

# History MA / American History Certificate

## Goal: Enhancing the Visibility of the MA Program

**Goal Description:**

The Department of History shall strive to increase the visibility of its online MA in History program within Texas, the United States, and the historical profession at large.

**Providing Department:** History MA / American History Certificate

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

**Performance Objective: Enhancing the Visibility of the MA Program**

**Performance Objective Description:**

The faculty of the Department of History will participate in the development of new promotional activities and recruitment tools.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

**KPI #1: Enhancing the Visibility of the MA Program**

**KPI Description:**

The MA in History program shall work to enhance marketing and promotional materials to highlight its curricular innovation, faculty research strengths, and recent career outcomes.

**Target Description:**

The MA in History program shall develop a new promotional video highlighting the faculty research strengths, curricular innovation, and student outcomes.

**Results Description:**

Along with the SHSU production team, the department produced a high-quality video outlining the curricular innovation, faculty research strengths, and recent career outcomes for the MA in History program. The Director of Graduate Studies and Department Chair wrote a script and recruited three faculty members to record a segment promoting each of the program's three thematic tracts. The video is now hosted on the [SHSU MA in History](#) homepage and is also used for targeted advertisements on social media.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

**Action: Enhancing the Visibility of the MA Program**

**Action Description:**

The Department of History shall strive to increase the visibility of its online MA in History program within Texas, the United States, and the historical profession at large.

## Goal: Historical Literacy

**Goal Description:**

The MA in History at SHSU serves three student populations: (1) students who wish to pursue a doctoral degree in the discipline; (2) students who wish to gain certification to teach dual-credit or two-year college courses in History; and (3) general interest learners who wish to enrich their knowledge of history and understanding of the past. The MA program prepares students to critically analyze historical events; to assess major interpretive problems and historiographical debates; to weigh and interpret conflicting evidence; to assess change over time; to evaluate the complexities and contingencies of the past; and to gain an appreciation of the texture and diversity of the human experience. Students who complete the MA degree should be able to make and sustain a historical argument in professional prose; to situate those

arguments in larger interpretive frameworks; to evaluate the merits of an historical argument; and to pose good questions, both about the past and their own particular moment. Students with the MA degree should be equipped to pursue doctoral studies in the discipline.

**Providing Department:** History MA / American History Certificate

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

**Learning Objective: Historical Research Skills**

**Learning Objective Description:**

Before graduating, students will be able to locate, evaluate, and interpret textual and non-textual historical evidence; articulate the significance of their work by positioning original research in larger historiographical conversations; and present findings efficiently and effectively, both orally and in writing.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

**Indicator, Criterion, and Findings: Historical Research Skills**

**Indicator Description:**

Non-thesis students in the MA in History program are required to take HIST 6394: Seminar in History during their penultimate or final semester in the program. The object of this capstone seminar is the production of an original, article-length interpretive essay rooted in primary sources. Each semester, the department's Graduate Affairs Committee shall collect a randomized sample of the writing artifacts produced across all sections of HIST 6394: Seminar in History for purposes of evaluation.

**Criterion Description:**

The department's Graduate Affairs Committee shall assess the thesis, evidence, organization, and mechanics of a randomized sample of writing artifacts produced in the capstone seminar course using the attached rubric. The department will consider it a success if all writing artifacts scored by the committee obtain a minimum score of "meets expectations" on the attached rubric.

Attached Files

 [HIST 6394 Rubric.pdf](#)

**Findings Description:**

The Graduate Affairs Committee did not meet to conduct an evaluation of HIST 6394 papers in Spring 2024. The program director in conjunction with the chair will ensure that the assessment is completed in Fall 2024.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

**Action: Historical Research Skills**

**Action Description:**

Before graduating, students will be able to locate, evaluate, and interpret textual and non-textual historical evidence; articulate the significance of their work by positioning original research in larger historiographical conversations; and present findings efficiently and effectively, both orally and in writing.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

**Learning Objective: Historiographical Literacy**

**Learning Objective Description:**

Before graduating, students will demonstrate their ability to evaluate major interpretive problems; engage in historiographical debates; and identify recent trends in historical literature. Students will likewise be able to distinguish the range of methodological tools and approaches that historians use to

access the past.

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

##### **Indicator, Criterion, and Findings: Historiographical Literacy**

###### **Indicator Description:**

All students are required to take HIST 5301: Methods in History during their first semester in the program. This course, which evaluates different methodological tools and analytical approaches, is designed to hone historical thinking skills necessary to undertake the MA degree. The program shall administer a pre- and post-semester assessment to all students in the course. This assessment shall gauge the acquisition of historical thinking skills and knowledge of various analytical tools and methodological approaches.

###### **Criterion Description:**

The program shall develop a scoring rubric to evaluate the pre- and post-semester assessment administered to all students who enroll in its HIST 5301: Methods in History course.

###### **Findings Description:**

The department did not develop a scoring rubric owing to the labor of its comprehensive undergraduate curriculum reform. The undergraduate affairs committee and assessment team will work to devise such an instrument in the Fall 2024 semester for deployment in Spring 2025.

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

##### **Action: Historiographical Literacy**

###### **Action Description:**

Before graduating, students will demonstrate their ability to evaluate major interpretive problems; engage in historiographical debates; and identify recent trends in historical literature. Students will likewise be able to distinguish the range of methodological tools and approaches that historians use to access the past.

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

##### **Performance Objective 1: Quality Instruction**

###### **Performance Objective Description:**

In response to the quinquennial program review conducted in February 2020 and in an effort to ensure continued student success, the Director of Graduate Studies will work with the departmental faculty to clarify the graduate catalog and curriculum. The unit shall engage in substantive conversations about the content and contours of the three thematic tracks that organize the curriculum: (1) Rights & Identity; (2) War & Violence; and (3) Encounters & Exchanges. The program shall seek to lend greater coherence and clarity to the tracks by developing narrative descriptions of each track and its animating concerns/questions.

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

##### **KPI #1: Quality Instruction**

###### **KPI Description:**

The program shall consider it a success if the departmental faculty engages in a series of substantive conversations about the thematic tracks and produces new narrative descriptions of each thematic track. These descriptions shall be added to the academic catalog, posted to the program's webpage, and included in the MA in History Student Handbook.

###### **Target Description:**

The department shall expand and improve its MA program website so as to include thematic track bibliographies and animating questions. The department shall also enhance and expand the MA in History Student Handbook.

###### **Results Description:**

The department created working groups for each of the three thematic tracks. Each working group developed an overview, a set of animating questions, and sample bibliographies for its respective track. The information appears on the department's Thematic Tracks Homepage where individual links lead to the specifics of each track. The pages assist in recruitment and also provide information for current students.

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

##### **Action: Quality Instruction**

##### **Action Description:**

To further clarify its capstone requirement, the departmental faculty shall adopt a revised set of guidelines, policies, and procedures for the MA in History Portfolio process.

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

##### **KPI #2: Quality Instruction**

##### **KPI Description:**

To further clarify its capstone requirement, the departmental faculty shall adopt a revised set of guidelines, policies, and procedures for the MA in History Portfolio process.

##### **Target Description:**

The program shall consider it a success if the department adopts new guidelines that clearly establish the goals of the portfolio process, the timetable for completing the portfolio process, and the rights and responsibilities of both faculty and students.

##### **Results Description:**

Following are the new guidelines for the portfolio process, its timeline for completion, and the rights and responsibilities of both faculty and students, as adopted by the department, Spring 2024:

1. Students will be expected to submit an annotated bibliography as part of each graduate seminar. Each instructor will determine how this assignment is assessed.
2. Students enrolled in HIST 6394: Seminar in History will be expected to complete an article-length seminar paper, the scope and topic of which will be determined by the course instructor.
3. Students enrolled in HIST 6394: Seminar in History will be expected to pass an oral defense of said article-length seminar paper. The structure and rubric for this defense will be determined by the course instructor.
4. Instructors for HIST 6394: Seminar in History will be encouraged to work with the Department Chair and Director of Graduate Studies to plan a virtual graduate research showcase, providing students with the opportunity to present their scholarship in a professional setting.
5. These new provisions will replace the current MA in History portfolio process, including written and oral portfolio defenses. There will no longer be a need for “portfolio committees.”
6. When enrollment and scheduling demands allow, multiple sections of HIST 6394 will be offered. To facilitate close mentorship and to acknowledge the onerous demands of this course, these sections will be capped at 10 students each. Ideally, one section of HIST 6394 will be offered within each thematic track.

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

##### **Action: Quality Instruction**

##### **Action Description:**

The program shall consider it a success if the departmental faculty engages in a series of substantive conversations about the thematic tracks and produces new narrative descriptions of each thematic track. These descriptions shall be added to the academic catalog, posted to the program's webpage, and included in the MA in History Student Handbook.

**Goal: Quality Instruction**

**Goal Description:**

To ensure quality instruction, the department will build on the success of its recent curricular reforms by working to clarify the three thematic tracks that organize its MA program.

**Providing Department:** History MA / American History Certificate

**RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS** -----

**RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1**

**Performance Objective 1: Quality Instruction**

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**RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2**

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**Results Description:**

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**RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3**

**Action: Quality Instruction**

**Action Description:**

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**RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2**

**KPI #2: Quality Instruction**

**KPI Description:**

To further clarify its capstone requirement, the departmental faculty shall adopt a revised set of guidelines, policies, and procedures for the MA in History Portfolio process.

**Target Description:**

The program shall consider it a success if the department adopts new guidelines that clearly establish the goals of the portfolio process, the timetable for completing the portfolio process, and the rights and responsibilities of both faculty and students.

**Results Description:**

Following are the new guidelines for the portfolio process, its timeline for completion, and the rights and responsibilities of both faculty and students, as adopted by the department, Spring 2024:

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4. Instructors for HIST 6394: Seminar in History will be encouraged to work with the Department Chair and Director of Graduate Studies to plan a virtual graduate research showcase, providing students with the opportunity to present their scholarship in a professional setting.
5. These new provisions will replace the current MA in History portfolio process, including written and oral portfolio defenses. There will no longer be a need for “portfolio committees.”
6. When enrollment and scheduling demands allow, multiple sections of HIST 6394 will be offered. To facilitate close mentorship and to acknowledge the onerous demands of this course, these sections will be capped at 10 students each. Ideally, one section of HIST 6394 will be offered within each thematic track.

**RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3**

**Action: Quality Instruction**

**Action Description:**

The program shall consider it a success if the departmental faculty engages in a series of substantive conversations about the thematic tracks and produces new narrative descriptions of each thematic track. These descriptions shall be added to the academic catalog, posted to the program's webpage, and included in the MA in History Student Handbook.

## **Update to Previous Cycle's Plan for Continuous Improvement Item**

**Previous Cycle's Plan For Continuous Improvement (Do Not Modify):**

**Closing Summary**

The MA in History program shall devote significant energies to recruiting students for its new MA in History and Political Studies degree. This will mean leveraging connections with local school districts and increasing alumni outreach. The program can and should do a better job of marketing and outreach with local school districts. Alumni outreach shall be a strategic priority for the program in 2023-2024.

The MA in History program shall also seek to enhance opportunities for academic community engagement. In particular, the program shall seek to increase the number of students who participate in hands-on internship experiences at the graduate level. This almost certainly means leveraging the alumni network.



The department will need to consider how internship and public history experiences fit into the existing thematic tracks. The program may also explore a graduate micro-credential in public history.

The MA in History program shall also seek to interface with other new history department initiatives, including the Medical and Health Humanities minor and the forthcoming oral history program.

#### **Update of Progress to the Previous Cycle's PCI:**

The Department of History increased the visibility of its online MA in History program within Texas, the United States, and the historical profession at large. The MA in History program enhanced marketing and promotional materials to highlight its curricular innovation, faculty research strengths, and recent career outcomes. The MA in History program developed a new promotional video highlighting the faculty research strengths, curricular innovation, and student outcomes. The [Department of History Graduate Student Recruitment video](#) is currently hosted on MA in History homepage and has also been used for targeted advertisements on social media. Target *met*.

The Department of History expanded and improved its MA program website to [include thematic track descriptions](#). The department enhanced and expanded the MA in History Student Handbook. The program departmental faculty engaged in a series of substantive conversations about the thematic tracks and produced new narrative descriptions, bibliographies, and animating questions for each. The department added these to the [academic catalog](#), [the program's webpage](#), and included them in the MA in History Student Handbook. Target *met*.

The department adopted new guidelines that established the goals of the portfolio process, the timetable for completing the portfolio process, and the rights and responsibilities of both faculty and students. To further clarify its capstone requirement, the departmental faculty adopted a revised set of guidelines, policies, and procedures for the MA in History Portfolio process. The [portfolio process guidelines](#) are available online. Target *met*.

### **New Plan for Continuous Improvement Item**

#### **Closing Summary:**

The Department of History will strive to increase the visibility of its online MA in History program within Texas, the United States, and the historical profession at large. The faculty of the Department of History will participate in the development of new promotional activities and recruitment tools, coordinating with in-college marketing unit. The MA in History program shall devote significant energies to recruiting students for its new MA in History and Political Studies degree. The MA in History program shall also seek to enhance opportunities for academic community engagement. The MA in History program shall coordinate with other new history department initiatives, including the Medical and Health Humanities minor and the forthcoming oral history program.