

University of South Florida Information Please refer to the Program Manual and the

[Graduate Program Canvas page](#) for additional details about the program.

Important Contacts

History Department Graduate Director: Dr. Matt King, matthewking1@usf.edu SOC 2B
Graduate Program Specialist Ruth Borrero

Meeting Official Deadlines

Meeting all deadlines is the graduate student's responsibility. USF is a large institution with a complex bureaucracy, for which forms and procedures are critical to smooth transitions and complying with policies and requirements. Students should become familiar with requirements and deadlines

The Comprehensive Examination – MA Portfolio

All MA students need to submit an MA Portfolio for faculty evaluation during the semester they intend to graduate. Students typically will complete their MA portfolio near the end of their fourth semester in the program. Students are permitted (and encouraged) to begin developing both of these pieces of written work during their coursework. Both components of the MA portfolio must be approved in consultation with the student's advisor(s):

1. A capstone project that shows the student's ability to conduct original historical research on a specialized topic within their major field. It can be an original research paper for use as a writing sample in a PhD application or publication in an academic journal as a solo author) or another type of project of similar rigor that shows the ability to undertake historical research at the MA level. There are no specific requirements for this project, but we recommend that the word count gravitate toward the length of a peer reviewed journal article.
2. A historiography paper of at least 5,000 words that is on a topic other than that of the capstone project (excluding footnotes and bibliography).

Upon submission of the MA portfolio, the student's committee of three faculty members spends several weeks reviewing it and providing a pass/fail grade to the student. If more than one committee member votes to fail the student on the portfolio, the student fails. If the student fails the portfolio, they have one additional semester to revise and resubmit it to their committee for review. Failing the portfolio twice results in the student's removal from the program.

Detailed instructions (including descriptions of appropriate assignments to use, timeline, and evaluation criteria) of how and when to submit your portfolio elements to your committee [available here](#)

Thesis and Non-Thesis Credit Hours

Students have the option of taking 6 credits of thesis hours during their coursework. These credits should only be used when students opt to complete a substantial research project for item #1 in their MA portfolio – the kind of capstone project that can take more than a year of research and writing. If students do not want to undertake a thesis for their capstone project (item #1 in the MA portfolio), then they should not take any thesis credits. Instead, they should direct more content courses for a total of 6 credit hours.

Students have the additional option of choosing to complete an official MA Thesis that will go through the [Electronic Thesis & Dissertation \(ETD\)](#) process and see their completed MA Thesis stored online through Proquest. ETD requires submission of a completed MA portfolio (the MA Thesis will be the Capstone Project of the portfolio) around week 7 of the semester of graduation, which means that students need to submit their final portfolio around week 4 or 5 of the semester to provide time for review and approval. (required) (Project) (2) (sh) mea

graduation (the specific day will vary). This will give members of the committee sufficient time to review and provide comments on portfolio before the end of the semester. MA students are not required to have an oral defense of their portfolio. [MA deadlines related to MA portfolios are detailed here each semester](#)

The below flowchart summarizes the options that MA students have for their portfolio:

Do you want to take 6 Thesis Credits for completion of your Capstone Project (only recommended for students completing a yearlong, substantial research project), or do you want to take 6 credits of graduate seminars?



6 Thesis Credits



6 Credits of Graduate Seminars



Do you want this thesis to go through the ETD submission process and be stored on Proquest?

Great! Make sure to indicate this on your Course Audit form. You will need to submit your portfolio to your committee during your last semester of coursework (typically around week 9/10 at the latest). You do not need to complete an oral defense, though you can choose to if you wish.



Yes

No

Wonderful! Make sure to indicate this on your Course Audit form. You will need to submit your portfolio to your committee around week 9 of the semester to ensure you have defended it by the ETD submission deadline (usually around week 7 of the semester). You must also conduct an oral defense of your MA Thesis before the ETD submission deadline.

Excellent! Make sure to indicate this on your Course Audit form. You will need to submit your portfolio to your committee during your last semester of coursework (typically around week 9/10 at the latest). You do not need to complete an oral defense, though you can choose to if you wish.

Timeline and Degree Path: Year One

Fall Semester: Coursework for Full-Time Students (9 credits)

- HIS 6112 Analysis of Historical Knowledge (3 credits)
- Content Seminar (3 credits)
- Content Seminar (3 credits)

Portfolio/Thesis Considerations Students should be using seminar final assignments to prepare portfolio elements when appropriate, in consultation with their advisors.

Spring Semester Coursework for Full-Time Students (9 credits)

- Content Seminar (3 credits)
- Content Seminar (3 credits)
- Content Seminar (3 credits)

Portfolio/Thesis Considerations: Students should be using the seminar final assignments to prepare portfolio elements when appropriate, in consultation with their advisors.

By the end of the first year of the MA program:

- Students should be well on their way to completing the requirements for their Concentration/minor field; they should use [the MA Course Audit worksheet](#) to assess their progress through their degree, in consultation with their advisor.
- Students should have decided whether or not they will write a thesis for item #1
- If they are not writing a thesis, they should (at the very least) start thinking about what they will do for the capstone project (item #1) of the Portfolio. Ideally, they will have already started developing a research project in one of their seminars.

Timeline and Degree Path: Year Two

Fall Semester: Coursework for Full-Time Students (9 credits)

- Content Seminar (3 credits)
- Content Seminar (3 credits)
- Content Seminar or Thesis Hours (3 credits)

Portfolio/Thesis Considerations: Students writing a thesis should be developing chapter drafts and aiming for a completed draft by the beginning of the spring semester. Students should be using their content seminar final assignments to prepare final portfolio elements when appropriate.

By the end of the first semester of the second year:

- Students should have decided on their historiography essay for item #2 of their portfolio and be working to expand or develop it (if needed) to prepare for their Portfolio review.
- At this time, students should also be discussing with their advisor which faculty will be on their three-faculty committee to evaluate their portfolio.
- Students writing a thesis should have a nearly full draft completed by the beginning of the spring semester so that they can revise and submit it to their committee for review in plenty of time before the university [ETD submission date](#) (typically mid-March).

Spring Semester Coursework for Full-Time Students (6 or 9 credits)

- HIS 6075 Historical Research and Publication
- Content Seminar or Thesis Hours
- Content Seminar (if necessary to maintain credit status for funding)

At the beginning of the semester when the Portfolio review will occur:

- Students and their advisors should finalize ~~both~~ components of the Portfolio and students should be working on revising them for the Portfolio evaluation.
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Funding

The USF History Department has a limited number of Graduate Assistantships available for MA students that we distribute between incoming and continuing students on a competitive basis. All new applicants will be considered for funding during the admissions process. ~~Indicate~~

have concerns about your relationship with your advisor, please contact ~~Dr. King~~ Matt King (matthewking1@usf.edu) to inform him of the situation.

How can I best utilize USF's libraries?

Reach out to our library liaison, [Dr. Matt Knight](#), who works directly with students and faculty to facilitate our access to research resources in the USF Library. Feel free to email Matt directly if you have questions related to library resources. He is an amazing resource and also teaches Irish and Irish-American history in our department!

FAQ: Classes and Coursework

Where can I find information on history department courses (and courses in other departments)?

We maintain a [page on Canvas](#) dedicated to information about course offerings.

Which classes should I take?

This is a question best answered by your graduate advisor and, potentially, the Graduate Director. I recommend first

