

The Honors Program in History 2024-25

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HONORS CALENDAR FOR 2024-25:

* October 7	Honors Registration form due
October 11	Last day to add Senior Research I (299A)
October 28	Last day to apply for research grant award for winter break
January 24	Last day to add Senior Research II (299B)
February 3	Last day to apply for research grant award for spring break
* January 27 – February 28	Oral Presentations (see p. 6)
Late Feb/Early March	Arrange for PSO in Spring if desired; check with Student Financial Services for deadline
* February 28	Oral Presentation form due
April 11	Rough draft due to your primary advisor
April 18	Last day to add Senior Research III (299C) if not on PSO
** May 5 (Monday) at Noon PDT	Thesis submission deadline (one Word Doc and one PDF)
* Week of May 12-16	Honors Presentations
May 16	Last day to submit (by noon) with late submission grading
May 30	Last day for Brand Fund reimbursement requests
June 15	Commencement
* Mandatory to maintain eligibility for Honors.	
** Late submission grading will be applied between 5/5/25, 12:01 pm until 5/16/25, 12:00pm.	

In Summary: Requirements to Complete the Honors Program in History

In roughly chronological order:

1. Complete HISTORY 299H in Winter Quarter of junior year. Students studying overseas in Winter Quarter must consult with the Director of the Honors Program, Prof. Rowan Dorin, to obtain project approval before proceeding. Students who have not taken 299H should contact Kai Dowding for next steps.
2. Have and maintain a GPA in history courses of 3.5 during the honors year and a GPA of 3.3 in university-wide work.
3. Have a primary advisor (History faculty at the rank of Core Lecturer through Full Professor).
4. Have a secondary reader (faculty with an active academic appointment at Stanford).
5. Submit the Honors Registration form to Kai Dowding by October 7, 2024.
6. Declare Honors on Axess.
7. Enroll in a total of 11-15 units of HISTORY 299A, 299B, and 299C (Senior Research I, II, III), spread across the academic year. Each course requires a minimum of two meetings with your primary advisor.
8. Give an in-progress oral presentation of your work to your primary advisor between January 27 and February 28, 2025. For more details on the oral presentation, see page 6.
9. Submit the Oral Presentation Form to Kai Dowding by February 28.
10. Submit a rough draft of your thesis to your primary advisor by April 11.
11. Adhere to the thesis length requirements: **A minimum of 60 pages and a maximum of 120 pages**, including footnotes and bibliography. For more details on formatting requirements, see page 6.
12. Submit the honors thesis on or before the deadline of May 5, 2025, at **12:00pm noon** Pacific time. **The deadline is absolute: 12:01pm will incur late penalty grading and ineligibility for prize consideration.** Email one Word Doc and one PDF of the thesis to Kai Dowding (kdowding@stanford.edu) and your thesis advisors. For submission and deadline details, please see pp. 6-8.
13. Present your thesis to your mentors and peers during the week of Honors Presentations in Week 7 of Spring Quarter. For more details on the honors presentations, see the bottom of page 4.
14. Notify History's Student Services Officer, Kai Dowding, immediately of any changes you make in your topic, title, advisors, or status in the honors program (kdowding@stanford.edu).

CONTACTS:

Rowan Dorin, Director of the Honors Program
dorin@stanford.edu

Anne Twitty, Director of Undergraduate Studies
atwitty@stanford.edu

Kai Dowding, Student Services Officer
kdowding@stanford.edu

THE UNDERGRADUATE THESIS in HISTORY

How does a thesis differ from a long paper or a graduate thesis? This is a key question to discuss with your faculty advisors. Establishing a scope for the thesis is your first challenge. In general, a thesis attempts, through analysis of primary sources, to address a new question or to reinterpret a moment in history, an undertaking spurred by a willingness to question accepted versions of a story and to expand on the understanding of the past. Fidelity to primary sources in constructing an argument and a solid grasp of the existing work on the topic are crucial to the project as is patience with the writing and revision process. One of the rewards of original research, and a question to keep you engaged as you work, is the significance of the ideas you present.

Other than adherence to research paper guidelines (Kate Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* is a frequent companion), no standardized format is prescribed; history theses vary in structure and appearance. If you are interested in seeing the range of other thesis writers' work, you may access digital copies of many theses from 2020 through 2024 in the Stanford Digital Repository, under "Undergraduate Honors Theses, Department of History, Stanford University" in SearchWorks. Depending on County and University guidelines, you may also be able to review the department's archive of theses located in Green Library's Special Collections. Keep in mind that these are not templates of research or writing styles but rather instances of excellent work.

YOU AND YOUR THESIS ADVISORS

Primary Readers / Primary Advisors

Primary readers must be History faculty at the rank of Core Lecturer through Full Professor, and their research areas should closely match students' areas of interest. Short-term and temporary lecturers are not eligible to serve as primary readers. While it may appear that research areas are the sole determinant for your advisor selection, this is not the only significant issue. Take time to learn about the mentoring styles of your advisor (how often they are willing to meet, how they perceive the balance between primary and secondary documents in research, etc.). It is better to take these steps at the beginning of your project than to struggle with less-than-satisfactory advising arrangements for the duration of your thesis writing. In addition, it is best to make contact early on, ideally at the beginning of Autumn quarter. At the end of your project, both readers provide comments. The primary advisor will submit a grade for your project in consultation with your secondary reader.

Secondary Readers

The History Department requires all honors students to select a secondary reader. Secondary readers may be from other departments or programs, but must have an academic appointment active for the duration of the academic year. Their role can vary: some honors students prefer their advisor and reader to be equal contributors to their projects, while other secondary readers simply provide a second reading of the completed honors project. You and your secondary reader should discuss the expected level of participation.

An important note about faculty advisors: Get to know them! Communicate with them and ask for what you need (politely, of course). If you are not comfortable with the quality of supervision you are receiving, address the situation directly, first by consulting the Honors Director and then by creative problem solving. Aim for a balance: take the initiative in your research and writing, but don't hesitate to ask for help, both from advisors and peers.

Peer Readers

Peer readers are vital. They provide objectivity and encouragement but are not involved in evaluating your work. The best situation is a mutual peer readership; guilt about taking up someone's time and tentativeness in asking someone to read drafts are less problematic this way. In addition to one-on-one peer reading, group support can be helpful.

THE HONORS THESIS MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

The Honors Thesis Mentorship Program is a free program that pairs thesis writers with graduate student mentors who are working on doctoral research. This program is designed to connect undergraduate and graduate researchers and provide an additional layer of support for thesis writers as well as a look into graduate life and research. Graduate students will meet undergraduates wherever they are in the thesis writing process and offer support with research, writing, and project management, depending on student needs. The relationship between graduate student mentors and undergraduate thesis writers is non-hierarchical and highly collaborative. Graduate students are not third readers but rather supporters and mentors. If you have questions or would like to join the program, contact Jennifer Depew at jdepew@stanford.edu.

STAGES OF THESIS WRITING

Early Research: You will have decided on your general topic and explored research avenues by the beginning of Fall Quarter of your senior year. Students are advised to integrate the feedback received on the thesis prospectus into early research activity.

Fall Quarter, the research phase: Includes regular meetings with fellow honors researchers and selected faculty (perhaps varying by week), including your primary advisor, with whom a minimum of two meetings is mandatory for 299A. Emphasis on research skills, formulation and conceptual framework, narrowing research focus, selecting relevant secondary works, and placing the research in a historiographical context. Thesis writers should be focused on research throughout Autumn Quarter, completing the majority of it by January.

Winter Quarter, the writing phase: Students are strongly encouraged to begin writing as early as possible. Weekly or biweekly meetings with fellow writers, a writing tutor, and faculty advisors are recommended. A minimum of two meetings with your primary advisor is mandatory for 299B. Sometime in late January/February, all students are required to give an oral presentation of the work they have completed so far to their faculty advisor.

Take advantage of secondary readers and peer readers. It's best to set chapter deadlines throughout the quarter—ideally, **by the end of Spring Break, you should have completed a rough draft**—not a final draft, but a coherent, readable thesis ready for revision. A preliminary draft will be due to your primary advisor shortly after the beginning of Spring Quarter.

Spring Quarter, the revision phase: Biweekly or monthly meetings between students and advisors, secondary readers, and peer readers. A minimum of two meetings with your primary advisor is mandatory for 299C. **A preliminary draft of your thesis is due to your advisor on April 11.** Revise, reformulate, finish without panic. Pencil in some time for consultation with a style guide regarding technical points of paper presentation. Take formatting time into consideration in order to meet the deadline. **Important: Since honors and university prizes are at stake, this deadline, unlike deadlines for course assignments, is absolutely strict. There are no extensions, not even by minutes.**

Honors Presentations: Each thesis writer will present a synopsis of their thesis to mentors and colleagues. Presenters will answer questions from the audience, including history faculty members. **The Honors Presentations will be scheduled between May 12-16 (usually 10:00am to 2:00pm PDT), and attendance is mandatory.** Be sure to hold these dates until you are notified of a final day and time at the start of Spring quarter.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do I register on AXESS for honors?

Declare “Honors” on Axess. Be sure to leave room in your schedule for honors units. In your first quarter of honors work, you will enroll in your advisor’s section of 299A (Senior Research I). Be sure to enroll in the correct section in order to receive the appropriate grading (NOTE: Enrolling in Section 1 of 299A/B/C that says “Staff” is an incorrect enrollment.) Normally, in your second quarter, you will enroll in 299B, and, in your third, in 299C.

How do I distribute my honors units?

You and your advisor devise a plan for the academic year. Please note that Axess limits the maximum enrollment of one section of honors to 5 units. If you would like to enroll in honors for more than 5 units in one quarter, simply enroll for more than one course. For example, you can enroll in 5 units of 299A and 3 units of 299B in one quarter, if your registration limit is not exceeded. The next quarter, you may enroll in 2 units of 299B and 5 units of 299C. The courses can be taken in combination.

At a glance: (1) Enroll in a total of 11 to 15 units of honors, spread across the academic year.
(2) Enroll in no more than 5 units for any one course of 299A, 299B, 299C.
(3) Conclude your honors work by enrolling in at least 1 unit of 299C.

How is the honors project graded?

While you are completing your honors work, your advisor will submit an “N” for each quarter, signifying that your work is “in progress.” At the completion of your project, your project will be awarded a letter grade. This letter grade will replace each “N” on your transcript. You must finish your project before the deadline; no “N,” “L,” or “I” grades will be awarded at the end of the year.

In addition to assigning a letter grade for Senior Research I, II, and III, both faculty advisors share evaluative comments.

If you decide not to finish your honors thesis after signing up for any amount of 299A/B/C units, please understand that you have registered for course work – therefore you must “withdraw” from these units as you would withdraw from any course at the University, and you will receive the “W” designation on your transcript. Departmental Honors is not considered an “extra credit” project, and **the History Department does not award units for an unfinished thesis**. The same University rules apply to units of honors work as they do to regular classes taken for units.

What is the Oral Presentation?

Between January 27 and February 28, students will present an informal work-in-progress to their primary advisor. Secondary readers, graduate mentors, and peer readers are also encouraged to attend the oral presentation.

Consider this a check-in and consultation session where you will receive important feedback and direction for moving forward. This is not a defense or presentation of the finished thesis, but rather a check-in and a chance to receive feedback on your work so far. Writers are encouraged to integrate the questions posed during the oral presentation into the final thesis.

How will the honors notation appear when I graduate?

If you have successfully completed the honors project, your diploma and transcript will reflect that you graduate “with Departmental Honors.”

If I finish all my university and major coursework by the end of winter quarter, can I decline to enroll for spring quarter while I work on my honors project?

In order to continue working on your honors project while not paying the standard university tuition, you may file for Permit for Services Only (PSO) status via the “Student eForms” section on the “Student” tab in Axess. PSO status gives you full privileges as a student, but you will not have to pay the usual tuition. PSO status, however, does not permit students to enroll in any units. Therefore, if you cannot fit the 11-15 units of Honors units into your autumn and winter quarter study lists, then you will not be eligible for PSO status.

What is the format for the honors thesis?

You will submit one Word Doc and one PDF of your thesis to Kai Dowding (kdowding@stanford.edu) and your thesis advisors. The minimum length of the thesis is 60 pages (including footnotes and bibliography), and the maximum length is 120 pages. Other than that, the department does not require a particular format. You will want to consult with your advisor and historical writing texts for guidance on style, and be sure to allow ample time for formatting and proofreading.

When is the honors thesis due?

The due date is Monday, May 5, 2025 at noon. As noted above and throughout this handbook, the deadline is **absolute**. No extensions beyond 12:00pm will be granted and 12:01pm will be past the deadline. Submit one Word Doc and one PDF of your thesis to Kai Dowding. Only students who meet this deadline will be eligible for prize consideration.

Honors theses submitted by the due date that receive a grade of B+ or higher will receive Departmental Honors. Theses submitted by the due date that receive a passing grade below B+ will not receive Departmental Honors but the thesis writers will receive credit for the units, provided they drop Honors by May 30 at 5:00p.m. To drop honors, submit a “Major, Minor, Honors, or Degree Program Change or Declaration – UG” form in Axess, via the “Student eForms” section of the “Student” tab. If students in this position do not drop honors, their degree conferral will be denied.

What if I cannot finish my thesis by the deadline?

LATE SUBMISSION GRADING POLICY:

Honors theses will be accepted with the Late Submission Grading Policy applied from 12:01pm on May 5 until May 16 at 12:00 noon. **Submissions made during this time frame will NOT be eligible for prize consideration.** No units of credit will be issued for drafts, partially completed chapters, notes, etc.

Late Submission Grading Policy: Students who submit their thesis between 12:01pm on May 5 until May 16 at 12:00pm will forfeit one-half grade for the late submission. The same one-half grade penalty applies no matter when in this period the thesis is submitted. That is, **the penalty is the same for submission on May 16 as for submission on May 5 past noon.** The penalty is applied to all 11-15 honors units in which the student has enrolled.

Examples of Late Submission Grading. A grade of A- on a thesis submitted in this late time frame will become a B+; the student will still receive Departmental Honors (B+ is the minimum grade to receive Honors). A grade of “B+” on a thesis submitted in this late time frame will become a B; the student will not receive Departmental Honors (B+ is the minimum grade to receive Honors). A grade of B or below on a thesis submitted in this late time frame will also be reduced by one-half point and also will not receive Departmental Honors.

Theses submitted in the late time frame that receive a **passing** grade below B+ will receive credit for the units, provided they drop Honors by May 30 at 5:00pm. Students who do not drop Honors will not be cleared for graduation. To drop honors, submit a “Major, Minor, Honors, or Degree Program Change or Declaration – UG” form in Axess, via the “Student eForms” section of the “Student” tab.

NON- SUBMISSION BY MAY 16 AT 12:00 P.M.

Students who have enrolled for Honors units, but do not submit a finished thesis by May 16 at 12:00pm, must drop Honors by May 30 at 5:00pm and withdraw from all honors units. If they do not, their degree conferral will be denied.

Consider these issues if you cannot meet the May 5 deadline:

Before deciding if you should continue to work on the honors thesis during the two-week late submission grading period, you should assess the following issues:

- (A) can my project get an A- or better, enabling me to still receive Departmental Honors? If you think (after consultation with your primary advisor) the answer is “yes,” then it’s probably worth continuing. (Remember that a B+ is the minimum grade to receive Honors; with late submission grading, the minimum grade becomes A-.)
- (B) do I need credit for the 299A/B/C units in order to reach my 180 threshold for graduation? If you do, then you should definitely try to finish during the late submission grading period – withdrawing from the units means you certainly won’t graduate, so you might as well try to finish, even if it means your final grade is a B or lower, but passing. The goal here becomes getting credit for the honors units to get you to the 180.
- (C) if you conclude that (1) you cannot finish a thesis that will receive Honors with the extra 2 weeks of time; (2) you do not need the units to get to 180; and (3) you do not want to lower your overall GPA with the late submission grading, you should drop Honors by May 30.

Can I request an “I” (Incomplete) and finish my thesis in Summer or Autumn quarters?

No. The History Department will not permit students to continue to work on an unfinished honors thesis in any subsequent quarter. No academic credit will be awarded for an unfinished History honors thesis.

What if I am authorized for academic accommodations through the Office of Accessible Education (OAE)?

Students authorized for academic accommodations through the OAE are strongly encouraged to submit an Accommodation Letter to both the primary thesis advisor and the Director of Honors as soon as possible. If appropriate, a no-penalty extension to the Honors thesis deadline *may* be arranged after review of the Accommodation Letter.

However, theses submitted after Monday, May 5, 2025 at noon – for *any* reason – will not be eligible for prize consideration due to the established selection process timeframe. Students should engage the Honors advisor, the Director of Honors, and their OAE Disability Advisor/Learning Specialist early in the writing process to ensure prize eligibility.

Academic accommodations authorized by the OAE cannot be granted retroactively.

Can I be reimbursed for the expenses of my research?

General Thesis Expenses

After you have successfully completed your honors project, you may apply for reimbursement for project-related expenses. Be sure to save all your original receipts.

A reimbursement form will be available from Kai Dowding or on the History Department website. The deadline to submit your reimbursement request is May 30, 2025. No late submissions will be accepted. The Director of Honors will review all requests. If approved, your reimbursement will be processed and mailed to your permanent address or deposited via direct deposit.

Thesis Research Grant

***** Please note that Thesis Research Grants can only support undergraduate travel allowed by the University’s travel policy.**

***** Updates to the travel policy will be posted to <https://healthalerts.stanford.edu/covid-19/travelers/>**

***** Please contact Kai Dowding (kdowding@stanford.edu) with any questions.**

Eligibility: ONLY History majors pursuing an Honors thesis in their Senior Year

Amount: Varies

Application: Student Grants Application eForm, available on the History Department website under Academics > Undergraduate Program > Forms. The form may also be accessed through this link:
<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/933caac5bb45464e9f27983c96d8e0db>

Deadlines: For Winter Break Funding: Monday, October 28, 2024
For Spring Break Funding: Monday, February 3, 2025

A note regarding HISTORY 209S

The department permits honors students to use their work in HISTORY 209S as part of their history thesis, keeping in mind the following considerations:

- To receive credit for HISTORY 209S, you must submit a complete, polished, and edited paper following the guidelines and instructions given in class. You may not submit rough pages from your thesis for credit. Once HISTORY 209S is complete, you may use portions of it in your final thesis. A common approach is for your 209S paper to become the basis of a thesis chapter, with appropriate editing and rewriting to make it part of the larger project.
- History honors units are distinct from 209S units of credit. For honors students taking HISTORY 209S in Autumn quarter of their senior year: you must be working on **both** your honors thesis and your 209S paper during Autumn quarter.
- Students should discuss their approach with both the 209S instructor and thesis advisor.

Honors Thesis Calendar Sample Template 2024–2025

*This is a suggested timeline that past thesis writers have found useful.
Work with your primary advisor to customize a timeline that fits your project.*

FALL TERM

Classes begin September 23, 2024

Week 2: Meet with Thesis Advisor/Advisee and establish a timeline

Week 3: October 7 Honors Registration Form Due

October 11 Last day to add senior research

Week 4: Honors Mentorship Program pairings

Week 5: Literature review due; HMP Meet & Greet

Week 7: Submit first 20 pages/first chapter to advisor

Week 9: Meet with Advisor to discuss comments or written comments

WINTER TERM

Classes begin January 6, 2025

Week 3: Submit second 20 pages/second chapter to advisor

Weeks 4-8: Oral presentations

Week 8: Submit third 20 pages/third chapter to advisor

Week 10: Zero draft, students begin revising

SPRING TERM

Classes begin March 31, 2025

Week 2: April 11 First Draft to Advisor

Week 6: May 5 Thesis Submission Deadline at noon (one Word Doc and one PDF)

Week 7: Honors Presentations