

History Department MA Coursework Grading Guidelines

A+ (90-100): Written work is original, exceptionally well researched and presented, and demonstrates an excellent command of relevant theoretical and historiographical material. In seminar courses, this student is a clear leader, making informed, sophisticated contributions, posing insightful questions and drawing on relevant theoretical materials.

A (85-89): Written work demonstrates strong command of the historiographical literature, insightful use of primary source evidence (in research-based papers), and original, independent thinking and initiative. This student is a leader in seminar discussions, making informed comments that draw important connections between assigned readings and to larger course themes.

A- (80-84): Written work demonstrates good use of primary source material (in research-based papers) and an appropriate range of historiographical literature, and is presented clearly. In seminar discussions, the student makes informed comments demonstrating understanding of the readings, with appropriate references to specific content.

B+ (77-79): Student is meeting the requirements of an MA-level course. Written work and analysis is acceptable, but not showing sustained or in-depth engagement with advanced concepts or the historiography. In research-based papers, primary sources are being used, but not as extensively or thoughtfully as one would expect of a student at this level. In seminar classes the student participates, but in a limited fashion, and might occasionally show signs of only having done part of the assigned reading.

B (73-76): Student is producing acceptable work for an MA. There is little originality or creativity in the student's written work, and the presentation of this material may still require rigorous editing. Research needs to be guided by the professor more than one would expect at the MA level. Research-based papers involve primary sources, but in a rather superficial way, and perhaps only a minimal number of them. In seminar classes, the student's level of participation is fairly limited, and often restricted to generalities, often showing clear signs that they have only done part of the required reading.

B- (70-72): Student is producing barely adequate written work for an MA. There are significant gaps in the research. There is evidence of limited engagement with primary sources and the historiography, but often on a much more superficial level than appropriate for graduate level study. The quality of writing may often be below expectations for graduate-level work. The level of engagement and/or relevant participation in seminar discussions is minimal.

Below 70: Student is producing unacceptable work. There is no engagement with primary sources in research-based papers. There are major errors of interpretation of secondary sources and the historiography. Student has an incomplete work record because he or she has missed an in-class presentation or seminar leadership assignment, a written assignment, or more than two class meetings.