HISTORY OF SCIENCE AND MEDICINE

Humanities Quadrangle, 203.432.1365
http://hshm.yale.edu
M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.

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The Graduate Program in the History of Science and Medicine is a semi-autonomous graduate track within the Department of History. The program’s students are awarded degrees in History, with a concentration in the History of Science and Medicine.

FIELDS OF STUDY
All subjects and periods in the history of science and history of medicine, especially the modern era. Special fields represented include American and European science and medicine; disease, therapeutics, psychiatry, drug abuse, and public health; science and national security; science and law, science and religion, life sciences, human genetics, eugenics, biotechnology, gender, race, and science/medicine; bioethics and medical research; environmental sciences; human and social sciences; physical and earth sciences.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PH.D. DEGREE

Courses
Students will ordinarily take fourteen courses by the end of the third year. In their first two years, all students will normally take the three core Problems seminars: Problems in the History of Medicine and Public Health (HSHM 701 or HSHM 703), Problems in the History of Science (HSHM 702), and Problems in Science Studies (HSHM 710). These courses are committed to exploring histories of medicine and science alongside the cultural, political, and social forces that shape them. Issues of race, gender, sexuality, disability, class, and religion are integrated into discussions of medical and scientific knowledge production and praxis in Western and non-Western contexts. In addition, students are expected to take the HSHM Program seminar (HSHM 790, a half-credit course that may be repeated for credit) during their third
through sixth semesters. These courses meet every other week and teach skills related to research and professional development relevant to careers in and beyond academia.

Students are also required to take four additional graduate seminars with an HSHM course number. The remaining seven courses can be taken in HSHM, history, or any other field of demonstrated relevance to the student’s scholarly objectives. Of the fourteen total courses, at least three must be seminars that result in an original research paper; at least two of these papers must be written in HSHM seminars. Students may ordinarily use up to two independent reading, independent research, or pedagogical seminars toward their course requirements. The use of additional independent credits requires approval.

Graduate school grading at Yale follows a qualitative rubric of Honors, High Pass, or Pass. During the first two years of study, students must achieve Honors in at least two courses in the first year and Honors in at least four courses by the end of the second year, with a High Pass average overall. At the end of each term, the director of graduate studies (DGS) will ask faculty members whether they have serious concerns about the academic progress of any first- or second-year students in the Ph.D. program. Faculty members who have such concerns will provide written feedback to the DGS at the DGS’s request. The DGS will use discretion in ensuring that feedback is provided in a clear and effective manner to any students about whom there are concerns.

Students who enter having previously completed graduate work may obtain up to three course credits toward the completion of the total course requirement, the number being contingent on the extent and nature of the previous work and its fit with intended course of study at Yale.

Languages

All students must show proficiency in two languages in addition to English relevant to the student’s research interests and approved by the DGS. Over the years, our graduate students have demonstrated proficiency in a wide range of languages, including American Sign Language, Bulgarian, French, German, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Latin, Mandarin Chinese, Norwegian, Russian, Spanish, and Swedish. Students may fulfill the requirement in a variety of ways, including demonstrated command of a native language other than English, graduation from an approved foreign university where teaching is conducted in a language other than English, passing an approved language course for credit, or passing a language test administered by the faculty or by one of Yale’s language departments. Language tests are administered by their respective departments (such as German, Italian, French, East Asian Languages and Literatures). Students should consult the DGS for additional details and options for uncommon languages.

Yale offers classes in a variety of languages, from introductory to advanced levels, as well as special summer courses for targeted reading proficiency. There are also opportunities to study languages outside of Yale’s curriculum, including funding for summer language study, and Directed Independent Language Study (DILS) for individuals who wish to study a language not offered by Yale. For more information on these programs and foreign language tutoring at Yale, please visit the Center for Language Study's website at http://cls.yale.edu.
Students may petition to substitute a specific skill for one of their languages. Proposals require discussion of how the skill will be used in the student’s research and a plan for positive demonstration of proficiency.

Second-Year Review

At the end of the academic year, the HSHM faculty will hold a special meeting to review each first- and second-year student in the program. The purpose of the meeting is to assess students’ academic progress. In order for second-year students to proceed to the third year, they must demonstrate through written work, classroom performance, and participation in departmental activities that they have the ability to: (a) speak and write clearly; (b) conduct independent research at a high level; and (c) develop coherent scholarly arguments. A faculty vote will be taken at the conclusion of the review meeting to decide whether each second-year student may continue in the program. If a majority of faculty present and voting determine that a student may not continue, the student will be informed in writing and withdrawn from the program. The review meeting must be a full faculty meeting, but faculty members with no knowledge of the students under review may abstain from the vote, and their abstentions will not count in the total. Those members of the faculty who have worked with or know the students being evaluated are required to attend. In the event that any necessary faculty members absolutely cannot be present, they may send their views in writing to the DGS, who will read them at the meeting.

Qualifying Examination

Prior to beginning work on the dissertation, all students are expected to develop a broad general knowledge of the discipline. This knowledge will be acquired through a combination of course work, regular participation in HSHM colloquia and workshops, and dedicated preparation for the qualifying oral examination.

The qualifying examination has two main goals. First, it is a preparatory step toward the dissertation. Students will master the analytical vocabulary of the discipline and engage critically with key historiographic and theoretical questions. This will prepare them to select a research topic of scholarly significance and to articulate its import effectively. Second, the qualifying examination will prepare students for teaching. Students will learn to communicate a set of historical themes and narratives confidently and fluently.

Students will normally spend the summer following their second year preparing for the oral qualifying examination, which will be taken in the third year, preferably during the first half.

The qualifying examination will normally consist of four fields, each of which will be examined by a different faculty member: two fields in the history of science and/or history of medicine; one field in an area of history outside of medicine and/or science; and one field of special interest, the content and boundaries of which will be established in consultation with the student’s adviser.

Possibilities for the field of special interest include a second field in history outside of history of science or medicine, a field with a scientific or medical focus (such as bioethics, health policy, public health, medical anthropology, or medical sociology), or a field at the intersection of science, medicine, and other subjects (such as law, national
security, religion, culture, biotechnology, gender, race, literature, the environment, and so on).

The examination itself will be an oral exam, with each field examined for thirty minutes. Ahead of the exam students will also submit, for each field, a written syllabus for an undergraduate course. With approval, students may submit other written materials instead of a syllabus; examples could include a teaching statement, the text of a fifty-minute undergraduate lecture, a review essay, or an exhibit proposal. In rare cases students may also propose alternatives to the oral component, given sufficiently compelling intellectual or career factors.

In preparation for the qualifying examination, the program’s faculty work closely with students to facilitate the successful passage of the exam. A student who does fail the qualifying examination will be permitted to retake it. A student who fails a second time will be asked to withdraw from the program.

Advising

During their first term in the program, all students will be advised by the DGS. During the second term and thereafter, each student will be advised by a faculty member of the student’s choosing. The adviser will provide guidance in selecting courses and preparing for the qualifying examination. The adviser may also offer help with the development of ideas for the dissertation, but students are free to choose someone else as the dissertation adviser when the time comes to do so. Students are encouraged to discuss their interests and program of study with other members of the faculty.

Dissertation Prospectus

Students are encouraged to begin thinking about their dissertation topics during the second year. This is an opportune time, since they will be expected to submit a dissertation prospectus as soon as possible following the qualifying examination and to defend the prospectus orally before being admitted to full candidacy for the doctoral degree. The prospectus colloquium is typically held in the second term of the third year, with advancement to candidacy before the start of the fourth year.

For more information, please see the program’s Guide to Prospectus and Prospectus Colloquium at https://hshm.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/prospectus_guide.pdf.

Committee Constitution Requirement

Each Ph.D. student must have a dissertation committee and a dissertation adviser, satisfactory to the student’s department and in accordance with graduate school requirements, in order to register for the fourth year of study. Students without an approved committee and dissertation adviser will normally be withdrawn from their program.

Teaching

Teaching is an important part of the professional preparation of graduate students in History of Science and Medicine. Students are encouraged to participate in programs to develop their teaching skills, including the Certificate for College Teaching Preparation,
which is a comprehensive training program designed to enhance proficiency in classroom instruction.

Typically, during the third and fourth years of study, students will serve as teaching fellows, which usually means that they will lead small-group discussion sections for undergraduate courses and grade their students’ exams and papers. On occasion, however, students may work as teaching fellows in the second term of the second year, particularly if they have received course credit for previous graduate studies, or if they choose to defer the completion of their required course work for the first term of the third year. Students usually work as teaching fellows for courses in the History of Science and Medicine, but they may also have the opportunity to be teaching fellows in History or other departments.

At least two terms of teaching are required for doctoral students to graduate from the Program in the History of Science and Medicine; four terms are required for students on Yale-supported fellowships, although students may elect to substitute one or two of these terms with research assistantships at the Yale Center for British Art, the Yale University Art Gallery, or other sites across campus. For more information, please contact the Office of Financial Aid.

Chapter Conference and Dissertation Completion

In the fourth or fifth year, and preferably no later than the fall term of the fifth year, students are required to submit one chapter of the dissertation (not necessarily the first chapter) to the dissertation committee. The committee will then meet as a group with the student to discuss the chapter and the student’s progress on the dissertation more generally. This conference is meant to be an extension of the conversation begun in the prospectus defense, with the aim of providing feedback on the student’s research, argument, and style at this early stage of the dissertation writing process. No less than one month before students plan to submit their dissertations, a relatively polished full draft of the dissertation should be discussed with the student by the dissertation committee in a dissertation defense of one to two hours. This will give the students additional advice and counsel on completing the dissertation or on turning it into a book, as appropriate. Students are required to submit the draft to their committee in sufficient time for the committee to be able to read it. This defense is designed to give students advice on the overall arguments and the final shape of the dissertation or book and to leave time for adjustments coming out of the discussion.

M.D.-PH.D. AND J.D./PH.D. JOINT-DEGREE PROGRAMS

Students may pursue a doctorate in History of Science and Medicine jointly with a degree in Medicine or Law. Standard graduate financial support is provided for the doctoral phase of work toward such a joint degree. Candidates for the joint degree in Law must apply for admission to both the Law School and the graduate school. Information about the joint-degree program with Medicine can be obtained from the website of the Yale School of Medicine (http://medicine.yale.edu/mdphd) and from the website of the Section of the History of Medicine (http://medicine.yale.edu/histmed).
MASTER’S DEGREES

M.Phil. and M.A. (en route to the Ph.D.)  See Degree Requirements under Policies and Regulations.

Terminal Master’s Degree Program  For the terminal master’s degree students must pass seven term courses, four of which must be in HSHM. Course work will normally include at least two Problems graduate seminars and two additional graduate seminars in HSHM. The remaining courses are to be chosen in consultation with the DGS or a faculty adviser. Honors grades are required in two courses, with a High Pass average overall. Financial aid is not available for this M.A. program.

More information is available on the program’s website, http://hshm.yale.edu.