

Russian History

PHD QUALIFYING EXAMINATION GUIDELINES

1. Expectations for students taking the oral exam in the major field

The major-field exam committee will consist of two members from the Russian field committee, chosen by the student with the agreement of those faculty members. The student should discuss preparation for the **oral exams** well in advance and will have submitted an agreed-upon bibliography for that exam no later than six weeks prior to the exam. **1)** The focus of the exam is to demonstrate a command of the major periods and turning points of Russian history (for example: the Time of Troubles, the Schism, reigns of Peter and Catherine, Napoleonic Era, Great Reforms, Russian Revolutions of 1905-17, Stalinism, and the collapse of the Soviet Union). Knowledge of Russia as a Great Power should also be evident. In discussing these major turning points the student should demonstrate a close familiarity with 4-6 major recent textbooks in Russian history (for example, Hosking, Riasanovsky, Freeze [ed], the Longman series) and be able to compare their organization, selection of topics, and treatment of themes **2)** The student should demonstrate a command of the relevant English- and Russian-language scholarship on Russia. Completion of the regularly offered colloquium on Russian historiography will serve as fulfillment of the requirement to demonstrate command of the Russian-language scholarship. **3)** The student should also demonstrate a familiarity with post-Soviet, Russian-language scholarship on a limited number of themes in agreement with the faculty members supervising preparations for the exam. Normally, this should include a knowledge of the contents of at least two of the major Russian language history periodicals, such as *Otechestvennaia istoriia*, *Voprosy istorii*, *Istoriia i istoriki*, *Ab imperio*. **4)** Finally, the student should also be able to demonstrate familiarity with the history and culture of a non-Russian people or a predominantly non-Russian region of the Russian Empire and USSR. General exam guidelines state: “The oral exam will run for no more than three hours. The major field examiners will have no more than two hours for their part of the exam. The inside and outside minor fields, combined, will have no more than one hour.”

2. Expectations for students taking the oral exam in the inside minor field

The inside-minor field will consist of one member from the Russian Field Committee. The student will ordinarily have taken at least two colloquia in Russian history, and should be able to demonstrate a working knowledge of modern Russian history (from the time of Peter the Great) based upon a bibliography approved by the faculty member no less than six weeks prior to the exam. At this time too, the faculty member and student should agree upon general themes and topics to be discussed at the oral exam, and in most cases the faculty member should adhere closely to these themes in questioning the student. As with the major, the student should have a reasonable familiarity with key monographs and articles, but also be able to discuss a cluster of major textbooks in describing how the student would teach a survey course at the undergraduate level.

This list of topics can be modified by the student and exam committee at the time the bibliography is drawn up.

3. Guidelines for the prospectus

As stipulated by the history department guidelines, the second part of the exam will be the presentation of a dissertation **prospectus** (see those guidelines for deadlines). This prospectus should consist of a 15-page (4000 words) bibliographical/analytic essay, describing and evaluating the literature pertaining to the topic selected by the student, an attached bibliography, and a 3-5 abstract or grant application succinctly identifying the theme, types of sources and research strategy to be pursued.