

Early Modern Europe

Ph.D. Qualifying Exams: Preparation and Guidelines

Students should start thinking about their Qualifying Exams as soon as they begin their coursework. The courses they take should prepare them for the exams, and thus should cover a range of perspectives and areas in the Early Modern European field. The syllabi for these courses should also help in creating the reading lists for the exams. For a broad approach to the field, students are *required* to take History 615. Otherwise, students, in consultation with their advisors and the chair of the Early Modern History field, are responsible for drawing up readings lists that will serve as the basis of their exams.

The semester before a student plans to take the exams, he or she should meet with each examiner and review the proposed readings lists. It is also helpful to consult with instructors from time to time in the course of the preparation period.

The Oral Exams

Students should take their Ph.D. Qualifying Exams in the third year of study. The exams consist of three fields: one major, one inside minor, one outside minor. The inside minor should be selected from the list of fields listed on the History Department's webpage; students should follow the requirements for this exam prescribed by the field. There will be two examiners for the major field, and one each for the minor fields. The outside minor examiner will represent a department or program other than History. The outside field examiner may, at his or her discretion, waive participation. If the examiner is not present, the instructor should certify that the student has satisfied the requirements of that field. All examiners must be IU faculty members.

Major Field in Early Modern European History

The major field should cover the entire Early Modern Period-- that is, from roughly the fifteenth to the eighteenth century. In practice, this usually means that one part of the major field exam would be devoted to a topic or approach—e.g., economic or cultural history, gender and the family—spanning the entire period, while the other half might focus on the portion of the period that will relate to the student's topic for the dissertation (the Renaissance, the sixteenth century, the seventeenth century, or any other chronological expanse of time). Thus students should prepare two reading lists, one thematic in focus, the other chronological. The purpose of the major field exams is two-fold: first, to ensure that students have the requisite background that would prepare them to teach basic undergraduate courses in the period; second, to test students' knowledge of the field as a means of determining their readiness to pursue the research and writing of the dissertation.

Minor Field in Early Modern European History

Students who choose to be examined in Early Modern European History as an inside minor field should approach an instructor in the Department and draw up a reading list that will serve as the basis for the exam. In addition, students should take at least three courses in the Early Modern Field, one of which should be History 615. The purpose of the inside minor in the Early Modern Field is to ensure that students have the background which will allow them to teach an undergraduate survey course in the period. Thus, the reading list should be a combination of books and articles that address general issues and survey the period and those which are more monographic in orientation.

The Dissertation Prospectus

Within six months of passing the Qualifying Exams, a candidate should defend his or her dissertation prospectus. This should be a text of 20-25 pages in length, which defines a research question, surveys the relevant historiography, discusses the proposed methodology or approach, indicates the sources to be consulted, and assesses the contribution to scholarship the dissertation will make. In prospectus should also include a bibliography. In advance of the Prospectus Defense, the candidate should distribute the text to his or her dissertation committee, which will decide whether the defense should proceed or whether additional work is needed.

August 2009