

## **THE HISTORY HONOURS THESIS**

Students have three options in pursuing an Honours degree in History: they can write a traditional thesis, an archival thesis, or a research article. All three provide students with the opportunity to contribute to historical knowledge through original research.

When picking a topic, it is important that the student locates sufficient suitable primary sources to work with, and that these be readily available without necessitating expensive or extended travel. It is also important for students to consult with faculty on the suitability of their proposed topic.

The **traditional thesis** (no longer than 75 pages double-spaced plus scholarly apparatus) is normally divided into three chapters and a brief conclusion. The first chapter formally introduces the topic and describes its importance; it explores the historiography of the subject, placing the research in the context of what other historians have discovered. Subsequent chapters present analysis and interpretation of the primary sources, and contribute original research to historical knowledge. A short Conclusion terminates the thesis. The thesis is written under the supervision of a faculty member and a second reader.

Students also have the option of writing an **archival thesis**, utilizing the university archives under the supervision of a faculty member and a University Archivist. In the first term students work closely with the Archivist, organizing a selected collection of primary documents, reading related secondary literature, creating a finding aid, and writing a short archival description. In the second term, students write an extended research essay (minimum 20 pages) under the supervision of department faculty, using primary material from the collection and secondary reading from the first term.

Finally, a student can, in close consultation with their supervisor, spend the first term researching and writing an historiographical paper (20 pages minimum) on a chosen topic. The paper would be due the first week of December to the supervisor and second reader. In the second term, students research and write a publishable-quality **research article** (about 10,000 words) based on primary sources and following from the historiographical paper written in the fall term. A first draft would be due February 1. The final version would be due two weeks before the Registrar's thesis submission deadline. A copy is due to the department Chair at this time. The research article is written under the supervision of a faculty member and a second reader.

All students present an oral defence of their thesis, regardless of which option they select.

### **TRADITIONAL THESIS TIMELINE:**

1. By mid-March of their third year, prospective Honours students should submit an Honours Thesis Application to the department Chair outlining the topic and identifying the primary sources to be used. The topic and sources should be developed in consultation with department faculty members.
2. Once the proposals are received, they will be circulated to all faculty members and then reviewed at a faculty meeting. Proposals will be matched up with faculty members willing to supervise them or act as second readers. Prospective honours students will be notified of these results in writing by the Chair.
  - Students are strongly advised to work on their thesis over the summer, given the challenging timetable for submitting drafts.

3. The suggested timetable for submitting the traditional thesis is as follows:

- ◆ **By end of second full week of classes:** Thesis Supervisor, Second Reader and Student should meet to review progress made over the summer and to set dates for submission of chapters to each reader.
  - At this meeting, Student will provide both readers with an up-dated thesis proposal (which might serve as the basis of the thesis Introduction), thesis statement and bibliography of primary and secondary sources.
  - This proposal should be subjected to a serious review with an eye to the suitability of the topic and the student's ability to complete it successfully.
- ◆ **By middle of November:** Draft of one chapter should have been reviewed by both readers and a revised draft prepared.
- ◆ **By last day of December exams:** First draft of a second chapter should have been reviewed by both readers and returned to Student so that revisions can be done over the break.

**December:** Mid-term grade to be submitted by Supervisor in consultation with Second Reader. If, in the estimation of the readers and the Chair, satisfactory progress has not been maintained, the student may withdraw from the honours program. Such student will be given the option of submitting a 25-35 page paper on their topic for 3hrs credit as HIST 3693 Special Topics. Otherwise they can choose to overload the full 6hrs needed to complete the Major.

- ◆ **By end of first full week of classes in January:** Revised draft of a second chapter should be submitted to Supervisor.
- ◆ **By Monday following Reading Week:** Draft of third chapter should have been reviewed by both readers and a revised draft prepared.
- ◆ **By first Monday in March:** Draft Conclusion should have been reviewed by both readers and a revised draft prepared.
- ◆ **By two weeks before the Registrar's thesis submission deadline:** Entire thesis should have been reviewed by both readers, and a revised draft submitted to the Chair complete with presentation pages, figures, appendices etc. The thesis will be checked by the Chair and/or a specially constituted committee to assist in the task of making sure it conforms to university guidelines. Students will be required to make any necessary revisions. Supervisors will submit their grades to the Chair at this time.

If, in the estimation of the readers and the Chair, a thesis is not good enough to submit to the University Honors Committee, 6hrs of credit for Special Topics can be given to complete the Major.

**By 12:00 noon of the Registrar's thesis submission deadline:**

All University Honours committee forms must be completed and signed and a final draft of the full thesis must be submitted to the University Honours Committee by the Student. This is a non-negotiable deadline and it is the Student's responsibility to make sure it is adhered to.

**ORAL DEFENCE**

At a convenient time, students will present a 10-15 minute summary of their thesis to the Department and fellow students, and be prepared to answer questions from the audience.

**GRADE**

The grade will be assigned by mutual agreement of both readers. In the case of disagreement, the Supervisor will be responsible for assigning the grade in consultation with the Chair.