

Thesis Option

1. A student who plans to take a thesis must meet the department's GPA requirement of 3.5 or better in all History courses taken as part of the M.A. program. The student should also attend the University's thesis writing workshop which is held once every semester in the Library.
2. Students who undertake a thesis do so under the supervision of a three-person Thesis Committee, consisting of one Principal Advisor and two Readers. Faculty are not obligated to serve on thesis committees, so as a first step the eligible student must secure the agreement of an appropriate member of the History Department's full-time faculty to serve as the thesis Advisor.
3. In conjunction with the Principal Advisor, the student identifies faculty members who might agree to serve on the committee. It is the student's obligation to then secure the agreement of two of these faculty members to serve as Readers. Under the supervision of the Advisor and Readers, the student prepares a Thesis Proposal approximately 500 words in length, describing the topic, question, historiographic context, and primary sources for the thesis. Once the proposal has been approved by the Advisor, the two Readers, and the department Chair, the student may register for thesis units. It is also upon approval of the Proposal that the Advisor and Readers formally constitute the student's thesis Committee.
4. The research and writing of the thesis take place subsequent to the approval of the Proposal and the registering for thesis units. Students must register for 6 thesis units (HIST 5990) over at least two semesters. Three of the HIST 5990 units will substitute for 3 units of the 21 unit elective requirement. Until completion of the thesis, students will receive a grade of RP (Report in Progress) for these units. Students are strongly encouraged to complete the thesis within two semesters of the Proposal approval. University guidelines require completion of the M.A. degree (from first semester of coursework to graduation) within seven years from completion of the first course on the Study Plan.
5. The thesis is to be completed under the supervision of the Advisor, but students are strongly encouraged to consult with the two Readers throughout this process.
6. When the Advisor determines that the student's thesis is complete, the Advisor will assist the student in scheduling an Oral Defense for the thesis.
7. Oral Defense Format: The oral defense will be 75 minutes in length, during which the student will be examined by all three members of the Committee. The student will be asked questions about the sources and research methodology of the thesis, the nature and significance of the project and its findings, and any other relevant questions related to the thesis which the Advisor and Readers may ask.
8. The thesis is graded Pass/Fail. Students who pass the Oral Defense are considered also to have passed the thesis. Students who fail the Oral Defense will be required to undertake revisions of the thesis and schedule a second defense no earlier than six weeks following the initial defense. Students who fail the second defense are considered to have failed the thesis and will receive a

grade of “F” for their thesis units. Students must then complete comprehensive examinations in order to receive their master’s degree.

9. Students who have passed the Oral Defense then follow the procedures for final submission of the thesis set by the College of Natural and Social Sciences. Guidelines for submission are available on the Library’s website at

<http://www.calstatela.edu/library/guides/thesbk.htm>

Students must also prepare three Thesis Approval Pages, which must be signed by all three members of the Thesis Committee, as well as the History Department Chair. The University Thesis Coordinator oversees final submission of the thesis. Students must be enrolled during the term in which they submit their thesis to the Library.