

grade of “Incomplete” for the thesis. Students will have until the first day of class of the spring semester in the senior year to submit all final revisions.

***During the spring semester of the senior year,** the student will make a formal presentation of the thesis at either the department’s Making History Series or at the Phi Alpha Theta chapter conference. Both events are open to all faculty, staff, and students.

9. The department will submit the final copies of the thesis to the Library Archives for binding. Two bound copies will be placed in the library holdings; one copy will be placed in the department; and one copy will be presented to the student.

10. Upon completion of all written and oral components of the thesis, the accomplishment will be formally noted on the student’s transcript.

Availability of Historical Source Materials

Before deciding on a thesis, it is important that the student determine the availability and accessibility of historical sources in which to investigate the thesis topic. A consultation with the prospective thesis director may prove helpful in this area. The student should focus on the use of primary sources (firsthand original historical writings) as opposed to secondary sources (scholarly historical interpretations).

The Phillips Memorial Library contains excellent collections of primary source materials, including many United States and European newspapers and magazines and a wide variety of academic journals. These are available in printed form, microfilm, and/or electronic format.

The library’s collection of books and bound periodical volumes totals more than 350,000, including approximately 1,650 current print periodical titles and over 19,000 full-text electronic journals. The library is also a selective depository for United States government documents and a full depository for Rhode Island state documents.

As a member of HELIN (i.e., the Higher Education Library Information Network), the library, through its

on-line catalog, makes available the materials owned by it and the ten other HELIN member libraries: Brown University, Bryant College, the Community College of Rhode Island, the Dominican House of Studies, Johnson & Wales University, Rhode Island College, Roger Williams University, Salve Regina University, the University of Rhode Island, and Wheaton College.

The library also subscribes to over 100 bibliographic and full-text electronic databases, which include indexes to periodical literature, as well as corporate information, statistics, and full-text sources. A listing of these databases can be found through the library home page at <http://www.providence.edu/Academics/Phillips+Memorial+Library/>. Two of the leading electronic historical databases subscribed to are *America: History and Life* and *Historical Abstracts*.

Located in the library is the Office of Special and Archival Collections, which not only is a repository for information on Providence College but also for 48 donated manuscript collections. These collections (listed at <http://www.providence.edu/Archives/Browse+the+Collections.htm>.) emphasize primary source material on local and national individuals and organizations that impacted Rhode Island political, legal, and cultural history during the nineteenth and especially the twentieth centuries. Some prominent mayoral, gubernatorial, and congressional papers include those of John E. Fogarty, Joseph A. Doorley, Jr., J. Howard McGrath, John O. Pastore, and Dennis J. Roberts. Other noteworthy collections are those from the Quonset Point Naval Air Station, the Urban League of RI, and the state constitutional conventions.

Still other collections illustrate traditions and contributions of the Dominican Friars, who founded and administer Providence College. The Dominican Archives, administered by the Province of St. Joseph, are located in the Center for Catholic and Dominican Studies.

The Department of History will encourage and support any and all serious endeavors of senior history majors to pursue the writing of a history honors thesis in accordance with the above guidelines.

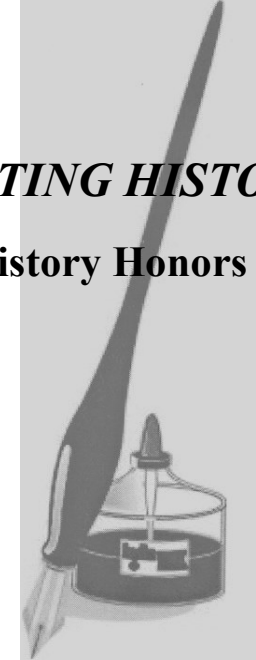
[Revised September 2012]



PROVIDENCE
COLLEGE

Department of History

WRITING HISTORY: The History Honors Thesis



Informational Brochure
Prepared by the Providence College
Department of History

WRITING HISTORY: The History Honors Thesis

The History Honors Thesis Option

The Department of History offers its majors the opportunity to write a thesis in the senior year. Although an extremely challenging undertaking, a thesis can be an intellectually rewarding and totally satisfying experience not only for students intending to pursue graduate study but also for those planning a career in education, business, government, or any of the professions.

Moreover, thesis writing makes a contribution to one's knowledge and understanding of the past so as to understand the present more fully and approach the problems of the future more intelligently.

Why Do a History Honors Thesis?

Writing a thesis is an opportunity to work as an independent historian. Such a major project requires a significant investment of time and energy, but there are several good reasons why one might consider such an undertaking.

First of all, for the highly motivated, serious student of history—especially the student who is planning further graduate study in history—it presents an invaluable opportunity to learn, discover, and actually “do” history.

Secondly, it offers the rare pleasure to an undergraduate student to explore a long-standing interest or to delve more deeply into a topic covered in history classes but not investigated fully.

Thirdly, because of the significant time, effort, and patience involved in research, synthesis, and analysis, the student has a chance to learn and master—under the supervision of a thesis director—the historian's craft of structuring an extensive piece of original writing.

Fourthly, a well-crafted history honors thesis can lay the foundation for a future master's thesis or possibly for a doctoral dissertation in history.

Criteria for a History Honors Thesis

1. The option of doing a history honors thesis is available to any senior history major with a minimum cumulative G.P.A. of 3.55 in history. Exceptions to this requirement may be made only at the discretion of the chair and proposed thesis director if the student has demonstrated adequate aptitude through his/her more recent history courses.

In preparation for this undertaking, students considering writing a history honors thesis are strongly encouraged to enroll in a history seminar during their junior year. (The topic of the seminar does NOT have to be related to the thesis topic they anticipate proposing for consideration.)

2. No later than mid-May of the junior year, the student interested in a history honors thesis will petition a professor of his or her choice with a two-to-three-page proposal for the thesis. The proposal should include the topic and a preliminary thesis statement and outline the approach or methodology that will be used to investigate the thesis statement. It should also include a preliminary bibliography of primary and secondary sources. (The petitioned professor has the option of refusing to direct the project.)

3. If the proposal is accepted by the thesis director, he/she will indicate such approval in writing to the chair of the department, at which time the proposal will be reviewed by the chair.

4. If the proposal is also approved by the chair, the student will receive written notification of such approval. At that point, the chair will create a section of HIS 490 History Honors Thesis for the *following* fall semester and register the student for it. The chair, in consultation with the thesis director, will then select a second reader in a closely related field. If the thesis topic is interdisciplinary, the second reader may be chosen from another department.

5. As soon as written acceptance of the proposal is received from the chair, the student should begin the reading and researching of the topic, developing an extended bibliography of primary and secondary sources as well as a preliminary and final outline of the thesis. It is advised that the majority of the primary and secondary

research be completed prior to the start of the fall semester, leaving adequate time for the final and most important stages—writing, revising, and finalizing the thesis project.

6. The thesis will be at least forty-to-fifty double-spaced, typed pages in length. Ideally, it will make an original contribution to the field in question. Nonetheless, it should demonstrate research in primary sources, historical interpretation, critical analysis, and accurate scholarly documentation. In all cases, it should show evidence of clear understanding of the issues concerning the topic.

7. Consultations with the thesis director will be held on a frequent and regular basis throughout the course of the thesis project.

8. The timeline for the thesis is as follows:

*The student will submit a working historiographical essay by the **first day of the fall semester**.

***During the first week of the fall semester**, the student will schedule a meeting with the senior administrative coordinator of the department to review departmental style and format guidelines for the thesis.

*The student will submit a complete outline of the thesis by the **first Monday of October**.

*The student will submit *two* unbound copies of the completed thesis by the **first Monday of November**.

*The thesis director and second reader will read, comment on, and return the thesis to the student by the **third Monday of November**.

*The student will incorporate the revisions and corrections suggested by the readers and submit *two* unbound copies of the fully revised and corrected thesis to the department by the **last day of classes in the fall semester** for a final review.

***After consultation** with the second reader, *if no further revisions are required*, the thesis director will assign the final grade for the thesis, and the student will submit *four* unbound copies of the thesis to the department. The final grade will not be submitted until the thesis receives the official approval of the thesis director, the second reader, and the chair. Should approval be pending at the end of the fall semester, the student will receive a