

So...you want to thesis in History?

(How to prepare for an honors thesis in the Department of History at Wellesley College)

Eligibility

- Must be a history major
- Must have a 3.5 GPA in classes applied to history major
- Must complete 6 of required 9 unites for major before end of junior year
- Must have advisor

Before Applying

- Before you can apply to thesis, you must find an advisor to work with you.
- You cannot submit a proposal without the endorsement of an advisor.

Approaching Potential Advisor

- *Ideally*, you will identify an advisor in the fall semester of your junior year.
- If not, keep in mind you need an advisor to sign off on your proposal, which will be due in early April of your junior year.
- Before approaching an advisor, you should be prepared to articulate a legitimate project.
- You should only approach faculty that will be in residence your senior year.

Who to approach?

These are the general criteria for accepting thesis students in the history department:

- the student's project overlaps with faculty member's research area or specialization
- the student has taken at least one (1) courses with faculty member, *preferably* two (2) courses

How to Apply

To apply, you must submit a formal thesis proposal. This proposal should be no longer than 3 pages (not including bibliography) and it must:

- clearly define the problem you plan to research
- describe the sources and methods you plan to use in solving it
- include a brief bibliography of primary and secondary sources critical to your project

Submitting application

You must submit the following materials to the History Department (via Anne Wasserman, Founders 202A or anne.wasserman@wellesley.edu):

- a cover sheet, signed by your faculty adviser
- your research proposal and bibliography
- an unofficial copy of your transcript
- and an application for the Schwarz Fellowship, if you will need funding to support your work.

Application Deadline: April 7, 2015

overseas?

Students who are studying overseas during their junior year must still submit the honors application before April 7, 2015. In such cases, application materials should be sent directly to your thesis adviser, who will pass them along to the History Department.

Please note that it remains the student's responsibility both to identify a faculty adviser and to consult with that adviser (usually via e-mail) while developing the research proposal. Students studying overseas are strongly encouraged to contact potential advisers before going abroad.

Financial Support

The History Department and Wellesley College offer several sources of funding to help students defray research expenses.

The F. A. O. Schwarz Foundation Scholarship

- This scholarship provides grants ranging from \$500 to \$2000 primarily to support research during the summer before the senior year.
- In addition, each Schwarz scholar will receive a stipend of \$1000.
- You must submit an application for the Schwarz Scholarship with your thesis proposal.
- Go to the WC History website/Honors/Funding Your Honors Work to access the application (or visit the History department).

Jerome A. Schiff Fellowship

- Schiff fellowships are merit awards that support the scholarly work of students enrolled in the senior honors program
- Awards range from \$2000 to \$3000
- Form attached. Or go to the WC History website/Honors/Funding Your Honors Work to access the application (or visit the History department).

The Schiff application requires:

- Cover sheet
- Resume
- 2 – 3 page proposal
- 2 letters of recommendation

The Schiff application is due in October of your senior year (meaning this grant will *not* fund your summer research for an honors thesis).

Selection Process

The entire history department vets all incoming thesis proposals and decides, as a department, who will be allowed to thesis. Students will receive notification of these decisions within several weeks after submitting proposals.

If selected to be a thesis student, the history department will enroll in HIST 360 (Senior Thesis Research, 1 unit) for the first semester of your senior year.

Summer Research

The summer between your junior and senior year is crucial for the honors student; it is a time to conduct as much research as possible.

- Remember, when you return to Wellesley as a senior, you will have other classes and responsibilities *in addition to* working on your thesis.
- Honors thesis students want to come into their senior year having completed a bulk of research for their thesis

Fall Semester Senior Year (HIST 360)

All honors candidates must participate in the History Department Honors Seminar

- At a meeting early in the fall semester, honors candidates must make brief presentations of their thesis topics.
- Honors candidates must also attend a second meeting during fall semester reading period and present brief reports on the progress of their research, circulate working outlines of the chapters they propose to write, and share ideas about each other's projects.
- Honors candidates will be required to submit a draft of a chapter to their History Department adviser by the last day of the fall semester examination period.

Examining Committee

During the Fall semester, honors candidates should assemble an Examining Committee, which must include:

- Honors thesis advisor
- Two additional members of the department (including the chair or a representative designated by the chair)
- one tenured faculty member from outside the history department (this person will fulfill the role of the Committee on Curriculum & Academic Policy (CCAP) visitor as required by legislation)

Evaluation— HIST 360 (Senior Thesis Research)

Honors candidates will receive a grade for HIST 360 based on their progress and adherence to honors requirements during the fall semester of their junior year.

For honors candidates to proceed to HIST 370 (Senior Thesis), they must demonstrate sufficient progress during the Fall semester of their senior year while enrolled in HIST 360.

If an honors student's advisor or the department decides that sufficient progress has not been made, that student will not be allowed to enroll in HIST 370 in the Spring semester, which means they will not be allowed to continue as a honors thesis candidate.

Note: The student who cannot continue to HIST 370 (Senior Thesis) may be allowed to continue in HIST 360 (Senior Thesis Research), for which she will receive a grade for the work she completes. However, she will not be eligible for honors.

Spring Semester Senior Year (HIST 370)

- All honors candidates must continue to participate in the History Department Honors Seminar
- Honors candidates must complete a draft of the entire thesis no later than the last Friday before Spring Break.
- A complete draft will include an introduction and conclusion and properly formatted citations

Submit Thesis

The completed thesis must be submitted (electronically) on the April date set by the Registrar.

Evaluation— HIST 370 (Senior Thesis)

Thesis exams take place in early May, during the reading or exam period. This is an oral examination of approximately an hour with the honors student's Examining Committee.

If the members of the Examining Committee judge the candidate's completed thesis to be of very high quality and are satisfied with her performance in the oral examination, they will recommend that she be awarded Honors in History.

It is possible, although uncommon, for a student to receive academic credit for the thesis but not be awarded the distinction of Honors.

Whether or not an honors candidate receives honors, she will receive a grade for HIST 370.

Relevant Links

History major requirements:

<http://www.wellesley.edu/history/majorminor>

Description of Honors:

<http://www.wellesley.edu/history/honors>

Applying for Honors:

<http://www.wellesley.edu/history/honors/applying>

Funding Honors Work:

<http://www.wellesley.edu/history/honors/fundinghonors>

(Find application forms for Schwarz and Schiff Fellowships and Student Research Grants here)

Requirements of Honors Candidates:

<http://www.wellesley.edu/history/honors/requirements>

Evaluation of Honors Work:

<http://www.wellesley.edu/history/honors/evaluation>