

**Master of Arts in Applied
History and Public Humanities
Manual for M.A. Students**

**Department of History
The University of Akron
2026**

INTRODUCTION:

The Master of Arts in Applied History and Public Humanities: Goals and Guidelines

The degree's name, Master of Arts in Applied History and Public Humanities, reflects the combined nature of the program. The core of the degree is in the History department, integrated with the graduate Certificate in Public Humanities, led by the Institute for Human Science and Culture at UA's Center for the History of Psychology. The coursework is interdisciplinary, combining content and experiential learning. The degree prepares students with the practical skills and content knowledge needed for a variety of careers in museums, archives, education, non-profit, research, and other areas, or further professional study.

The core curriculum of 31 credit hours is divided across three fields, allowing students to earn both the M.A. and the Certificate in Public Humanities. Field 1 is Public History (10 credits), where students take courses that focus on historical content in either early or modern American History and courses that apply this content in public settings such as museums and archives. Field 2 (8 credits) is content oriented, under the broad themes that have direct application to applied settings: "Conflict and Memory" and "Media and History." Field 3 (6 credits) concentrates on the Graduate Certificate in Public Humanities, where students deepen and extend their coursework in the application of content and skills development. Two other courses round out the curriculum: Historiography (3 credits) and a Graduate Research Seminar (4 credits). The research seminar serves as the capstone course with the expectation of a final project that can be in multiple formats, such as a research paper alone or in combination with an exhibit or other applied history project. Historiography provides the needed overview of the development of the major theories and schools of thought in the historical profession. Finally, students take comprehensive examinations in their two major fields of study – Public History and Public Humanities, and Thematic History: Conflict and Memory or Media and History.

The regulations that follow set forth the basic requirements and procedures for study toward the M.A. at the University of Akron.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Students applying for admission to the M.A. program must hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university, with a minimum undergraduate grade point average of 3.0. Applicants without a history major or significant undergraduate coursework in history will be considered, provided they show evidence of the ability to engage in research and writing.

An application to the M.A. program consists of the following:

1. An application form.
2. A letter of intent.
3. Scores from the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) General Test.
4. A writing sample.
5. Three letters of recommendation.
6. Applicants whose native language is not English must meet the Graduate School requirements for English Language Proficiency:
<https://bulletin.uakron.edu/graduate/international-students/>.

The applicant must submit all application materials online to the Graduate School online application platform. To access it, visit <https://www.uakron.edu/graduate/admissions/apply>.

The Graduate Committee may grant provisional admission to applicants whose qualifications do not warrant full admission but whose academic records indicate promise of successful performance. When these students have completed 15 semester credits with a 3.0 average or better, the Director of Graduate Studies will petition the Graduate School to grant full admission.

Students whose undergraduate work falls well below the minimum standards of admissions but who believe they have the ability and ambition for graduate work may demonstrate their capability by taking upper-level undergraduate courses. They may apply for admission after having completed twelve credit hours of history coursework with a 3.7 average or sixteen credit hours with a 3.0 average.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Field 1: Public History

Field 2: Thematic History: Conflict and Memory or Media and History

Field 3: Public Humanities Thematic Cluster

REQUIRED COURSES	CREDITS
Historiography (HIST:689)	3
Capstone: Graduate Research Seminar (HIST:601) (Public History Project or Option Paper; both count for Capstone for Public Humanities)	4
Field 1: Public History	
Foundations of Museums & Archives I (IHSC:501) (Also counts towards Certificate)	3
Foundations of Museums & Archives II (IHSC:502) (Also counts towards Certificate)	3
Reading Seminar in Applied History (HIST:672) (Will count as Methodologies for Public Humanities)	4
Field 2: Thematic History: Conflict and Memory, Media and History	
Graduate Reading Seminar (HIST:6xx)	4
Graduate Reading Seminar (HIST:6xx)	4
Field 3: Public Humanities Certificate	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students must take classes from academic units outside History (6 credits). Select courses that align with the Applied History program and professional interests. Possibilities listed here; for others, please consult with the Graduate Director before registering. AADMN 610: Principles of Arts Administration AADMN 620: Arts Administration Practices AADMN 630: Fund Raising and Grantsmanship COMM 506: Contemporary Public Relations COMM 575: Political Communication COMM 645: Intercultural Communication Theory EDFN 620: Psychology of Instruction for Teaching and Learning EDIT 610: Introduction to Instructional Technology ENGL 589: Digital Projects in the Archives ENGL 689: Digital Humanities	6
TOTAL	31

Students must pass a written examination in the first two fields (see “Comprehensive Examinations,” section). Students must achieve a GPA of 3.0 in courses taken to satisfy the third-field requirement.

Sample Program of Study (Full Time)

Year 1: Fall

Foundations of Museums & Archives I (IHSC:501)	3 credits
Reading Seminar in Applied History (HIST:672)	4 credits
Historiography (HIST:689)	<u>3 credits</u>
Total	10 credits

Year 1: Spring

Foundations of Museums & Archives II (IHSC:502)	3 credits
Reading Seminar, Conflict and Memory (HIST:6xx)	4 credits
Public Humanities Elective (1 of 2)	<u>3 credits</u>
Total	10 credits

Year 2: Fall

Reading Seminar, Media and History (HIST:6xx)	4 credits
Research Seminar (HIST:601)	4 credits
Public Humanities Elective (2 of 2)	<u>3 credits</u>
Total	11 credits

TOTAL **31 credits**

COURSE WORK

Seminars

The seminar is the core of graduate education. In these 600-level courses, participants study and master the analytical and research skills of historical scholarship in small groups of graduate students and faculty. There are two types of seminars in the History department. The Graduate Reading Seminar emphasizes the historiography of a particular topic or era; they focus on Historiography, Applied History, as well as content organized around the themes of Conflict and Memory, or Media and History. The Graduate Research Seminar emphasizes a public history project or Option Paper, both requiring original research. Students should expect similar work from other departments offering courses for the degree.

Five-hundred-level Courses

These courses are often taught in conjunction with advanced undergraduate (400-level) courses. Although M.A. students attend classes with the undergraduates, they are usually required to do more work and work of substantially higher quality. Examples of the more rigorous requirements for graduate students include a greater reading load and additional research and writing. Many faculty also periodically meet separately with the graduate students in tutorial sessions.

GRADES

All graduate students must maintain a minimum 3.0 average. Those students whose GPA falls below 3.25 will not be considered to be making satisfactory progress toward the degree. Any student whose grade-point average falls below 3.0 is no longer in good standing with the Graduate School and will be placed on academic probation. Such a student must raise their GPA to 3.0 within two semesters of full-time academic work (or 15 hours) or face expulsion from the M.A. program.

The Dean of the Graduate School, with the approval of the Chair of the History Department, may dismiss any student who accumulates six hours of C+ work or below. Four hours of “F” entails automatic dismissal. Students dismissed from the Graduate School may not be readmitted for one calendar year. Readmission to the Graduate School will be granted only upon presentation of strong evidence of improved performance.

The grade of I (Incomplete) may be given when the student cannot complete the work required in a course within the semester. An incomplete must be completed during the next semester the university is in session or it is converted to an “F” grade. Students accumulating 12 hours of incomplete may not register for additional classes until the incompletes are made up.

The grade IP (In Progress) may be given in Research and Thesis courses where work is on a continuing basis. At the time work is completed, the IP is changed to a letter grade. An I (Incomplete) or IP (In Progress) may, upon application by the student or instructor, be changed to a PI (Permanent Incomplete) when the instructor is satisfied that, for reasons beyond the student’s control the course cannot be completed. The change from I or IP to PI must be approved by the department Chair and the Dean of the College.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS

Students take comprehensive examinations in their two major fields of study: a combined exam in Public History and Public Humanities and a combined exam based on the content covered in the seminars on Conflict and Memory and Media and History. Students are encouraged to complete their exams at the end of their last semester, but they may be taken at other times by mutual agreement among the student and faculty. For the combined fields students may be examined by two faculty, each having taught the seminar for each theme.

If a student does not pass the examinations “unconditionally” (an average of B+ or better for all parts of the exam), the examining faculty members will require the student to take the exams over. Exams may be repeated only once.

CULMINATING EXPERIENCE: PUBLIC HISTORY PROJECT OR OPTION PAPER

All students enroll in the Graduate Research Seminar where they will complete an applied public history project (working with an organization), or a research paper, called an option paper. The projects will be varied, depending on the student and the needs of the organization. Examples could include a museum exhibit – traditional or digital, cataloging an archival collection, or creating an educational program. The project will include a written research component. Others may decide to complete a longer option paper alone. Either way, the culminating experience is integrated into the coursework.

The student, together with the faculty member in whose research seminar the student completed the project or option paper, will select a second reader who will also review the project or option paper. When both faculty members agree on an acceptable finished product, they will inform the Director of Graduate Studies in writing.

Should an irreconcilable disagreement occur between the faculty members, the Director of Graduate Studies will choose a faculty member to arbitrate the disagreement.

GRADUATION INFORMATION

Students are responsible for meeting deadlines set by the Graduate School and for preparing appropriate forms. Please refer to the Graduate School's website for details on the necessary steps: <https://www.uakron.edu/graduate/current-students/graduation-information>.

For graduation requirements, refer to the Registrar's Graduation and Commencement website for details: <https://www.uakron.edu/registrar/graduation/>.

Students should confer with the Director of Graduate Studies throughout their program to ensure they are making satisfactory progress toward the degree and meeting all requirements.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

To offset the costs of the MA program, the History department will offer scholarships to qualified students who are in good academic standing to cover tuition, with amounts based on available funds and enrollment.

The University of
Akron
Department of
History

TITLE

AUTHOR

A seminar paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in History

Reader

Reader

Director of Graduate Studies

Date