

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY M.A. THESIS GUIDELINES

1. FIRST STEP: It is the student's responsibility to obtain, read, and follow these guidelines and the Graduate School Thesis Guidelines (to be downloaded at http://www.latech.edu/graduateschool/thesis_guidelines.shtml).

2. GENERAL INFORMATION:

A. THESES PREPARED IN THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY must follow A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, by Kate L. Turabian (University of Chicago Press) and The Chicago Manual of Style (University of Chicago Press).

B. A completed thesis draft will ordinarily be between 70 and 125 pages in length, excluding bibliography and other back matter.

C. The thesis will be an original contribution to knowledge, in that it will contain an original argument or arguments, based on original research in primary sources. It is expected that the documentation on which the thesis is based will represent a thorough review of the available secondary and primary material.

D. Student concentrations will include at least one course in the area of the proposed thesis (excluding independent study). This course will be taken under the thesis director. The thesis director may waive this requirement at his/her discretion.

3. DURING FIRST QUARTER IN PROGRAM:

A. Prior to preparing and submitting the required plan of study, an incoming graduate student will meet with members of the graduate faculty to discuss possible concentrations and potential thesis topics/field choices, etc. The student will then choose and consult with a thesis director and committee members (obtaining their agreement to serve) prior to submitting the signed plan of study, which is due by the end of the student's first quarter in the program.

B. THE THESIS DIRECTOR

(1.) The Thesis Director will be a member of the graduate faculty and a full-time faculty member in the Department of History. Qualified faculty members from other units, other disciplines, or other institutions may serve as advisory committee members, when appropriate and with prior departmental approval.

- (2.) The Thesis Director is responsible for guidance in research design, in bibliography, and in general structure and organization. The director may edit for style and clarity. **The director is not responsible for routine copy editing or for the format requirements of the Graduate School. The candidate bears sole responsibility for these matters, and for compliance with all due dates and submission of all required forms.**

C. THE THESIS DIRECTOR AND OTHER COMMITTEE MEMBERS are responsible for reading and providing feedback on submitted work in a timely manner, but they have no responsibility to “rush” consideration of work submitted too closely to applicable deadlines. In general, a student may expect that a director or committee member will return a chapter draft within 15 days of submission and a complete draft within 30 days of submission. Students are advised that drafts in excess of 110 pages will take longer in the revision and approval process. Drafts that are poorly written, weakly organized, or that contain numerous typographical and spelling errors will also take longer.

4. PRIOR TO BEGINNING WORK ON A THESIS, a graduate student will familiarize him/herself with the Graduate School and History Department guidelines and deadlines for thesis writers and assume full responsibility for complying with them. Thesis directors and committee members will also be familiar with these guidelines and deadlines.
5. BY END OF FIRST QUARTER IN PROGRAM: Submit Graduate Plan of Study form with all signatures (see paragraph 3A).
6. BY THE LAST DAY OF THE THIRD QUARTER IN THE PROGRAM: Submit thesis topic in the form of a written proposal to thesis advisor. Several examples of successful proposals can be found on the dept. website.

A. EXPLANATION OF THE SIX THESIS PROPOSAL AREAS

- (1.) Tentative Title: The title should reveal something about the type and intent of the thesis. It should state clearly the subject of the thesis and its chronological and geographical scope.
- (2.) Objectives: The objectives should tell what the writer intends to prove or discover in the thesis overall (for instance, proving that the price of sugar played a part in the invasion of Cuba, using diplomatic documents as resource material).
- (3.) Related Research: This section would serve as a brief review of literature, showing what kinds of research have been done in the

past on the topic or in related areas of the topic.

(4.) Research Need: This section will relate the objectives to the related research, showing that the objectives of the thesis have not already been done, as shown in the related research, but that there is sufficient related research and other information to develop the thesis.

(5.) Methodology: This section should outline the proposed chapters of the thesis, giving a chapter-by-chapter summary of the thesis content. Many theses contain 5 chapters: an introduction, three chapters developing the topic, and a conclusion.

(6.) References: The references section should list in proper Turabian/Chicago bibliographical form the related research documents and some of the other sources that the writer is contemplating using.

(7.) IMPORTANT NOTE: AS YOU BEGIN SUBMITTING YOUR THESIS chapters and then the complete drafts, always make sure that you submit both the revised copy and the marked draft. Also make sure that your name and contact information (a phone number where you can be reached and an email address) are included with any work submitted.

7. STUDENTS MUST ENROLL IN NO LESS THAN SIX (6) THESIS HOURS (LBAR 551) PRIOR TO COMPLETION OF THE PROGRAM

8. BEGINNING TWO QUARTERS PRIOR TO GRADUATION: Candidates should submit thesis drafts to their thesis director for correction and revision in installments of one chapter. In general, a student may expect a chapter draft to be returned with corrections within 15 days of submission. A draft of the complete thesis must then be submitted to the director prior to its submission to other members of the committee.

9. STUDENTS MUST HAVE A **COMPLETED DRAFT** SUBMITTED TO THEIR THESIS ADVISOR FOR REVISION BY THE **FIRST WEEK OF THE QUARTER IN WHICH THEY PLAN TO GRADUATE:**

10. AFTER COMPLETING ALL REVISIONS RECOMMENDED BY THE THESIS ADVISOR, A DRAFT OF THE ENTIRE THESIS WILL BE SUBMITTED TO THE THESIS COMMITTEE BY THE THIRD WEEK OF THE GRADUATION QUARTER.

A. Committee members who receive submissions from more than one student

will read them in the order received.

- B. The department will not approve a thesis that has not been carefully proofread and copy edited, or that does not follow Turabian/Chicago Manual of Style guidelines.**
- C. Once a thesis has received departmental approval, it becomes the candidate's sole responsibility to obtain other approvals and signatures necessary to be released for graduation (e.g., College of Liberal Arts, the Graduate School, Prescott Memorial Library, and Comptroller's Office). The department has no responsibility for ensuring that these requirements are met.**
- D. Students are strongly encouraged NOT to try to finish the M.A. program, especially with a thesis, in the summer quarter. Directors and/or committee members may not be available, and may not be willing to read a thesis in the summer quarter, even if they are teaching.**

10. DURING THE QUARTER THE STUDENT INTENDS TO GRADUATE, PLEASE CHECK THE GRADUATE SCHOOL DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSION OF THE FOLLOWING:

- a. A draft of the thesis will be submitted to the Graduate School for initial check of format. BE SURE to provide contact information, including name, phone number, and email address.
- b. A draft of the thesis, approved by the thesis director, committee members, and Graduate School (format check) will be submitted to the History Department Head for approval.
- c. Submit one copy of final thesis draft with all corrections approved (by thesis director, committee, Graduate School (format check), and History Department Head) to College Director of Graduate Studies.
- d. Submit one copy of final thesis with all corrections made to the Dean of the Graduate School.
- e. Submit five copies of final thesis to the Dean of the Graduate School.
 - 1) Use 20lb permanent white bond with at least 25% cotton fiber. Use the same brand of paper throughout and for all forms.
 - 2) Submit 5 copies of thesis; 7 copies of title page, abstract, and signature page.
 - 3) Submit each copy in an appropriately-sized, unsealed manila folder with your name legibly printed on the outside.

- f. Submit all from e. to the Library
- g. Deposit payment (see Graduate School Thesis Guidelines for details) to Cashier's Office.
- h. Submit deposit receipt to the Library.
- i. Submit receipt from the Library to the College of Liberal Arts Graduate Director.

11. CELEBRATE!