

**Department of History
Graduate Student Handbook
2014-2015**

Jackson State University

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Deadlines for 2014-2015	5
Requirements for Graduation	7
Paperwork and Examinations	9
Succeeding in Graduate Classes	12
Plagiarism	13
Completing Your Thesis or Project	17
If Things Go Wrong	20
Continuing Your Graduate Education	21

Why Study History

The best and truest reason for studying history is your love of history. Historical study, however, will also give you valuable skills and knowledge that will serve you well in a variety of careers and as a citizen.

Historians are people who have learned to see patterns, not just in archives but in all the detritus of ordinary life. They take individual documents or events, place them in a broader context, and build explanations from the evidence, telling us what happened and why. Historians are also communicators. Learning from the past is not enough, a true historian must be able to teach what they have learned to other people, first by writing, but also through lectures, film, or exhibits. The same research and communication skills that make good historians also prepare students who can persuasively argue a legal point, concisely summarize a business problem, or analyze government policy.

Why Study at Jackson State?

Diversity

We offer courses in a wide range of topics, including African, Latin American, Middle Eastern, and American history. We have the largest and most diverse history faculty of any program in the Jackson metropolitan area. Our professors study all aspects of the past, from popular culture to health to politics. We also have specialists in philosophy and geography.

Mentorship

We have a seasoned, well-educated, and caring faculty. We offer small classes and supportive instructors. Our students have gone on to become successful teachers, lawyers, archivists, and university professors.

Convenience

Jackson State is conveniently located in the heart of Jackson and can be easily reached from highways 55, 20, and 80. Our graduate courses are all offered in the late afternoon or evening. Starting in summer 2015, we will be offering summer courses as well. We are also close to historical resources, including the Mississippi State Archives and the Margaret Walker Center.

Deadlines for 2014-2015

(Paperwork Must Be Submitted to Graduate School Before 4 pm.)

Note: This has been supplied for ease of reference but always check the graduate school website for changes.

Fall 2014

Deadline to apply online to graduate in December 2014	Oct 7
Deadline to apply for Graduate English Competency Examination...	Oct 16
Deadline to apply for Graduate Area Comprehensive Examination..	Oct 16
Committee Report of Defense Result due to Graduate School.....	Oct 17
Graduate English Competency Examination, 8:00 am.....	Nov 1
Graduate Area Comprehensive Examination.....	Nov 1
Last Day for Clearance to Graduate in December 2014.....	Dec 5

Spring 2015

Deadline to apply for Graduate English Competency Examination...	Feb 12
Deadline to apply for Graduate Area Comprehensive Examination..	Feb 12
Committee Report of Defense Result due to Graduate School.....	Mar 6
Deadline to apply online to graduate in May 2015.....	Mar 6
Graduate English Competency Examination, 8:00 am.....	Mar 7
Graduate Area Comprehensive Examination, 8:00 am.....	Mar 7
Last Day for Clearance to Graduate in May 2015.....	Apr 24

Summer 2015

Deadline to apply for Graduate English Competency Examination	TBA
Deadline to apply for Graduate Area Comprehensive Examination	TBA

Deadline to apply online to graduate in August 2015.....	TBA
Committee Report of Defense Result due to Graduate School.....	TBA
Graduate English Competency Examination, 8:00 am	TBA
Graduate Area Comprehensive Examination	TBA
Last Day for Clearance to Graduate in August 2015.....	TBA

REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION

The graduate catalog lists the department and university requirements for graduation. You can get the catalog as a printed booklet but it's always available as a PDF at <http://www.jsums.edu/graduateschool/graduate-catalog/>.

- ☐ **Complete any conditions on your admission to the graduate school. This may include taking (an) undergraduate course(s).**
- ☐ **Pass the Graduate English Competency Exam (GECE) or pass Eng 500 with at least a B.**
- ☐ **Take Hist 545, Historical Criticism and Historiography and Hist 546, Historical Research.**
- ☐ **Submit the Committee Approval Form.**
- ☐ **Complete 30 hours of coursework (including Hist 545 and 546) and 6 hours of thesis research if you choose to write a thesis. If you fail to complete your thesis by the end of 6 thesis hours, you will need to enroll in 1 thesis hour a semester until you finish.**
- ☐ **Complete 33 hours of coursework (including Hist 545 and 546) and 3 hours of thesis research (Hist 590) if you choose to write a project. If you fail to complete your project by the end of 3 thesis hours, you will need to enroll in 1 thesis hour a semester until you finish.**
- ☐ **Pass the Graduate Area Comprehensive Exam (GACE).**
- ☐ **Register for thesis hours while you are completing your research and writing of your thesis or project. Thesis hours are graded. To receive an A or B, you must meet regularly with your advisor and make significant progress toward completion. You must remain registered for at least 1 thesis credit hour every Fall and Spring semester until you graduate.**
- ☐ **Complete your project within one year after you pass the GACE or within two years if you are completing a thesis. You are strongly encouraged to complete your thesis or project as soon as possible. Too many students finish their coursework but never complete their thesis or project.**
- ☐ **Have your thesis or project approved by your advisor and committee and sign the Committee Report of Defense Results and**

your thesis. The department chair and dean must concur and sign as well.



Submit three unbound copies of your thesis or one bound copy of your project to the graduate school.

PAPERWORK AND EXAMINATIONS

You will have a fair amount of flexibility in your studies but you need to make sure that you fulfill all of your requirements so that you don't find yourself unable to graduate at the last moment. All deadlines and requirements are final and will not be waived or altered.

All the forms you will need and much of the information is at the graduate school website. (<http://www.jsums.edu/graduateschool/>). Please visit and explore this website thoroughly.

Examinations

Graduate English Competency Exam: You need to take this exam your first semester in the program. You will find more information about the exam, including a practice exam, at: <http://www.jsums.edu/graduateschool/graduate-english-competency-examination/gece/>. If you fail this exam, you must register for and pass English 500 with at least a B. Most importantly, if you are unable to pass this exam, you will probably have difficulties in passing your courses and completing your thesis or project. Use the exam as a warning and get whatever help you need to improve your writing.

Graduate Area Comprehensive Examination: After you have completed 24 graduate credits with a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0, you should complete and submit the application to take the Graduate Area Comprehensive Exam (GACE). You will find more information about the exam at: <http://www.jsums.edu/graduateschool/graduate-area-comprehensive-examination-gace/>. Meet with your advisor to make sure that you have fulfilled all the requirements before submitting the application.

The GACE is a written test of your historical knowledge. *You must pass this exam before you advance towards submitting and defending your thesis or project!* If you fail this exam, you may reapply to take it in the next semester. If you fail the exam twice, you must petition the Dean of Liberal Arts to retake the exam.

You will select four areas in which you have taken classes to focus on in your examination. You will answer one question from each. DO NOT ATTEMPT TO ANSWER QUESTIONS FROM AREAS IN WHICH YOU HAVE NOT TAKEN CLASSES. Your answer should be an essay that demonstrates your historical knowledge and ability to make historical and historiographical arguments based on the material that was covered in the classes for that area (hence your need to have taken the classes).

Paperwork

All paperwork must be submitted to the Graduate School by 4 pm on the required date. The Graduate School will not accept late submissions or make exceptions. If you miss a deadline, you will need to wait at least a semester to submit again. All forms are available at <http://www.jsums.edu/graduateschool/graduate-forms/>. The graduate advisor and department chair will need to approve of and sign all of these forms before you submit them.

Degree Plan: Meet with the graduate advisor in the first month of your first semester to complete the degree plan. You will find more information at <http://www.jsums.edu/graduateschool/degree-plan-for-doctoral-students/>.

Application for Graduate English Competency Exam (Deadlines for 2014-2015: Oct 16, Feb 12): You will find the application online at <http://www.jsums.edu/graduateschool/graduate-english-competency-examinationgece/>. You must fill out the form and then bring it to the graduate advisor in the history department. The graduate advisor must verify that you have at least a 3.0 GPA and no incompletes. After the graduate advisor has signed, you will submit the form to the graduate school before the deadline.

Application for Degree Candidacy: After the student has completed about 12 to 15 semester hours, typically in the second semester, he or she should submit the "Application for Degree Candidacy" form. You will find more information at <http://www.jsums.edu/graduateschool/application-for-graduate-degree-candidacy-specialist-in-education/>. This is the first step towards your Graduate Area Comprehensive Examination. You will need to meet with the graduate advisor to perform a degree evaluation before you fill out this form. The form will only be accepted if:

- You have completed any requirements from your admission into the program.
- Any incompletes have been resolved and removed.
- You have passed the Graduate English Competency Exam or English 500 with a B or higher.
- You have a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0.

Application for Graduate Area Comprehensive Exam (Deadlines for 2013-2014: Oct 16, Feb 12): The exam tests the breadth and depth of your historical knowledge. You will find more information at <http://www.jsums.edu/graduateschool/graduate-area-comprehensive-examination-gace/>. The form will only be accepted if:

- You have completed any requirements from your admission into the program.
- Any incompletes have been resolved and removed.
- You have passed the Graduate English Competency Exam or English 500 with a B or higher.
- You have completed at least 24 credits with a GPA of at least 3.0.

Committee Approval Form: To complete your thesis or project, you must have a thesis or project advisor and a committee. Both the graduate advisor and the department chair must approve your thesis or project advisor and committee members. Your thesis or project advisor must be a History department faculty member who is knowledgeable in your research area and with whom you are able to work well. Your committee must have two additional members of the history faculty and an additional faculty member who is not a historian but is a member of the JSU graduate faculty. Before they sign the Committee Approval Form, all prospective committee members must have read and approved of your thesis or project proposal.

Committee Report of Defense Results (Deadlines for 2013-2014: Oct 17, Mar 6): Please note that the defense results must be reported early in the semester to allow you to graduate. This means that you must have a complete draft by the end of the previous semester that your advisor and committee all agree only needs revising before the defense.

Last Day to Submit Online Application to Graduate in this Semester (Deadlines for 2013-2014: Oct 7, Mar 6): You will find the link for graduation clearance through PAWs or on the graduate school website. You will need your J-number and PIN (from the history department).

Last Day for Completion of Online Clearance by Graduate School (Deadlines for 2013-2014: Dec 5, Apr 24): This means that the graduate school must have received any required materials, including three unbound final copies of a thesis or one bound copy of project, at least two weeks before this point.

SUCCEEDING IN GRADUATE CLASSES

Taking Classes:

Graduate classes are built around reading, writing, and discussion. If writing is a problem for you in any way, you need to seek help immediately, before you have problems in class. Both reading and writing are skills that develop over time but you need to be willing to spend time practicing. Make reading part of your daily routine and you'll find graduate school much easier.

Transferring Credits:

You may transfer a maximum of 9 credits from other graduate programs or from classes taken as a non-degree candidate. You must have received at least a B, the classes must have been at the graduate level, and they must have been significantly related to the study of history. Transfer credits will not be automatically accepted by the program. The decision to accept transfer credits lies with the Department Chair (with the concurrence of the College Dean and the Graduate School).

Grades and Incompletes:

Graduate school is much more demanding than undergraduate studies. You must maintain higher standards and you have far fewer opportunities to remedy your errors. Please read the standards below carefully. If you fail to comply with these requirements, you will be asked to leave the program.

GPA: You must maintain at least a 3.0 grade point average overall and within the History program. Classes with a C or lower do not count towards your degree and you may not have more than two Cs on your transcript.

Incompletes: You may not have any more than two incomplete grades at any time. Incompletes must be made up within six weeks for resident students or within one year if not a resident. The one exception is for thesis, research, or independent study. In those classes, you may receive an IP that will be amended when you complete your thesis satisfactorily.

Repeating Courses: You are only allowed to repeat one course during your graduate studies. Both grades will appear on your transcript and be used in calculating your GPA. Your old grade and your new grade will both appear on your transcript but your new grade will be used to calculate your GPA.

Monitoring Your Own Progress:

You should meet with the graduate advisor your thesis or project advisor regularly. The graduate advisor should review your transcript with you each semester. Your thesis or project advisor should meet with you to monitor your progress. PAWS, the online software you use for registration, can also help you track your own progress. One of the options is to Audit yourself. If you select the options for a detailed view, you will receive an overview of your transcript, your requirements, and your progress.

Disability Services

Our department faculty will be glad to accommodate students with disabilities. To make those accommodations, however, faculty need to have an official request from the disability services office. To begin this process, the student must contact the Latasha Norman Center for Counseling and Disability Services:

**2100 Student Center, 2nd floor
Latasha Norman Center for Counseling and Disability
Services
601-979-0374**

PLAGIARISM

Scholarly research and sharing is only possible if scholars can trust each other to behave ethically. At many times in history, scholars hoarded knowledge, keeping their discoveries hidden to protect against theft. Today we share our knowledge, openly publishing our discoveries for everyone to read. We acknowledge the sources of ideas and information that we have used, trusting that other scholars will do the same. By pursuing an advanced degree, you are joining the community of scholars and are expected to uphold our shared professional ethics.

Plagiarism is the cardinal sin of scholarship. The JSU graduate school defines plagiarism as

- * Directly quoting the words of others without using quotation marks or indented format to identify them;
- * Using sources of information (published or unpublished) without identifying them;
- * Paraphrasing material or ideas of others without identifying the sources;
- * Dissertations, theses, projects, proposals or other research papers that are not the work of the student submitting them;

- * When direct quotations are used, they must be indicated and when the ideas of another are incorporated in papers they must be appropriately acknowledged. (*2013 Graduate School Catalog*)

We will discuss how historians avoid plagiarism shortly but first you should be aware of the potential consequences of committing plagiarism. Your professors will check your papers for plagiarism, using their own skills as researchers or software like SafeAssign. If you are caught plagiarizing in a class, your instructor will penalize you but he or she will also document your plagiarism in your department file. Repeated acts of plagiarism may endanger your status in the program. A thesis or project with any plagiarism will not be accepted. If plagiarism is discovered after a thesis is accepted, the graduate school will reconsider your degree.

Plagiarism and Historians

Historians generally use a large number of sources in their research so proper citation and quotation is a particular concern for us.

The following advice may help you avoid problems (and yes, all of these are mistakes we've made at least once):

- * Never put off adding footnotes or endnotes to something you are writing. No matter what you think in the heat of composition, you will not remember where that quote or fact came from when it's time to revise your draft.
- * Always copy down the full source citation when you take notes. No matter how much you hate writing it down now, you will hate it ten times as much when you're trying to finish.
- * If you take notes on a source, make it very clear if you are quoting or paraphrasing the information. Too often students (and scholars) copy their notes into their writing without realizing they are plagiarizing from the original text.
- * If you are xeroxing, always xerox the title page as well as the information you want. Usually the publication year does not appear on the title page so write it down or copy it as well.
- * Make sure you keep a copy of the full source information for any material you request to be copied at an archive. Otherwise, you will have a fascinating stack of photocopies with no idea where they came from.
- * Keep your research organized so you always know what notes belong to which source.

- * Consider using an electronic program to keep your research organized. Zotero (<https://www.zotero.org>) is free and was designed by historians. There are other alternatives (free and paid) but Zotero does have greater flexibility in recording information from a wide range of sources.
- * **Always back up any writing or research you do.** In the last decade, we've personally known three students who had some or all of their master's thesis stolen because they had not backed up their laptop or memory stick. That doesn't include losses due to viruses or equipment breakdowns. Online resources like Dropbox will back up your files for free. Use them!

Paraphrasing and Plagiarizing

You have two possible ways to use sources in your writing: quoting and paraphrasing. **In both cases, you must cite your sources.** For detailed information on how to cite sources, please consult Turabian. When quoting, you use the exact words of the source. Quoting is useful to prove a point or illustrate an attitude but it cannot be used to replace the main text of your paper. Paraphrasing means that you are taking someone else's ideas or information but putting it in your own words.

When quoting, it's crucial to be completely accurate in copying the original words. If you wish to use only part of a quote, use ellipses ... to mark any missing words. If you want to use an author's ideas but not his or her words, that is called paraphrasing. In paraphrasing, you must be careful to **completely** rephrase the ideas in **your own words**. If you're confused, please examine the following examples:

The original:

Paleolithic hunting and gathering was done in groups, and success depended more on organization and cooperation than on individual bravery or strength. The family was the basic social unit, but it was normally an extended family, or clan, that included uncles, aunts, in-laws, and other relatives rather than the nuclear family (mother, father, children) that is common today.¹

Quoting correctly:

- * Paleolithic hunters and gatherers "depended more on organization and cooperation than on individual bravery or strength."

¹ Philip J. Adler and Randall L. Pouwels, *World Civilizations* Vol 1 (Independence, KY: 2011), 7.

- * In the Paleolithic, humans depended on the "extended family rather than the nuclear family that is common today."

Paraphrasing correctly:

- * Group work was at the center of Paleolithic life.
- * Cooperation was essential to Paleolithic humans and they depended on extended families for survival.

Plagiarizing (plagiarized words are in *italics*):

- * *The family was the basic social unit* for Paleolithic humans and they depended on *an extended family, or clan, that included uncles, aunts, in-laws, and other relatives.*
- * *Success in the Paleolithic depended more on organization and cooperation and not on individual bravery or strength.*

Note that in both cases above some words have been changed but so many words remain the same that the sentences are still plagiarized.

Proper Citation of Sources

Historians follow the *Chicago Manual of Style* (also known as Turabian) format for citations. Many students (and some English professors) complain that Turabian is too complicated compared to systems like APA. There is a good reason for the difference. APA is designed for writers who mostly have to cite two types of sources: journal articles and books. Turabian will tell you how to cite medieval manuscripts, letters, government documents, sculpture, and radio broadcasts. The diversity of our discipline requires a more flexible system of citation.

If you are writing a thesis or project, owning a copy of Turabian will make your work much easier. You can buy it in paper or as an ebook. There are many editions but you want the most recent one. (There have been significant changes over time so in case of disagreement, you may want to check the edition number.) There are two key sections of the volume that you will need in particular: the Appendix and Chapters 16 and 17.

The Appendix lays out all the mechanical details of a paper or thesis. This is where you'll find the guidelines on pagination and formatting your title page.

The two chapters are where you will learn how to cite your sources. Keep in mind that this part of Turabian isn't really designed to be read as much as consulted. At the beginning of each chapter, there is a detailed outline of what the chapter covers, with each section identified with numbers.

Chapter 16 lays out the general guidelines. If you look at the beginning of the chapter, you'll see that this is where you look to find out how to organize your bibliography (16.22) or how titles should be capitalized (16.13) among other things.

Chapter 17 provides the details. If you look at the introductory outline, you will see that you can quickly spot where to go for different sources: chapters in a book (17.18), DVDs (17.58), and social networking sites (17.73).

Take a little time to learn the system and you'll find that Turabian can be your best friend (or at least a friendly acquaintance).

COMPLETING YOUR THESIS OR PROJECT

Project versus Thesis:

Both the project and the thesis are substantial written works of historical research. A thesis should be based on primary sources and use them to examine an original historical question. A thesis should have at least three chapters and a **minimum** of sixty pages of text. A project is generally shorter. A strong project topic will often analyze a historiographical debate or place a smaller or local event in a larger historical context. A project may rely much more on secondary materials than a thesis. If you wish to continue your graduate education, you should choose to complete a thesis because it will probably be critical in winning admission to a good program. The following comments will apply whether you choose to write a thesis or a project.

Selecting a Topic:

Your topic must be one that interests you and that you are able to find sources on for your research. You have easy access to the state archives in downtown Jackson, the oral histories and collections at the Margaret Walker Alexander Center, and you can request additional materials through interlibrary loan at the JSU library. Online archives like the Library of Congress website, American Memory, make other sources readily available. (Be careful, though, that you are using a legitimate archive. You can find many of them listed on the department website.)

Explore widely when you consider possible thesis topics. History is the study of how people lived in the past and people in the past were just as complicated as people are today. You can choose to look at any aspect of the human past. Just within our department, we have

historians who study popular culture, urban politics, religion, health, and family life.

Oral Histories and Human Research

After the revelation of the Tuskegee Syphilis Study and many other ethically dubious human research projects, the federal government mandated careful monitoring of human research at all institutions that accept federal funding. At Jackson State, the group in charge of that monitoring is the Institutional Review Board. Why this matters to you as a historian is that oral histories count as human research. If you will be interviewing people as part of your research, you need to follow IRB guidelines. You and your advisor must complete an online training in ethical research and you will need to submit a proposal describing your research for approval. You can find out more about the process at: <http://www.jsums.edu/research/compliance-unit/>.

Selecting Your Advisor and Committee:

Your advisor must be a member of the history department graduate faculty. You should choose someone in your area of interest. You must work closely with your advisor so make sure to check in with him or her regularly. Your committee must include your advisor, two other history graduate faculty members, and a graduate faculty member from outside the department. Your advisor should help you choose your committee.

Writing Your Thesis or Project:

You will select a topic and begin your research in Hist 545 and Hist 546 in your first year. By the end of your first year, you should have your thesis or project well established. You should plan to use your summer to complete or at least advance your research. After you have completed 18 hours of coursework and submitted the committee paperwork, you will be eligible to enroll in the Thesis course (Hist 590). This is not a traditional seminar or course but research and writing under the direction of your advisor. You will be assessed based on your progress on your thesis or project.

As you write your thesis or project, keep in close touch with your advisor and your committee members. Share your thesis chapters as you progress. Your committee members all come from different areas of research and will have different comments to offer. You need to seek comments and advice from all of them.

Your thesis or project must follow exactly the Graduate School guidelines. It is a good idea to review previous history theses and projects. You must cite your sources according to the Turabian method. Specific directions are available from the Graduate School.

Please consult "Guidelines for Completing a Master's Thesis" or "Guidelines for Completing a Master's Project." You will find both guides at <http://www.jsums.edu/graduateschool/cyberadvising/>. If there is a conflict between the JSU guidelines and Turabian, always follow the JSU guidelines. This is one time where following the letter, not the spirit, of the law is critical. It doesn't matter if the rules seem arbitrary or ridiculous, you need to follow them exactly. If you do not, your thesis will not be approved and you will not graduate.

Your thesis must also follow all the principles of good writing: You cannot have any grammar or spelling errors in your final draft. Plan plenty of time for proofreading your thesis after you've completed your substantive revisions.

Defending your thesis or project:

Your defense is the final stage in the master's program. Your advisor will tell you when he or she believes that you are ready to defend. Your entire committee must agree in writing before you can schedule your defense. This is why it's so important to meet with all of your committee members as you write. Plan ahead so that you have plenty of time to address all of your committee members' concerns before your defense.

You should have your thesis or project completed, correctly formatted, and thoroughly proofread before your defense. Repeated spelling or grammatical errors, improperly formatted or missing citations, and an incomplete or incorrectly formatted bibliography will all lead to you failing your defense. If your advisor or committee members tell you that you are not ready to defend, listen to them! If you fail your thesis defense, you will have to wait six months before petitioning the Dean of Liberal Arts for a second defense.

At your defense, you will be expected to make a short presentation on the key points of your research and why your research is important to historians. Next, your committee members will question you on aspects of your thesis or project. Finally, you will be asked to leave the room for a brief period while your committee discusses whether your thesis should be accepted, accepted with the condition that you make further specific revisions, or rejected. You will then be informed of their decision.

IF THINGS GO WRONG

Academic Standing

A student can have three possible academic statuses: in good standing, on probation, or subject to dismissal.

Being in good standing means that you are maintaining the required 3.0 GPA and making satisfactory and timely progress towards your degree.

A student may be put on probation for several reasons:

- * Failure to complete any conditions placed on the student's admission to the program.
- * Failure to maintain a 3.0 GPA.
- * Failure to take the GECE and GACE in a timely matter.
- * Failure of the GACE or GECE (until resolved by passing Eng 500).
- * Failure to progress toward completion of thesis or project in a timely manner.

If you are placed on probation, you may not take the GECE or GACE, advance to candidacy, defend your thesis or project, or graduate. The graduate advisor will need to submit an explanation for your situation and a plan for you to correct your deficiencies before you will be allowed to register for classes. After you have been placed on probation, you must rectify your problems within the next semester. If you do not, you may be subject to dismissal. Students cannot remain on probation for more than two semesters.

Subject to dismissal is the most serious status. If a graduate student's coursework is unsatisfactory, he or she may be asked to leave the program. Before this step was taken, the student would be notified of the specific concerns and have an opportunity to discuss the problems with the department's graduate advisor, the department chair, and college dean.

Academic Complaints

If you have a grievance with the behavior of your instructor or other academic issues, you should begin by discussing the issue with your instructor or the graduate advisor if it is not a classroom issue. If you are unable to resolve the issue with your instructor or the graduate advisor, you would next speak to the department chair. Continued concerns should be appealed to the dean's office.

Right to a Safe Academic Environment

The Department of History seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment for all its students, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation or preference, disability, or political beliefs. If you feel that we are not living up to this commitment, please speak to your instructor, the graduate advisor, or the department chair. If you have been harassed, intimidated, or attacked in person or by telephone or email, please report this behavior as soon as possible to the Department of Public Safety (601-979-2580) and/or the Division of Student Life (601-979-2241)

CONTINUING YOUR GRADUATE EDUCATION

Things to Consider:

Doctoral level study is highly demanding and is not guaranteed to lead to an academic career. If you are interested in pursuing a doctorate, you should be prepared to read several hundred pages every week and to write multiple lengthy essays over the course of a semester. You will also need to research and write a dissertation which often are from three to six hundred pages long. The average time for completion of a history doctorate is around six years. If you complete your degree, you will find that the job market is very tight for academic positions and you may need to accept a job far from your family and friends. Finally, history is one of the lowest paid academic disciplines.

The study of history also has many advantages. A history professor has the opportunity to study and teach the field that he or she loves. He or she will need to continue to research and write over the course of his or her career. Many history Ph.D.s are now pursuing alternative careers like archivist, corporate historian, or research consultant. If you are seriously considering pursuing a doctorate, go to the American Historical Association website (www.historians.org) which has many useful resources for potential graduate students (and is the source of many of the facts in this section).

Preparing to Apply

Your admission to a doctoral program will depend in large part on the following elements: Your transcript, your thesis, your recommendations, and your GRE scores. Your thesis in particular will demonstrate to admission committees your potential for historical research. A strong thesis makes a strong application. You will also need high GRE scores. GRE scores are often used by departments as a way of winnowing down the number of applicants to consider. Practice and prepare for your GRE test and retake it as needed. Select your recommenders carefully. You want the letter to both speak highly

of you and demonstrate a deep knowledge of your scholarly abilities. Building good relationships with your professors is an important part of this process

CONCLUSION

Whether your eventual goal is to improve your teaching career, obtain a job in an archive or museum, or to progress to doctoral study, take full advantage of your time at JSU. Learn as much as you can.

Best wishes for your studies and future career!

Written by Dr. Janice Brockley, Department of History. August 2013