

Guidelines for Administering History Prelims

1. Major professor is considered chair of the examining committee, which also includes the minor professor and a third examiner. These three ought to be the same faculty listed on the Plan of Study.
2. Examining committee comprises major professor, minor field advisor, and a 3rd party selected by the student with consent of major professor.
3. Fields are to be defined by the student and major or minor professors and should address both the kind of issues to be studied and the existing literature that bears on the issues. Typically a field will be defined by a reading list.
4. For students admitted to the Ph.D. beginning Fall 2006, minor fields must be outside the geographical area of the major field. Minor fields that are thematic or methodological may qualify as long as they include literature from and about parts of the world outside the major field. (For example, economic development, comparative slavery, comparative religion, historical demography, environmental resource management.)
5. Every student should schedule a preliminary exam meeting with his or her committee members shortly before taking the first exam. The purpose of this meeting is to establish the definitions of the fields and the character of the student's preparation so that all parties understand the scope of the knowledge to be assessed. The exams themselves consist of a written major exam, a written minor exam, and an oral final exam. Major and minor field exams will be prepared by the faculty who trained the student, but they will be read by all three members of the committee and will provide a point of departure for the final oral exam.
6. A grade of pass or not pass will be determined by the exam committee at the conclusion of the oral exam. Major and minor professors may wish to consult with the student after reading his or her written answers, but written exams do not receive separate grades of pass or not pass.
7. Students are responsible for scheduling their exams. Exams may be scheduled at any convenient time, but students must complete the exam program inside of five weeks time. Please note that requests to schedule oral exams must be submitted to the graduate school at least two weeks before the date desired.