

LATIN AMERICAN HISTORY

PHD QUALIFYING EXAMINATION GUIDELINES

Expectations and Guidelines for the Oral Exam and Prospectus Defense in Latin American History

Students Majoring in Latin American History

The purpose of the exam is to have students demonstrate the knowledge of Latin America's history they will build on as they become effective researchers and teachers in the field.

The exam will be based on material covered in the concerned student's courses, which in most cases will consist of the colloquia on Colonial Latin America and Modern Latin America plus a variety of thematic colloquia and seminars. However, we also expect students to read additional works to cover any obvious gaps. To discover such gaps, at least eight weeks before the exam students should give each member of their exam committee a list of the works with which they are familiar. The professors will then make suggestions as needed.

During the exam we will discuss the methods and interpretations of Latin Americanists as well as what students have learned about Latin America's history. In this discussion we expect students to be able to think about broad trends in Latin American history and connect these trends with specific experiences and historical approaches.

Students should prepare for the exam by reading suggested works, reviewing works already covered, thinking about how the various works, issues, and events are related to each other, discussing them with other students, and, of course, discussing the exam with their professors. Students should also consider how they would organize courses in Latin American history.

Passing the exam requires, at a minimum, the knowledge necessary to teach surveys of Latin American history and thematic courses in the student's area of interest for both graduate and undergraduate students. Although the exam may touch upon issues related to the student's planned research, generally serious discussion of that research will be postponed until the oral defense of the proposal.

Students Minorng in Latin American History

The purpose of the exam is to have students demonstrate the knowledge of Latin America's history they will build on as they become effective teachers of undergraduate courses in the field. Obviously knowledge of Latin American history and historiography may also be useful for the research of some students, and in those cases the exam will be adjusted as necessary.

The exam will be based on material covered in the concerned student's courses, which in many cases will consist of the colloquia on Colonial Latin America and Modern Latin America plus a variety of thematic

colloquia and seminars. We expect each student minoring in Latin American history to have taken at least one of the basic colloquia (Colonial Latin America or Modern Latin America). All students minoring in the field should take at least three courses in Latin American history, including courses taken at the MA level at other institutions. We also expect students to read additional works to cover any obvious gaps. To discover such gaps, at least eight weeks before the exam each student should give each member of their exam committee a list of the works they are familiar with. The professors will then make suggestions as needed.

During the exam we will discuss the methods and interpretations of Latin Americanists as well as what students have learned about Latin America's history. In this discussion we expect students to be able to think about broad trends in Latin American history and connect these trends with specific experiences and historical approaches.

Students should prepare for the exam by reading suggested works, reviewing works they read previously, thinking about how the various works, issues, and events are related to each other, discussing them with other students, and, of course, discussing the exam with their professors. Students should also consider how they would organize courses in Latin American history.

Passing the exam requires, at a minimum, the knowledge necessary to teach undergraduate surveys of Latin American history and thematic undergraduate courses in the student's area of interest.

Defense of the Dissertation Prospectus

The purpose of requiring students to prepare and defend a dissertation prospectus is to facilitate dissertation research, especially the lengthy periods of research in Latin America that precede the writing of the dissertation. Although obviously during the course of research and writing we expect dissertation projects to change, we feel that thinking seriously about the goals, methods, and theoretical framework of the project at a relatively early stage will help prepare students for the opportunities and problems that present themselves over the course of the research. Thus we require students to prepare a 10-15 page prospectus, explaining the significance of the proposed project and placing it in historiographical context. This prospectus should also outline the methodologies and theoretical tools the student expects to employ in researching and writing the dissertation. A bibliography is also required. During the course of writing the proposal students should consult with the professors who make up their committees.

The purpose of the defense is threefold. First, it will ensure that students meet minimum standards for the prospectus. Second, and more important, it will give the student a chance to discuss the proposed dissertation with his or her peers as well as faculty. This discussion will aid the student in her or his research. Third, the defense will give the student crucial practice in discussing his or her research in a group setting, a skill that is often required of professional historians.