

Colorado State University-Pueblo
College of Humanities and Social Sciences
Department of History, Political Science, Philosophy, and Geography
Proposed Master of Arts Degree in History

Overview of the Proposed Program:

Name of Program: **History**

Degree Type: **Masters of Arts (M.A.)**

Department: **History, Political Science, Philosophy, and Geography**

College: **College of Humanities and Social Sciences**

Curriculum: **30 credit hours of study, including classroom instruction, directed research or internship and thesis/exams**

Five-Year Expected Enrollment: **40 steady state after 4th year**

Career Opportunities: **Provides paths to increased pay and promotion for educators, career progression for public history professionals, or for preparation towards a history Ph.D. elsewhere**

Introduction:

This history masters program proposal has come about as a result of a combination of two main factors: overwhelming student demand among the constituencies who will be served by the program, and a \$1.7 million Teaching Traditional American history (TAH) grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Moreover, since 2004 the history department at Colorado State University-Pueblo has participated in the Southeast Colorado history Project. Three previous TAH grants provided an impetus for the department to respond to growing student demand; with the implementation of the most recent TAH grant, a permanent M.A. program is now feasible for serving this important client base. One function of all of these grants was to pay for area teachers to take graduate classes at CSU-Pueblo. [Participation in the TAH grant program is restricted to teachers.] Many of the teachers who took these courses expressed an interest in using the grant classes as a stepping stone to a graduate degree. However, since the department did not have a permanent graduate program, potential students will have to travel to other locations outside the Pueblo area to pursue a history graduate degree. In fact, the most recently-awarded U.S. Department of Education grant can pay for as many as 90 teachers to earn their M.A. degrees over its likely five-year life span if the CSU-Pueblo Department of History can put in place a permanent graduate program.

At the time the first Teaching American History Grant was awarded in 2004, the department had only four full-time, tenure track faculty and one full-time lecturer. To that number we have now added a specialist in Colonial American history. CSU-Pueblo has also added a Ph.D. historian as Coordinator of Chicano Studies, an M.A. archivist in public history, and another full-time lecturer in history. Consequently, the department currently can support approximately 40 teachers and still meet requirements for our undergraduate classes taught by tenured and tenure-track faculty. Indeed, the department is at present accomplishing this workload in implementing the grant for that many teachers in graduate classes, even without the possibility of a degree. If it

can add Ph.D.-level faculty in the future, the department believes it can significantly grow the program as well, because it is clear that the demand exists. For example, we have denied 25 teachers admission to graduate classes because those classes were already full. Thus, the department can maintain the current number of approximately 40 students, but will need additional faculty to move beyond that number.

Alignment with University Mission Statement and Department Goals:

The CSU-Pueblo authorizing legislation mandates that the university "*shall be a regional comprehensive university,*" and "*offer a broad array of baccalaureate programs with a strong professional focus and a firm grounding in the liberal arts and sciences.*" This proposed program directly fulfills this mission, primarily because it will meet the needs of area educational professionals because it is designed with them in mind. The teaching, public history and even the general historical emphases in the program will meet another aspect of the University's mission, namely "*setting the standard for regional comprehensive universities in teaching, research and service by providing leadership for its region.*" Training leaders in the historical community for Southern Colorado both will serve the region and improve the quality of research and teaching conducted in this area, on and off campus. By focusing on the history of the diverse populations of Southern Colorado, this will in turn enhance the diversity of the University, which is also part of its mission.

The goals of the history program at Colorado State University-Pueblo are to

- provide students with a general knowledge of history and historical methodology;
- introduce students to the theoretical works that serve as the foundation of historical scholarship;
- prepare students, through training in communication skills and in research methods, to gain knowledge of certain areas of history;
- prepare students to continue independent personal study and learning about specific subject areas;
- prepare students to engage in critical thinking.

The graduate curriculum outlined below meets all of these standards at a much higher level than our current undergraduate courses. Besides the expected courses in the general history of the United States, the only required course in the program for all students is on historiography and historical methodology. Theoretical works that serve as the basis for historical scholarship will be included in this course. All graduate courses will have a substantial writing component, making critical thinking skills an absolute necessity.

Potential Market:

For the next five years, there is a built-in market for a potential graduate program: teachers who are accepted into the grant program will have their tuition and books paid for by the grant. Nevertheless, the department believes that a significant number of students will sign up for the graduate program without these incentives, and continue to do so after the grant ends. There is, at present, also a significant potential market for masters programs in history throughout the

United States. As the American Historical Association (AHA) found in a 2004 study of masters programs in history.

The master's degree is the fastest-growing degree in the United States, and the Department of Education expects that master's degrees will continue to expand and flourish for at least another decade... Meanwhile, master's degrees in history lagged far behind, with a 16 percent decrease in the number awarded during that period.¹

The AHA connects this to the decline in history as an undergraduate major, but at CSU-Pueblo the number of majors has grown steadily over the last eight years. In Fall 2000, the History Department had 70 majors.² By Fall 2008, that number had grown to 150.³ An increase of this magnitude clearly reflects an interest in history in the area from which CSU-Pueblo draws its students. The increased number of majors at this time of rising enrollment for the university also means that the department will have a steady stream of future graduates interested in the masters program.

Furthermore, the decline of history masters programs in the United States has significantly impacted the diversity of graduate history education across the country. The exception to that trend has been the primary minority group that this university serves. This is again from the AHA study:

In 1999–2000, the last time the [National Postsecondary Student Aid Study] was conducted, the population of graduate students enrolled in history master's programs was actually less diverse than the population of students enrolled at the doctoral level, with the notable exception of Hispanics.⁴

Therefore, this program has the potential to help expand the minority enrollment and diversity of CSU-Pueblo and further our mission as an Hispanic Serving Institution, especially through offering graduate courses in Southwestern and Chicano history.

In order to gauge interest in a potential masters program at CSU-Pueblo, the Southeast Colorado history Project commissioned a survey by Grant Design Concepts, Inc. (GDC). GDC set up an internet web site where potential students could answer questions designed by GDC and

¹ American Historical Association, "Retrieving the Master's Degree from the Dustbin of History," 2004 (www.historians.org/projects/cmd/2005/Report/intro.cfm), accessed January 29, 2008.

² University of Southern Colorado, *Fact Book*, September 2001 (www.colostate-pueb.o.edu/IR/FactBook/2001/), accessed January 29, 2008.

³ Colorado State University-Pueblo, Student Statistics, September 2008.

⁴ American Historical Association.

members of the CSU-Pueblo history department. The department then contacted local teachers associated with the Southeast Colorado History Project, local alumni and other interested parties in an effort to gather their feedback on the potential program. The survey site, which remained active from September 18 through December 21, 2007, garnered 90 responses. The following analysis is based on those results.

Questions on the survey were designed to determine interest in the degree, the desired objectives of potential students, student expectations of the potential course work, when and how often potential students will want to take classes, how much credit potential students might already have, the ability of students to bear the cost of the program and other related issues. The survey also gathered the contact information of potential students so that they could be recruited once an M.A. program begins. Of 45 non-teachers who participated in the survey, 39% were CSU-Pueblo students or alumni, and 11% came from the Pueblo business and professional communities. Fifty-eight percent of respondents had a college degree, and 20% already had a masters degree (presumably in a different field).

The most important results of the survey were that 77% of respondents were interested in a history masters program at CSU-Pueblo, and 73% of respondents said that they were likely to enroll. If these applicants followed through on that intention during the first semester, it could indicate the program will start with over 60 students. While a matriculation rate of 100% is unlikely, news of an M.A. program will also bring in additional students that the survey did not reach. In short, the forty existing spots for graduate students in history at CSU-Pueblo could easily be filled. It is also worth noting that this survey was taken before the awarding of the TAH grant, illustrating a substantial interest in the program irrespective of this outside funding source, and a continuing regional client base once those funds are gone.

Besides the accumulation of statistical data, there were open field questions on the survey to allow students to elaborate upon their interest in and expectations of a potential M.A. program. GDC summarizes those responses as follows:

Many participants would be very excited for the opportunity to continue their education at CSU-Pueblo. Most of the comments expressed enthusiasm for having the ability to complete their master's degree in history in a place that is close to their home or where they already attended school for their bachelor's degree. Many individuals stated that they simply did not continue their education after their bachelor's degree because there were no graduate programs [available locally], and instead they just went straight into their work field. If a master's degree in history would have been offered, there was an indication that many of the participants would have applied for that program.

In terms of enrollment, this clearly bodes well for a potential history masters at CSU-Pueblo, even after the TAH grant has run its course. The GDC assessment does not even include students who are currently enrolled in other graduate programs. The new graduate education degree program at CSU-Pueblo, for example, is not specifically designed for history teachers; however, there is a possibility that some teachers getting that degree may wish to take courses in our program.

Another possibility for obtaining students will be from applicants to the History Department at CSU-Fort Collins. Our Fort Collins colleagues have told us that they do not have sufficient faculty to offer enough courses to meet the demand reflected in all the qualified applicants to their program. This raises the possibility of qualified students who cannot enter their program coming to ours. Conversely, the CSU-Fort Collins graduate program will accept up to 15 credits as transfer if the grades are “B” or better. Therefore, some students, particularly those in the public history emphasis (which is a CSU-Fort Collins specialty) may want to begin graduate studies here and finish there.

Curriculum:

As explained above, this M.A. in history is designed in response to a demand from teachers, public historians, and members of the community to offer more opportunities for professional and individual development and growth in the field of history in the Pueblo region. In addition to introducing new trends in interpreting history and new discoveries in the field, the program will also stress new techniques and strategies for transmitting historical ideas in the classroom, in museums, and in the community.

Offering a masters degree at CSU-Pueblo will require a near-complete revision of existing graduate courses (namely courses with numbers over 500 and in our current catalog). The department proposes eliminating HIST 513 (Frontier America), HIST 558 (Modern Europe), HIST 589 (Borderlands) and HIST 593 (Seminar).

These courses will be replaced by the following sequence:

- HIST 501 Historical Studies (3)
- HIST 502 Museum Management (3)
- HIST 503 Archival Administration (3)
- HIST 504 Historic Preservation (3)
- HIST 505 Historiography and Theory (3)
- HIST 509 Seminar in Public history (3)
- HIST 510 Directed Study for Preliminary Examination (3)
- HIST 491 Special Topics (1-3)
- HIST 592 Research (3)
- HIST 598 Internship (3-6 VAR)
- HIST 599 Thesis Research (3)

Content areas in the History 501, 592 and 594 courses might include topics in U.S. history, world history, the teaching of history and Latino heritage. Most courses will be in U.S. history, reflecting the classroom needs and interests of area teachers.

The graduate program will have three emphases: General History, Teaching and Public History. The General History emphasis is designed for students with a general interest in history or those who wish to enter a Ph.D. Program. The Teaching emphasis is designed for working educators

or people who hope to become teachers. The Public History emphasis is designed for those people working in or who want to enter a public history field.

Students with a General History emphasis must complete an M.A. thesis to receive their degrees. Students in the Teaching emphasis and in the Public History emphasis will be encouraged to take a comprehensive examination instead. The exam will consist of questions written by three professors from whom the student took courses, for which the student will provide written responses. Those responses will be evaluated by each professor, and they will decide as a group whether the student passed or failed the exam. The response to each question will be between 10 and 20 pages and will be open note, open book, and take home. The thesis will be between 60-100 pages, and may be undertaken only if the student has the written consent of a member of the graduate faculty to serve as a thesis advisor. Faculty work hours devoted to graduate exams and theses will be limited by the small number of students expected to choose the thesis option. Thesis workloads may also be limited by accepting fewer people into the program with a general history emphasis. For a program with teachers as its primary constituency, this will not significantly impact its size.

The requirements for the General History emphasis will be

HIST Courses	Titles	Credits
HIST 501	Historical Studies.....	6
HIST 505	Historiography and Theory.....	3
HIST 510 or 599	Directed Study for Prelim Exam or Thesis Research.....	3
HIST 592	Research.....	6
	Electives (may include History 501, 591, 592 or courses transferred from other institutions).....	12
		<u>TOTAL 30</u>

Up to six credits may be replaced with courses from the HIST 503-505 listed below with the permission of the graduate director.

The Requirements for the Teaching emphasis will be

HIST Courses	Titles	Credits
HIST 501	Historical Studies.....	9
HIST 505	Historiography and Theory.....	3
HIST 510 or 599	Directed Study for Prelim Exam or Thesis Research.....	3
HIST 592	Research.....	3
	Electives (may include History 501, 591, or courses transferred from other institutions).....	12
		<u>TOTAL 30</u>

The requirements for the Public History emphasis will be

HIST Courses	Titles	Credits
HIST 502	Museum Management.....	3
HIST 503	Archival Administration.....	3
HIST 504	Historic Preservation.....	3
HIST 509	Seminar in Public History.....	3
HIST 598	Internship.....	6
	Electives (may include History 501, 591, 592 or courses transferred from other institutions).....	12
		<u>TOTAL 30</u>

Up to 15 transfer credits may be accepted from other graduate institutions, or 9 credits from courses taught at CSU-Pueblo prior to the 2008-09 school year). It will be the responsibility of the Department Chairman (with the advice of the Graduate Coordinator) to determine which credits will be accepted. Once students reach the thesis or exam stage, they will be required to take at least three credits each fall and each spring semester in order to consult with faculty with respect to their thesis or exam. Those who do not register for credit will not be permitted to continue in the program.

Application Procedure:

To be eligible for the CSU-Pueblo graduate program in history, students will need to have a B.A. or B.S. in history or a related discipline with a minimum 3.0 undergraduate grade point average from an accredited institution of higher learning.

Applicants to the history M.A. program must complete the university’s graduate application form and submit official college transcripts, a 2-3 page statement that gives a detailed account of their background, qualifications and purpose in seeking a history M.A., and letters of reference from three professionals familiar with the applicant’s qualifications and likelihood of success. They may also submit a 10-15 page writing sample for consideration by the department’s graduate admissions committee. The deadline for applications will be May 1 of each year.

The graduate admissions committee will consist of three tenure-line history professors. They will meet annually, shortly after the May 1 deadline. Students wishing to begin coursework in the spring must submit all admissions materials but will be admitted only on a provisional basis until the next cycle

Resource Needs:

The History Department believes that it can immediately begin offering a history masters program without negatively affecting the quality of undergraduate history education at CSU-Pueblo. However, the M.A. program must remain at approximately 40 students for the foreseeable future without additional Ph.D.-trained faculty. The latest TAH grant gives us the capacity to grow the program to 90 students/teachers at one time. The appeal of having the

government pay all expenses for an M.A. degree will likely be enough to come close to, if not exceed, that total when students who are not teachers are included.

The initial objective of the department is to have three graduate classes offered each Spring and Fall semester, with occasional summer courses as demand and teacher-availability requires. One course in the Public history emphasis will be offered each semester. If the department has trouble achieving this objective or if it finds that this will diminish focus on undergraduate education, it will limit the number of incoming graduate students.

Because nearly all graduate courses will be taught in the evening or on weekends in existing university classrooms to meet the schedule needs of teachers in the program, the history M.A. will not overtax the existing physical resources of the university. In addition, the department's TAH grant funds include \$155,000 for the CSU-Pueblo Library for digitized primary resources, the purchase of monographs, and journals to facilitate graduate research, so any additional strain on the Library's resources will be covered.

Enrollment Projections:

As stated previously, the department has approximately 40 students/teachers enrolled in graduate courses right now, before approval of the program. Thirty-five of those teachers have committed to pursuing an MA in history with the department. Therefore, in light of the work schedule and time commitments of Pueblo area teachers interested in pursuing a graduate degree, a graduate program in history at CSU-Pueblo could safely count on at least 35 students for the five-year life of the TAH grant. Based on the demand predicted in the GDC survey, the department is confident that it could increase that number to 40 students by reaching beyond teachers to other constituencies. Furthermore, it is not unreasonable to expect some interest in a public history program (which will not tax faculty resources of the History Department), and that will add as many as 5 more students.

Without additional resources, then, the department projects a steady enrollment of 45 students over the next five years. That number is manageable without diminishing our efforts devoted to undergraduate education. Indeed, as stated earlier, the department is handling that number of graduate students now. With additional faculty manpower, the number of graduate students in history could double to as many as 90, but the department does not need that manpower to run a successful, albeit smaller, program.

Program Assessment:

The graduate program will have two kinds of assessment vehicles: those required by the Teaching American History Grant and those that are built into the program. Of those required by the grant, there are also two kinds of assessment: course assessment and program assessment. Each course offered under the auspices of the grant has a document-based question (DBQ) instrument designed to test the skills of participating students. These tests are given at the beginning and end of each course. These document-based questions are based upon up to 14 primary and secondary sources. Students are required to use these documents to answer a broad-based question in essay format. Scoring is done using the same rubric that the Education Testing

Service uses for essays in its History Advanced Placement Exam. Some of these tests are drawn from the pool created by the DBQ Project, a company from Chicago with whom the department has previously contracted. Others are written by the instructors of each course.

The second form of grant-related assessment is multiple choice exams designed to gauge students' knowledge of history. These are given at the beginning and end of each class. Each test has 40 multiple-choice questions. The grant requires that at least 50% of the questions on such an exam be drawn from nationally-normed standardized tests. The relative success of the course and the program at teaching specific factual knowledge is determined by comparing average scores from one year to another. Because historical thinking and writing skills are the most important things any student can learn during a history graduate program, the department will continue DBQ testing after grant funding expires. Because the department is more concerned about historical critical thinking and writing skills than specific content knowledge, it will cease using multiple choice testing at that juncture.

The graduate program also has a very important assessment vehicle written into the program itself: the exam/thesis requirement. As stated earlier, teachers will be encouraged to take the exam rather than complete a thesis since this will likely better suit their needs than a research project. Anyone who fails to answer those questions to the satisfaction of the majority of the three professors will not be allowed to receive the degree.

Students who are not in-service teachers and who are interested in completing their graduate education at a Ph.D.-granting institution will be encouraged to complete an M.A. thesis rather than take an exam. The thesis process will expand their knowledge rather than review their coursework; however, it also will serve as a means to test skills. Thesis writers will work with a single professor; but, two other professors will have to sign off on the work. A satisfactory thesis will have to exhibit strong writing, critical thinking and research skills, just as they are taught in the program's graduate courses. While this kind of work will be difficult to assess in a conventional manner, the department believes that it will be important for particularly strong students who wish to follow an academic career path. This option will provide them with experiences similar to those they will confront in a Ph.D. program. We estimate that few of the graduate students will choose the thesis option because the program's initial focus is primarily on teachers.

The History Department has determined three different student learning outcomes for this program. First, upon graduation students will be able to draw conclusions about the historiography of the subjects they have studied. This outcome will be assessed through the exam/thesis requirement of the program. Inability to do this throughout the exam or in the thesis will prevent a student from graduating.

Second, upon graduation students will be able to read and interpret primary source documents. This will be assessed through the DBQ tests given in each course. Since the final DBQ test will be included as part of the course grade, students will have to master this skill to get the best grade possible in each class. Furthermore, since the skills needed to do well on the exam will have been taught during the courses (indeed, the test itself may be taught during the course), students will have many opportunities throughout their graduate careers to master this outcome.

Finally, upon graduation students will be able to read and interpret secondary sources. This skill will be assessed through the research paper requirement in the historiography and theory course. The ability to read and interpret secondary sources independently is a requirement for understanding the concept of historiography, and failure to do this will prevent students from passing the course. Since historiography and theory are required to complete the degree requirements for the M.A. no matter what kind of history they are studying, success at achieving this learning outcome will be assured.