

DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE

Dissertation Prospectus Guidelines

The following format is recommended for the dissertation proposal. Although the organization and substance of any dissertation is always subject to revision during the process of research and writing, attention to these issues in the early stages is critical to the outcome of the project.

The proposal should be about 15 pages/5000 words in length, double-spaced, 12-pt font, exclusive of bibliography; it is to be submitted six months after completion of the General Examination.

1. ***Project statement:*** Present a clear and concise account of the historical problem you intend to address and its significance. This should be distinguished from the “topic” or general area of inquiry. Clearly frame the historical problem that you intend to resolve in the work. Make as clear as possible your own perspective. Students are encouraged to include a chapter outline in this section (Approximately 5-6 pp/2000 words.)

2. ***Historiographic context:*** Place the dissertation problem in a broad historiographic context by critically assessing secondary works of relevance to the project. Reflect a thorough review of writings that pertain to the problem you address. Indicate how the dissertation may build upon or challenge certain historiographic themes. It is often easiest to identify the three or four main bodies of relevant secondary work, with reference to their most important representatives. (Approximately 2-3 pp/750 words.)

3. ***Methodological and theoretical considerations (may be combined with preceding section):*** Describe the basic methodology for accomplishing the project. Review relevant historical literature that suggests critical approaches to analogous questions, including relevant literatures from other disciplines (e.g., philosophy, sociology, anthropology). You may wish to provide a critical assessment of theoretical questions implicit in the work. (Approximately 2-3 pp./750 words)

4. ***Sources:*** Assess and cite the relevant primary sources you have identified to date to support the project. In preliminary form, identify and describe key archival repositories and anticipated source materials. Other unpublished sources may include manuscript materials, as well as M.A. and Ph.D. theses. Where appropriate, note interviews, oral histories, and other sources. (Approximately 3-4 pages/1000 words).

5. ***Schedule:*** Devise a preliminary schedule outlining plans for stages in writing the dissertation. Include appropriate time for research, travel to collections, writing and revision of the manuscript. Where possible, note prospective chapters and indicate potential times for their completion. It is expected that chapter titles and foci may shift with time. (No more than one page). If possible, use a spreadsheet form for this information, dividing each year into three sections: spring semester, summer, fall semester. Include information about when you expect to be teaching and when you hope to be on fellowship (traveling or otherwise).

6. ***Bibliography:*** Include the list of primary and secondary sources your have used *to date* in designing the thesis. Do not include material you have not yet read.

Steps and Deadlines (2018-19)

1. Meet or otherwise consult with your principal advisor about topic(s), schedule, and membership of your three-person dissertation prospectus review committee. This may be the same as the membership of your final dissertation committee or overlap with it.¹ All members of the committee should ordinarily be available for a single face-to-face meeting at which all are present (see #4 below). It may be helpful to provide your advisor with a copy of this sheet for easy reference when you discuss these matters.
2. With the aid of your advisor, line up other members of your prospectus review committee and submit their names to Linda Schneider.
3. Submit a draft of your prospectus to your review committee on or before **11/1/2018**.
4. Meet with all of the members of your prospectus review committee *together* to discuss your draft prospectus; they have two weeks to review the proposal and are supposed to provide individual written comments and recommendations to you on the basis of that reading. These do *not* substitute for the face-to-face meeting, which is intended to make sure that you are not getting conflicting advice from different advisors, and to make sure that they have an opportunity to come to a consensus among themselves as to what you should be doing. You should plan to meet on or before **11/15/2018**.
5. Revise your prospectus as needed.
6. Submit your revised prospectus to Linda Schneider by **12/4/18**, docketing on the agenda for the faculty meeting on **12/11/18**.

Linda will notify you of the action taken by the department shortly after the meeting.

You are welcome to submit your prospectus at any time *before these deadlines*.

Please contact Linda Schneider and/or Liz Lunbeck with questions about the process or about your particular situation.

1. The names of faculty members available for the direction of the PhD dissertation are listed in the course catalogue under History of Science 300. The director of the dissertation must be an eligible member of the department. Dissertation committees comprise at least three members. The department requires that two members of the committee be members of the department. Students are encouraged to include junior faculty on their dissertation committees.