their Advisor which foreign languages are necessary for the completion of the Ph.D. To advance to candidacy, students must complete the language requirement no later than the Fall semester of Year 3.

E. Oral Examination and Advancement to Candidacy

By the end of Year 2 or earlier, each Ph.D. student names a three-person Oral Exam Committee, consisting of their Advisor and two additional departmental or affiliated faculty. They will advise the student on defining examination fields, language requirements, coursework, and preparing for the Oral Examination. The student shall compile an examination list of books and topics in each field that must be approved by all members of their Committee. The student is responsible for scheduling the exam at a mutually convenient time and for submitting all necessary paperwork to the Graduate Program Coordinator. The Oral Exam usually lasts about 1 ½ or 2 hours and is graded as “pass with distinction,” “pass,” “weak pass,” or “fail.” Students who fail may petition to take the exam a second time at a future date. Full-time Ph.D. students must pass their Oral Exam by the end of their fifth semester (Fall semester of Year 3) or early in their sixth semester, so as not to conflict with the required Dissertation Prospectus Workshop (Spring semester of Year 3).

F. Dissertation Committee and Prospectus

The dissertation is the most important requirement for conferral of the Ph.D. In their last semester of coursework, third-year Ph.D. students prepare a dissertation proposal in the supportive setting of Prospectus Dissertation Workshop. Each student works in close consultation with their three-member Dissertation Committee, comprised of their Advisor and 2 History faculty or Affiliates (who may or may not be the same as their Oral Exam Committee). Before advancing to candidacy, the student must receive official approval of the prospectus from all Dissertation Committee members. In the rare case that a change of Advisor is necessary, the student may request another faculty member in the History Department to serve as their new Advisor; the student may not advance to candidacy, however, until the new Advisor has officially agreed to serve. Once all degree requirements, but the dissertation, are completed, the student is Advanced to Candidacy.

G. Dissertation ABD Status and Defense

Following Advancement to Candidacy, ABD students proceed with dissertation research and writing, which often takes them off-campus to archives, libraries, and research institutes. They are still, however, required to enroll for one credit of dissertation research each semester (HIS 699, HIS 700, or HIS 701, depending on the student’s location) until the dissertation defense. Teaching assistants must register for 9 credits of Dissertation Research on Campus (HIS 699). The ABD student should continue to communicate with their Advisor—at least once a semester—to provide a progress update on their dissertation and discuss any challenges that might arise.

Upon nearing completion of the dissertation, the ABD student must confirm their four-member Dissertation Defense Committee, including their Advisor, two History faculty or Affiliates, and one “outside reader” (i.e. faculty from another department or university). Before the defense can be scheduled, the Graduate School must approve the Dissertation Defense Committee. The student is responsible for submitting all necessary paperwork to the Graduate Program Coordinator well in advance. The form for the defense (same as that used for Oral Exams) is available from the Graduate Program Coordinator and must be submitted to the Graduate School by the 15th day of class during the semester when the defense is to be scheduled.
At least 2 months before the date of the defense, the student MUST deliver the entire dissertation to all Committee members to allow sufficient time for them to read and critique it. Committee members should promptly provide written feedback, indicating any required revisions so the student has at least one month to address them. If any Committee member does not provide a written critique, the student can assume that person approves the dissertation in the form submitted. The student must make all required revisions and resolve any written objections—to each committee member’s satisfaction—prior to submitting the dissertation to the Graduate School. The defense is open to interested students and faculty. See Graduate School website for further information on deadlines and regulations concerning dissertation submission and scheduling of the dissertation defense.

Faculty of History Department

Professors

Gootenberg, Paul, Ph.D., 1985, University of Chicago: Modern Latin America, Andes, economic-social history, drug history, commodities.
Hong, Young-Sun, Ph.D., 1989, University of Michigan: Modern Germany, humanitarianism and human rights, race, gender.
Lipton, Sara, Ph.D., 1991, Yale University: Medieval Europe, Jewish history, religion, gender.
Sellers, Christopher, Ph.D., 1992, Yale University; M.D., University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, 1992: U.S. environmental history, medicine and the body, transnational industrial and urban history.
Wilson, Kathleen, Ph.D., 1985, Yale University: Modern British cultural and political history.

Associate Professors

Beverley, Eric L., Ph.D., 2007, Harvard University: Early modern and modern South Asia, Indian Ocean, Muslim world, urban studies, law and crime, transnational history.
Chase, Robert, Ph.D., 2009, University of Maryland: Post-1945 U.S., civil rights law and politics, the Civil Rights, Black Power, and Chicano movements, prisons and policing.
Cooper, Alix, Ph.D., 1998, Harvard University: Early modern Europe, science, medicine, environment, women and gender, cross-cultural encounters.
Frohman, Larry, Ph.D., 1992, University of California, Berkeley: Modern Europe, surveillance studies and the information society, welfare and social policy, intellectual history.
Masten, April, Ph.D., 1999, Rutgers University: Nineteenth-century U.S. cultural history.
Mimura, Janis, Ph.D., 2002, University of California, Berkeley: Modern Japan, imperialism, fascism, political-economy, technology and society.
Newman, Elizabeth Terese, Ph.D., 2008, Yale University: Mexico, environmental humanities, anthropology, archaeology.
Shankar, Shobana, Ph.D., 2003, University of California, Los Angeles: Africa (particularly West Africa), colonial and postcolonial politics, religion, health, Muslim-Christian interactions, Africa-South Asia connections.

Assistant Professors

Ballan, Mohamad, Ph.D., 2019, University of Chicago: Medieval and Early Modern Mediterranean, Borderlands, Intellectual History, Iberian Studies.

Lecturers & Visiting Scholars


Affiliated Faculty

Adams, Margarethe, Music: Kazakhstan and Northwest China; music, sound, and belief; temporality and popular culture; Islam in Central Asia.
Asare, Abena, Africana Studies: Contemporary Africa, international human rights, penal abolition, truth and reconciliation, historical justice, historical theory.
Bernstein, Michael A., Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs: Economic and political history of the United States, macroeconomic theory, industrial organization economics, history of economic theory.

Burgos-LaFuente, Lena, Hispanic Languages & Literature: Caribbean literatures, poetry, Latin American essay writing, sound studies, and transatlantic literary crossings in the first half of the twentieth century.

Firbas, Paul, Hispanic Languages and Literature: Epic poetry, textual criticism, historiography and colonial geography of South America.

Gulema, Shimelis, Africana Studies: Modern and contemporary Africa, migration and diaspora, modernity and modernization, urbanization.

Hesford, Victoria, Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies: Gender, sexuality, queer and feminist theory, U.S. queer and feminist history, popular and mass culture in the postwar era, critical theory.

Honisch, Erika Supria, Music: Music, politics, and religious culture in early modern Europe, historical sound studies, music’s materialities, historiography, and music in ritual.

Levy, Daniel, Sociology: Political Sociology, Comparative Historical Sociology, Globalization, Collective Memory Studies.

Lloyd, Karen, Art: European Renaissance and Baroque Art, Italian Sculpture, Early Modern Europe and the Americas, Early Modern Art Theory.

Landsman, Ned, Ph.D., 1979, University of Pennsylvania: Early American History and Scotland.


Lebovics, Herman, Ph.D., 1965, Yale University: Modern Europe; intellectual and cultural history; Germany and France.

Lemay, Helen R., Ph.D., 1972, Columbia University: Medieval and Renaissance history; history of science and medicine; women’s history.

Man-Cheong, Iona, Ph.D., 1991, Yale University: Late imperial China, empire, oceans, diaspora, transnationalism.

Marker, Gary J., Ph.D., 1977, University of California, Berkeley: Russian social and intellectual history; history of printing; European labor history.


Rosenthal, Joel T., Ph.D., 1963, University of Chicago: Medieval history; medieval England; social history.

Roxborough, Ian, Ph.D., 1977, University of Wisconsin (joint appointment with Sociology): Latin America, labor, war and the military.

Williams, John A., Ph.D., 1963, University of Wisconsin: British Empire; Africa; the Commonwealth; expansion of Europe.

Wishnia, Judith, Ph.D., 1978, Stony Brook University: Modern Europe; France; labor history; women’s history.


NOTE: The course descriptions for this program can be found in the corresponding program PDF or at COURSE SEARCH.