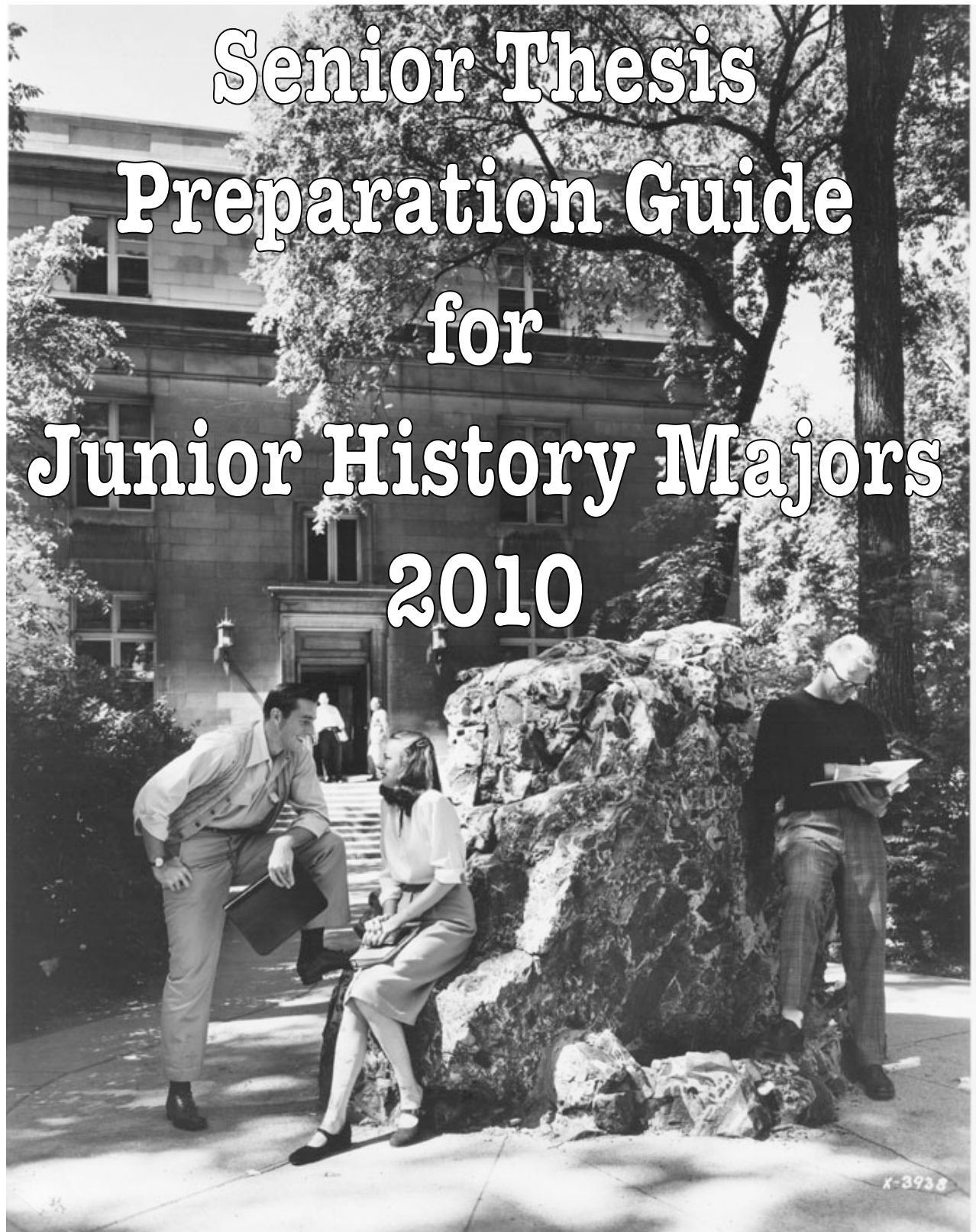


# Senior Thesis Preparation Guide for Junior History Majors 2010



NORTHWESTERN  
UNIVERSITY

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## PREFACE

Over the last decade, Northwestern has been a leader in promoting undergraduate research. The University offers two types of programs to support independent research projects conceived by students and advised by faculty: research grants and senior thesis programs. This guide represents a pilot effort to alert students and advisors to resources, timetables, strategies, and best practices for the initial stages of senior theses. Our goal is to help students and advisors reconcile choices of scope in developing a research proposal.

By gathering advice and information—including reflections from former thesis writers and annotated sample proposals—we hope to enhance both the process and product of undergraduate research at Northwestern. Students will have a single resource for connecting essential yet disparate resources from around the University. Also, this guide will better equip faculty to direct outstanding undergraduate research. With a shared menu of tips, reminders, and deadlines, students and faculty can establish productive working relationships that will be in place for senior year.

In addition, juniors interested in independent research will find information about fellowships that support post-graduate research or study. Northwestern's Office of Fellowships works closely with students whose undergraduate research experiences spark a desire to do more. "More" could mean a year of research abroad, two years of master's level study in Great Britain, or a longer commitment to a doctoral program.

We are grateful for the assistance and insights of Christopher Hayden, Assistant to the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education and Coordinator of the Undergraduate Research Grant Program. His commitment to expanding and improving undergraduate engagement in research has made this guide both possible and necessary. We hope that this guide will prompt other undergraduate majors to explore ways to collaborate more meaningfully with the URG Program.

Input from Harriet Lightman, Head of Academic Liaison Services at Northwestern University Library, and Janet Olson, Assistant University Archivist, improved the presentation of strategies and resources for developing a historical thesis project. Penny Hirsch, Associate Director of the Writing Program, prepared style guidelines and assisted with annotation of the model proposals.

Production of this guide was underwritten by Weinberg's Hewlett Fund for Curricular Innovation. We appreciate the support and enthusiasm of Ron Braeutigam, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education, and Mary Finn, Weinberg Associate Dean for Undergraduate Academic Affairs.

Since our primary goal is to gather wisdom and information, some content is borrowed from departmental, library, and URG sources. Nothing in this guide represents new departures in curricular matters or funding policies; it is merely an effort to bridge the learning and advising that take place in the History Department

and the URG Program. As a final note of thanks, we acknowledge the students and faculty who generously contributed their wisdom to support aspiring thesis writers.

*Bradley Zakarin, Lecturer in History and Departmental Honors Coordinator*  
*Jana Measells, Ph.D. Candidate in History and URG Program Advisor*

January 2009

# SENIOR THESES & THE SENIOR THESIS PROGRAM

This guide is about *how* you, as a junior History major, can prepare an application for admission to the History Department's Senior Thesis Program. For this to have any meaning, you first need to understand *why* you would want to write a senior thesis and *what* you will be doing in the program.

## WHY WRITE A SENIOR THESIS?

With all of the demands on a senior's time, why would anyone go beyond the major's course requirements and assume an extra burden? The History Department welcomes applications to the Senior Thesis Program from outstanding history majors who wish to take on the challenge of actively investigating and writing history. In three years of classroom learning, students will have acquired a great deal of historical information and a variety of interpretive skills; however, for those with a passionate interest in how history is "made," there is no substitute for actually doing a sustained piece of historical research and writing. The Senior Thesis Program is for students who want to do original research and fashion their own interpretation of the past.

*"I really enjoyed the process of writing a thesis; it aided me in focusing my interests and developing my understanding of a historical process that has deeply affected and influenced me."*

*-2008 Thesis Writer*

Students who have participated in the program consistently describe it as the most exciting and rewarding intellectual experience of their college years. It can be a meaningful capstone to your liberal arts education—something unlike any other project. The rewards of the program include the chance to work closely with a faculty advisor, craft an original research project, sample the pleasures of sustained intellectual study, and sharpen writing and research skills that will be valuable in your future work. Each of these opportunities is elaborated upon below—in case you need convincing.

## BUILDING AN ADVISING RELATIONSHIP

When you enroll in a course, the formal relationship between student and professor is defined on a syllabus by readings, due dates, and office hours. In the Senior Thesis Program, you and your advisor are largely left to your own devices for the fifteen months leading up to submission of your final thesis. Few programmatic deadlines intrude upon this one-on-one working relationship, which is central to the thesis experience. The nature of each relationship depends upon personal preferences, research schedules, and mutual expectations. You will play an active role in fostering a productive dynamic in the months ahead.

## ASSUMING CREATIVE CONTROL

As noted above, a syllabus lays out most parameters for your work in a course. Even major term papers come with a prompt. At a minimum, you have to relate your work to the course's themes. In the Senior Thesis Program, there is no prompt. You choose your own topic, questions, themes, methodology, sources, and organization. In addition, the timetable is largely up to you. While all theses are due on the

same day next May, you choose when to start. You just need to reconcile your thesis choices with your overall schedule—a situation that resembles the working conditions of independent scholars.

### *TRANSCENDING THE QUARTER SYSTEM*

Along with being in charge, you also escape the artificial boundaries of the quarter system. Though the Senior Thesis Program exists on paper as three courses (Hist 398-1-2-3), it is far greater than the sum of its parts. No three individual courses—lectures, seminars, or independent studies—can replicate the program. Your extended commitment to the examination of a historical subject makes the thesis a unique culmination of your plan of study. Instead of a ten-week horizon, you will work on a scale of months that allows for zigs, zags, and tangents that will add texture to your study as you become an expert on the subject.

*Senior Thesis Program > Hist 398-1-2-3*

In addition, Northwestern's generous resources allow interested students to pursue research outside of the normal academic year. The Office of the Provost's Undergraduate Research Grants and Weinberg's Summer Research Grants support summer research—whether you need to travel or simply need time to immerse yourself in local resources. Thus, you can choose an ambitious topic and, in effect, be paid to devote part of your summer to thesis research. Along with letting you pursue the topic of your choice, winning a competitive grant is an excellent credential on your résumé.

*Funding from NU allows you to start your project over the summer.*

### *DEMONSTRATING TRANSFERABLE SKILLS*

What do the last three sections have in common? They all point to post-college life. Initiative, creativity, and perseverance—traits developed by successful thesis writers—will be indispensable to future success in the workplace or graduate study. Indeed, the Senior Thesis Program provides useful examples for highlighting these traits in applications and interviews. Consider the broadly applicable skills you will exhibit in the months ahead:

- **information gathering** (surveying existing literature)
- **networking** (consulting with scholars, librarians, and archivists)
- **reading documents** (analyzing data)
- **brainstorming** (formulating hypotheses)

Even the process of writing a proposal hones valuable skills in project planning and setting priorities, which will serve you well in future endeavors. Moreover, curious employers, admissions committees, or fellowship selectors will recognize a summer grant and/or honors for your thesis as concrete evidence of talent and potential.

### **FUNDAMENTALS OF A SENIOR THESIS**

A senior thesis in the History Department is an analysis based on individual research using primary materials that makes some original contribution to the field. The variety of methods and approaches used



in the discipline of history means that no single type of thesis can be set as a model. The originality of a thesis may lie in its explication of untapped sources, its reinterpretation of familiar sources, its new synthesis of existing interpretations, or some other novelty. A thesis will almost invariably include:

- an introduction to set out the problem, limit the scope of the inquiry, and position the thesis in relation to the current state of historical opinion on the topic;
- a set of chapters to present and analyze the relevant sources; and,
- a conclusion to summarize these findings and suggest future avenues of research.

**Theses are typically 40-60 pages in length and include a thorough bibliography.**

Pretty straightforward, right? Everything will fall into place once you find a topic. After all, plenty of people pulled it off last year. Not so fast! A 50-page thesis represents far more creativity, drive, organization, reflection, and revision than five 10-page term papers. Those 50 thesis pages include excerpts from the choicest primary sources, the right amount of necessary background information, precise summaries of work by other scholars, and the clearest articulations of your argument (including its significance). To reach this point, you will eventually relegate many fascinating points to footnotes and delete some of the best prose you ever wrote. Such hard decisions are months away, but the investment you make now will afford you the clarity of purpose to make the right calls later.

*50-Page Thesis ≠ 5 x 10-Page Papers*

### TOPIC SELECTION

Before you can embark on your thesis journey, you must identify a topic that will motivate you and formulate research questions and a plan that you can tackle. The following questions and examples may help prime the pump:

- *What problems have gotten under your skin in previous classes?* Casey Kuklick's coursework in History, African-American Studies, and Political Science made him sensitive to the agency of oppressed peoples. In his thesis, he questioned the consensus view that Robert F. Kennedy's speech in Indianapolis preempted riots there after Martin Luther King's assassination. Digging deep into Indianapolis archives and the Kennedy Library, Casey offered a narrative of the civil rights movement that gave new explanatory power to locals' experiences and beliefs.
- *What issues have interested you most?* Noah Graf combined a long-standing interest in political institutions (constitutionalism in particular) with extensive coursework in medieval history for a thesis about the depositions—through legal rather than violent means—of Edward II and Richard II in fourteenth-century England.

*"The original idea sprung from something that I had heard in class that really surprised me and made me think, so I pursued that idea—the final thesis topic was very different than the original idea, but it was a good start."*

*-2008 Thesis Writer*

- *Do you have any special language skills?* Anna Prior utilized Italian, which she honed while studying abroad, to examine the Venetian press's response to the American Revolution. Supported by an Undergraduate Research Grant, she traveled to view eighteenth-century editions of *Notizie del Mondo* available only in a special collection at Princeton University.
- *What kinds of materials do you most enjoy working with?* Inspired by film courses in the School of Communication, Jeremy Berman used films (e.g., *The Jazz Singer*) from the 1920s to explore American filmmakers' perspectives on rapid societal change and to consider public reaction to films in the context of competing notions of modernity.
- *Do you feel a special affinity with a particular place or epoch?* Theresa Bowman took multiple courses on Irish history and culture. She lived in rural Ireland one summer to observe cultural roles for women and learn the local language. Her thesis, which emerged from a Hist 395 research paper, examined the "Women First" pages of the *Irish Times* as a site of developments in both women's journalism and the broader women's movement and cultural change in Ireland.
- *What sort of question would you like to answer?* Richard Maidman set out to address a big question about identity: What did it mean to be Ottoman in the seventeenth century? Richard focused on a ten-volume travelogue of a writer's journey to distant corners of the vast and diverse Ottoman Empire. Acknowledging the interpretive limitations and opportunities inherent in this main primary source, he examined ties that bound regions to central authority and customs that pointed to cultural independence.

## SCOPE OF A SENIOR THESIS

Next May, your completed senior thesis will be 40-60 pages. Some theses are as long as 80 pages, but you should exceed the standard length only for intellectually compelling reasons. In these early stages, try to formulate a set of questions (or a single question) that can be addressed in a scholarly essay of 40-60 pages. Since you have not done any research or writing yet, how can you *know* whether your project is the right size? The following guidelines can help get you thinking along the right lines.

## POSSIBLE MODELS

Familiarizing yourself with the form and scope of a senior thesis will help you define a topic and ask research questions that suit this kind of work. **Appendix 3 has a list of recent senior theses. To review any of these works, contact Susan Hall in the History Department Office.**

A senior thesis in Northwestern's History Department is a distinct academic product; it is neither an extended term paper nor a condensed book. Do not mistake a thesis for something you are accustomed to writing (that is, a term

*√Book ≠ Thesis ≠ Term Paper<sup>2</sup>*

paper) or reading (that is, a book). The former error will limit your potential to generate new knowledge or contribute to a scholarly dialogue; this will render later stages (analysis and argument) tedious. The latter blunder will bring frustration because you cannot accomplish in one year and 60 pages what a professional historian is fortunate to achieve in three years and 300 pages.

How can you reconcile this mixed message of “aim high, but not too high”? One option is to look to professional journal articles or essays in anthologies, which approximate 40-60 word-processed pages. A review of their footnotes, however, suggests how much longer they *could* have been. Why is this of interest to an aspiring thesis writer? Because it highlights how authors intentionally limit their goals for articles, often concentrating on a single point. They can develop further points in future projects that relate to earlier works. In the same way, you might ignore one avenue of research and revisit it in the future for a fellowship project or graduate study. Such editorial decisions are fundamental to the thesis process:

*Thesis ≈ Journal Article*

- What will your thesis fundamentally be about?
- What aspects will receive extensive attention?
- What will be relegated to a discursive footnote?

You and your future advisor will define your thesis topic and constantly refine it so that the primary goals, which may evolve over time, drive your research and come through in the final written product.

### *ONE PROJECT*

It is perfectly normal to start off with a laundry list of disparate interests, general ideas, and big questions. In the weeks ahead, you can trim, merge, or recast items. As you review your list, ask yourself the following:

- How might you link different interests to make the entire thesis coherent?
- How much historical, theoretical, and methodological background do you need to contextualize your broad ideas?
- How much evidence would you have to assemble and present to answer your profound questions?

You may be on your way to identifying two or more research projects if your answers are “hmmm,” “yikes,” and “whoa.” There is only room for one project in a successful senior thesis—even if you are planning a synthetic interdisciplinary thesis for a double major. (Consult both majors’ Directors of Undergraduate Studies for details about this option.)

Your thesis need not be your last research project. An “extra” thesis idea could be the seed of a proposal for a fellowship, such as a Marshall for graduate study or a Fulbright for independent research. Many Northwestern students win fellowships for 1-2 years of study or research. You may think of them as supplementary capstones to your undergraduate education rather than a commitment to a career in academia. Once you know your options, your imminent thesis decisions may feel less like “either/or” and more like “now/later.” Contact the Office of Fellowships to learn about the possibilities, or attend informational events during the winter and spring quarters. (See “Planning Your Progress” for details.)

*Your thesis need not be your last academic project. An “extra” idea you have now could be the seed of a fellowship proposal for graduate study or independent research.*

## **THE SENIOR THESIS SEMINAR**

The Senior Thesis Seminar (Hist 398-1-2-3) is a full-year course for students writing a senior thesis. During the fall, the seminar meets regularly to discuss the writing of history, strategies for organizing a thesis, and questions relating to evidence, objectivity, and the use of primary and secondary sources. The goal of the fall quarter is to produce a final thesis proposal of 12-15 pages. In the winter, students meet twice in small groups (usually pairs) with their seminar leader to discuss chapter drafts. You will spend most of your time completing research and drafting two body chapters of 15-18 pages each. In the spring, there are no seminar meetings or requirements. You will work independently toward completing and revising drafts of your thesis. In the weeks leading up to the departmental thesis deadline, you will coordinate revisions and feedback with your thesis advisor and seminar leader.

Letter grades for each quarter of Hist 398 are assigned at the end of the year. The fall quarter's grade is based on class participation and written work. Grades for the winter and spring are given in consultation with thesis advisors and are based on thesis quality. In the interim, students receive a "K" continuing grade.

### *392/395 SUBSTITUTION*

One unit of Hist 398 may be applied as **either** a 392 **or** 395 (as long as the 395 evaluation criteria have been met) on your major worksheet. Consult Susan Hall in the History Department Office about this option before the start of fall quarter.

## **DEPARTMENTAL HONORS AND PRIZES**

Many students are drawn to the Senior Thesis Program in part by the prospect of earning degree honors. The history of the program, however, suggests that honors are insufficient motivation to carry students through the thesis process. Your enjoyment and success in the senior year will depend on your interest in and commitment to the project you develop in the months ahead. Still, honors are a legitimate consideration and, in the interest of transparency, the History Department's honors information is included here.

### *PROCEDURES AND STANDARDS*

Completion of Hist 398 does not guarantee honors. The History Department's Honors Committee makes a recommendation on honors, and its recommendation is subject to approval by the Weinberg Committee on Superior Students and Honors. The Honors Committee uses the following criteria in its deliberations:

- 1) Two readers of the thesis must judge it to be of very high quality. One will be the faculty advisor; the other is the Director of the Senior Honors Seminar. In all cases, both readers must submit a written evaluation of the thesis, explaining their recommendation for (or against) the granting of honors, and commenting on the originality and quality of the work. In cases where there is a

division of opinion a member of the departmental Honors Committee will report on the thesis as well.

- 2) The candidate should have a minimum GPA of 3.5 in history courses.
- 3) The candidate should have a minimum GPA of 3.5 overall.
- 4) Exceptions will be made to the minimum GPA requirement in items 2 and 3 if the thesis is judged to be of extraordinarily high quality.

A majority vote of the Honors Committee then ensures a recommendation for honors, and the candidate's name is forwarded to the Weinberg Committee on Superior Students, which makes the final determination of honors.

### *THE JOHNSTON PRIZE*

The Grace Douglas Johnston Prize is awarded to the student whose senior thesis is judged to be of the highest quality. The award is made by the third member of the Honors Committee who is neither the student's advisor nor the Director of 398. At that reader's discretion, the prize may be split two ways.



Photograph: James L. Bixby. Courtesy Northwestern University Archives.

## APPLYING TO THE SENIOR THESIS PROGRAM

History majors apply to the Senior Thesis Program in the spring of their junior year. Candidates are generally expected to have a cumulative GPA above 3.5; however, no one will be admitted solely on the basis of a strong GPA, and candidates with a GPA below 3.5 will occasionally be admitted.

Winter quarter of your junior year is the time to explore topics as a prelude to the development, drafting, and submission of a proposal. Your proposal is the fundamental document of your application to the Senior Thesis Program. The other essential element—a letter of recommendation from a confirmed faculty advisor—is an endorsement of that proposal and a pledge to guide you toward completion of the project.

### TIMELINES

Once you decide to apply to the Senior Thesis Program (and faculty hope you will), your next decision is when to get started. The calendars in “Planning Your Progress” contain more detailed information, but you have two basic options.

**Option 1** is relevant if you are considering summer research. Start exploring topics immediately so that you can apply in **mid-March** for an Undergraduate Research Grant (URG). A carefully developed URG application is likely to be a strong application for the Senior Thesis Program because the URG Committee requires a more detailed research agenda than the Department’s Honors Committee. If you win a URG, then you are guaranteed admission to the Senior Thesis Program, provided you have the commitment of a faculty advisor. URG results are released around the Department’s application deadline. Thus, you will know early on (approximately mid-April) that you have both summer funding and a seat in Hist 398; this will allow you to make summer plans (research schedule, travel, housing) as early as possible.

*“I really recommend doing research in another place outside of Northwestern if possible and if your topic lends itself to that. The Undergraduate Research Grant was great because it helped me access sources I wouldn’t have even known to look for and really diversified my research in the end.”*

*-2008 Thesis Writer*

**Option 2** is to take your time and focus on the History Department’s **mid-April** deadline for application to the Senior Thesis Program. You may propose a project that begins in September. Or, if you unsuccessfully applied for a URG, you may indicate your intent to apply for a Weinberg Summer Research Grant at the end of spring quarter. (Note: Students in other schools who are also doing Weinberg majors are not eligible to apply for Weinberg grants.) For any application, a faculty advisor must endorse the proposal. You will know by mid-May about admission to the Senior Thesis Program. This will leave ample time to register accordingly for fall courses and—if you wish—to develop your proposal further for a Weinberg grant application, the deadline for which falls during spring reading period.

## THESIS PROPOSALS VS. GRANT PROPOSALS

Students often wonder about the connection between a grant proposal for summer funding (URG or Weinberg) and a thesis proposal for admission to the History Department's Senior Thesis Program. The committees that evaluate these proposals share the same fundamental questions: What have you figured out so far about your topic? And, what questions still need to be answered? Readers want to see what you know *now* and what you plan to do *next* in order to know more *later*.

There are, however, two crucial differences between grant proposals and thesis proposals: the audience of readers and the degree of detail required. This guide will steer you toward a proposal that satisfies both an interdisciplinary grant committee and a committee of historians. As a rule of thumb, a good grant proposal will be a strong departmental thesis proposal—but not necessarily vice versa.

*A good grant proposal will be a strong thesis proposal—but not necessarily vice versa.*

### *THESIS PROPOSALS: ADMISSION TO THE SENIOR THESIS PROGRAM*

Your goal in a thesis proposal is to convince the History Department's Honors Committee—and your advisor—that your project represents a meaningful capstone to your experience in the major. You can pursue a feasible and important thesis between September and May of your senior year; it is called the *Senior Thesis Program* for precisely that reason. The Honors Committee does not privilege summer starters over fall starters when making admissions decisions. The key criterion is the alignment of means and ends. For example, if you plan to start in September, then your proposed thesis should rely on sources available locally, either in physical or electronic format.

*The Honors Committee does not privilege summer starters over fall starters.*

A thesis proposal does not need a timetable for research or proof of contacts; such specificity is required only for grant proposals. Even if you are not applying for a summer grant, however, you should address these details as soon as possible. You will have to confront them at some point anyway, and early planning may preempt unpleasant surprises later. Indeed, careful planning may be more important for those students not conducting summer research because they will actually have less time to act on their proposals come September.

### *GRANT PROPOSALS: SUMMER FUNDING*

Each year, one third to one half of the History Department's prospective thesis writers seek summer grants. Some hope to incorporate materials from distant archives that they could not visit during the academic year. Others sense that they need time to start on voluminous or complex sources that would be too daunting to delay until fall.

A grant proposal must convince an interdisciplinary committee of faculty to spend thousands of dollars in support of your research. You cannot assume that readers will appreciate why a topic that you, a budding historian, find fascinating needs further scholarly attention. Thus, you must pitch the significance of your project to a broader audience. Your efforts to do so will pay dividends. In the short term, you will be better able to articulate the importance of your research questions, and thus the questions themselves. In the



longer term, you will have more ways to describe the relevance of your historical research to prospective employers, admissions committees, or fellowship selectors.

Northwestern's funding pool for undergraduate research is deep, but not bottomless. Also, committee members read many grant proposals and sometimes have to make hard choices. A good proposal makes their job easier: it is short (approximately 2 single-spaced pages), gets to the point, and anticipates reasonable questions about the project's viability. Your task is to convince the committee that your project is a worthwhile investment—that is, that you will advance the University's educational mission by making your own contribution to knowledge.



Photograph: James L. Bixby. Courtesy Northwestern University Archives.

## DOING LEGWORK WITH LIBRARY RESOURCES

You probably have a few ideas—some big, some small—for your thesis. Before you can start actual **research** on one of these topics, you need to do some preliminary **legwork**: What scholarship (secondary sources) will give you a sense of the historiography? What kinds of historical documents (primary sources) could you examine to contribute to the literature? Your research (and eventual analysis and argument) will be only as good as this legwork. The surest way to meet the standards of the Honors Committee and grant committees is to use the same tools professors rely on for their research. Northwestern University Library spends millions of dollars each year on a professional staff and ever-expanding physical and electronic holdings. You may stumble across a few gems on the world wide web, but your process will be far from systematic—a shortcoming likely to leave holes in your knowledge and weaken your thesis. One consideration in evaluating proposals is whether students have figured out what is readily available to them. You may even find that the richness of local resources will allow you to undertake a more ambitious project than you first thought.

*Before you can start actual **research** on a thesis topic, you need to do some **legwork**.*

### BASIC SEARCH PARAMETERS

Be active and experimental when conducting your initial searches for sources. Amateur researchers plug in search terms that make sense to them and get frustrated when library catalogs and databases return items that do not meet their expectations. To search efficiently and effectively, put some thought into your search terms: Have you chosen the keywords that best capture your research interests? How does the topic you are exploring intersect with other subjects?

*Be active and experimental when conducting your initial searches.*

For example, if you are interested in the role of nationalism in Chinese foreign policy, you might do a keyword search in NUcat for “Chinese nationalism.” With more than 50 results, you would be off to a good start and may immediately set out to look at those sources. If, however, you searched again for “China AND nationalism,” you would get nearly 300 results. Since your goal in these early weeks is to get a broad (if superficial) view of the scholarly landscape, you should run searches with different keywords.

Different databases and catalogs have different organizational structures, so you must conduct various searches within each one you use. Do not assume that a catalog like NUcat and a database like JSTOR are designed the same way. Furthermore, you should run similar searches in multiple resources because no single tool is comprehensive. Keep track of your search methods so you can share your legwork with faculty and librarians; this will give them a good idea of the ground you have covered, and enable them to brainstorm with you about where to look next.

## KEYWORDS VS. SUBJECTS

The most common way to search is by keyword. Depending on the specificity of your interests, the utility of keyword searches will vary. If too narrow, the paucity of results will frustrate you. If too broad, the volume will overwhelm you. For example, a keyword search for “Vietnam War” yields more than 3,000 items in NUcat—too much to browse quickly and efficiently. If your keyword search does not help, try a **subject search**. A subject search for “Vietnam War” in NUcat produces 450 entries, each of which is a Library of Congress subject heading with the number of items under that heading. Here are a few samples:

- “Vietnam War, 1961-1975—African Americans” (27)
- “Vietnam War, 1961-1975—Bibliography” (15)
- “Vietnam War, 1961-1975—Diplomatic history” (20)
- “Vietnam War, 1961-1975—Fiction” (77)
- “Vietnam War, 1961-1975—Journalists” (10)
- “Vietnam War, 1961-1975—Participation, Australian” (4)
- “Vietnam War, 1961-1975—Public opinion” (24)
- “Vietnam War, 1961-1975—Sources” (12)

As you can see, that massive list of 3,000 (from the keyword search) is divided up among subjects (450) to give you some food for thought. This handful of sample subjects offers many points of entry for students interested in domestic American history, international relations, history and literature, and more. In addition, note the categories of “Bibliography” and “Sources”; these universal subject headings point, respectively, to volumes with lists of relevant scholarship (secondary sources) and collections of (or individual) historical documents (primary sources). Use these shortcuts to your advantage.

## SECONDARY SOURCES

Secondary sources are scholarly works that inform your research and represent voices in the academic conversation to which your thesis will be a contribution. Common forms of secondary sources are books, journal articles, and dissertations. Though it may seem counterintuitive, as you conduct your legwork, secondary sources should come before primary sources (that is, documents from the historical period you plan to study). Start with a broad search and develop a long working bibliography. Then, start prioritizing the material based on how closely it relates to your emerging topic.

Consider these tips to maximize productivity in the legwork stage:

- Start with the most recent works and mine their bibliographies and footnotes to identify other secondary sources.
- Share your working bibliography with faculty to catch significant works you might have missed and to prioritize the material you have discovered on your own.

- Share your working bibliography with librarians to see if you are missing major resources such as journals or reference guides that exist only in print.
- Save interesting yet ancillary literature (especially slow-going readings in a foreign language) for the end.

## **INDEXES & ABSTRACTS**

To cast a wide net, use databases of indexes and abstracts of current and past scholarship. These resources return citations for and brief summaries of books, articles, and book reviews. The best resources to start with are “America: History and Life” (for American and Canadian history) and “Historical Abstracts” (for the rest of the world from the Renaissance to the modern era). You can efficiently glean a few important insights through working with these resources:

- *How was a book received?* The number of book reviews will give you an idea of how much attention was paid to a given work. In addition, you can get a quick summary of a book’s arguments and shortcomings, as perceived by other scholars. If a book is widely reviewed, then make sure to include it in your bibliography.
- *What is the state of the field?* Look for “review essays” in journals that provide a historiographical overview of recent scholarship or a longitudinal review of scholarship on a topic. While giving you a capsule summary of works that you might address in your proposal, these essays may point you toward even more sources.
- *How can you acquire a copy of the source?* Use the “Find it at NU” button to determine if the work is available in physical or electronic format, or if you will need to order it via Interlibrary Loan. (See below for details on Interlibrary Loan.)

## **PRIMARY SOURCES**

Primary sources are documents surviving from the period of history you will study in your thesis. They are usually textual, but they can also be films, photographs, quantitative data (e.g., economic or demographic), material objects, paintings, or other formats.

The first place to look for primary sources is in your growing set of secondary sources. The bibliography of a book or footnotes of a journal article will tell you which primary sources have been utilized by other scholars (and where they found them). You can also find primary sources in a number of other locations, including

- archives (discussed in more detail below)

- surrogate archival collections (published papers of prominent figures, published records of government agencies, materials on microfilm, digitized collections)
- databases of primary sources (e.g., ArchiveGrid, Archive Finder), though note that not all archival materials appear online

**Appendix 1 contains a list of library collections throughout the Chicago area. Note: you should consider the Center for Research Libraries to be an extension of Northwestern’s holdings.**

## **WORLDCAT AND INTERLIBRARY LOAN**

WorldCat is a catalog of 7,000 libraries, including Northwestern University Library. Many primary and secondary sources listed in WorldCat can be acquired via Interlibrary Loan (ILL). The short form requires only a simple on-line submission. Then, in 10-14 days, you will receive a copy of your requested source in physical or electronic format. This might seem like a quick turnaround, but it will seem like an eternity when deadlines are approaching. Furthermore, ILL loan periods can be as short as three weeks. Thus, you should plan accordingly if you are counting on sources via ILL, allowing time to get the material as well as time in your schedule to read it.

Why are WorldCat and ILL critical resources in the legwork stage? A topic focused on an exotic locale does not always require travel to that location; you might be surprised to learn where archives and collections are maintained. Research travel requires time and money, and grant committees will want to know that your project genuinely requires travel to access critical resources. So, ask yourself the same questions they will ask: Why spend time and/or money seeking out a book or documents you can access right here?

*A topic focused on an exotic locale does not always require travel.*

## **CONSULTATIONS**

Though the term suggests otherwise, “independent research” is not a solitary endeavor. Confusion stems from the emphasis on coming up with your own topic and making an original contribution to knowledge.

The fact is, however, that independent research requires getting all sorts of help. Not convinced? Pick up your favorite history book or a past senior thesis. Note how many librarians and archivists are acknowledged for their assistance. Such assistance can be invaluable at the outset, when researchers have lots of questions, but few concrete ideas for how or where to find answers. Librarians and archivists can provide expert advice not only about what known sources are available where, but also how you can determine the existence of kinds of sources that you imagine would be ideal. Do not hesitate to ask for help from these experts. No historian—from the novice to the most advanced professional—can work successfully without their help.

*Independent research is not a solitary endeavor.*

## LIBRARIANS

The History Department's liaison to the Library is **Harriet Lightman**, Head of Academic Liaison Services. She is the first point of contact for prospective thesis writers looking to explore Northwestern's collections and possible thesis topics.

Alternative contacts at the Library are suggested for the following subfields:

- African History (David Easterbrook, Curator of the Herskovits Library of African Studies)
- African American History (Kathleen Bethel, African American Studies Librarian)
- History of Science (Robert Michaelson, Head Librarian Seeley G. Mudd Library for Science and Engineering)
- East Asian History (Qunying Li, East Asian Studies Liaison)
- Jewish History (Shoshanah Seidman, Jewish Studies Liaison)
- Classics (Bill McHugh, Reference Collection Management Librarian and Classics Liaison)

*"I spent a lot of time with Harriet Lightman, who helped me locate sources. It was during this time that I realized I would need to apply for a Weinberg grant to go to London to do research, as the materials that I needed for my topic weren't available at libraries in the U.S."*

*-2008 Thesis Writer*

## ARCHIVES

Archives and libraries are often closely connected. In fact, Northwestern Archives is part of Northwestern University Library. Still, archives work quite differently than libraries. Archives primarily house unpublished documents (primary sources) that are unavailable anywhere else. If you look in the bibliographies of books, you will see categories for "archival sources" or "unpublished sources." The references in those sections point to archives—big and small, public and private—that hold one-of-a-kind historical documents. Keep track of any archives listed in bibliographies (or the footnotes of journal articles) that you encounter while conducting legwork. The records at these archives might be valuable for your thesis.

Archives are different from the library materials you are familiar with and can baffle the novice researcher. The manuscripts and organizational records that archival repositories contain are as diverse and unique as the person or group that created them. Thus, these primary sources are not catalogued or organized the same way that books are. To work with archival materials, you need to ask the following:

- How are documents organized?
- Who can help?
- What are finding aids?
- How does someone plan archival research?

Some answers to these questions should embolden you to expand your research vision beyond the friendly confines of Northwestern. In fact, you may even learn that some primary sources are available at Northwestern University Library in a physical format (e.g., microfilm), through one of the Library's subscriptions to electronic resources for historical research, or directly from an archive's website.

## *ARCHIVISTS*

Think of archivists as a type of referral service. They know the collections that they organize. The better they understand your topic and what you are looking for, the more likely they are to identify sources that relate to your thesis. Thus, you should be ready to share your initial keywords and subjects. Once you make a first match between your research questions and archival holdings, an archivist can then bring new materials to your attention: “If you liked this particular document, then you’ll probably like...”

Such dialogue is essential because you ordinarily cannot browse through archival materials the way you might roam library stacks. Archival collections are generally “paged”—brought to you at a desk in a reading room from secure shelving areas. After all, many archival records are carefully filed single pieces of paper that have grown delicate with age. Archival collections usually consist of boxes filled with paper—and not neatly typed 8.5x11 sheets. Each box can contain hundreds of documents such as handwritten diaries, postcards, telegrams, or faded mimeographs—not to mention numerous non-textual formats.

Assistant University Archivist Janet Olson and Project Archivist Jason Nargis have created an online video tutorial to introduce prospective thesis writers to Northwestern’s rich archival collections and de-mystify the process of planning archival research. Even if you plan to visit far-away archives, this tutorial will familiarize you with the fundamentals of working with archival materials and how to help archivists help you. Access the tutorial at [http://www.library.northwestern.edu/archives/tutorials/tutorials\\_list.html](http://www.library.northwestern.edu/archives/tutorials/tutorials_list.html).

## *FRAMING A REFERENCE QUESTION*

Researchers are often driven by questions like this: “How did people in period X think about issue Y?” Unfortunately, archival collections reflect the unique nature of their creators, not the potential research needs of scholars. The answers are not cut-and-dried; rather, historians must tease them out of the documents—this is what makes archival research exciting and full of unexpected surprises. Turning your questions into an archival research agenda requires both imagination and an understanding of what kinds of documents might provide clues and yield useful evidence. A series of scrapbooks from Northwestern sorority members in the 1950s, for example, might provoke a new interpretation of the era’s gender relations. An archivist can help you connect the dots between your questions, the documents that might offer answers, and the location of those documents. Since you likely do not yet know what documents exist to advance your research, try to imagine your ideal primary source:

- What kinds of sources would be pieces of your puzzle? Diaries? Internal memoranda?
- Who would have produced these sources? Individuals? Organizations?
- What issues or events would be addressed in these sources?

The “smoking gun” sources you dream up probably do not exist. Of course, historical research would be far less exciting and challenging if they did. Still, if you can imagine such primary sources to answer your research questions, then you can give archivists a good hint for leading you to useful materials.



## *FINDING AIDS AND ARCHIVAL GUIDES*

Archives generally publish finding aids—similar to tables of contents or indexes to collections (some of which are even available online), but these aids have limits. They do not describe every item in a collection; and, they only give date ranges and general descriptions that help researchers determine if, and in what box, useful material exists. When archives acquire new collections, archivists must try to anticipate how future researchers might want to use these collections. Therefore, it is crucial to communicate with archivists—especially early on, when they are indispensable allies for identifying collections and specific primary sources that can shape a research agenda. These details will be important for your research proposal.

*Archivists are indispensable allies for identifying collections and specific primary sources.*

Remember these final warnings when planning your archival research agenda:

- not all collections have a finding aid or a catalog record
- not all of an archive's collections are listed online

The absence of a relevant collection in a likely archive's website is not evidence that the collection does not exist. Simply describe your topic to an archivist, note where you have already looked, and ask whether useful documents might be stored in a different collection. Once you identify a relevant collection, an archivist may be able to lead you to related collections or other materials (such as periodicals or photographs) that are not described.

## *NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES*

The University Archives is a great resource for thesis writers, especially those who want to conduct archival research starting in September. Though the University Archives collects materials related to the history of Northwestern, you can pursue many directions within this range. For example, Anthony Abata immersed himself in the original records of the Northwestern University Settlement House for a thesis that explored broader themes of progressivism and nativism at the turn of the twentieth century. Other kinds of topics that can be researched at the University Archives include:

- comparisons with different institutions
- continuity or change at Northwestern as a case study in larger national trends
- a snapshot or long view of student life, the curriculum, etc.
- studies of specific people or events at Northwestern

You could examine the personal papers of distinguished faculty, the organizational records of programs or departments, scrapbooks and diaries documenting student life, and complete runs of various university and student publications from course catalogs to literary magazines. The next question is how you will tie the specific archival research to a larger scholarly conversation about a historical issue, event, or theme.



Photograph: James L. Bixby. Courtesy Northwestern University Archives.

## DEVELOPING A THESIS TOPIC

The last chapter highlighted tools and resources available to you for your thesis. Once you start building a bibliography, checking out books, and downloading journal articles, you need to figure out what it all means. How does everything fit together? This is one of the joys of independent research: you get to decide. Your interests and perspectives will lead you to interpret other scholarship in unique ways and think about historical questions that remain unanswered, insufficiently answered, or incorrectly answered. From there, you will contemplate how you can provide your own answers and make a contribution to a scholarly conversation.

### SELF-DIAGNOSTIC TESTS

According to Professor T.W. Heyck, the thesis writer's task is to "define a good historical question, the 'answer' to which is the thesis." This sound advice comes with a caveat: once defined, your historical question (or questions) may change, multiply, or evolve. Unlike a term paper, a thesis takes shape over an entire year. With deadlines over the horizon, you may spin your wheels and jump around from one historical question to another without making progress toward the "good" one that will drive your thesis.

*A thesis writer must  
"define a good historical  
question, the 'answer' to  
which is the thesis."*

*-Professor T.W. Heyck*

One way to avoid this trap is to run regular self-diagnostic tests. Keep a record so you can track changes in your thinking and the new sources that prompt them. The following prompts will help you think about your research interests and communicate your ideas and goals to professors, librarians, and archivists.

- Summarize in **two sentences** the period(s), people(s), and place(s) that you want to study.
- Ask **two questions** that you would like to answer about the period(s), people(s), and place(s) that you want to study.
- List **two secondary sources** (e.g., books, journal articles, etc.) that are relevant to the period(s), people(s), and place(s) that you want to study.
- Describe **two kinds of primary sources** (e.g., government documents, periodicals, diaries, photographs) that would shed light on the period(s), people(s), and place(s) that you want to study.

Run this quick self-diagnostic test every 7-10 days. Compare new answers to old ones so you can see the direction in which your project is moving.

## ENGAGING FACULTY

As a History major at Northwestern, you have access to faculty who are leaders in their fields of research and dedicated teachers and advisors. Professors are eager to work with you on developing a thesis topic that will be the culmination of your education in the major. This section offers tips for helping professors help you. Keep this fundamental principle in mind: you should feel both **empowered** to avail yourself of professors' guidance and **responsible** for using their time constructively.

*You should feel both **empowered** to avail yourself of professors' guidance and **responsible** for using their time constructively.*

## SEEKING ADVICE

Your goal for January-February is to identify a topic to research. Students seeking admission to the Senior Thesis Program must exhibit the same entrepreneurial drive as professional historians: they are on a mission to locate sources that will shape their answers to burning questions.

The more independent effort you invest upfront, the more a professor can do to advance your cause. Seeking advice is not the same thing as getting answers. You have an independently defined goal so no one can give you the "right" answer and no one can dictate the precise steps required to achieve it. Instead, professors (and librarians, archivists, etc.) will respond to what you present to them. While professors have a list of paper assignments for their courses, they do not have a menu of thesis topics for potential advisees. This is the main difference between a regular course and the Senior Thesis Program: you are engaging faculty as an independent scholar; there is no syllabus or paper prompt mediating the interaction. Once you have taken the initiative to explore possible topics to research, seek guidance on possible next steps and new directions.

*Seeking advice is not the same thing as getting answers. Professors will respond to what you present.*

First, think about who can help you. Make a list of faculty you know from coursework, major advising, or a research assistantship. Also, look at the faculty page on the History Department website. Review the teaching and research of faculty in your area of specialty. Finally, browse the backgrounds of faculty who study different eras and places than you but perhaps share a thematic interest (e.g., women's history, religion, law). Who is knowledgeable about subjects that are related to a possible aspect of your thesis?

*"Figuring out my thesis topic was a process within itself, and involved consulting with several different history professors I'd met during freshman and sophomore year."*

*-2008 Thesis Writer*

Second, set up a meeting. In an e-mail, summarize the library legwork you have done and the most recent version of your research questions. (The results of a self-diagnostic test will help if you are stuck.) Before hitting "send," think about the impression you want to make. Even if you have taken a course with a professor, you are now reintroducing yourself as an independent researcher: indicate what you already know (perhaps in the easily readable format of a bibliography) and what you hope to learn (such as a set of research questions); and, ask if there is anything you should do in preparation for the meeting. Do not be discouraged if a professor tells you to check out a book, dissertation, or journal article before coming to

talk. He/She does not expect you to be familiar with everything written on your emerging thesis topic—after all, you are still exploring options.

Third, prepare for the meeting. “I want to do a thesis on early America” is not a good opening line for a productive exchange with a professor. You should be able to offer far more specificity—that is why you do library legwork. Even if you are not more committed to studying culture than politics, you can run database searches for “early America” and browse through results. Use titles to get ideas for potential topics within the expansive category of “early America.” Furthermore, you will feel more confident heading into a meeting if you have done some legwork and begun to consider fundamental questions: Why is this topic interesting to you? What *kinds* of primary sources do you want to use?

Finally, remember that you have ample time to secure an advisor by April. You do not need to end an initial conversation with, “So, will you be my advisor?” Instead, follow up immediately on any advice, such as contacting an archive or checking out a book. Doing so will advance the development of your research project, perhaps taking you in new directions that lead toward a different faculty member as a potential resource and prospective advisor. Or, you may realize that this professor would be the best possible advisor and you can go back with a progress report to get more guidance and, perhaps, seal the deal.

*“I approached Professor [X] with a few topic ideas in mind, but they were very vague and general... [He] politely but firmly informed me that [my proposed topic] was much too broad! With his help, I was able to narrow it down... I would definitely recommend approaching an advisor with some ideas, though, because that helps to show them that you're serious about a thesis. I remember Professor [X] telling me that one of the reasons he agreed to oversee my research was that I had followed up on all his research suggestions and he could tell that I was committed to what I was talking about.”*

*-2008 Thesis Writer*

### **SEEKING AN ADVISOR**

All thesis writers are expected to have a faculty advisor from the History Department. **Appendix 2 contains a list of faculty eligible to advise theses in the coming academic year.**

If you have a compelling reason for working under an advisor from a different department, contact the History Department’s Director of Undergraduate Studies and Honors Coordinator as soon as possible.

Your timeline for securing an advisor will depend on your progress in developing a thesis topic, which may also relate to plans to pursue a summer research grant. Applications to the Senior Thesis Program require a confirmed advising relationship, which is certified by a letter of recommendation from the intended advisor. Thus, **you should meet at least two times with your intended advisor by the departmental deadline.** URG applications also require letters of recommendation from advisors. Note that the timelines are very different: URG applications are due in mid-March, which is well before the departmental deadline in mid-April. (See “Planning Your Progress” for details.)

Since you are in charge of defining your topic, you need to be creative and proactive about managing your advising relationship. Here are some suggestions shared by History faculty who have advised senior theses:

- Consider taking a course with a prospective advisor in the spring. Some professors will only advise students who have taken a course with them because this ensures they have necessary background knowledge for the thesis.
- When a potential advisor suggests that you consult secondary sources or contact a librarian, act on that advice before your next meeting so it can be productive. Otherwise, you will be right where you were at the end of the last meeting.
- If a prospective advisor takes the time to suggest revisions on a proposal draft, either incorporate them or explain why you chose not to do so. This will demonstrate both courtesy—you are listening to their feedback—and rigor—you have your own ideas about the thesis and can think independently about it.
- Think about language skills that you can apply to your thesis. Can you continue language study in preparation for archival research or interviews in a foreign language? Raise this with potential advisors, who will appreciate the opportunity to guide a student who is pushing his/her limits with a thesis.
- Communicate your intended progress, obstacles you encounter, and areas in which you need general guidance or specific assistance. A prospective advisor likely has to tend to his/her courses, scholarship, committee duties, and other students; therefore, you must take the initiative. For example, ask about how you should prepare for each meeting and when you should send proposal drafts in order to receive timely feedback.

## ANTICIPATING YOUR NEXT STEPS

As you enjoy the excitement of exploring thesis topics, it is important to pause briefly and look ahead to the actual execution of the research project. Take your constellation of ideas about a topic and start organizing them into a long-term agenda. This chapter covers four categories of consideration for anyone about to embark on a senior thesis in History.

### VIABILITY

Once you have a thesis topic that excites you, make sure it is viable; that is, can you pursue it with the resources at your disposal? The definition of “viable” will change over time. Something viable on February 15 may no longer be on September 15 if you do not make headway in the intervening months. You and your advisor must align means and ends because the committees that decide admission to the Senior Thesis Program and summer funding are especially concerned with viability. You can complete a successful and rewarding thesis between September and May of the senior year. Ask yourself if the project’s current scope fit the time you have and the space you can cover:

- *Are you willing to start work on your thesis over the summer?* If so, then you can apply for summer funding to...
  - conduct research in local or distant archives
  - perform oral history interviews
  - do essential reading (especially foreign-language sources that demand more time)
- *Are you definitely going to start work on your thesis in September?* If so, then...
  - devise a research agenda that depends on local physical resources (e.g., microfilm, Chicago-area archives) and electronic resources
  - avoid a topic that requires sources available only in distant archives because it will be relatively late in the thesis process before you can acquire them
- *Are you asking research questions that can be answered...*
  - with your skills and background knowledge?
  - in 60 pages?
  - by May of next year?

*“It would have been possible to go abroad during winter break to get materials, but it also would have meant that my winter quarter would’ve been spent both researching and studying, which would have been a lot. If you need a research grant or need to go abroad to do research, I would definitely suggest doing that in the summer if possible.”*

*-2008 Thesis Writer*

As a newcomer to independent research, you may not be sure how to move forward. Fortunately, you can seek advice from professors, who have extensive experience with planning and executing personal research agendas and helping students set up theirs.

## PREPARATION

Discussions of preparation tend to focus on courses already taken and language skills already developed; however, you have time to expand your knowledge base and/or strengthen skills to carry out the thesis you envision. In proposals for a summer grant or admission to the Senior Thesis Program, acknowledge any weaknesses and explain your plans to address them between now and September:

- For a highly specialized thesis topic, arrange an **Independent Study** in spring quarter if there are no courses that will give you necessary background knowledge or familiarity with relevant scholarship. The supervisor of that Independent Study may be your preferred thesis advisor. Developing your own reading list will give you a head start on the thesis—and a valuable appendix for your proposal(s).
- Think broadly about your thesis topic and what more you can learn about it or the scholarship about it. Look for a **seminar** inside (such as a Hist 395) or outside of the History major that may give you a more textured understanding of the place, period, or people you want to study in your thesis.
- If you want to work with foreign-language sources, perform quantitative analysis, or conduct interviews, then take a **skills or methods course** that will prepare you. In your proposal(s), you can explain how an upcoming course in statistics, economics, sociology, or a foreign language will enhance your thesis. (Note that you can apply for funding for summer language programs if increasing proficiency for later research is a priority.)

*"My thesis would have definitely benefited from a wider range of reading in the period, such as a 395 seminar in literature or art to get a feel/mood for the period."*

*-2008 Thesis Writer*

## BALANCE

As you formulate your thesis topic and research agenda, seek a balance between the **research** you will perform, the **analysis** you will conduct, and the **argument** you will present. Early (and ongoing) attention to these basic stages and their connections will help you through all parts of the process. The following questions highlight the fundamental interrelatedness of research, analysis, and argument:

- *Why gather so many sources that you cannot possibly analyze them (because of time constraints) or write about them (because of space constraints) in any meaningful way? Every year, some*



thesis writers fall into this trap. It is usually a symptom of an insufficiently focused topic. In other cases, it betrays a mistaken impression that research trumps analysis—when you will do the most intellectual heavy lifting—and composition—when you will fine-tune your arguments through presentation. If sources are abundant for your topic, narrow the focus so that you are not endlessly gathering.

*"I would tell people that your topics often start as extremely broad and far reaching, and then often become significantly more focused and smaller in scope as the year progresses because you cannot do justice to a broad topic in 60 pages."*

*-2008 Thesis Writer*

- *When should you pause during your analysis of sources to consider the need for further research or adjustments to your argument?* Once immersed in the close reading of sources, you may discover rich and fascinating things that you did not anticipate when gathering. This process of discovery, after all, is what historians live for and why you are pursuing a thesis. Still, you must keep an eye on the larger project. Your advisor will help—provided you meet and share regular updates. You may need to put analysis on hold to conduct further research or reconsider your hypotheses. And, although students often think that writing comes *after* research and analysis, getting your ideas down while fresh in your mind can help refine your argument. It can even reveal aspects that need additional research or analysis while you still have time to do something about it.
- *How can you present convincing answers to your questions if you have no evidence to support your argument or no argument at all?* If one key to a solid thesis project is a good set of questions, another is finding enough of the right kinds of sources to present a supportable argument. You must search widely enough and dig deeply enough to collect a set of sources that you can later analyze and then present in your thesis. The best prose cannot compensate for a lack of documentation and superficial analysis. Of course, you can focus on a narrow set of sources—many successful thesis writers and professional historians do just this—but think carefully about what those sources can tell you and then define your questions accordingly.

You will not move in a purely linear fashion through research, analysis, and argument. The complexities of independent scholarship will require you to resume research, reconsider interpretations, and revise prose as you go along. They are all part of the same process of discovering (and articulating) answers to your research questions.

## AUDIENCE

It is never too early to start thinking about the audience for your eventual thesis: an audience of professional historians. While current or personal interests may drive your research, your readers will expect you to employ historical methods and draw historical conclusions—even if you choose to incorporate other methodologies or theoretical approaches.

Readers will pay close attention to your development of a central argument and your contribution to the scholarship about your topic. To meet this expectation, you must familiarize yourself with the field and situate your original research within it. That said, historians regularly strive to make their work relevant to general audiences. Indeed, one compelling reason to do so is to secure funding. Thus, you may choose to incorporate other methodologies and/or suggest the broader implications of your research. A proposal for funding is often a good place to do this, and the next chapter picks up on this theme of communicating the significance of your work.

## WORKING TOWARD A RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Once you have done some **exploring**, you need to make the turn toward **explaining**. To gain admission to the Senior Thesis Program and/or receive summer funding, you will craft a formal research proposal that organizes the ideas swirling around in your head and presents them in a compelling fashion.

Students regularly panic about these proposals, but such anxiety highlights general misconceptions about the purpose of a proposal. Far from an eternal oath, a proposal is merely a first crack at identifying issues of interpretive importance and explaining how you will address them.

The *process* of proposal writing is a terrific aid for developing your thesis topic. Be prepared to write multiple drafts—strong proposals are rarely produced on the first (or second, third, or perhaps even ninth) attempt. Indeed, revision helps researchers discover what their questions really are, why these questions matter, and how they might best go about answering them.

A clear understanding of the conventions and standard elements of proposals is essential for defining a thesis that is both feasible and likely to sustain your interest over the next year.

### PROPOSAL WRITING AS A GENRE

A research proposal differs in important respects from other forms of writing with which students are more familiar, such as an academic essay or a research paper. Instead of trying to reach a minimum length (e.g., 7 pages or 2000 words), you must achieve discrete goals within a specified space constraint (e.g., 2 pages or 750 words). Many students find this shift challenging, but the process of writing a proposal is essential for **organizing** your exciting ideas and **prioritizing** your next steps.

### DEFINING YOUR QUESTIONS

While an essay or a research paper requires an overall argument and provides evidence to support it, a research proposal is organized around questions to which the author does not yet have answers. A good research proposal *does* make an argument of a particular sort: its purpose is to convince readers that the questions are worth trying to answer and that the author has a concrete plan for doing so.

*A good research proposal makes an argument: it convinces the reader that its questions are worth trying to answer and that the author has a concrete plan for doing so.*

A good proposal and, by extension, a solid research agenda are organized around a central interpretive problem broken down into a series of smaller, more specific questions. Even if you begin with a topic that just seems fascinating, you will find that you have lots of different kinds of questions about its historiography and history. As you work toward a proposal, try to isolate and prioritize those questions: Which questions do you most want to find the answers to? Which questions can you realistically answer?

If they are not the same, how might you reconcile what you *want* to find out with what you *can* find out through independent research?

### SO WHAT?

As you work on a central question for your thesis, you also need to consider how you can explain to others why it is meaningful. This is the universal “so what?”: How will answers to your particular questions contribute to our collective knowledge? How will your research help us better understand the subject? While there are many ways of establishing the significance of a project, never assume that an uninitiated reader will find your topic inherently interesting. You must hint at the broader implications of your research in order to win over a reader who does not necessarily know (or care) anything about your thesis topic. The examples in “Learning from Model Proposals” exhibit various means of achieving this end.

### ELEMENTS OF A PROPOSAL

No two proposals are exactly alike in content and form, but most successful proposals share basic features that allow readers—the people who make admissions decisions and award grants—to appreciate the importance of your questions, the suitability of your methods, and the likelihood of your success. Understanding these features will allow you to anticipate—and address—questions readers might have about your project.

Proposal components are generally most effective when *presented* in the order below, but you do not need to *develop* them in this order. Many writers, for example, find it easier to draft the opening paragraphs once the rest of the proposal has taken shape. Approaching your proposal as a series of specific sections, furthermore, is a powerful means of ensuring that you provide the information readers need and that you make efficient use of the limited space.

All that said, these are guidelines to help you—not rules requiring rigid adherence. You may decide that certain bits of information could reasonably fit into more than one section or that the distinction between “background” and “literature review” is not as clear as you had first imagined. Ultimately, it is less important that you find the “right” place for any given piece of information than that you answer readers’ questions, which usually pertain to the standard elements of a proposal.

Thinking of each section as one specific paragraph will help you get started and ensure that you achieve balance between the different proposal elements. As you refine your project and revise your proposal (and get feedback on drafts) you will find it easier to make decisions about how and whether your project requires deviations from the structure suggested here.

## INTRODUCTION

Purpose: Often the most difficult section to write, the introduction should quickly engage readers with succinct answers to their immediate questions: What problem does the author want to solve? And, why does it matter? By the end of the first paragraph or the beginning of the second, readers *expect* a clear statement about what kind of research the author proposes to conduct and what that research will help them better understand.

Strategies: Experiment early on with different possible introductions: Is there a specific event or anecdote that captures the essence of your project? Or, would a more general explanation better orient the reader to your topic? Even if it seems difficult right now, exploring options will help clarify *in your own mind* what your central research question is. You can elaborate on this question in other parts of the proposal; your goal at this point is to help readers—in just a few sentences—to understand what you are trying to find out and why. Do not worry if it takes a while to find the right “hook” and a concise statement of the project and its significance; it will get easier as you work through other parts of the proposal.

## BACKGROUND

Purpose: Since academics have different specialties, you cannot assume that readers know anything about your topic. You will therefore need to help your reader appreciate both the relevance of your chosen topic and the logic of your research agenda. The key is to provide *enough* background but not so much that your reader is distracted from the central purpose of the proposal—conveying the nuts and bolts of your research plan. Include *only* what is essential for readers to know in order to understand *your* project. The tricky part is determining the bare minimum readers need to know in order to appreciate the novelty and significance of your research questions.

Strategies: As with the introduction, writing the background section gets easier as you develop other parts of the proposal. It is particularly helpful, especially in the early stages of proposal writing, to confine this section to a single paragraph. You may find that you are able to sprinkle bits of relevant background information throughout the proposal (e.g., in the introduction or literature review sections). In order to do so effectively, you need a clear sense of what readers need to know and when they need to know it. To assess your progress on this front, get feedback from others who represent your target audience: **the well-educated but uninitiated reader.**

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Purpose: Readers want to know how your proposed project relates to other scholarly research and how it will contribute to our collective knowledge. Therefore, you must situate your proposed research within existing scholarship. Once you demonstrate familiarity with relevant scholarship, you then need to explain how your project will build on, challenge, or go beyond existing research. This is where you convey how the project you are proposing is original and innovative. It also sets the context for the research questions you will articulate in the next section.

It is generally not sufficient to state that your research will simply “fill in a gap”—that is, to write that the project is original because other scholars have ignored the topic. Rather, you will need to explain how filling this gap can illuminate issues that might otherwise be missed.

Strategies: The following questions can help you get started: What scholarly research has been completed on the same topic or theme? How will your research differ from previous work? What questions have other researchers asked and what is your understanding of their findings? Which aspects might they have neglected or what problems have they been unable to solve? How have previous researchers left unexamined the questions/issues/topic that you will address?

If no studies of your particular topic exist, look to parallel or broader bodies of scholarly literature. For example, if you are studying a particular social movement that has never been studied, you might look to studies of other social movements or to more general theoretical literature on social movements. Unless a few seminal studies dominate the literature on your topic, you may need to make generalizations about the types of research that scholars have done. It is often more effective to accurately summarize the state of existing literature than to discuss individual works in detail. You can always use footnotes and the bibliography to cite other works.

The literature review may seem daunting, but you have probably already identified some key works while developing your topic. One or more books or articles from a syllabus or term paper might have led you to your topic. In addition, you know someone who can help: your faculty advisor. As you discuss the project with your advisor, he/she will be able to direct you to appropriate scholarship. These recommended readings, in turn, will give you a solid basis for a literature review.

Your current goal is to familiarize yourself with these works, not necessarily read them start-to-finish. The proposal is your promise to read them more closely so your eventual thesis is as comprehensive as possible.

## *RESEARCH QUESTIONS*

Purpose: This section (along with “methodology”) may be the most critical as you work toward developing a viable topic and research agenda. Your project should revolve around one central research question. Define that question and, if necessary, break it down into a series of interrelated questions so readers understand what questions you expect to answer with your research. The holes, gaps, contradictions and limits of previous research that you have outlined in the literature review should lead to a more detailed explanation of precisely what you seek to learn.

Strategies: Pay particular attention to the relationship between your research question(s) and your methodology. All sections of the proposal should be interrelated, but it is critical that your research questions and methodology “match”—that is, make certain that your research questions can actually be answered using your chosen methodology. Proposal writers often find that their initial questions are too

vague or broad to be answerable with available sources and methods. Thinking of your questions and methods in tandem will help you bring them into alignment so your project is manageable.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Purpose: While “research questions” will tell readers *what* you hope to learn through your research, your “methodology” tells them *how* you plan to go about answering those questions. You will need to convey the following:

- *The **scope and length** of the research*—Readers will want to know if you can feasibly complete the project given the your stated scope and length of the research. How much material will you examine? Will you need to travel? How many interviews will you conduct? What is your timetable for conducting the research?
- *The **types of data or source materials***—Why are these sources relevant for the questions you hope to answer? If you are traveling to an archive, what kinds of materials do you expect to find? For interviews, how will you choose your subjects?
- *How you plan to analyze the data*—To what ends will you study your chosen materials? What criteria will you use as you sort the information? Do you have a working hypothesis? Can you project possible findings?

Strategies: Novice proposal writers frequently find the methodology section perplexing, particularly in disciplines where methods are not explicitly described as such. Think of this section as a statement of your research plans. Of course, you cannot know exactly what you will find until you actually conduct the research, but you *can* contact archivists and librarians to discover what types of sources might be available and where they are located, meet with faculty and other experts to discuss what methods and approaches might be best, and think carefully about how much research you can realistically do in a given timeframe.

Note on Timelines for Grant Proposals: A research grant compensates you for your time and effort. Thus, readers on grant committees want to know exactly how you plan to spend that time. URGs and Weinberg Summer Research Grants are intended to fund 8-week projects. Under certain circumstances, Weinberg College will consider a pro-rated summer grant for those students who cannot commit to 8 weeks of research. In grant proposals, state as precisely as possible your planned timetable and agenda for the entire research period. You can include these details about your methodology either in the text of the proposal or in an appendix.

## **PREPARATION**

Purpose: This section demonstrates that you are qualified to undertake your proposed research by describing specific and relevant examples of previous training, experience, and coursework. What courses have you taken that have helped prepare you for this project? More importantly, which types of knowledge did you learn in them that will help you complete the research? Do you speak the necessary foreign languages? Do you have experience conducting interviews or manipulating data sets? Further, if you will travel to conduct research, have you established contacts in your place of research? Have you scheduled

appointments for interviews? Have you contacted archivists to ensure that materials you wish to examine are accessible? Have you begun the process of obtaining clearance from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to do research with human subjects (if applicable)?

Strategies: Avoid simply listing or stating relevant courses completed or past experiences; instead emphasize the sets of skills and bodies of knowledge that you have acquired. Think about aspects of your preparation that align with your proposed methodology, and address any shortcomings. If you lack experience in critical areas, then note how you will overcome them through coursework, or how you will work around them during your research. If necessary, propose self-imposed limits on the scope of your research plans, and explain your intellectual justification for doing so.

## *CONCLUSION*

Purpose: The “conclusion” of a proposal conveys to readers how you, the researcher, will benefit from undertaking the project and indicates what the scholarly product of the research will be. Readers also want a sense of how a project fits in with a student’s overall goals, whether it is a senior thesis to cap off an academic career or a chance to get a taste of what graduate work might be like.

Strategies: A conclusion need not be long. The following questions will guide you toward a successful conclusion: How does the project fit into your overall academic and/or career goals? Will the research prepare you to apply for graduate school or a fellowship? Aside from a senior thesis, what might you do with the research (e.g., a presentation at an academic conference, publication in a scholarly journal)? Feel free to aim high in your conclusion. Committing lofty goals to writing is not an ironclad pledge; rather, it is your chance to articulate just how far you might take the contribution to knowledge you seek to make.

## *BIBLIOGRAPHY*

Purpose: A bibliography is an essential element of a strong proposal, as it allows you to show the reader that you have done legwork and are familiar with the relevant scholarly literature—even if you have not yet read it. A thorough bibliography also takes some of the pressure off writing the literature review section. Discussing individual works in the text of your proposal is less crucial if your readers can instead scan bibliographic entries.

Strategies: A bibliography is always a work in progress. You do not have to read everything before preparing your proposal’s bibliography. Listing potentially relevant works will help you and your advisor prioritize your research agenda. As you develop your bibliography, you will discover where you need to dig deeper and/or how you might pare down a topic that starts off too broad. Think of the bibliography as a concrete representation of your awareness of the body of knowledge to which you hope to contribute.

Note on Citation Styles: Start practicing appropriate citation styles now to save time later. Citations are more than bureaucracy; doing them right shows that you know conventions of the field. For the discipline



of history, the *Chicago Manual of Style* is the bible, and is available in print and on-line through the Northwestern University Library website.

### ***APPENDICES AND SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS***

Purpose: Appendices are another way to strengthen your proposal by demonstrating that you have done your homework. Depending on the nature of your project, you may find that supplemental materials are not necessary, but most proposals can benefit from additional information like that listed below.

Strategies: Materials you might include as appendices include:

- A bibliography of primary sources you intend to examine
- Evidence of contacts (e.g., copies of correspondence with archivists and research librarians)
- Evidence of contact and appointments with potential interviewees
- A list of interview questions
- A week-by-week timeline for your research agenda (for grant proposals only)

You should mention each appendix in the text of your proposal. Number appendices by the order in which you refer to them in the proposal. Along with a number, label each appendix with a brief descriptive title (e.g., “Appendix 2: Correspondence with Kennedy Library Archivist” or “Appendix 3: Selected Materials from Leopold Papers Finding Aid”).



Photograph: Courtesy Northwestern University Archives.

## PREPARING A RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Proposal writing is its own genre with its own conventions. Researchers write and committees read proposals in different ways than they might approach, for example, a term paper. Students often struggle to apply their standard essay writing techniques to proposals—a strategy that can lead to frustration because of space constraints. The last chapter emphasized the goals and elements of a proposal that make it distinct as a form of scholarly communication. This chapter addresses some of the finer points of proposal preparation. While research questions and methodology are fundamental to any good proposal, give sufficient attention to your presentation of the thought and legwork you have invested in your thesis topic. After all, the departmental Honors Committee and summer grant committees will depend on your written proposal when evaluating your prospects for success.

### EFFECTIVE PROPOSAL-WRITING STYLE

Your proposal, like all of the model proposals in the next chapter, should be written in clear, concise, grammatical prose. As you read the model proposals, notice the following stylistic strategies that helped the writers make a compelling case for their projects within a few pages.

#### *PERSONAL PRONOUNS*

Writers use first person (“I,” “my”) when discussing their own interests and plans. This is appropriate in a research proposal because *you* will be admitted to the Senior Thesis Program and/or awarded a summer grant.

#### *WELL-ORGANIZED PARAGRAPHS AND HEADINGS*

For the most part, writers use topic sentences to signal a paragraph’s key point. That point often corresponds to a required element, such as “what I want to learn,” “what scholars have previously studied,” or “where I plan to find sources.” Writers then add details that explain the topic sentence or argue the point it makes. Also, paragraphs should not be overly long.

In addition to well-organized paragraphs, writers sometimes use headings to identify key sections. Such organization is helpful because readers often skim the beginnings of sections and paragraphs to find a proposal’s main argument before they go back for details. Headings and topic sentences highlight a proposal’s structure.

#### *ACTION-ORIENTED SENTENCES*

A preponderance of sentences should use *active voice*. In other words, sentences emphasize who (or what) performs the action:

- My project will use...
- The current literature does not show...

- I contend...
- I have prepared for this work by...
- To answer these questions, I will analyze...
- This project will allow me to...
- This study focuses on...
- Bibliographies mention...
- I need to visit...

Active voice makes sentences shorter and clearer and makes writers sound confident. Use passive voice when you have a legitimate reason for doing so, such as when the actor is not important or when passive voice promotes coherence. Consider these examples from the model proposals:

- *Actor is not important*
  - “Several Connecticut newspapers circulated in Windham were known for their extreme zealotry.” It is not necessary for **Alex Jarrell** to say that the public knew these newspapers for their zealotry.
  - “In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, prostitutes were increasingly considered to be outside the sphere of womanhood. In the late 1760s, 2069 women were arrested.” Who “considered” or “arrested” the women is obvious and unimportant for **Arianne Urus’s** purposes.
- *Promote coherence*
  - “Elisabeth Julie Lacroix, for example, was a 49-year-old woman arrested in 1778, who had been abandoned by her husband, out of work four to five days, and without food for one day. Her story is replicated countless times...” **Arianne’s** use of the passive voice allows her to keep the focus on Elisabeth’s story.

Active or passive voice is only an issue with action (transitive) verbs, which have objects. Some sentences simply use state-of-being (intransitive) verbs, such as “is” or “was”:

- “The *New London Gazette* is available at the Northwestern Library on microfilm.” (**Alex**)
- “Martin Luther King’s status in the community was under fire.” (**Casey Kuklick**)

These intransitive verbs are often necessary, but in a well-written proposal, active verbs in the active voice will dominate.

## CONCISENESS

Good proposal writers explain their ideas as succinctly as possible. Most writers start with a proposal that is a little too long. Then they solicit help from advisors and peer reviewers to trim the fat. Along with unnecessary background information, you should be vigilant about clunky phrases and excessive qualifying words. The following strategies for revision will help.

- *Change passive to active voice (see above)*

- *Eliminate “stretcher” sentence openings*
  - Wordy: “It is these three facts that call Jones’s theory into question.”
    - Concise: “These three facts call Jones’s theory into question.”
  - Wordy: “There were numerous laws in the 1890s that led to the arrests.”
    - Concise: “Numerous laws in the 1890s led to the arrests.”
  - Wordy: “It is my contention in this proposal that...”
    - Concise: “In this proposal, I contend that...”
  - Wordy: “It is the belief of most scholars that...”
    - Concise: “Most scholars believe that...”
  
- *Avoid nominalizations (i.e., nouns comprised of “hidden” verbs)*
  - Wordy: “This project focuses on the analysis of...”
    - Concise: “This project will analyze...”
  - Wordy: “Identification and evaluation of the first problem are necessary for resolution of the second.”
    - Concise: “We must identify and evaluate the first problem before we can resolve the second.”
  - Wordy: “Most critics are in agreement with this assessment.”
    - Concise: “Most critics agree with this assessment.”
  
- *Eliminate wordy phrases that represent personal writing ticks*
  - Wordy: “at this point in time”
    - Concise: “now”
  - Wordy: “due to the fact that”
    - Concise: “because”
  - Wordy: “at a later time”
    - Concise: “later” or “next” or “then”
  - Wordy: “for the purpose of” (as in “for the purpose of determining”)
    - Concise: “for” or “to” (as in “for determining” or “to determine”)
  - Wordy: “a majority of”
    - Concise: “most”

## EFFECTIVE USE OF TRANSITIONS

Transitional words and phrases show how sentences and ideas are related to each other. Used correctly, they make it easier for readers to follow your argument. The following transitions at or near the beginnings of sentences will make your logic come through clearly and coherently to readers.

- *To show results*—“therefore,” “as a result,” “consequently,” “thus,” “hence.”
- *To show addition*—“moreover,” “furthermore,” “also,” “too,” “besides,” “in addition.”
- *To show similarity*—“likewise,” “also,” “similarly.”

- *To show contrast*—“however,” “but,” “yet,” “still,” “conversely,” “nevertheless,” “on the other hand” (if you have used “on the one hand” previously).
- *To show examples*—“for example,” “for instance,” “specifically,” “as an illustration.”
- *To show sequence or time*—“first,” “second,” “third”; “previously,” “now,” “finally,” “later”; “next,” “then.”
- *To show spatial relations*—“on the east,” “on the west”; “left,” “right”; “close up,” “far away.”

## REPETITION AND PARALLELISM

As the model proposals show, it is often effective to repeat key terms and phrases: “I will pursue research in three areas...; I will travel to X in July in order to...; I will then go to Y so that I can...” The repetition in these sentences helps readers focus on the student’s proposed actions.

## DO’S AND DON’T’S FOR PROPOSALS

There is no universal set of rules for proposal writing. The following insights come straight from the Undergraduate Research Grants Committee (URGC), which is the group of Northwestern faculty that reviews URG applications and makes awards, and reflect some common strengths and weaknesses in proposals. To increase the likelihood of success, you and your advisor should subject your late-stage drafts to scrutiny based on this list.

### **These do’s and don’t’s are more pertinent for students intent on securing a summer grant.**

Remember that the bar for receiving summer funding is significantly higher than the bar for gaining admission to the Senior Thesis Program. That said, all thesis writers eventually confront the challenges implicit in these do’s and don’t’s. Think about all of them even if your sole application will be for admission to the Senior Thesis Program.

### DO’S

- Convey priorities for the sources you want to examine. What comes first and why? Delineate a research agenda, not a wish list. It is okay to be realistic and suggest that you might not get through it all, but avoid “this, this, this, and maybe this if there is time leftover.”
- Mention and document any consultations with people who can enhance the credibility of your research agenda (e.g., archivists, interview subjects). If your project involves arrangements that are easy to make (local, internet, no language barrier), then the URGC has a greater expectation that details will be worked out in time for the proposal. There is no slack cut on the theory that you can eventually make the arrangements with ease.
- Establish a “travel imperative” by exhausting local resources. Between Northwestern and greater Chicago, many sources are already available or can easily be ordered via the library. You should

indicate awareness of what is available and how it can supplement but not fulfill your aims. Also, if most but not all sources can be accessed without travel, then explain why the project simply would not be the same without the distant sources; that is, just how essential to your thesis is the remaining fraction of sources?

- Explain why you need time over the summer. Is it to get a head start on tricky sources? Get through a high volume of material? Work with foreign language sources so you can assess progress in September? Since a first-rate thesis can be completed between September and May of the senior year, you need to explain how *your* thesis is so ambitious that it requires a substantial portion of the summer.

### *DON'T'S*

- Do not incorporate methodologies from other fields merely to seem sophisticated. Half-baked and frivolous interdisciplinarity comes across as superficial pandering or naïvete rather than methodological rigor. It is hard enough to propose a project within one field; avoid unnecessary degrees of difficulty and focus on fundamentals. You can always complicate matters down the road if your research and analysis require it.
- Do not propose research that cannot be done in the time allotted. Your methods point to tasks. Estimate how much time it literally takes to conduct oral history interviews or read legal documents. Your readers will.
- Do not leave readers scratching their heads about your understanding of how archives work or how vast collections can be. It is insufficient to propose visiting an archive or doing research in Gov Docs. You cannot wander through an archive, and “Government Documents” is an umbrella term for a massive amount of material that could occupy an entire career.
- Do not commit yourself to a certain set of findings. While it is okay to favor or expect one, you still need to consider what negative findings would mean. Remember that the committee is investing in questions, not answers.
- Do not take a “shotgun” approach that indicates little consideration of priorities. Pick one case (or a few cases) to study and explain why it is (or they are) representative of a larger whole or interesting in and of itself (or themselves). You can hint at plans for a future grant or fellowship proposal that will allow you to add cases.



Photograph: Courtesy Northwestern University Archives.



## LEARNING FROM MODEL PROPOSALS

The model proposals in this chapter suggest the diversity of topics that you might pursue and exhibit different strategies for convincing readers that a project is both feasible and worthwhile. Each proposal secured summer funding and/or admission to the Senior Thesis Program.

The style and content of these model proposals differ, but what they have in common—and what makes them all successful—are answers to fundamental questions:

- What is the student hoping to find out from the research?
- Why does it matter (i.e., what will it help us better understand)?
- How does the project represent an innovative approach to the topic?
- How will the student actually conduct the research?
- Does the student have the necessary background, skills, and/or contacts to execute the project?

Though these proposals are not perfect, they are excellent models from which to learn. They make clear that there is no single “right” way of presenting your research project. You should neither pick one for replication with your topic nor attempt to force features of each into your own proposal. Instead, read the proposals carefully—along with the annotations—to understand the choices you have and strategies that have worked in the past.

### INTRODUCTION

A good introduction is efficient: it draws readers in while directing attention to the central issues to be explored in the proposed project. You want to “hook” the reader, but not at the expense of clarity and brevity.

- *Anecdotes*—**Casey Kuklick** uses an anecdote to get readers’ attention. For this strategy to work, the vignette or specific event must be highly relevant to the issues the project will explore, and Casey has chosen well: the day of Martin Luther King’s assassination is central to his main questions about the civil rights movement and Robert F. Kennedy.
- *Funnels*—**Arianne Urus** uses the opposite strategy. She starts with a general statement and then gradually zeroes in on her topic. This approach can be especially valuable when readers might need extra background information at the outset.
- *Paradoxes*—By juxtaposing two seemingly contradictory historical realities, **Toku Sakai** helps the reader to visualize the central historical puzzle that his project will investigate. This approach works best when the author can identify and succinctly articulate a tension that a reader can readily grasp.

What makes these examples truly effective, however, is that the authors get to the point right away. The purpose of the project is clear either by the last sentence(s) of the first paragraph or opening of the next.

## BACKGROUND

How much do readers *really* need to know? And, when do they need to know it? Your answers matter: every line devoted to background is a line lost for explaining your questions, methods, and preparation—the things that make your proposal uniquely yours.

- *Strengthening other aspects of the proposal*—Background information can clarify the specific aims and significance of the overall project. **Casey** and **Arianne** focus on the intersection of topics that could easily constitute projects in their own right; however, through careful selection of only the most relevant information (about King and Kennedy, in Casey’s case, and about eighteenth-century gender ideology and the lives of Parisian prostitutes, in Arianne’s case), each guides readers toward understanding why the proposed project will bring together distinct areas of scholarship.
- *Helping readers understand the focus of your project*—“Background” often means describing the historical context, but it can mean other things. In **Hannah Morris’s** case, the broader context of Nazi rhetoric is reasonably well-known; however, it is less obvious why *Der Stürmer*, in particular, should serve as the basis for a research project. By providing information about this publication’s history, content, and appeal, Hannah conveys how a study of this publication can yield unique insights.
- *Providing appropriate historical context*—A section devoted to background information is not always necessary. Since he is dealing with a well-known topic (the American Revolution), **Alex Jarrell** can cover most of the essential historical context in his introductory paragraph. **Toku**, by contrast, cannot assume his reader will know much about the context in which the Japanese constitution was written. Also, he needs to justify his focus on a particular twelve-year period. The background information in his second paragraph addresses both of these issues.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review might seem daunting because you have to summarize and characterize others’ arguments all at once; that is, you need to explain existing scholarship in a framework that sets up the importance of your project.

- *Identifying gaps or contradictions*—**Casey's** topic lends itself to treatment of specific works. He signals the beginning of his literature review with a topic sentence that mentions the “current literature” and effectively juxtaposes historians’ differing interpretations to make the case for a more thorough comparison of King and Kennedy. Similarly, **Toku** identifies a scholarly tendency to focus on Yoshida’s regime, a focus, he argues, that is too narrow to shed light on the historical paradox he aims to explain; however, Toku makes this point in his introduction rather than in a separate section.
- *Bringing different streams into dialogue*—**Arianne** makes the case for the novelty and significance of her topic by situating it as a project that puts different streams of scholarship (gender, ideology, and social history) into dialogue with one another. She weaves her literature review into the background section of her proposal.
- *Building on recent trends*—The huge body of scholarship on the American Revolution cannot be summarized in a short proposal. Although **Alex's** proposal would have benefited from more attention to the literature, he identifies a subset of scholarship (recent trends) and relates his project to them. Moreover, his appendices and bibliography convince readers that he is familiar with relevant works. His aim is not to challenge existing interpretations; rather, he will contribute to our knowledge of the revolutionary experience at the local level.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research questions can be, but need not be, articulated in the form of a question. The manner in which you ultimately choose to articulate your research questions is less important than being clear and specific about (a) what you are trying to find out, and (b) what kinds of information you expect your particular sources to yield. You can see two very different but equally successful approaches in the model proposals.

- *Explicit questions*—**Hannah, Casey, Arianne,** and **Alex** devote a specific paragraph to laying out a series of interrelated questions they will be trying to answer during their research. Readers can easily identify the string of question marks and know that they are at the heart of the proposal.
- *Embedded questions*—**Toku** folds his research questions into the discussion of his sources. Rather than explicitly posing questions, he explains exactly what he expects to find in each set of sources he will examine. This strategy can be particularly effective if you are dealing with disparate types of sources that readers will not be able to connect for themselves.

## METHODS

Collecting and analyzing primary sources are central to the historian's methodology. In proposals, researchers must discuss the kinds of sources they want to gather (e.g., archival documents, microfilm reels, oral history interviews, films), where they are located, how they will be accessed, and how they will help answer research questions. The model proposals rely on a combination of archival and published primary sources.

- *Variety of disparate sources*—Because he seeks to recreate a particular historical moment, **Casey** needs to draw from a variety of sources. He thus takes care to explain the types of sources he will use (personal papers, periodicals, etc.), where they are located (Boston and Indianapolis), and how each will contribute to the project. **Alex** likewise relies on a broad range of sources that, taken together, will help him understand Windham, Connecticut, during the American Revolution. Through appendices, he demonstrates impressive knowledge of archival sources and the legwork he has *already* done in contacting archivists.
- *Particular set of sources*—**Arianne** and **Hannah** identify narrow sets of sources, which allow for an in-depth study of the texts and documents. This creates a challenge: Arianne and Hannah must convince readers that one type of source will yield data from which they can draw meaningful conclusions. They preempt potential concerns by carefully describing the nature of the sources, the kinds of information they contain, and how their eventual analysis will answer their research questions.
- *Local resources*—Sometimes the only way to access essential sources is by travelling to distant archives. **Toku** shows how one can undertake an international project—a thesis about Japanese constitutional debates—without leaving the Chicago area. He discovered a wealth of sources available online and near Northwestern, which he introduces in his methods section and then discusses further, explaining the extra time needed to work through voluminous foreign-language sources. Thus, Toku makes a strong case for summer funding.
- *Alignment of primary sources and research questions*—**Toku's** and **Alex's** proposals exemplify the common overlap between “research questions” and “methods.” After all, the questions researchers ask of sources are part of their methodology. No project can get off the ground until a researcher identifies relevant sources. Sometimes, however, the ideal sources simply do not exist. **Arianne** is interested in the experiences of eighteenth-century Parisian prostitutes, but they rarely left written records of their lives. Arianne nonetheless makes a strong case for relying on police records instead. Just as important, however, she explicitly acknowledges the limitations and pitfalls of such indirect sources.

## PREPARATION

As you read the model proposals, note the connections between projects and preparation. Each student cites coursework, specific skills, and preliminary legwork. Pay particular attention to how these students explain both their deep and proximate preparation to make completion of the project seem likely.

- *Language skills*—**Toku** and **Arianne** put their language proficiency to good use by proposing extensive work in foreign-language sources. **Hannah** acknowledges some potential difficulties reading German sources, but she offers strong evidence of sufficient training. She solidifies her case by appropriately limiting the scope of her project (focusing primarily on front-page stories) and providing an intellectual justification for doing so.
- *Legwork*—**Arianne**, **Casey**, and **Alex** all make clear that they have established contact with the relevant archivists and have been granted permission to work with the collections. In addition to explaining how their faculty advisors will aid them during their research, Arianne and Casey identify other scholars who have agreed to assist them.
- *Experiences beyond the classroom*—While **Hannah** has taken classes in German history, she cites other experiences (e.g., work in Holocaust museums) to demonstrate her long-term interest in the topic and familiarity with the kinds of primary sources one might use. Similarly, **Arianne** explains how a previous internship in New York gave her experience with archival research.

## CONCLUSION

The most important information to convey in the conclusion is how the project fits in with your larger goals and what the outcome of the research will be.

- *Inevitability*—The authors of all of these proposals demonstrate how their projects represent a logical culmination of their undergraduate interests, experiences, and coursework. **Hannah**, **Arianne**, **Casey**, and **Alex** are explicit about their intention to write a senior thesis.
- *Future plans*—**Arianne** has already decided that she intends to pursue a graduate degree. An equally legitimate goal is the type that **Hannah** articulates: she hopes to use this research experience as a way to explore a possible longer-term commitment to scholarly research.

## BIBLIOGRAPHIES AND SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

The model proposals include bibliographies and appendices as additional evidence of preparation that would take up too much room in the space-limited body. Note the techniques used by the authors of the model proposals.

- *Listing primary and secondary sources separately*—All of these proposals separate lists of secondary scholarship from the primary and/or archival sources that the researchers intend to use so that readers can quickly assess the student’s familiarity with existing scholarship and primary sources at the heart of these projects. Given the nature of **Toku’s** project, he wisely further divides his sources into English- and Japanese-language sources.
- *Keeping the bibliography appropriately sized*—**Alex’s** bibliography provides a good model for topics for which an enormous amount of literature exists. **Casey** uses the excellent strategy of including a selected list of primary and archival sources. While your working bibliography may be quite extensive when you submit a research proposal, include only the most relevant materials in the proposal’s bibliography.
- *Using appendices to document contacts and provide extra details*—**Alex** includes correspondence with archivists, which provides evidence of both archival contacts and the types of sources available. **Casey** and **Arianne** both use appendices to offer additional information about their sources and to document contacts with archivists and other scholars.

## DEPARTMENTAL THESIS PROPOSAL: HANNAH MORRIS

Hannah's details demonstrate that she has thought carefully about her focus. Emphasizing how she will correlate changes in rhetoric with political and military developments in Germany, she establishes the significance of her research. Her focus on rhetoric in one publication makes the study feasible; her attention to its relationship to larger stories makes the study significant and relevant to historians' larger questions about Nazism's appeal.

With a focus on one publication, Hannah uses the background section to provide more to convince readers that a study of this particular periodical can shed light on the appeal of anti-Semitic rhetoric. As a first step, Hannah establishes the influence and wide circulation of the paper and gives a sense of its contents. These few details confirm that Hannah has done real legwork.

Josef Goebbel's infamous propaganda techniques and unyielding control over the Third Reich's media outlets has been closely studied in order to understand how National Socialism easily acquired a nation's support. While Goebbel's outlandish attacks on the subversive enemy and Hitler's roaring speeches seduced the German population and solidified an anti-Semitic stronghold, only Julius Streicher and his notorious weekly paper, *Der Stürmer*, could cause die-hard Nazis to disassociate themselves from such a brand of Nazism. Its erotic imagery and deeply anti-Semitic quality appealed above all to the lower-class masses, boasting a high circulation from the Weimar Republic years through the end of the war. Because *Der Stürmer* sought to cement the concept of the parasitic Jew causing Germany's misfortune, it provided a base for the escalation of anti-Semitic actions.

I would thus like to examine how this weekly paper evolved from its original purpose and how or if it escalated anti-Semitic rhetoric as it became clear that the Nazis would lose their war to the "enemy." In this exploration of *Der Stürmer*, I will read, examine, and compare the articles and cartoons from the years of its publication from 1923 through 1945. By first analyzing the paper's entire progression from a marginal to an influential publication, I can later more critically examine the period of my greater interest – the war years. I will begin in 1937, right before Nazi Germany began its expansion into Europe when *Der Stürmer*'s circulation was at its height. Through tracing the nuances of *Der Stürmer*'s rhetorical development as a parallel to the rise and fall of the Nazi party, I hope to expose how such a low-brow newspaper could transfix and hold a generation of readers who would become perpetrators of the cause.

First published in April 1923, *Der Stürmer* eventually became the "one paper Hitler himself claimed to read from cover to cover."<sup>1</sup> While other Nazi-published newspapers like *Völkischer Beobachter* and *Das Reich* covered world news for the Nazi "elite," Julius Streicher and his *Stürmer* did not seek the higher ground, nor did it aim to meet journalistic standards. Through the paper's virulent hatred, erotic cartoons, and articles about *Rassenschande* (miscegenation) trials, Germany's least educated and lower classes found a comfort in the NSDAP. By 1937, the Nuremberg-based paper boasted a circulation of 500,000, a number still misleading because many pedestrians could peruse the contents through special window-displays called "*Stürmerkasten*."<sup>2</sup>

Scholars have chronicled Julius Streicher's public persona and his rise within the NSDAP. Randall L. Bytwerk's book, *Julius Streicher*, confines *Der Stürmer* to a product of the editor – how *he* became the leading Jew-baiter. The book aims to find the impact of the paper, rather

Although Nazi propaganda is not the object of Hannah's proposed thesis, she employs familiar examples of Nazi rhetoric (Goebbels and Hitler) to introduce her research subject. In doing so, she also establishes a compelling contrast between scholarly interest in those examples and the relative lack of attention to the popular publication she proposes to study. This opening strategy helps readers anticipate the more detailed discussion in the literature review.

Hannah signals the beginning of her literature review with a topic sentence about what "scholars have chronicled."

<sup>1</sup> Bytwerk, *Julius Streicher*, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ryszka, "The Leading Newspapers in the Third Reich," in *Why Didn't The Press Shout?*, p. 302-3.

than the goal of the rhetoric. Dennis Showalter explains in his book, *Little Man, WHAT NOW?*, how *Der Stürmer* fits into a historical timeline of anti-Semitism, detailing each incarnation of the stereotyped Jew throughout its publication in the Weimar era. However, no scholar has traced the purpose of *Der Stürmer* and method of attack in correlation with various periods of the Nazis' power – from its existence as a *völkisch* cult through Hitler's *Machtergreifung* and the period of Total War. The scarcity of research on the topic is most likely due to the nature of the "unscholarly" material, but by examining the rhetoric, article topics, and cartoon subjects, we can begin to understand how "ordinary men" of Nuremberg and Germany could believe in the illusions of the Third Reich.

By breaking down her main question into a series of "research questions," Hannah tells the reader precisely what she will be looking for in her primary source base. Such information is crucial for a successful proposal.

Hannah establishes a gap in the literature that her project aims to fill, but wisely, she does not leave the reader hanging. Instead she clearly explains what filling this gap will help us better understand.

As I study the development of *Der Stürmer*, I will be asking several questions. Firstly, how does the NSDAP's promotion of anti-Semitism, through the organ of *Der Stürmer*, change? Does the anti-Semitism take a different form depending upon the stage of the Nazis' power or circumstance of the times like the Depression? What is the image of the regime that ordinary people saw? More specifically, how did *Der Stürmer*, or Nazi-supporters for that matter, publicly handle their imminent defeat in the war? How did the paper continue promoting anti-Semitism when the Jews had long been purged from the readers' society? Lastly, why did the paper's circulation drop dramatically during the war? Did Julius Streicher's fallout from the NSDAP's leadership noticeably affect the publication's output or circulation? Is there evidence of any censorship imposed upon Streicher?

This discussion of other sources suggests other directions Hannah might take as her research develops. Her priorities are clear, but she has explored the topic enough to impress readers with her awareness of supplementary research to round out her main agenda.

In order to conduct this research, I will rely heavily upon *Der Stürmer* itself, which is available in its entirety on microfilm at Northwestern University's library. The front page stories and cartoons will be the focus of the research, not only because there are thousands of pages to read, but also because the front pages are what drew in its readers. In order to gather evidence about Julius Streicher and his paper's readership, I will examine the transcript of his trial at the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg, read interviews conducted with Streicher, as well examine a compilation of readers' letters to the editor. I will also search for studies about the paper's circulation numbers and readership in order to understand the German public's reception to *Der Stürmer*.

Hannah displays knowledge of her sources—both in terms of availability and the extent of materials. To make the project feasible, she will focus on front-page issues, a decision that has an intellectual justification.

My qualifications and familiarity with Holocaust studies have prepared me to succeed in completing a senior thesis. I have excelled in relevant coursework like *History of the Holocaust* and *German History 1789-1989* with Professor Peter Hayes, and I speak highly-proficient German, despite only beginning to study the language eighteen months ago. Though I am not fluent and will have initial difficulty in reading issues of *Der Stürmer*, I am certain that with practice along with continuing to study the language for my minor, my German reading abilities will improve. I just returned from studying abroad in Germany, where I spent the summer at Berlin's Goethe Institute and the following six months at the University of Tübingen. Throughout the eight months, I actively sought to learn Holocaust history. I visited Sachsenhausen with a Holocaust survivor, took a class in German called *Nationalsozialistische Verfolgung und Vernichtung im deutschen*

Hannah's proposal is a terrific example of explaining how one's limitations will not derail the project. Hannah concedes that she has only recently begun studying German, but she offers compelling evidence of sufficient background and experience to complete the project as proposed.



*Südwesten 1933-1945* (Nazi Persecution and Annihilation in Southwest Germany), and gave a presentation in German about persecution between 1933-1938. By the end of this summer, I will have also worked at two Holocaust museums. Two summers ago, I interned at Holocaust Museum Houston, where I gave daily tours to a wide-range of visitors. This summer, I have earned an internship in the photo archives department of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. I will have the opportunity to work with rare documents and photos and have access to primary sources that will undoubtedly be useful for my thesis research. After three months at the national museum, I will be more comfortable doing research in archives and using German in a historical context.

Writing a senior thesis will be central to my development as a history student and to my experience at Northwestern. Not only will I learn a more specific and in-depth aspect to Holocaust history, I will also use a medium that I love – the newspaper. Furthermore, this project will help me determine exactly how I want to continue in the course of my life – whether I want to continue high-level research in graduate school or whether I choose another avenue in life. Either way, I know this year-long experience will be invaluable, academically and personally.

Hannah concludes by emphasizing her plans to write a senior thesis, her passion for her subject, and the usefulness of the research for helping her make career plans.

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## URG PROPOSAL: CASEY KUKLICK

Casey begins by indicating both the kinds of **sources** he will use (archives & newspapers) and the **purpose** of the project (to reconstruct a significant historical moment). He fleshes out the details later, but he recognizes that readers look for a succinct statement at the outset.

This sentence offers a clear answer to one of the specific questions readers will have: what contribution to knowledge will this project make?

This paragraph begins well by emphasizing the contrast that Casey introduced at the top. In its careful framing of information, the paragraph also sets up the interpretive solution that Casey will propose.

On the night of April 4th 1968, Martin Luther King was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee. On that same night, halfway across the country in Indianapolis, Democratic presidential hopeful Robert F. Kennedy was preparing to give a campaign speech in a mostly black, working class neighborhood. When he learned of King's death, however, Kennedy chose to inform the crowd of the assassination and delivered an impromptu, inspired address imploring the nation and the black community to emulate King and embrace wisdom and peace in the face of violence and disorder. The speech, in effect, represented the potential coming together of two powerful movements in the late 1960s—the liberal Democratic Party and the civil rights movement—which offered the country the hope for renewal in an era of turmoil.

My project will use archival and newspaper research to reconstruct what I consider to be a transcendent moment in American political culture in the late 1960s. This research will contribute to a greater understanding of the growing synergy of Kennedy's campaign and the civil rights movement in its later stages. Robert Kennedy's speech on April 4th, and the crowd's response to it, tellingly reveals this fusion. I will begin my project immediately following the end of Spring Quarter and continue it throughout the summer, traveling to both Indianapolis and to Boston.

1968 saw both political and social upheaval in the United States. In the midst of anti-war and King-inspired anti-poverty protests at home, Robert Kennedy's campaign sought to unite poor, black, and otherwise oppressed voters in order to secure the Democratic nomination for the presidency. At a time when these voters were disenchanted with U.S. policy both in Vietnam and at home with Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty, Kennedy managed to overcome their misgivings about politics and his own political nervousness to ignite the support of an enthusiastic base. By the time of his assassination in June of that year, Kennedy had strong prospects for the Presidency.

By contrast, Martin Luther King's status in the black community was under fire. Various elements of the black community, such as the Black Panthers and SNCC, were starting to speak out against King's non-violent approach to civil rights. Further, King's gradual shift to anti-war and anti-poverty campaigns did not have the same effect on the American public as his earlier civil rights campaigns had had. His disappointments were manifested most in a march in Memphis that turned into an embarrassing display of looting and violence in what was supposed to be a trademark non-violent King protest.

Despite the seemingly opposite directions these two political leaders were moving, in reality their goals and visions for the future of American society were converging at the time of King's death. RFK's Indianapolis speech highlights this convergence of ideals. The fact that Kennedy was willing to talk to the crowd about King and his legacy reveals his growing empathy with the black community. In addition, he

Casey's use of familiar events helps orient readers. The juxtaposition establishes a compelling tension that guides readers' attention toward the central issues of the project.

After setting the scene, Casey needs to immediately give readers a sense of the project's significance. This sentence also gives insight into Casey's interpretive framework.

Readers are likely familiar with many aspects of Casey's topic, so why does he devote two full paragraphs to "background"? Since his project aims to offer a new interpretation of familiar events, he begins this section with a paragraph of relevant facts for each of the two topics he brings together. This brief historical context is essential for considering the interpretive framework he articulates two paragraphs later.

relates to their feelings of vulnerability by invoking memories of his own pain felt after his brother's death. His words resonated with them, conveyed not forcefully or high-handedly, but with a sense of real urgency and conviction. That speech, and that moment Kennedy presided over, symbolized a larger feeling of "what might have been" had Kennedy and King lived to lead America into what turned out to be the most turbulent years of the 20th century, both at home and abroad.

The current literature does not adequately address the convergence of Kennedy and King's platforms in the late 1960s. Biographies of both men mention ideological similarities between the two, but fail to investigate simultaneously the parallel moral motivations of each man on behalf of the poor, oppressed, and anti-war constituencies to which each man was appealing. Much is made in Arthur Schlesinger's RFK biography, for instance, of Kennedy's admiration for and political advocacy on behalf of American Indians, Mexicans, and working class whites. Similarly, in *At Canaan's Edge*, Taylor Branch chronicles King's insistence on including these same minority groups in the Poor People's Campaign, much to the dismay of SCLC workers who wanted the movement to remain primarily black. In *From Civil Rights to Human Rights*, Thomas Jackson argues that King's movement was increasingly radical on behalf of economic and social justice for the poor. I contend that Kennedy's campaign, too, was moving along the same ideological lines, and that these similarities are important in understanding the evolution of American political culture during the time. Hypothetically, their increasingly radical viewpoints, if merged into coherent policy, could have changed the direction of both the Vietnam War abroad and the pace of LBJ's Great Society programs at home. With regard to the speech especially, prevailing wisdom holds that "Indianapolis was silent" in the days following King's assassination, presumably because of Kennedy's influence. But Richard Pierce claims in *Polite Protest* that the Indianapolis black community is historically unique in its utilization of nonaggressive protest for gains in civil and economic rights. How does this notion fit in with the reaction to Kennedy's speech in the aftermath of the assassination?

My project seeks to recreate the moment in time in Indianapolis when Bobby Kennedy presumably inspired a poor, black crowd to remain calm in the wake of a highly personal and community tragedy. Was there really a comparative calm in Indianapolis in the days following King's assassination? If so, was it because of Kennedy's speech, and how did it take advantage of the "space" opened by Pierce's claim of black Indianapolis' relative passivity? How do Kennedy's evolving political and personal platform, the King assassination, and the nature of the crowd combine to provide a distinctive lens from which to investigate the nature of both men's converging ideals and their potential effect on American political culture in the 1960s? How and why does Kennedy's speech, and the crowd's reaction to it, highlight his potential ability to assume King's "moral mantle" in the black community? Kennedy was uniquely equipped on that April night in 1968 to reach out to poor blacks by virtue of his ideological similarities with King. Fundamentally, this is the assertion that my project seeks to investigate.

*The opening of this paragraph exemplifies the smart use of limited space. The first sentence of Casey's "research questions" clarifies what he seeks to accomplish with his research. He builds on the momentum he established with his earlier, more general statement, then breaks down this larger purpose into a series of specific questions that help readers envision the kinds of information he will look for.*

*The first two sentences of the literature review not only identify the "holes" in existing research, but also suggest how the proposed research goes beyond this research. The rest of the paragraph highlights the many contradictions in the literature. By showing how scholars have not resolved questions about political affinities between King and Kennedy, Casey implies how he might propose an alternative interpretation—a strategy that leads into the project's specific research questions and methods.*

I will pursue my research in three areas, using the secondary literature of the civil rights movement, black Indianapolis, and King and Kennedy themselves as tentative interpretative frameworks. I will explore Kennedy's ideas and aspirations for change in American society at the Kennedy Library in Boston, which holds his campaign papers from 1968 and oral histories of his staff members. King's papers and correspondence detailing his evolving platform for social and economic justice will be accessed at the Howard Gotlieb Archives at Boston University. In Indianapolis itself, I will research databases of black Indianapolis and national newspapers as well as visit the Indianapolis Historical Society, which has erected a commemorative marker at the site of Kennedy's speech. By compiling and contrasting materials from these three archival bodies, I can construct a historical narrative that will, as I have mentioned, contribute to our overall understanding of the potential direction of American political culture in the late 1960s.

*In the methods section, Casey demonstrates his knowledge of relevant sources, where they are located, and what types of materials are available at each location. Before actually conducting research, no one knows for sure what he/she will find, but Casey shows that he has identified multiple promising collections.*

I have prepared for this project as a history major by taking many relevant courses, including: 20th Century U.S. History, Civil Rights and Black Liberation, Political Parties and Elections, Problems of Cities, Revolution and Social Change, and Black Activist Debates. I have established contacts with Professors Thomas Sugrue at the University of Pennsylvania and Richard Pierce at Notre Dame. I have also contacted various archivists at each site I intend to visit. Finally, I intend to use this research next year to produce an honors thesis in history on the speech, possibly expanding on its implications and meanings for civil rights and politics in the 1960s.

*Casey's "preparation" is effective because the course titles show that he is well-qualified to evaluate the materials he will examine. He summarizes essential legwork by noting his contact with archivists and scholars who can help advance his agenda.*

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*A brief explanation of who Professors Sugrue and Pierce are (e.g., are they experts on this topic?) would have added greater clarity, but Casey has nonetheless strengthened his proposal by indicating the ways he has independently sought out assistance—a trait that increases the likelihood of completion.*

## URG PROPOSAL: ARIANNE URUS

*Arianne takes a “funnel” approach of introducing her topic with a general statement about gender ideology in the period and then transitioning to her specific research focus. This strategy works well for establishing the context and orienting the reader.*

The Enlightenment marks a pivotal era in the movement away from the traditional view of women as unruly temptresses toward the emergence of more ‘modern’ constructions of women as, above all else, chaste wives and mothers. French writers—most notably, Jean-Jacques Rousseau—heralded a shift in constructions of femininity in a novel way; Rousseau popularized the view of women as a collective, and talked about the nature of women in general, rather than simply women of a certain social status. At the same time, however, an influx of young single women migrated to Paris in search of work in a labor market that quickly became oversaturated, leaving them no choice but to turn to prostitution, either periodically or permanently, to make ends meet. My project investigates how the change in gender ideology of the eighteenth century affected the social realities of Parisian prostitutes from 1750 to 1789. My research will take place in Paris at the *Archives de la Bastille* from mid-June to early August, and seeks to better understand the relationship between gender ideology and social reality.

*These two sentences are a fine example of an introductory statement of the purpose and nature of the research—two things the reader will want to understand right away.*

*In Arianne’s “background,” she conveys broad knowledge that helps situate the specifics of her project (which she addresses in more detail in the next paragraph). This strategy not only provides pertinent information for readers, but it also demonstrates that she understands the period and context well enough to make a meaningful contribution with her research.*

In the eighteenth century prostitutes were increasingly considered to be outside the sphere of womanhood. While earlier conceptions held that prostitutes, like all women, were slaves to their libidos, the Enlightenment transformed these ideas into charges of deviance. As the century progressed, more and more Parisians began to talk about ideas of femininity in relation to the public sphere as newsheets and pamphlets on the subject proliferated and literacy rates in the city increased. This was especially true in light of the Diamond Necklace Affair of the 1780s, when a prostitute impersonated Marie Antoinette, raising questions about the place of women in the public sphere.

*These details establish the significance of the project. Arianne makes good use of numbers to show that prostitution was an important phenomenon in this time and place, while preparing readers for her particular interest and methodology—examining the lives of individual women.*

Meanwhile, contemporary writer Louis-Sébastien Mercier observed that there were at least 30,000 prostitutes in the city who thought that laws such as Louis XIV’s 1684 ordinance on vice did not apply to them.<sup>1</sup> In the late 1760s 2,069 women were arrested for prostitution, and by 1789 around 13 percent of females aged between 15 and 50 were engaged in sex work.<sup>2</sup> Elisabeth Julie Lacroix, for example, was a 49-year-old woman arrested in 1778, who had been abandoned by her husband, out of work four to five days, and without food for one day. Her story is replicated countless times, and it is women with stories like these who I wish to study. There is a wealth of secondary literature on the topic of prostitution in eighteenth-century Paris, but nowhere are the changes in gender ideology and the social realities of prostitutes analyzed within a collective framework. Current scholarship tells us that prostitutes were seen as outside the sphere of womanhood, and, as consequence, they are not sufficiently treated in studies of changes in gender ideology. Indeed, historians have argued that prostitutes were part of a marginalized group to whom the standards of femininity did not apply. Historians have generated extensive scholarship illuminating the importance of Rousseau’s writings on women.<sup>3</sup> Others exposed what contemporary Parisians were thinking about prostitutes and prostitution,

*This literature review efficiently acknowledges the existing literature while still pointing toward the project’s particular focus. Arianne might have started a new paragraph here to signal the beginning of the literature review.*

and Erica-Marie Benabou has written a thorough study of the social realities of prostitutes' lives.<sup>4</sup> Most of this work, however, fails to bring together women's history with the history of gender ideologies. Feminist approaches to prostitution stress the need to recognize the institution within the wider context of gender ideology, social organization, and economic developments; I propose to do exactly this in the case of eighteenth-century Paris.<sup>5</sup> I will merge the two separate spheres of literature on the subject to provide a more complex and nuanced understanding of the relationship between the new gender ideology and prostitutes' lives. My approach aligns with the current direction of the historiography, that is, to reincorporate 'the social' in eighteenth-century France, and I hope that my research will be on the forefront of this new scholarship.<sup>6</sup>

Arianne properly acknowledges the limitations of available sources, but then makes a good case, in the following paragraph, for why these sources are nonetheless useful for her project.

Bringing two bodies of literature or lines of thought into dialogue is an excellent strategy for showing how the research will contribute to knowledge. Arianne's innovation in this case is the merging of social and intellectual history.

I will travel to Paris this summer and closely analyze police records in the *Archives de la Bastille* at the *Bibliothèque de l' Arsenal* to explore the intersection of gender ideology and the social reality at the ground level. Prostitutes did not leave behind their own writings, so I must rely on the police records – based on daily interactions between police and prostitutes—as a medium through which to gain access to their lives. By reading police reports on prostitution I expect not only to learn about what happened to prostitutes on a daily basis, but also to determine the degree to which Rousseauian ideas trickled down to the police, and possibly the prostitutes themselves. Were the police exposed to the changing gender ideology, and did they invoke these new ideas in their own discourse? If so, did it affect the way they wrote about prostitutes? Did they try to enforce these new ideas on them? How much control did prostitutes have of their own activities, vis-à-vis brothel proprietors and the police? Did these women, at the bottom of society, challenge the monolithic discourse on women articulated by the male literary elite and invoked by the police? If the police did not see the prostitutes as within the sphere of womanhood, could they live in a freer or less restrained fashion than their more reputable counterparts?

Arianne rightly recognizes that her sources are familiar to, and much used by, experts in the field. Here, she seizes an opportunity to both subtly acknowledge that fact and distinguish her work from that of others.

In the first sentences of this paragraph, Arianne shows that she has the language skills and experience needed for her research. She demonstrates knowledge of how to accomplish archival research (e.g., the importance of letters of introduction and of contacting archivists in advance). To convey the understanding that she will need help along the way, she notes that she has made contact with someone working in this archive who will be there at the same time.

To answer these questions, I will mine the police records in the *Archives de la Bastille* (please see appendix for a specific list). Rather than approaching the documents to learn about prostitution as an institution, I will approach the documents with a mind to discover the realities of prostitutes' lives through their daily interactions with the police. The *Bastille* documents are more than simple records of arrests. Indeed, eighteenth-century Paris witnessed an information-gathering craze in which police spies gathered comprehensive information reports on various segments of the population; for prostitutes these included anecdotes describing daily events, notes on the habits, appearance, requests, and sometimes conversation of their clientele, as well as short biographies of the women. Records such as these from at least seven brothels in the 1750s and 1760s survive in the *Archives de la Bastille*. In conducting my social study I will examine materials I have already identified as potentially useful and evaluate these women seriously as social actors.

While the previous sentence spoke to the experts in the field, this summary of the information contained in the police records enables the non-specialist to understand why such documents are viable sources for this kind of project.

I took a research seminar with graduate student Britt Petersen on the Old Regime in France in which I specifically studied prostitution, and I have also taken classes in both eighteenth and twentieth-century French

history at Rice and Northwestern universities. I can read, write, and speak French comfortably, and was pleased to participate in the Rencontres Internationales des Jeunes program—an all-expenses paid trip to Paris awarded by the Chicago French Consulate—last summer, which allowed me to experience French culture firsthand. My advisor, Professor Sarah Maza, has written a letter of introduction to Bruno Blasselle, the director of the archives on my behalf, and he has agreed to let me work there. I have also been in contact with historian Lisa Graham, who has extensive experience working with the sources I am interested in at the *Archives de la Bastille*. She will be conducting research in the *Arsenal* this summer, and has offered to meet with me while I am there. I am therefore prepared to spend time on my own living and conducting research in Paris. I also have experience conducting archival research, which I gained as an intern for the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation last summer where I researched the history of a block in the East Village at the New York City Municipal Archives. This skill has whetted my appetite to do more archival work and has acculturated me to the trials and rewards of such an endeavor.

This project fits into my academic career because I will use the summer research to write a senior thesis next year. I intend to pursue a graduate degree in history in the future, and hope to find a career that will allow me to continue studying the lives of women who have traditionally been relegated to the margins of history.

*This succinct conclusion nicely establishes what the end product of this project will be and why it is important to Arianne's career goals.*

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**ARCHIVES DE LA BASTILLE AT THE BIBLIOTHÈQUE DE L'ARSENAL**  
**RECORDS OF INTEREST**

1. 10,234
  - a. 4ième cahier (1 janvier 1752-8 mai 1753)
  - b. 5ième cahier (9 mai 1753- 15 juillet 1754)
  - c. 6ième cahier (16 juillet 1754-30 septembre 1756)
  - d. 7ième cahier (1 octobre 1756- 10 février 1757)
2. 10235-10237
  - a. daily papers for Lieutenant de Police
3. 10,238-10,242
  - a. (bulletins rédigés par l'inspecteur de police Meusnier sur la vie des filles galantes de Paris les plus remarquées, 1749-1758)
4. 10,243
  - a. notes, rapports, et papiers de l'inspecteur de police Meusnier, chargé de la partie des moeurs; notes sure la ville galantes de Paris, 1748-1755
5. 10, 244
  - a. notes, rapports, et papiers de l'inspecteur de police Meusnier, chargé de la partie des moeurs
  - b. 1ième cahier
    - i. quelques aventures galantes (1750-1754)
6. *Rapports sur les prêtres débauchés*, Arsenal, Bastille mss. 10246
  - a. Brothel reports focusing on the clergy
7. 10,248
  - a. notes, rapports, et papiers de l'inspecteur de police Meusnier, chargé de la partie des moeurs; papiers de l'inspecteur Meusnier de son successeur à la surveillance des moeurs, l'inspecteur Marais
  - b. 1ieme cahier
    - i. surveillance des particuliers. Aventures galantes. Signalements (1750-1757)
  - c. 2ième cahier

- i. notes de l'inspecteur Meusnier sur les plaints et réclamations portées à la Lieutenant de police (1749-1757)
- 8. 10,252-10,253
  - a. des rapports venus des maîtresses de maisons de débauche
  - b. 1<sup>ière</sup> cahier
    - i. rapports des inspecteurs de police charges de la partie des moeurs, particulièrement des inspecteurs Meusnier et Marais, sur les "petites maisons scituées aux environs de Paris, avec les noms des propriétaires et de ceux qui les occupant (1749-1758)
  - c. 3<sup>ième</sup> cahier
    - i. rapports des inspecteurs de police charges de la partie de moeurs, particulièrement des inspecteurs Meusnier et Marais, sur la vie privée de quelques gentilshommes et hauts personnages des Paris (1749-1771)
    - ii. 4<sup>ième</sup> cahier
      - 1. rapports adressés au Lieutenant général de police par les maîtresses de maisons de débauche (1752-1755)
  - d. *Rapports venus des maîtresses de maisons de débauches*, Bastille mss. 10252-53.
    - i. Two boxes of material from the Bastille, now kept at the Arsenal.
      - 1. Arsenal, Bastille mss. 10252, 120
        - a. Inspectors reported on themselves and other police agents fairly casually
    - ii. Arsenal, Bastille mss. 10253, 19.
      - 1. October 1757 letter to the General Inspector of Police from a brothel proprietor complaining that Inspector Marais visited too frequently
  - e. *Rapport d'inspecteurs de police sur les aventures galant*, Arsenal, Bastille, unpaginated mss. 10252, 35
- 9. 10256, 10259-10267
  - a. les sodomites
- 10. 11069-12149
  - a. Dossiers de prisonniers
- 11. 12692-12695
  - a. Salpêtrière 1719-1765

## CORRESPONDENCE

From Bruno Blasselle, director of the archives at the *Arsenal*:

Chère madame,

Nous accueillerons bien volontiers mademoiselle Urus cet été. Nous lui établirons une carte de lecteur et elle aura accès aux collections de la bibliothèque. Veuillez agréer, chère madame, l'expression de ma considération distinguée.

Bruno Blasselle

Directeur de la bibliothèque de l'Arsenal

[bruno.blasselle@bnf.fr](mailto:bruno.blasselle@bnf.fr)

*M. Blasselle agreed to accommodate me in the archives this summer.*

From Professor Lisa J. Graham, associate professor of history and department chair at Haverford College, who will be working at the *Archives de la Bastille* at the *Arsenal* this summer:

Dear Arianne:

You have selected an ambitious and interesting topic for your senior thesis and I definitely think you could find some relevant sources over the summer. [...] If you make it to Paris this summer, send me an email and I would be happy to meet you. I tend to work at the *Arsenal* pretty regularly.

Regards,

Professor Graham

## WEINBERG GRANT PROPOSAL: TOKU SAKAI

### Introduction

The Japanese's constitution's Article 9, the famous "no-war" clause, renounced war as a means of resolving international dispute. By vouching to never maintain land, sea, or air forces, Japan had, in effect, given up the prospect of re-militarization for good.<sup>1</sup> Yet today there are 239,000 active Japanese military units operating in Japan under the guise of a Self Defense Force with an annual budget of just over \$50 billion. The Japanese Self Defense Force is larger in size and spending than all of Great Britain's military units combined.<sup>2</sup> To this day, the entire constitution has never been changed.

This study focuses on the first twelve years of Article 9, from 1947 to 1959. These years are crucial because they encompass the time period when the outbreak of the Korean War led the United States to drastically re-prioritize their objectives in Japan.<sup>3</sup> To thwart the Communist threat, under the order and supervision of the American forces, Japan broke from post-war policy and went from having absolutely no army to one of 75,000.<sup>4</sup> These twelve years also encompass the change in office of three key prime ministers, Shigeru Yoshida, Ichiro Hatoyama, and Nobusuke Kishi, the last two of whom departed from Yoshida's stance on permanent demilitarization and aggressively pursued re-militarization.<sup>5</sup>

Previous scholarship has focused on Yoshida's regime but neglects to analyze the changes in discourse and rhetoric made by his succeeding Prime Ministers. This project thus aims to fill the gaps in this literature. Because today's pro-revision discourse shows such strong similarity to those of the 1950s, answering how and why the calls for revision were defeated during Hatoyama and Kishi's regimes will contribute to the historical literature on post-war Japan and shed light on the current debates on revision.

### Methodology

To address these questions, the project will analyze the changes in Japanese and American discourse over the stated 12 year span and the

*Toku recognizes the importance of explaining the project's time frame to the reader, explaining that this selection of dates has a genuine intellectual justification.*

*The introduction sets up a provocative historical and narrative tension for readers: the contradiction between the Japanese constitution and the political reality of their military.*

*Even though Toku uses headings to organize the proposal, he also uses strong topic sentences and well-unified paragraphs to help readers easily find the key points they will be looking for.*

*Toku uses one of several possible strategies for establishing the significance of the study—in this case by connecting it with current events and debates.*

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<sup>1</sup> Dower, John W. *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*. New York: New Press, 1999. p.82

<sup>2</sup> Chinen, Mark A. "Article 9 of the Constitution of Japan and the Use of Procedural and Substantive Heuristics for Consensus." *Michigan Journal of International Law*. 27 (55) (February 2006): 59

<sup>3</sup> Dower, John W. *Empire and Aftermath: Yoshida Shigeru and the Japanese Experience, 1878-1954*, Cambridge: Council on East Asian Studies. Harvard University, 1979. p. 378

<sup>4</sup> Moore, Ray A. and Donald L. Robinson. *Partners for Democracy: Crafting the New Japanese State Under MacArthur*. New York: Oxford University Press. 2002. p. 3

<sup>5</sup> Gordon, Andrew. *Postwar Japan As History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993. p.18

continuity implied by the survival of Article 9. In order to analyze the discourse of Japanese politicians, I plan to examine the correspondence of Prime Ministers Hatoyama and Kishi. These sources are available in electronic form at the National Diet Library. Changes in American discourse will be monitored by following the statements of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles in declassified letters, telegraphs, and memoirs found in Northwestern's Government Information archives. In order to investigate what, if any, impact the emerging discourse on national security had on Japanese public opinion, I will also investigate Op-Eds and Letters to the Editor published in the Yomiuri Shimbun, one of Japan's major national newspapers, which is available at the University of Chicago Library as a searchable electronic database and at the Center for Research in the form of microfilm. This work will be the basis of a honors thesis in History.

*Toku shows good familiarity with local resources—one of the keys to a successful grant proposal.*

*This is a model example of a proposal that will employ different types of sources. Toku expertly conveys both the availability and accessibility of the relevant sources as well as the purpose of each and how they will contribute to the overall purpose of the thesis project.*

### **Proposal For Summer Work in Evanston/Chicago**

While living in Evanston, I will be within walking or a short train ride distance to all my sources. The University of Chicago and the Center for Research possess extensive archives of Japanese newspapers and Allied occupation documents dating back to 1945. Northwestern University has an impressive collection of declassified documents pertaining to U.S.-Japanese relations between 1945-1965 and the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration has a branch in Chicago where I can view microfilm containing correspondence between American and Japanese diplomats during 1947-1959. The bulk of my time however will be spent getting through the archival records in Japanese. I recently returned from a full-year abroad, 3 months of which have been spent as a Legal Intern in Tokyo and 9 months in Kyoto where I took classes on the Constitution and Japanese History with Japanese students at Kyoto University. During this time, I acquired key familiarity with the constitutional and historical issues at the heart of the Article 9 revision debate as well as in-depth understanding of the workings of the Japanese Diet. I am now fully proficient in the Japanese language and can competently read all the mentioned sources in Japanese. However, getting through Japanese primary sources still takes a staggering amount of patience and time. The summer is the only time I can conduct such thorough research in a foreign language. Lastly, because I was in Japan for most of the year, I need some time to get further acquainted with the historical scholarship about this time period and topic. The selected secondary sources are all essential readings that will help position my research and findings so that they will be in dialogue with the Historical scholarship.

*This proposal is a terrific example of an argument for funding a researcher's time (as opposed to, say, a researcher's need to travel to access materials). Even though most of the source materials are available locally, the author makes a good case for summer funding because of the amount of time required to conduct the research in a foreign language.*

*Toku's argument for funding has already shown how this project is an extension of his undergraduate interests. Thus, he concludes simply by emphasizing the contribution that his project can make to the field.*

An analysis of how political discourse on re-militarization was taken by the public and American officials only a decade after the end of World War II is a fascinating opportunity to investigate the roots of the Article 9 debate. At a time when the actual revision, if not complete elimination, of Article 9 is a realistic possibility, this research has incredible applicability not only in understanding the past, but in fully grasping the controversy today.

### ***Primary Sources in English***

Foreign Relations of the United States 1946 – 1960 (FRUS).

Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, available at Northwestern University Library

Records of the U.S. Department of State Relating to Political Relations with Japan 1930 – 1959 available in microfilm at the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (Chicago)

### ***Primary Sources in Japanese***

Yomiuri Shimbun 1945 – 1965 available at the University of Chicago Library

Yoshida Shigeru's correspondence with his cabinet can be obtained in digital form at the National Diet Library

Ichiro Hatoyama's correspondence with his cabinet can be obtained in digital form at the National Diet Library

Nobusuke Kishi's correspondence with his cabinet can be obtained in digital form at the National Diet Library

### ***Secondary Sources:***

Chinen, Mark A. "Article 9 of the Constitution of Japan and the Use of Procedural and Substantive Heuristics for Consensus." *Michigan Journal of International Law*. 27 (55) (February 2006)

Dower, John W. *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*. New York: New Press, 1999

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Quigley, Harold S. and John E. Turner. *The New Japan: Government and Politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956

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## WEINBERG GRANT PROPOSAL: ALEX JARRELL

In 1765 Britain passed the Stamp Act, which marked the first direct taxation on the colonists. Britain later passed the Quartering Act (1765), Townsend Acts (1767), and the Coercive Acts (1774) that also angered the colonists and contributed to the growing rifts and cleavages between them and the mother country. Colonial response to these acts, of course, is common knowledge. The Boston Tea Party and the Boston Massacre are hallmarks in American history, and colonial leaders like Samuel Adams and other Sons of Liberty are celebrated. Most recent historical research, however, has centered on how ordinary Americans in rural communities -- the majority of the colonists -- fueled the revolution for ideological and economic reasons. One such community is Windham, Connecticut. In Edmund Morgan's seminal text, the *Stamp Act Crisis*, Morgan alludes to how the community of Windham drove protest and radically opposed the Stamp Act.

My research will focus on the Windham community during the period leading up to the American Revolution. What was the political climate of Windham? What was its nature? Was the community indeed more radical? And, if so, what were the factors that contributed to and fostered this climate?

I am looking at local structures, local political cultural formations, and how they factored into the political climate of Windham. I am interested in how ordinary people experienced their own revolutionary moment.

Several Connecticut newspapers circulated in Windham in the mid-eighteenth century were known for their extreme zealotry against perceived British tyranny. Timothy Green, the publisher of the *New London Summary* (1758-1763) which became the *New London Gazette* (1763-1773), for instance, enjoyed a reputation for his vitriolic denouncement of the Stamp Act. The *New London Summary* is available on the Early American Historical Newspaper Database and the *New London Gazette* is available on microfilm at the Northwestern University Library for study.

In order to fully conduct research, I need to visit Windham to review and evaluate historical records available at the Windham Historical Society and the Windham Town Hall. Janet Clapp, the vice-president of the Windham Historical Society, said the society boasts many colonial papers and documents that are not cataloged. The Town Hall has marriage, birth, death, and land records on file that will facilitate a determination of the social-economic background of Windham. More importantly, the Town Hall has town meeting records dating back to 1687 that are available to the public. I also plan on traveling to the Connecticut State Library in Hartford, where I would use judicial, church, military and probate records. I have attached finding aids and email correspondences confirming the availability of these records.

I intend to spend fifteen business days in Windham, splitting my time between the Historical Society and the Town Hall. Next, I plan on spending fifteen business days at the Connecticut State Library. I will

*This proposal's greatest strength is the knowledge of sources that Alex demonstrates, both in this paragraph and the next. To be competitive for a URG, Alex would have needed to situate his work within a short review of the relevant literature, but his preliminary legwork and archival contacts are impressive. See especially the documentation in his appendices, a tremendous asset to any proposal in the field of history.*

*A research timeline is useful (and essential for grant proposals), especially when the researcher must consult multiple types of sources and/or travel to different locations. In this paragraph, Alex shows awareness of how his questions might sharpen and change along the way, potentially necessitating additional visits.*

*Alex invites readers' interest with the broad topic of the American Revolution, but must work quickly to establish his particular research focus. He does this in the second paragraph by delineating both his geographical focus and the questions he will be asking of his sources.*

*Given the nature of Alex's research questions, he needs to consult multiple types of sources. Here he conveys important information about the types and availability of the sources he intends to use.*

then spend three weeks synthesizing my findings, returning to any of the archives if needed to collect further information.

I am passionate about the origins of the American Revolution and I have taken several courses on early American History, including History 210-1 *U.S. to 1865*; History 102-6 *American Revolution, 1763-1787*; History 310-1 *Early American History to 1750*; and History 310-2 *Early American History: Revolution to Constitution*.

I will use this research for my honors thesis in History. Professor T.H. Breen brought Windham, Connecticut to my attention and said he would guide me through this research project.

*Alex's appendices are impressive for their detail and for showing how much legwork he has already done. While titles for the appendices and brief descriptions in the proposal itself would have been beneficial, the contents are accessible and give readers a sense that Alex has a need and a plan for his research trip.*

## APPENDIX 1

**From:** Jeannie Sherman" <JSherman@cslib.org>  
**To:** Alex Jarrell  
**Date:** Wed, 14 May 2008 8:59:38 PM +0000  
**Subject:** RE: Windham Colonial Records

Dear Alex,

This is in response to your e-mail to the Connecticut State Library regarding what records we may have for the town of Windham that covers the 1760s. Many of the records listed below are on microfilm, and are available during regular library hours. Please see: <http://www.cslib.org/hours.htm>  
Archival materials, such as Judicial records, are subject to the "Rules and Procedures for Researchers Using Archival Records and Secured Collections:" <http://www.cslib.org/arcrules.htm>

Here are some sources that are available:

### Church Records

We have a Guide to Church Records at the State Library that is arranged by town. I have listed below those records which cover Windham for the 1760s.

First Congregational Church. The Knell of a Record of the Deaths in the First Society of Windham, from 1751-1814 [Film number 650]

First Congregational Church Records, 1700 -1924. [Film number 79] These records are included in our state-wide Church Records Index, please see: <http://www.cslib.org/church.htm>

### Military Records

Military records for this time period are not really broken down by town. Several Series of the "Connecticut Archives" would be a good place to begin research. I have cut and pasted information from our "Research Guide to Manuscript Military Resources at the Connecticut State Library," [<http://www.cslib.org/miltrec.htm> ] below.

The Connecticut Archives collection comprises the records of the General Assembly to approximately 1820, and is grouped into broad topics. The series pertaining to military records include:

Connecticut Archives: Colonial Wars, Series I, 1675-1775.

Connecticut Archives: Colonial Wars, Series II, 1689-1806.

Connecticut Archives: Militia, Series I, 1678-1757.

Connecticut Archives: Militia, Series II, 1747-1786.

Connecticut Archives: Militia, Series III, 1728-1820.

Connecticut Archives: Revolutionary War, Series I, 1763-1789.

Connecticut Archives: Revolutionary War, Series II, 1756-1856.

Connecticut Archives: Revolutionary War, Series III, 1765-1820.

A collection of bound index volumes to the Connecticut Archives is available for use in the History and Genealogy Reading Room. Documents are indexed by subject and by names of individuals, providing volume, document numbers, and page numbers. Although there is no bound index volume for Revolutionary War, Series II, researchers may ask the librarians for the slip index covering this series. Researchers may retrieve microfilm copies of the documents from a cabinet adjacent to the bound indexes. The films are arranged alphabetically by series title.

Another place to research those from the town of Windham who may have fought in Colonial Wars would be our Veteran's Death Index. This index is arranged both by name and by the town from which the veteran served. For more on the Veteran's Death Index, see: <http://www.cslib.org/halecol.htm#vet>

### **Cemetery Inscriptions**

Here at the State Library is the Hale Collection of Cemetery Inscriptions, which covers inscriptions from the colonial times to circa 1934,

[ <http://www.cslib.org/halecol.htm#halecem> ]. In addition to the state-wide surname index, there are individual volumes by town. Within the Windham volume the following cemeteries are listed:

Ancient Cemetery  
Old  
New St. Joseph's  
North Windham  
Windham  
Creek  
Barber-Brook

### **Land Records**

We have microfilm copies of most towns' land records from the inception of the town to about 1900. Windham Land Records, 1753-1770, can be found on Film number 5037. There is usually some sort of index included in the land record volumes. There is also a general index to Windham Land Records that covers the 1760s on film number 5032

### **Probate Records**

Connecticut has two sets of probate records: estate papers (original documents generated or received by the courts in connection with a probate case) and probate court record books (court clerks' transcriptions of major probate documents). Because a document will sometimes appear in one set of records but not in the other, it may be useful to consult both. For more on our Probate Estate Index, see: <http://www.cslib.org/probate.htm>

>From our Finding Aid to Probate Districts: [ <http://www.cslib.org/probate/districtsw.htm> ]

Windham Probate District was constituted during 1719 October Session, from the Hartford and New London Probate Districts. Windham Probate District currently serves Scotland and Windham.

Town of Windham, Probate District chronology:

May 1692-October 1719 New London County Court & District

May 1692-October 1719 Hartford County Court & District

October 1719-Present Windham District

Estate Papers,

Indexes: 1719-1917 included in General Probate Index at CSL.

Originals: 1719-1917 at CSL.

Microfilms: 1719-1880 at CSL, and available through LDS Family History Centers.

Probate Court Record Books



Originals: None at CSL, contact probate court.  
Microfilms: 1719-1918 at CSL, and available through LDS Family History Centers.

### Judicial Records

Many Judicial Records are broken down by County. I have listed the Windham County materials for the time period you are researching that are available below.

An Archives Pass is required to use Judicial Records. For more information see: <http://www.cslib.org/arcrules.htm>

Windham County Superior Court

Dockets, 1726-1850

Boxes 39-40

Files, September 1756 - March 1761 through March 1769 to September 1772

Boxes 175-178

Papers by Subject, 1726-1907

Includes:

Appointments to Office, 1752-1873; Boundary, Lebanon-Norwich, 1755; Confiscated Estates and Loyalists; Costs, 1748-1897; Court Expenses, 1735-1883; Divorces, 1726-1907 (Alphabetical by name) (microfilm); Executions, 1730-1901; Insolvents, 1763-1901; Jurors, 1726-1887 (Alphabetical by town); and Travel, 1760-1901. See container list Windham Superior No. 5 [container list is available here at the State Library].

Windham County Court Records 1726-1855

1755 -Dec. 176, through June 1767-Dec. 1771, Volumes 8 through 12

The Finding Aid to Judicial Records at the Connecticut State Library is available at the following link:

[http://www.cslib.org/archives/Finding\\_Aids/judicial.pdf](http://www.cslib.org/archives/Finding_Aids/judicial.pdf)

(Windham County begins on page 42).

I hope this information is of help to you. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to e-mail me or telephone the History & Genealogy Unit (860) 757-6580.

Sincerely,

Jeannie C. Sherman, Librarian 1

Connecticut State Library

History and Genealogy Unit

## APPENDIX 2

**From:** Correna Bibeau <[cbibeau@windhamct.com](mailto:cbibeau@windhamct.com)>

**To:** Alex Jarrell

**Date:** Thu, 15 May 2008 3:16:14 PM +0000

**Subject:** RE: Windham Colonial Records

Alex,

All vital records (death, marriage, births) over one hundred years old are open to the public. Any land records & Town meeting minutes are open to the public. Copies of any vital records are ten dollars each. Copies of land records are a dollar a page. Town meeting minutes copies are fifty cents a page. Birth records within one hundred years are confidential. Marriage & deaths within one hundred years are public accessible, however some information on them is not available to the public. Any questions, feel free to contact us. (860-465-3015 or email)

-----Original Message-----

From: \*\*\*\*\*@northwestern.edu

Sent: Wednesday, May 14, 2008 11:42 AM

To: [cbibeau@windhamct.com](mailto:cbibeau@windhamct.com)

Subject: Windham Colonial Records

Dear Correna,

I wanted to follow up on our earlier conversation about Windham colonial records from the 1760s. Can you confirm that I would have access at Windham Town Hall to Birth, Death, Marriage, and Land Records? Also, you mentioned that you had just cataloged Town Hall meeting records that date back to 1686? Would I have access to these records as well?

I really appreciate your help!

Best,

Alex Jarrell

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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- Willingham, William F. "Deference Democracy and Town Government in Windham, Connecticut, 1755 to 1786" *The William and Mary Quarterly*. 3rd Ser., Vol. 30, No. 3 (July 1973): pp. 401-422

### *Primary Sources:*

Windham Historical Society

Phone: 860-456-2316

Windham Town Hall – Ex. Town Meeting Records, Birth, Death, Marriage, and Land Records

Phone: 860 465-3013

Connecticut State Library (Hartford) – Ex. Court, Probate, and Death Records

Phone: 860-757-6580

*New London Summary* (1758-1763)

*New London Gazette* (1763-1773)

## PLANNING YOUR PROGRESS

The calendars in this chapter present information sessions, tips for topic exploration, and deadlines that suggest an appropriate pace of progress for prospective thesis writers. Each item on the monthly calendars is briefly described below the calendar. Since everyone has different schedules and projects, there is significant flexibility built into the calendar. It is worth noting, however, that February is a critical month for doing legwork and developing a thesis topic. Many information sessions occur in February to serve those students applying for URGs in mid-March. Furthermore, March is, practically speaking, about a week long because you will be preoccupied with term papers and final exams before spring break. Thus, the mid-April departmental deadline will creep up sooner than you might think.

Check the calendars weekly and use this chapter to set and record research goals, plan meetings with faculty, and more. As you will see, many of the events hosted by the URG Program, the Office of Fellowships, and Northwestern University Library that are relevant to you and other junior History majors will also be useful to students doing research in other fields. Thus, feel free to invite your friends to these events. Also, keep in mind that many events will help you with more immediate research needs for winter and spring courses.

All of the “Week of” reminders are mere suggestions for engaging faculty who may be able to help you develop your thesis project and, perhaps, agree to advise your thesis next year.

Finally, the entries for dates with deadlines contain details about submission requirements and procedures. Students are expected to consult these entries when preparing materials for submission to a given office.



## FEBRUARY

🕒 = Application Deadline or Academic Landmark

📍 = Informational Event

👉 = Suggestion for Thesis Planning

	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11 📍 Senior Thesis Program Orientation	12	13
14 👉 Initial Search for Secondary Sources	15 📍 URG Intro to Proposal Writing for Humanities	16	17 📍 URG General Info Session	18 📍 Fellowships Forum	19	20
21 👉 Consult with Faculty	22 🕒 Spring Registration Opens	23 📍 URG Intro to Proposal Writing for Humanities	24 📍 URG General Info Session	25 📍 Fellowships Forum	26	27
28 👉 Search for Primary Sources						

### 📍 Feb. 11: Senior Thesis Program Orientation (4PM, Room 430, 1800 Sherman)

All junior History majors on campus who are interested in writing a senior thesis should attend this meeting, which provides prospective thesis writers with an overview of the Senior Thesis Program, funding opportunities, and library resources. The Director of Undergraduate Studies and Honors Coordinator will review the thesis process from options for topic development and seeking an advisor, to the Senior Thesis Seminar and scope of a thesis. In addition, current thesis writers will reflect on their experiences over the past year and report on where their projects stand.

### 👉 Feb. 14 (Week of): Initial Search for Secondary Sources

Start by reading "Doing Legwork with Library Resources." It may seem counterintuitive, but secondary sources come before primary sources. Find out what has been written so you know more about the topic, what is in dispute, and where room is for your contribution. Start with recent works and mine the bibliographies for references to identify other scholarship. Review essays in journals are often the most efficient introduction to major issues in the literature about a topic.

① Feb. 15: URG Intro to Proposal Writing for Humanities (12PM, 1940 Sheridan)

Writing a successful research proposal requires developing some new skills. After all, you are used to writing *after* you have done your research, not *before*. This workshop will cover the essential elements of a good research proposal, explain what reviewers will want to know before they fund your project, and give you strategies for conveying that information precisely and succinctly. The session will also cover how to use the process of drafting a proposal to turn your ideas into a concrete plan for conducting your research.

① Feb. 17: URG General Info Session (4PM, 1940 Sheridan)

General info sessions on the Undergraduate Research Grants Program cover the nuts and bolts of the application process and provide useful tips on designing a research plan and putting together a successful application. Whether you are just starting to think about independent research or already have a well-defined project in mind, attendance at one of these sessions is an essential first step toward securing summer funding. Make sure to attend one because, as the summer application deadline approaches, general info sessions give way to more specific sessions (Introduction to Proposal Writing, Proposal Revision Workshop). If you think you might do summer research, go to a URG info session now so you are not surprised by the standards or requirements.

① Feb. 18: Fellowships Forum (4PM, 1940 Sheridan)

Come hear an overview of opportunities to fund study, travel, work, independent research, and public service. The forum is an excellent way to make initial contact with the Office of Fellowships staff and learn about diverse fellowships for after graduation. You do not need to prepare at all. Just come with an open mind about ways in which you might spend the summer or the year after college. What you hear at a forum may also help you think strategically about possible thesis topics. For example, if you are excited about a topic that is too large for a senior thesis, you may be able to pursue part of it with a year-long fellowship for independent research or graduate study.

🔊 Feb. 21 (Week of): Consult with Faculty

Read “Developing a Thesis Topic.” Now that you have done some legwork with library resources, talk to faculty who can help you move to the next stage. Remember that first meetings do not need to end with, “And will you be my advisor?”

🕒 Feb. 22: Spring Quarter Registration Opens

Read “Anticipating Your Next Steps.” As your thesis interests develop, look for courses that will advance your knowledge or skill set: a lecture course to survey an era; a seminar to familiarize yourself with scholarship; or, a language course to facilitate foreign-language research. Your academic program for the spring could be an important part of the “preparation” section of your proposal for summer funding and admission to the Senior Thesis Program.

① Feb. 23: URG Intro to Proposal Writing for Humanities (4PM, 1940 Sheridan)

See Feb. 15 for details.

① Feb. 24: URG General Info Session (4PM, 1940 Sheridan)

See Feb. 17 for details.

① Feb. 25: Fellowships Forum (4PM, 1940 Sheridan)  
See Feb. 18 for details.

🔊 Feb. 28 (Week of): Search for Primary Sources

Start by re-reading “Doing Legwork with Library Resources.” Your initial search for secondary sources should spark ideas about the kinds of sources that you would like to examine. Once you have mined bibliographies to identify collections and archives used in existing scholarship, consult with librarians and archivists to determine the availability of primary sources at Northwestern and beyond that you can use for your research.





## MARCH

🕒 = Application Deadline or Academic Landmark

📍 = Informational Event

👂 = Suggestion for Thesis Planning

	1 📍 URG Proposal Revision Workshop 🕒 Center for the Study of the Presidency Fellows Program Due	2 📍 Zotero Workshop 📍 URG Proposal Revision Workshop	3 📍 URG Proposal Revision Workshop 🕒 Gilder Lehrman History Scholars Program Due	4 📍 Fellowships Forum	5	6
7 👂 Run Self-Diagnostic Test	8 📍 URG Proposal Revision Workshop 📍 Fulbright Info Session	9 📍 URG Proposal Revision Workshop	10 📍 URG Proposal Revision Workshop	11 📍 Fellowships Forum	12 🕒 URG Applications Due	13
14	15 🕒 Final Exams Begin	16	17	18 📍 Fellowships Forum	19	20
21	22 🕒 Spring Break	23	24	25	26	27
28	29 🕒 Spring Classes Begin	30	31			

### 📍 Mar. 1: URG Proposal Revision Workshop (12PM, 1940 Sheridan)

Getting feedback on your drafts is a key part of completing a successful research proposal. This guided peer-review workshop provides an opportunity to get structured, written feedback from others. Facilitators from the URG Program will show you how to identify the elements of a good proposal. As you practice giving feedback to others, you will gain insights into how you might improve the clarity and organization of your own proposal. **Note: Registration is not required for this workshop, but to participate you must bring 3 printed copies of your proposal draft.**

### 🕒 Mar. 1: Center for the Study of the Presidency Fellows Program Due

The Center for the Study of the Presidency is dedicated to the study of the presidency and its related institutions, especially their history. Its Center Fellows Program is a non-resident internship designed to promote interest in public policy and to encourage leadership in students. The program consists of two components: a Fall Leadership Conference and the Spring Symposium. Fellows meet government officials, public policy leaders, and representatives from prestigious think

tanks. Each fellow must participate in a panel discussion and deliver an original research paper during the Spring Symposium. Northwestern nominates candidates through an internal application process facilitated by the Office of Fellowships.

① Mar. 2: Zotero Workshop (3PM, University Library)

Zotero is freely available bibliographic software that works with the Firefox Internet browser. Zotero allows you to collect, manage, and cite your research sources in numerous publication styles (including Chicago). This session will explain Zotero by using it to save references to books, articles, and other online resources. Participants will then create a bibliography of the sources they have saved. All prospective thesis writers are encouraged to familiarize themselves with this software.

① Mar. 2: URG Proposal Revision Workshop (4PM, 1940 Sheridan)

See Mar. 1 for details.

① Mar. 3: URG Proposal Revision Workshop (4PM, 1940 Sheridan)

See Mar. 1 for details.

🕒 Mar. 3: Gilder Lehrman History Scholars Program Due

The Gilder Lehrman History Scholars Program offers 1-week and 5-week research programs in New York City to introduce students to leading historians and the institute's archival holdings. The focus of the Gilder Lehrman Collection is American history. Participants will have an intensive experience working with primary sources toward a goal of publishable research. The program would be excellent training for any prospective thesis writer, and it could be especially valuable for students interested in Revolutionary and 19<sup>th</sup>-century American history. Students apply directly to the Gilder Lehrman Institute. Application assistance is available from the Office of Fellowships.

① Mar. 4: Fellowships Forum (4PM, 1940 Sheridan)

Come hear an overview of opportunities to fund study, travel, work, independent research, and public service. The forum is an excellent way to make initial contact with the Office of Fellowships staff and learn about diverse fellowships for after graduation. You do not need to prepare at all. Just come with an open mind about ways in which you might spend the summer or the year after college. What you hear at a forum may also help you think strategically about possible thesis topics. For example, if you are excited about a topic that is too large for a senior thesis, you may be able to pursue part of it with a year-long fellowship for independent research or graduate study.

🕒 Mar. 7 (Week of): Run Self-Diagnostic Test

If you have not done so already, subject yourself to the self-diagnostic test laid out in "Developing a Thesis Topic." Once you have done so, you will be able to take stock of your progress since the Senior Thesis Program Orientation and plan for the Senior Thesis Program application deadline that falls approximately one month from this week.

① Mar. 8: URG Proposal Revision Workshop (12PM, 1940 Sheridan)

See Mar. 1 for details.

① Mar. 8: Fulbright Info Session (3PM, 1940 Sheridan)

This meeting will introduce students to the Fulbright fellowship. Topics will include the various kinds of Fulbright projects, resources at Northwestern to support your application, and the Northwestern application process. All students who seek ten months of international research, teaching, or study after graduation should attend. If you are contemplating an international thesis topic or one with comparative potential, then you may be interested in pursuing some element of it during a fellowship year.

① Mar. 9: URG Proposal Revision Workshop (4PM, 1940 Sheridan)

See Mar. 1 for details.

① Mar. 10: URG Proposal Revision Workshop (4PM, 1940 Sheridan)

See Mar. 1 for details.

① Mar. 11: Fellowships Forum (4PM, 1940 Sheridan)

See Mar. 4 for details.

🕒 Mar. 12: **URG Applications Due**

Submit your URG application by midnight online through the URG Program website at <http://www.northwestern.edu/undergrad-research/>. When you upload your application to the URG system, an e-mail will automatically be sent to the faculty sponsor of your proposal with instructions for submitting electronically the letter of recommendation.

① Mar. 18: Fellowships Forum (4PM, 1940 Sheridan)

See Mar. 4 for details.



## APRIL

🕒 = Application Deadline or Academic Landmark

📍 = Informational Event

👂 = Suggestion for Thesis Planning

				1 🕒 Review of Weinberg Grant Applications Begins 📍 Fellowships Forum	2	3
4 👂 Give Draft Thesis Proposal to Advisor	5	6	7	8 📍 Fulbright Info Session 📍 Fellowships Forum	9	10
11 👂 Give Final Thesis Proposal to Advisor	12	13	14 🕒 URG Decisions Announced	15 📍 Fellowships Forum	16 🕒 Thesis Proposals Due for On-Campus Students	17
18	19	20	21	22 📍 Fellowships Forum	23 📍 Fulbright Info Session	24
25	26	27	28	29 🕒 Thesis Proposals Due for Students Abroad 📍 Fellowships Forum	30	

### 🕒 Apr. 1: Review of Weinberg Grant Applications Begins

Weinberg College will begin reviewing completed Weinberg Summer Research Grant applications. Applicants should allow at least two weeks to receive a decision on their application. It is the responsibility of students to ensure that applications are complete, including a recommendation from a faculty sponsor. Weinberg College will continue to accept applications until the middle of reading period. Details about and application forms for Weinberg grants are available at <http://www.wcas.northwestern.edu/advising/honors/funding/index.html>. (Note: Students in other schools who are also doing Weinberg majors are not eligible to apply for Weinberg grants.)

### 📍 Apr. 1: Fellowships Forum (4PM, 1940 Sheridan)

Come hear an overview of opportunities to fund study, travel, work, independent research, and public service. Students may also come with questions about specific fellowships or applications. The forum is an excellent way to make initial contact with the Office of Fellowships staff and learn about diverse fellowships for after graduation. You do not need to prepare at all for a forum. Just

come with an open mind about ways in which you might spend the summer or the year after college. What you hear at a forum may also help you think strategically about course selection and possible thesis topics.

🔊 Apr. 4 (Week of): Give Draft Thesis Proposal to Advisor

With two weeks until the Senior Thesis Program application deadline, you want to have time to act on your advisor's suggestions so both your proposal and his/her recommendation will be as strong as possible when reviewed by the Department's Honors Committee. Since your faculty advisor likely has a busy schedule, you should take the initiative to arrange for timely feedback.

🕒 Apr. 8 Fulbright Info Session (1PM, 1940 Sheridan)

This meeting will introduce students to the Fulbright fellowship. Topics will include the various kinds of Fulbright projects, resources at Northwestern to support your application, and the Northwestern application process. All students who seek ten months of international research, teaching, or study after graduation should attend. If you are contemplating an international thesis topic or one with comparative potential, then you may be interested in pursuing some element if it during a fellowship year.

🕒 Apr. 8: Fellowships Forum (4PM, 1940 Sheridan)

See Apr. 1 for details.

🔊 Apr. 11 (Week of): Give Final Thesis Proposal to Advisor

Time is often a real constraint as the Senior Thesis Program application deadline approaches, but you have invested a lot of time and energy already so make sure your advisor sees the same proposal that the Honors Committee will see. Alignment between proposal and recommendation (including an advisor's confirmation of the proposal's development over time) is often critical in admissions decisions.

🕒 Apr. 14: URG Decisions Announced

URG applicants will receive e-mail notification about the Undergraduate Research Grant Committee's decisions. Weinberg students who unsuccessfully applied for a URG may revise their proposal with guidance from their advisor and submit an application for a Weinberg Summer Research Grant. (Note: Students in other schools who are also doing Weinberg majors are not eligible to apply for Weinberg grants.)

🕒 Apr. 15: Fellowships Forum (4PM, 1940 Sheridan)

See Apr. 1 for details.

🕒 Apr. 16: Thesis Proposals Due for On-Campus Students

Proposals should be 2-3 pages (not including bibliography) and must be submitted (1) in hard copy, and (2) via email attachment to Susan Hall (susan-hall@northwestern.edu). In addition, proposals must have a cover sheet indicating the following:

- Student name and email address
- Student seven-digit EmplID (not SSN)
- Proposal title
- Advisor name and email address

**To be considered complete, a formal letter of recommendation from your proposed faculty advisor must accompany the proposal.**

① Apr. 22: Fellowships Forum (4PM, 1940 Sheridan)

See Apr. 1 for details.

① Apr. 23: Fulbright Info Session (12PM, 1940 Sheridan)

See Apr. 8 for details.

🕒 Apr. 29: Thesis Proposal Due for Students Abroad

Proposals should be 2-3 pages (not including bibliography) and must be submitted via email attachment to Susan Hall (susan-hall@northwestern.edu). In addition, proposals must have a cover sheet indicating the following:

- Student name and email address
- Student seven-digit EmplID (not SSN)
- Proposal title
- Advisor name and email address

**To be considered complete, a formal letter of recommendation from your proposed faculty advisor must accompany the proposal.**

① Apr. 29: Fellowships Forum (4PM, 1940 Sheridan)

See Apr. 1 for details.





## MAY

🕒 = Application Deadline or Academic Landmark

📍 = Informational Event

📌 = Suggestion for Thesis Planning

							1
2	3	4	5	6 📍 Fellowships Forum	7	8	
9	10	11	12	13 📍 Fellowships Forum	14	15	
16	17 🕒 Senior Thesis Program Admissions Announced 🕒 Fall Registration Opens	18	19	20 📍 Fellowships Forum	21	22	
23	24 📍 Undergraduate Research Symposium	25	26	27 📍 Fellowships Forum	28	29	
30							

### 📍 May 6: Fellowships Forum (4PM, 1940 Sheridan)

Come hear an overview of opportunities to fund study, travel, work, independent research, and public service. Students may also come with questions about specific fellowships or applications. The forum is an excellent way to make initial contact with the Office of Fellowships staff and learn about diverse fellowships for after graduation. You do not need to prepare at all for a forum. Just come with an open mind about ways in which you might spend the summer or the year after college. What you hear at a forum may also help you think strategically about course selection and possible thesis topics.

### 📍 May 13: Fellowships Forum (4PM, 1940 Sheridan)

See May 6 for details.

🕒 May 17: Senior Thesis Program Admissions Announced

Juniors who apply to the Senior Thesis Program will receive notification from the Honors Coordinator about the Honors Committee's decision regarding their admission. Students who are admitted should continue to work with their thesis advisor before the end of the academic year. Students who are not admitted are invited to meet with the Honors Coordinator to discuss the reasons for the Honors Committee's decision.

🕒 May 17: Fall Registration Opens

Junior History majors who have been admitted to the Senior Thesis Program will receive a permission number from the Department for registration in Hist 398-1. Registration in Hist 398-1 is required of all students who plan to enter the Senior Thesis Program in the fall.

🕒 May 20: Fellowships Forum (4PM, 1940 Sheridan)

See May 6 for details.

🕒 May 24: Undergraduate Research Symposium (9AM-6PM, Norris)

Come hear paper and poster presentations from students who have conducted independent research during the past academic year. The slate of presenters will include some senior History majors who will present findings from their thesis research to the wider Northwestern community of faculty, students, and visitors. This event is an excellent opportunity for juniors who are curious about the possibilities for their emerging research agendas. Details are available at [http://www.northwestern.edu/provost/students/research\\_symposium/index.html](http://www.northwestern.edu/provost/students/research_symposium/index.html).

🕒 May 27: Fellowships Forum (4PM, 1940 Sheridan)

See May 6 for details.

## JUNE

🕒 = Application Deadline or Academic Landmark

📍 = Informational Event

👉 = Suggestion for Thesis Planning

		1	2 🕒 Weinberg Grant Applications Due	3	4	5
6 👉 Contact Thesis Advisor	7 🕒 Final Exams Begin	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

### 🕒 June 2: Weinberg Grant Applications Due

Weinberg College will not consider any applications for Weinberg Summer Research Grants after this date. Applicants should allow at least two weeks to receive a decision on their application. It is the responsibility of students to ensure that applications are complete, including a recommendation from a faculty sponsor. Details about and application forms for Weinberg grants are available at <http://www.wcas.northwestern.edu/advising/honors/funding/index.html>. (Note: Students in other schools who are also doing Weinberg majors are not eligible to apply for Weinberg grants.)

### 👉 June 6 (Week of): Contact Thesis Advisor

Before you depart for the summer, be sure to contact your thesis advisor about any plans for preliminary or substantive research before September. While a successful thesis can be written between September and May of the senior year, it is important that thesis writers and advisors are on the same page about project scope and research progress.



## APPENDIX 1: SELECTED LOCAL LIBRARY COLLECTIONS

This appendix was prepared by Harriet Lightman (Head of Academic Liaison Services and Subject Librarian for History, Economics, and Philosophy) and Bill McHugh (Reference Collection Management Librarian).

### BEYOND NORTHWESTERN

#### Center for Research Libraries (CRL)

<http://www.crl.edu/>

The Center, also referred to as CRL, is a major repository of both primary and secondary source materials. Located in Hyde Park, this library is open to readers on a limited basis. If you want to visit CRL, call ahead for access information. Northwestern students and faculty may borrow materials from CRL via interlibrary loan (ILL), and keep this material for exceptionally long periods of time. ILL is available at <http://www.library.northwestern.edu/loan/index.html>.

CRL has an online catalog, but many of their materials are uncataloged. Descriptions of the extent of their holdings, both cataloged and uncataloged, are available on their website. Particularly useful in assessing the scope of their collections are a series of topic guides accessible from <http://www.crl.edu/content.asp?l1=5&l2=22&l3=39>.

CRL has very rich collections of primary source material on an extremely wide range of topics, in a number of formats. Collection areas include, but are not limited to, foreign government documents, foreign and domestic newspapers, foreign doctoral dissertations, materials from Latin America, parts of Asia, parts of the former Soviet Union, and Africa.

#### The Newberry Library

<http://www.newberry.org/>

The Newberry Library is one of the premier collections in the United States of primary source materials for the study of Early Modern Europe; the history of printing and publishing; American literature through the 1920s; and the history of the Americas, including of Native Americans. The Library houses outstanding collections in many aspects of the history of United States, especially the history of Chicago. A majority of the Newberry's holdings are listed in their online catalog, which can be accessed via the URL above. You must visit the Newberry to find out the scope of their holdings. The Newberry's collections do not circulate, so you must go down to the Library to use their materials. For information on access to the Newberry, please see their web site, or telephone them. Also particularly useful are the detailed Newberry *Library Collection Descriptions*, available at <http://www.newberry.org/collections/L3ccolldesc.html>.

#### The University of Chicago

<http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/>

The University of Chicago has extremely rich collections; consult their online catalog from the URL above. Northwestern students and faculty may obtain circulating University of Chicago library materials via

interlibrary loan, or in person. Northwestern students/faculty have reciprocal borrowing privileges; for more information on this program, including information on how to activate your reciprocal borrowing privileges, inquire at Northwestern Library's circulation desk, or go to <http://www.library.northwestern.edu/circulation/privileges/reciprocal.html>.

The University of Chicago houses collections across the humanities and social sciences, with exceptional strengths in South Asia, East Asia, and the Middle East. The Special Collections at the University of Chicago range widely from the middle ages to modern times and cannot be quickly summarized; the Special Collections Department Web site at <http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/> provides a useful overview.

### **Chicago History Museum**

<http://www.chicagohs.org/>

Extensive collections on the history of Chicago, including both published and archival materials. For more information, including information on access and hours, explore the web site noted above. The Museum's Research Center's URL is <http://www.chicagohistory.org/research/aboutcollection>, and includes a description of the collections.

### **University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) Special Collections**

[www.uic.edu/depts/lib/specialcoll](http://www.uic.edu/depts/lib/specialcoll)

Holdings are varied, and include history of Chicago materials. See the Special Collections and University Archives home page. Materials are housed in both the Daley Library and the Health Sciences Library, both of which are located on UIC's campus. The Richard J. Daley Special Collections Department houses rare books and archival materials on the history of Chicago, among other items.

### **Loyola University Library**

<http://www.luc.edu/libraries/index.shtml>

Northwestern students/faculty have reciprocal borrowing privileges at Loyola; for more information on this program, including information on how to activate your reciprocal borrowing privileges, inquire at Northwestern Library's circulation desk, or go to this URL: <http://www.library.northwestern.edu/circulation/privileges/reciprocal.html> ; strengths include religious studies and philosophy.

### **DePaul University Library**

<http://library.depaul.edu/>

Strong collection of Latino/Latina literature in the general collection; interesting special collections include Irish literature and pulp fiction.

### **Chicago Public Library: Harold Washington Library Special Collections/Woodson Branch Library**

<http://www.chipublic.org/branch/details/library/harold-washington/p/Sp/>

<http://www.chipublic.org/branch/details/library/woodson-regional/>

Special Collections has exceptional areas of strength, especially in the history of Chicago, including theatre history, World's Fairs of 1893 and 1933-34, the history of Chicago neighborhoods, and materials on Chicago authors as well as rare books and archives. Other collections include American Civil War. CPL houses the Harold Washington Archives & Collections.

The Woodson Branch of the CPL, houses the Vivian G. Harsh Collection of Afro-American History and Literature.

**Art Institute of Chicago: Burnham and Ryerson Libraries**

<http://www.artic.edu/aic/libraries/>

One of the largest art museum libraries in the United States; extensive collections in the history of art and architecture.

**Field Museum Library**

[http://www.fieldmuseum.org/research\\_collections/library/default.htm](http://www.fieldmuseum.org/research_collections/library/default.htm)

Originally formed from materials garnered from the World Columbian Exposition in 1893, the library has an extensive collection of works in natural history, anthropology, and archaeology, as well as an extensive photo archive.

**Adler Planetarium: Webster Institute for the History of Astronomy**

<http://www.adlerplanetarium.org/research/index.shtml>

An extensive collection of early astronomical works, including rare books and early astronomical instruments.

**Gerber/Hart Library**

<http://www.gerberhart.org/index.html>

The Gerber/ Hart Library is a library for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender resources; the special collections (open by appointment only) include a remarkable collection of pre-Stonewall periodicals and literature, periodicals and newsletters from around the world, and erotica.

**Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies: Asher Library and Chicago Jewish Archives**

[http://www.spertus.edu/asher\\_cja/about.php](http://www.spertus.edu/asher_cja/about.php)

[http://www.spertus.edu/asher\\_cja/chicagojewisharchives.php](http://www.spertus.edu/asher_cja/chicagojewisharchives.php)

Materials on Jewish religion and culture, including a vast array of reference materials. The Asher Library's Special Collections include rare books dating from the 15th to the 20th centuries. Additionally, Special Collections holds the Muriel Yale Collection of Rare & Antique Maps of the Holy Land and the Ottoman Empire, which is one of the largest collections of maps of that region.

The Chicago Jewish Archives are housed at Spertus. This archive collects materials in all formats (letters, diaries, photos, memorabilia, audio and video tapes). The Archives are open by appointment only. Visit the website for more information. Records include organizations, family papers, synagogue papers, and oral history collections.

**National Archives and Records Administration (NARA): Great Lakes Regional Archive**

<http://www.archives.gov/great-lakes/contact/directions-il.html>

Extensive microfilm holdings. For more information on what is available, and on access, see the Web site noted above.

## AT NORTHWESTERN

Within the Northwestern University library system, there are several special repositories. Some of these specialized collections are listed below. For more information, go to <http://www.library.northwestern.edu/collections/index.html>. Each of these collections has specialized reference staff available for consultation. Many primary source materials are available in microfilm/fiche, or in digital format. Major microfilm/fiche collections are cataloged by the title of the collection, and can be found via NUcat. Also see *Guide to Microform Sources for the Study of History, Exclusive of African History, at Northwestern University Library*, available at <http://www.library.northwestern.edu/collections/history/microfilmguide.html>.

### **Africana Collection (Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies)**

<http://www.library.northwestern.edu/africana/index.html>

The premier collection of Africana in the United States, located on the 5th floor of the main library. Includes all aspects of African studies, including rare books, journals, poster collections, etc.

### **Art Collection**

<http://www.library.northwestern.edu/art/index.html>

Located on the third floor of Deering Library, adjacent to the main library building, the Art Collection has particular strengths in European avant-garde art of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and in architectural serials of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Government and Geographic Information and Data Services Department**

<http://www.library.northwestern.edu/govpub/index.html>

An excellent source for U.S. government documents and publications and for materials issued by the United Nations and the European Union, as well as some foreign government materials. Not all materials are listed in NUcat. Please visit the department on the main floor of the University Library, or check out their web site.

### **Music Library**

<http://www.library.northwestern.edu/music/index.html>

Located on the second floor of Deering Library, which is adjacent to the main library. The Music Library has its own reference staff.

### **Law Library (Pritzker Legal Research Center)**

<http://www.law.northwestern.edu/lawlibrary/>

The Pritzker Legal Research Center is located on Northwestern's Chicago campus. You may obtain circulating law library materials via interlibrary loan, or you may visit the library in person. Excellent legal history collections. Many materials are listed in NUcat.

### **Seeley G. Mudd Library for Science & Engineering (SEL)**

<http://www.library.northwestern.edu/sel/index.html>

SEL is located on the north side of the Evanston campus, adjacent to the Technological Institute (commonly known as Tech). Includes materials on the history of science and engineering, especially older periodical literature. Historical materials are also available at the Mathematics Library



(<http://www.library.northwestern.edu/math/>) and the Geology Library (<http://www.library.northwestern.edu/geology/>). All materials in these libraries are listed in NUcat.

### **Special Collections (Charles Deering McCormick Library of Special Collections)**

<http://www.library.northwestern.edu/spec/index.html>

A rich and varied collection of Northwestern's rare holdings, located in Deering, adjacent to the main library. Subject collections are well described at the URL above. Visit Special Collections for more information on the collections, and on access.

### **Transportation Library**

<http://www.library.northwestern.edu/transportation/index.html>

Located on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of the main building, this library houses a superb collection which encompasses information on all transportation modalities, including: air, rail, highway, pipeline, water, urban transport and logistics. It includes a significant collection on law enforcement, police management and traffic enforcement, and a collection of environmental impact statements which is one of the most complete in the world. Historical as well as current materials are available.

### **The United Library of the Garrett-Evangelical and Seabury-Western Theological Seminaries**

<http://www.unitedlibrary.org/>

Located on the north side of Northwestern's Evanston campus, this collection is particularly important for the history of religion, and for topics in medieval and early modern studies. Not all of the materials housed in The United Library are listed in NUcat; a complete search of their collection requires looking in NUcat, and in their on-site card catalog.

### **Galter Health Sciences Library**

<http://www.galter.northwestern.edu/>

Located on Northwestern's Chicago campus, Galter has a good collection of rare books for medical and dental history. Rare materials do not circulate; they must be consulted on-site, in the library. Information on the rare book collections at Galter is available at

[http://www.galter.northwestern.edu/special\\_collections/index.cfm](http://www.galter.northwestern.edu/special_collections/index.cfm).

### **University Archives**

<http://www.library.northwestern.edu/archives/index.html>

In Deering Library, adjacent to the main library building, the University Archives holds materials pertaining to every aspect of the history of Northwestern University.

### **Marjorie I. Mitchell Multimedia Center**

<http://www.library.northwestern.edu/media/index.html>

Located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the main building, south tower. The collection includes VHS videotapes, laserdiscs, and DVDs. Areas of coverage include documentaries, all areas of the performing arts, feature films and television series. Excellent historical collection. Materials are listed in NUcat. More information on circulation policies are available on the website, or inquire at the Center.



## **APPENDIX 2: FACULTY ELIGIBLE TO ADVISE THESES**

On the History Department's faculty webpage, you can view each professor's curriculum vitae (or "cv"), which includes research interests, publications, and teaching experience. Before meeting with a faculty member, you may want to consult his/her works that relate to your research interests.

The lists below is arranged by field. Keep in mind that being *eligible* to advise theses is not the same as being *obligated* to advise a particular thesis. Different professors have different expectations for prospective advisees. For example, some will only advise students who have taken a course with them. Others may have their own standards for thesis proposals. To ensure that you know your options, approach faculty early on and ask what they would want to see from you before endorsing a proposal for summer funding or admission to the Senior Thesis Program. Remember, they are eager to work with self-motivated students so find out what it will take to convince them that you fit the bill.

*Being eligible to advise theses is not the same as being obligated to advise a particular thesis.*

Note Regarding Faculty Leaves: Over the next few months, faculty availability may change as plans are confirmed for leaves during the next academic year. Depending on logistical considerations and the working relationship between student and prospective advisor, it may be feasible to have an advisor who will be on leave for one or more quarters. Still, students and faculty are encouraged to have open dialogues about possible leaves and contingency plans for advising. They may also wish to consult with the Director of Undergraduate Studies or Honors Coordinator.

### **ASIA**

Peter Carroll  
Laura Hein  
Rajeev Kinra  
Melissa Macauley  
Amy Stanley

### **AFRICA**

Jonathon Glassman  
Jeff Rice  
David Schoenbrun

### **MIDDLE EAST**

Henri Lauzière  
Carl Petry  
Kristen Stilt

### **LATIN AMERICA**

Brodwyn Fischer  
Frank Safford

## **UNITED STATES**

Michael Allen  
Josef Barton  
Henry Binford  
Martha Biondi  
Francesca Bordogna  
T.H. Breen  
Sherwin Bryant  
Geraldo Cadava  
Lane Fenrich  
Joseph Ferrie  
Darlene Clark Hine  
Michael Kramer  
Jennifer Light  
Kate Masur  
Robert Orsi  
Susan Pearson  
Dylan Penningroth  
Michael Sherry  
Carl Smith  
Ji-Yeon Yuh

## **EUROPE**

John Bushnell  
S. Hollis Clayson  
Dyan Elliott  
Benjamin Frommer  
Regina Grafe  
Peter Hayes  
Tessie Liu  
Sarah Maza  
Joel Mokyr  
Edward Muir  
Alexandra Owen  
Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern

### APPENDIX 3: RECENT SENIOR THESES

STUDENT	ADVISOR	TOPIC
Abata, Anthony	Safford	The Northwestern University Settlement: A History of Americanization, 1914-1923
Arney, Alexandra	Shagan/ Muir	English Catholics and the Jacobean Oath of Allegiance
Berman, Jeremy	Pearson	Fighting Feminism at the Flickers: How the Cinema of the 1920s Reflected the Political, Economic, and Sexual Subordination of American Women
Bowman, Theresa	Liu	Reading Between the Lines: An Analysis of "Women First," the <i>Irish Times</i> Women's Pages and the Irish Women's Liberation Movement
Carlson, Alexandra	Barton	Inundating the Country with Music: Jorge Peña Hen, Music Education and Democracy in Chile
Clarke, Max	Carroll	Pipe Dreams: Reading Opium, Reading Disease in Victorian London
Colee, Laura	Petrovsky-Shtern	The End of the Millennium: Defining Christianity through a Jewish Messiah in the 17 <sup>th</sup> Century
Erickson, Ryan	Binford	The Costs of Good Intentions: The Metropolitan Housing and Planning Council and Public Housing
Fitzpatrick, Megan	Sterenberg	A Historical Worldview: Winston Churchill and the Mediterranean Strategy
Graf, Noah	Lerner	Washing the Balm: The Theory and Practice of Royal Deposition in Fourteenth Century England ( <b>2008 Johnston Prize Winner</b> )
Hansen, Allison	Frommer	Czechoslovakian Resistance 1938-1945: Justification Through History
Jarrell, Alex	Breen	Windham, Connecticut and the Origins of the American Revolution
Johnson, Eric	Bushnell	Aleksander Dugin's Eurasianism and the Russian Idea
Kemp, Caroline	Kinra	Water-Sharing, The Punjab, and Indo-Pakistani Disputes: Re-Analyzing the Success of the Indus Waters Treaty, 1960
Kent, Jonathan	Carroll	Stronger than Bombs: The Strategic Partnership that Prevailed and Guided American Relations into the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century
Kuklick, Casey	Biondi	Sustaining Peace: Robert F. Kennedy and Black Political Engagement, Indianapolis 1961-1968
Ladd, Brittany	Mokyr	Caught Between America and Europe: Great Britain in the Post-WW II Era
Linderman, Lee	Sherry	American Film Music 1940s-Present: Composers and Directors, a Relationship Transformed
Maidman, Richard	Petry	The Ottoman Empire and the Jews: Enlightened Despotism or Calculated Repression

Marsh-Soloway, Michael	Bushnell	Interactions Along the Fault Lines of Civilizations: Investigating Literary Transitions and Legacies in Primary Source Russian Accounts of the Caucasian Conquest (1817-1864)
Miceli, Matthew	Barton	The Gatekeepers and the Ragpickers: Italian Leadership and Class Status in Chicago in the Early Twentieth Century
Morris, Hannah	Frommer	<i>Der Stürmer</i> : Dismantling the Attack of <i>Alljuda</i>
Philipp, Adam	Hayes	Carl Peters in Nazi Propaganda: Crafting a Hero
Preller, Alex	Fenrich	<i>United States v. Lopez</i> : An Examination of the Traditional Assumptions of Conservative Commerce Clause Jurisprudence
Prior, Anna	Muir	The Shot Heard Round the World: News of the American Revolution in 18 <sup>th</sup> Century Venice
Sakai, Toku	Stanley	The Hatoyama Doctrine: “Self-Reliant” Independence and the Japanese Constitution, 1951-1957
Sellers, Sarah	Kramer	The Domestic Ideal of the 1950s: Life Stages of White, Middle-Class Adult Women in the Workforce
Small, James	Hayes	Still Not Normal: German Historical Memory and the Center Against Expulsions
Song, Eubhin	Yuh	“When Two Koreans Meet They Establish a Church”: The Role of Christianity as an Arm of U.S. hegemony in Korean Immigration to the United States during the 20 <sup>th</sup> Century through Oral History Interviews
Spelhaug, Carling	Breen	War and the Press: English Provincial Newspapers and Local Political Views in the Wake of the Declaration of Independence
Stix, Benjamin	Barton	Regulating Hot Air: DDT, Markets, and EPA
Sumers, James	Macauley	Now Boarding: Developments in Commercial Aviation, Technology and Capital Transfer Between the U.S. and China, 1976-Present
Tripp, Caroline	Mokyr	Transformations in Eire: How the Troubles Ended
Tyree, Kathryn	Frommer	The Man Who Became a Country: Edvard Benes, Czechoslovakia, and the Process of Historical Image-Making
Urus, Arianne	Maza	Body Business: Power Through Prostitution in Eighteenth-Century Paris <b>(2009 Johnston Prize Winner)</b>
Wagner, Christopher	Bordogna	“But a Storm is Blowing from Paradise”: A History of Walter Benjamin’s “Melancholy”
Wolfson, Amanda	Breen	On the Legitimacy of the American Revolution in the Eyes of Göttingen Professors
Wood, Lindsay	Glassman	Assessing Civilization: Gender Islam and the Ideology of Progress in French West African Travel Writings, 1870-1910

## **APPENDIX 4: PREVIEW OF 2010-11 THESIS PROGRAM**

Projected major dates are based on the current year's program and are subject to change. Students and advisors will receive notification of any alterations or amendments to this tentative calendar.

<b>Feb. 11, 2010</b>	Senior Thesis Program Orientation
<b>Apr. 16</b>	Thesis Proposal for History Department Due (Students on Campus)
<b>Apr. 29</b>	Thesis Proposal for History Department Due (Students Abroad)
<b>May 17</b>	Senior Thesis Program Admissions Announced
<b>Week of Sep. 19</b>	First Meeting of Senior Thesis Seminar (History 398) NOTE: Regular Meetings Throughout Fall
<b>Week of Oct. 31</b>	Annotated Bibliography of Primary and Secondary Sources Due
<b>Week of Nov. 7</b>	Meeting with Thesis Advisor
<b>Week of Nov. 14</b>	1-on-1 Meeting with Seminar Leader
<b>Week of Nov. 21</b>	Oral Presentation of Work-in-Progress
<b>Dec. 6</b>	Final Thesis Proposal Due (approx. 15 pages)
<b>Week of Jan. 2, 2011</b>	Meeting with Thesis Advisor
<b>Week of Jan. 9</b>	1-on-1 Meeting with Seminar Leader
<b>Week of Feb. 6</b>	Peer Review of First Body Chapter (approx. 15 pages)
<b>Week of Mar. 6</b>	Peer Review of Second Body Chapter (approx. 15 pages)
<b>Week of Apr. 3</b>	Completed Draft of Thesis Due (approx. 55 pages)
<b>May 4</b>	Final Thesis Due to History Department (approx. 40-60 pages)

**USEFUL CONTACT INFORMATION  
FOR  
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