GENERAL INFORMATION ON PLAN B EXAMS IN ALL FIELDS:
PROCEDURES, EXPECTATIONS, AND FORMAT

The Plan B exams will be given at the end of the spring and fall semesters only. No makeup exams will be given under any circumstances. Candidates wishing to take the exams should notify the graduate advisor by no later than the fourth week of the semester in which they plan to take the exam. All candidates should print out the Plan B form under “Graduate Forms” at this website and send it the history graduate advisor. Do not simply call or e-mail the graduate advisor informing him or her that you want to take the exams.

The exams will be scheduled on a weekday evening beginning at 5.00 pm. The exam will last for four hours and the students will be expected to answer three questions. They will be closed book exams with no notes allowed either. Candidates may take the exam at a computer lab on campus or write in blue books (large size) if they prefer.

Candidates may only take the exam three times. If a candidate fails the exam three times, s/he will not receive the degree and may not elect to take the Plan A option.

The exam will be set and graded by two faculty members in the pertinent field. In the event of any disagreement, the exam will be referred to a third reader in the field. Candidates should expect to have to wait at least two weeks before getting the result. The exams will be graded on a Pass/Fail basis. No comment will be given to candidates who pass the exam. If a student fails the exam, comment will be made by the examiners indicating why the candidate failed the exam.

The questions for the exam will be based on the reading lists in the field. At present there is a general Plan B reading list in U.S. History and in World History. Candidates in Modern European History agree upon a reading list with their professors. Within the format described below, candidates will be given a reasonable degree of choice of questions.

Candidates should not assume that because they have completed all their course requirements and taken the U.S. History 210 series, or the 220 series in World History that they will necessarily be prepared for the exam. Not all readings can be covered during the course work and some independent reading and study is expected of Plan B candidates.

On the exam the student is expected to demonstrate considerable breadth and depth of knowledge, a familiarity with historiographical issues, to write a reasonably well organized essay within the time constraints, and to follow acceptable rules of grammar, spelling and literary style in presentation.

Candidates should answer the question directly. In answering questions, students while offering their own analysis should refer to books and authors that have informed them on the subject. Some questions will be more explicitly historiographical than others. The following questions obviously call for a historiographical type of answers: “How have interpretations of the causes of the French Revolution changed in the last fifty years? How have historians disagreed about the nature of slave culture and society in the antebellum U.S. since the publication of Kenneth Stampp’s, *The Peculiar Institution* in 1956?
Other questions will not call as explicitly for a historiographical essay where you summarize debates historians have had on a topic. Here are two examples: What were the causes, manifestations and consequences of the industrial revolution in early nineteenth century America? Why did the two world wars of the twentieth century become so widespread and destructive, and how did the second relate to the first? In answering questions like this, it is a good idea to mention relevant books and authors (especially if explicitly asked to do so), but the answers also require your analysis and not just an essay that exclusively summarizes what historians have said on these topics. Further, some questions like this will require that you have knowledge of essential facts and data to support your analysis. Do not overlook this. Essential facts, dates, etc. are not always taught in graduate classes. It is often assumed that you will already know this information or will glean it from your readings. It is often a good idea to read the appropriate “textbook” or overview type of book when you are taking the H210 or H220 series, and/or to read “textbook” or overview books when preparing for the Plan B exams.

Format of the U.S. Plan B Exams

Students can elect to take the exam in either pre or post 1865 United States history. Within the chosen period, a student can answer any three questions. Students will be able to choose between seven to nine questions on the exam.

To obtain a copy of the reading list call the department (924-5501), or pick one up at the history department office, DMH 134.

Format of the World History Exam

Students in World History will be given three questions in each of the three periods covered by 220abc (pre 1000, 1000-1750, and since 1750). They may choose to answer three questions in any of the time periods.

To obtain a copy of the reading list, contact Professor Bruce Reynolds or Professor Pat Don.

Format of the Modern Europeans History Exam

The Masters Exam in European History offers students six questions, out of which they must answer three. The first two sets of questions are very general. They ask students to consider themes, movements, and events, such as revolutions in European history from 1750 to the present. The third set of questions examines students on topics in European history from 1945 to the present. There are two questions in each section, and one question must be answered from each section.

To obtain a copy of the reading list, contact Professor Mary Pickering or Professor George Vasquez.