

Senior Thesis in the Department of History

The Senior Thesis in the Department of History is a year-long project that provides an opportunity for the most serious and capable history majors to research and write a scholarly paper of 30 pages or more. The thesis option involves a number of steps that must be carefully followed, including identifying a thesis adviser, proposing a thesis topic, receiving approval from the department, researching the topic, reading and analyzing secondary and primary sources, developing an original argument, writing and revising several drafts, and defending your completed thesis in April of your senior year.

Students are eligible to submit a thesis proposal if they have a GPA in the major of 3.65 or better and the written approval of a thesis adviser from a department member.

Guidelines for Completion of a Senior Thesis

1) Eligible students interested in writing a senior thesis must work with their faculty adviser and submit a thesis proposal by March 15 of their junior year. All proposals should use a thesis proposal form at the end of this document as the cover page.

Your proposal should identify a specific research question, explain what sources you plan to use and where they are located, provide a timeline for completing the various stages of researching and writing your thesis, and compile a preliminary bibliography of primary and secondary sources. Your proposal should also provide evidence that you have done the course and preparatory work necessary to complete the proposed thesis.

The March 15 deadline for the thesis proposal applies to all students, including those studying abroad.

2) Students who have had their proposal approved by the department should enroll in HI373 Thesis Prep for the fall semester of their senior year. Students should consult with their thesis adviser after the proposal has been approved to determine a summer reading list. During the first week of classes in the fall semester students should meet with their faculty adviser and agree to a schedule of meetings and assignment deadlines. A student's grade for HI373 and eligibility to continue thesis work in the spring semester will be based on the

adviser's assessment of the student's commitment to the thesis project, preparation for the meetings with their thesis adviser, progress in researching the topic, and the quality of any written work the adviser has assigned. Students must receive a final grade of at least "B" in HI 373 to enroll in HI 374 Thesis Writing during the spring semester.

3) Students enrolled in HI 374 will meet with their thesis adviser prior to the conclusion of the fall semester to establish a schedule for the completion of various drafts of the thesis in the spring.

4) The spring semester is devoted primarily to writing and revising multiple drafts.

5) A final draft of the thesis must be turned in to the chair of the department by April 15th.

Senior Thesis Defense

1. Students will defend their thesis in the second half of April. The thesis panel will include the thesis adviser, the department chair, and a third faculty member from the History Department or another department.

2. During the defense students should be prepared to provide a summary of their research question, thesis, methodology, and findings as well as provide thoughtful responses to questions posed by the members of the thesis panel.

3) At the conclusion of the thesis defense, the members of the panel will convene to decide on the grade for the thesis and then meet with the student to convey the final grade.

4) All students who complete a senior thesis must submit an electronic copy to the department secretary by May 1.

Senior Thesis Proposal Form
Department of History

Name:

Date:

Thesis Title:

Thesis Adviser:

Cumulative GPA:

Major GPA:

Brief Description (75 words):

Student Signature:

Thesis Adviser Signature:

Approval Date:

Department Chair Signature:

Thesis Proposal:

Attach your thesis proposal to this form. Your thesis proposal should be no more than 2 pages single-spaced and include the following information:

1. Provide a succinct description of the topic of your thesis, the question that your thesis will address, and why the question is important.
2. Describe the sources you plan to use and where they are located.
3. Provide a timeline of when you plan to complete the various stages or researching and writing a thesis.
4. If the topic of your thesis has been addressed by other historians or is controversial, explain the competing views.
5. Provide a bibliography with primary and secondary sources.