

**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY**  
**PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION SCHEDULE INSTRUCTIONS**

1. On page two of the schedule, please label the appropriate fields #1, #2, #3, and #4, as follows:
  - #1 Meets the pre-1815 requirement. A substantial part of the exam should cover the pre-1815 time period (pre-1798 for European fields)
  - #2 This field covers the geographical breadth requirement. At least half the exam will cover a geographical area other than that of the major field (or of the geographical field if the major field is thematic/comparative). This requirement is waived for those in examining a field in medieval history.
  - #3 This field is a comparative/thematic field. All thematic fields must be comparative.
  - #4. This field is geographical/chronological.
2. In the case of a constructed field or a field outside the department, the description of the parameters of the field that was submitted with the Ph.D. Program Plan should be appended to this form, along with a relevant bibliography.
3. The STUDENT should neatly print the NAME of each examiner and give CONTACT information, including department, e-mail, and institution. The examiners should initial the form to indicate their willingness to serve as an examiner. If they are not available to initial, an e-mail or letter indicating their agreement to serve should be attached.
4. As noted in the online instructions for [Preliminary Field Examinations](#), the meeting at which the examiner initials this form should be the occasion for a discussion of WHEN the exam will be administered and in what FORMAT. If the examiner is NOT going to be in residence in Urbana-Champaign at the time of the exam, they should make arrangements for communication with the student and with the other examiner about the reading list and the composition of the exam. This meeting should also involve discussions of subsequent meetings regarding the construction of the reading list and the discussion of the students' readings with the examiner--at least three such meetings are expected.
5. As of fall 2021, students may satisfy the requirements for each examination in one of several formats (see pages 5-6 below). The decision about which format is most appropriate for each exam should be made in consultation with the examiners for each field and must be indicated on this form.
6. Before submitting this form, students should make a COPY of all three pages AND the instructions to keep with their prelim exam records. The form contains important information regarding the rules and restrictions involved in changing the prelim schedule after the approval of this form. Also please note "INSTRUCTIONS FOR PRELIM DAY" so you will be prepared for the process of TAKING any scheduled take-home exams.

**Preliminary Exam Schedule**  
**FILL OUT FIRST THREE PAGES AND COPY THEM FOR YOUR RECORDS**  
**KEEP PAGE FOUR FOR YOUR RECORDS**

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ UIN \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Major Advisor(s) \_\_\_\_\_

**Major Field** \_\_\_\_\_

Examiner 1 \_\_\_\_\_ Initial \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Info: Dept: \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Examiner 2 \_\_\_\_\_ Initial \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Info: Dept: \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

EXAM MODE: Take-home exam      Historiographical Essay      Oral Examination

EXAM PERIOD TO BE TAKEN (month/year) \_\_\_\_\_ Pass \_\_\_\_\_ Fail \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

**Minor Field 1** \_\_\_\_\_

Examiner 1 \_\_\_\_\_ Initial \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Info: Dept: \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Examiner 2 \_\_\_\_\_ Initial \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Info: Dept: \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

EXAM MODE: Take-home exam      Historiographical Essay      Oral Examination

EXAM PERIOD TO BE TAKEN (month/year) \_\_\_\_\_ Pass \_\_\_\_\_ Fail \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

**Minor Field 2** \_\_\_\_\_

Examiner 1 \_\_\_\_\_ Initial \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Info: Dept: \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Examiner 2 \_\_\_\_\_ Initial \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Info: Dept: \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

EXAM MODE: Take-home exam      Historiographical Essay      Oral Examination      Portfolio

EXAM PERIOD TO BE TAKEN (month/year) \_\_\_\_\_ Pass \_\_\_\_\_ Fail \_\_\_\_\_

## Preliminary Exam Schedule

Please list courses taken and underway (include semester) to fulfill the requirements for each field:

### Major Field

Course 1:

Course 2:

Course 3:

Course 4:

### Minor field 1:

Course 1:

Course 2:

### Minor field 2

Course 1:

Course 2:

No exams may be taken for which coursework is not completed by the end of the preceding semester (NO I GRADES).

Outstanding I Grades YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ If YES please list \_\_\_\_\_

Language requirement satisfied:

Language \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ How \_\_\_\_\_

### IMPORTANT NOTES REGARDING RESCHEDULING EXAMS:

**CHANGES TO THE ENTIRE PRELIM EXAM SCHEDULE WILL ONLY BE ACCEPTED UP TO TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO THE FIRST EXAM THE STUDENT PLANS TO TAKE AND REQUIRES DGS APPROVAL.**

**ONCE A STUDENT HAS BEGUN TO TAKE THEIR PRELIMS, CHANGES FOR THE REMAINING PRELIMS ARE GRANTED ONLY WITH WRITTEN APPROVAL OF THE DGS.**

**Preliminary Exam Schedule**

**HONOR CODE AGREEMENT: NO EXAM, IN ANY FORMAT, MAY BE TAKEN WITHOUT STUDENT SIGNING THE HONOR CODE STATEMENT BELOW**

In composing written preliminary examinations for the Department of History, I agree to abide by University regulations concerning academic integrity, particularly with regard to the use of pre-written material in this exam. I understand that I may not insert prewritten blocks of text into the exam. I have clarified any uncertainties about this honor code statement with the DGS.

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

**Plans and requests for space/technology for take-home exam: check appropriate choice**

\_\_\_\_\_ I plan to take the exam at home or other personal space with my own computer.

\_\_\_\_\_ I cannot take the exam at home and request assistance in locating an alternate venue but can bring my own laptop.

\_\_\_\_\_ I request the department to help me find a venue and computer technology to take the exam.

\*\*\*\*\*

**EXAM SCHEDULE APPROVALS:**

MAJOR ADVISOR \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**AFTER OBTAINING ADVISOR'S APPROVAL, SUBMIT ALL COMPLETED PAGES OF THIS FORM TO THE GRADUATE SECRETARY (NOT DGS) IN 309 GREGORY HALL**

DGS \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION FORMATS -- EFFECTIVE FALL 2021

In consultation with the examiners, students will select one of the following options for completing each of their major and minor field exams. The format should be determined during the formulation of the reading list for each field.

### I. Major Field Exam

- Alternative A: completion of a **take-home exam** over an 8-hour period, usually beginning at 8:30am and ending at 4:30pm on a Tuesday or Thursday, sent and received by email. The number of questions and topics can vary, but the total length of responses is typically about 6,000 words (~24 double-spaced pages). Students will be asked to affirm in writing that they have not prepared any portions of the exam in advance, and they should not be given the exact questions in advance. Students who need an accommodation to allow for more time can petition the DGS and GSC. The department also works with DRES and honors those accommodations as appropriate.
- Alternative B: an **historiographical essay** (about 10-15,000 words) written over the course of a single semester and due by the last day of classes (Fall semester) or by April 15<sup>th</sup> (Spring semester).<sup>1</sup> The essay will analyze and synthesize the reading list, identifying major themes and trends in the history of the field and the current state of research. Students are welcome and encouraged to share drafts of the essay with examiners and to incorporate their feedback in the final product.
- Alternative C: an **oral examination** up to two hours in length, to be scheduled before the last day of classes (Fall semester) or by April 15<sup>th</sup> (Spring semester).

### II. Minor Field Exams

- Alternative A: completion of a **take-home exam** over an 8-hour period, usually beginning at 8:30am and ending at 4:30pm on a Tuesday or Thursday, sent and received by email. The number of questions will vary, but the total length of responses is typically about 4,000 words or 18 double-spaced pages. Students will be asked to affirm in writing that they have not prepared any portions of the exam in advance, and they should not be given the exact questions in advance. Students who need an accommodation to allow for more time can petition the DGS and GSC. The department also works with DRES and honors those accommodations as appropriate.
- Alternative B: an **historiographical essay** of approximately 6-8,000 words, written in response to the examiners' prompt (or choice of prompts) during the course of a single semester, due by the last day of classes (Fall semester) or by April 15<sup>th</sup> (Spring semester). Students are welcome and encouraged to share drafts of the essay with examiners and to incorporate their feedback in the final product.
- Alternative C: an **oral examination** up to 90 minutes in length, to be scheduled before the last day of classes (Fall semester) or by April 15<sup>th</sup> (Spring semester).
- Alternative D: a **portfolio** of materials for teaching the field or engaging in public-facing scholarship and education in the field, due by the last day of classes (Fall semester) or by April 15<sup>th</sup> (Spring semester).
  - For teaching, such a portfolio should include a detailed and annotated syllabus for an upper-level undergraduate class, with additional readings for graduate students. It should include the topics of all class meetings; sample assignments, prompts, and

---

<sup>1</sup> This deadline enables evaluation of the exam in advance of April 15<sup>th</sup>, when the department determines the student's eligibility for funding. This is especially important for students who plan take up an ABD fellowship in the coming year. Exceptions by petition.

exams; and a narrative explaining the theory and desired learning outcomes that shape the structure and contents of the course. It should also include a statement of teaching philosophy for approaching this particular field, including a reflection on how the course meets standards and goals for diversity and inclusion. Students are welcome and encouraged to share drafts of portfolio materials with examiners and to incorporate their feedback in the final product.

- For public-facing scholarship and education, the student should develop a plan and written prospectus in consultation with the examiners, outlining in detail the components of the portfolio, which could include both written and creative elements (digital humanities, oral history, media, performance, etc.); and agreeing on the goals for the portfolio and the standards for determining its success. As with any other exam format, examiners must have the necessary expertise for evaluating the quality of the work and its engagement with the field.

## GENERAL NOTES

Preparation for each examination, regardless of the chosen format, involves a substantial amount of work and some degree of stress for every student. Close **coordination** between examiners and the examinee are essential for the success of the prelims process, as well as for an individual exam's outcome. Clear **communication** about standards and expectations, as well as regular consultation and discussion, are required of all parties.

**Reading lists** may include primary sources and pedagogical materials, digital resources, seminal articles, and films as well as books. Major field lists should consist of ~80-100 items; minor fields of ~40-50 items.

Questions about graduate and undergraduate **pedagogy** may be part of any exam format.

Students deserve meaningful **feedback** on their exams, in addition to knowing whether or not they have passed. Examiners may coordinate in offering comments or may do so individually, in either written or oral forms.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR TAKE-HOME EXAMS

1. PRIOR to the scheduled exam, students must arrange for suitable personal or on-campus space. Space in Gregory Hall can be arranged with ample advance notice. Students should make every effort to ensure that the technology and conditions of the planned exam space are dependable on the exam day (barring unforeseeable events like mass power outages). If a catastrophic technological breakdown occurs during the exam, the student should notify the department as soon as possible, and try to retrieve the portion of the exam completed. If the DGS determines that this was a legitimate crisis, an alternate time for the exam, with new questions, will be arranged, in the current exam cycle if possible or the next exam cycle if necessary.

2. ON the scheduled day, students will receive the examination via e-mail at the beginning of the exam period, 8:30 AM. The exam period is 8:30 a.m.- 4:30 p.m. = 8 hours total.

3. You must e-mail the finished exam as a PDF or Word attachment to the Graduate Secretary by 4:30 PM – and wait for a confirmation of receipt. If there is any difficulty transmitting the completed exam, you will have an additional half-hour to deliver a hard copy of the exam (due by 5:00 PM). Any exam not received by 5:00 pm will be not be accepted, unless there are extenuating circumstances acceptable to the DGS.

