

### Obtaining Permission to Do a Thesis

*Thesis Supervisor:* Students interested in doing a thesis must first secure the support of a member of the faculty who is an expert in the field being investigated. If the student is permitted to proceed, this faculty member will be the supervisor of the thesis and will guide the student through the entire process. Once the student obtains his or her supervisor's signature on the thesis application form, s/he submits the form to the director of the graduate program and meets with the director to discuss the thesis process.

*Thesis Prospectus:* Working with this faculty member, the student prepares a thesis prospectus of approximately 3-5 pages exclusive of bibliography. The prospectus describes the project in detail, provides an analysis of the applicable historiography, and identifies precisely the primary sources to be used. The bibliography will list the works used in preparing the prospectus and those to be consulted. While the latter cannot be exhaustive, it should be as complete as the student can establish at this point of the process. The prospectus must be approved by the faculty supervisor before it is submitted to the chair of the department. The chair, director of the graduate program, and an ad hoc committee of faculty must approve the prospectus before the student may register for Thesis Direction I. The proposal may be accepted, returned for revision, or rejected. If rejected, the student may not reapply.

*Writing the Thesis:* The thesis counts for two courses (of the ten required) in your Master of Arts program. These courses are entered on your transcript when the thesis is submitted and approved as pass grades. The thesis is normally written in two consecutive semesters. Students register for History 9022 or Thesis Direction I (3 credits) for the first semester, then History 9032 or Thesis Direction II (3 credits) for the second semester. Note that in each term there is a deadline for submitting the thesis if you wish to complete your degree that term: see the Graduate Studies academic calendar for this information. If the thesis is not completed by the end of the second semester, a student may register for History 9080, Thesis Continuation. All three courses require permission of the History Department Chairperson before a student may register in them.

Graduate Studies has a brief pamphlet describing the proper format for submission of the thesis. The supervisor of the thesis will prescribe specific standards for the forms of documentation, footnoting, etc. If no other standard is specified, the department generally uses the latest edition of Kate L. Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (University of Chicago Press), or the *Chicago Manual of Style*, available in the book store.

*Completing the Thesis:* The completed thesis is submitted to the director of the graduate program and will have two readers: the supervisor of the thesis and a second reader to be chosen by the director. The director and both readers must approve the thesis before the student can proceed to the defense. They may also reject it or return it for revision. The student may only resubmit the rejected thesis twice.

*Thesis Defense:* The defense is open to faculty and students of the department. The director of the graduate program will preside and the two readers will conduct the examination. Members of the audience may be permitted to pose questions or make comments after the examination is completed. The director and both readers will determine whether the student has successfully defended the thesis. Two votes suffice. Upon completion of the defense the student submits the thesis to the graduate school, and may apply for graduation if all other program requirements have been met.