

Honours Program in History

The Honours Program in the Department of History offers students an exciting opportunity to research a topic of their choosing and to produce a substantial piece of academic writing. For students who are keen on independent research, the honours thesis is a unique chance find your own voice as a historian.

If you are in your third year (have completed 10 units of study, but not yet finished 15 units), and you have a minimum GPA of 3.0 in history courses, you may be eligible for admission into the Honours Program. Students who are interested should meet with the Chair of the Department to discuss a potential topic, think about which faculty member will supervise their honours thesis, and make sure they have met the requirements (see below).

Requirements

The Honours Program in History requires that students complete 20 units (after Grade 12 or equivalent). Ten of these units must be in history, which include the following components:

1. Both parts of the 1000-level courses in either European, World, or North American history. The Chair of the Department may grant permission to substitute a unit above the 1000 level);
2. Four 2000-level units;
3. Five units at the 3000 and 4000 level, including required seminar courses of HIST 3390 (Historiography), HIST 3391 (Historical Methodology), and one seminar (either HIST 4480, 4481, 4482, or 4483).
4. The honour thesis course, HIST 4499.

Notes:

- Honours students can take no more than eight units in any single area of study (Europe, World, North America).
- In order to remain in the Honours Program, students must achieve a GPA of 3.0 or better in 10 of the required honours units, with a grade of at least C- in each of these units; in addition, students must achieve a minimum grade of B- in the honours thesis, and an overall GPA of 3.0 or more must be obtained in all courses counted for the degree beyond the first full five units taken.

HIST 4499: Honours Thesis

Under the supervision of a faculty member in the history department, students select a topic and conduct research using primary and secondary sources.

In consultation with their supervisor, students can choose one of two formats:

- (a) a shorter thesis of between 30 and 50 type-written, double-spaced pages (exclusive of bibliography and endnotes) based on the structure of an academic journal article.
- (b) a longer thesis of between 50 and 80 pages (type-written, double-spaced).

Students will present their work to a committee of three faculty members – the supervisor and two readers. Students are encouraged to look at previous honours theses in history, which are available in the office of the department Chair, and in the university library.

Timetable:

During the Third Year

Students should apply to enter the Honours Program by contacting the Chair of the Department of History. The Chair will aid the student in finding a faculty member in the Department of History to act as thesis supervisor. Ideally, this will happen before the end of the Fall term. In consultation with the supervisor, a student will define the thesis topic and establish the basic primary and secondary resources available. The student and the supervisor will ask two other members of the department to act as readers on a thesis committee.

By 30 March of the Third Year – proposal

The supervisor will assist the student in preparing their proposal – a concise thesis outline (of about 750 words) defining the thesis topic and some of its key questions. The proposal must also include a working bibliography of available primary and secondary sources. The proposal must be submitted to the Chair of the Department for approval.

At this point, the supervisor will present the student with a History Department Thesis Welcome Package, which includes information about format, writing style, citation requirements, and examples of previous theses. Students are reminded that the university regulations on plagiarism will be strictly enforced and that proper use of language is one of the criteria used in the evaluation of all written assignments.

By 15 October of the Fourth Year – prospectus

With the support of their supervisor, students will craft their prospectus - a thesis statement and a descriptive summary of each part of the thesis. This summary should be ten to twelve pages, type-written, double-spaced, and must be submitted to the thesis committee for review.

By the Friday before the February Study Break

Students are required to submit a complete first draft to their thesis supervisor.

By mid-March of the Fourth Year

Students are required to submit three copies of their completed thesis to the Chair of the Department.

By the end of March or early April of the Fourth Year

Students are required to make an oral presentation of their thesis to a committee of three members of faculty, one of whom is the supervisor. After commenting briefly on the findings of his/her thesis, a student will have the opportunity to respond to questions. Thesis presentations are open to all students and faculty.

By 30 April of the Fourth Year

One digital copy of the final draft of the thesis must be submitted to the department to be sent for binding, along with a binding fee. A second digital copy, along with a hard copy, must be submitted to the Library. Students may also choose to pay to have a copies bound for themselves for a fee. For further information about depositing the thesis, binding theses, and fees, please see:

<http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/library/universityarchives/ethesisdeposit.aspx>