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## ***M.A. Thesis Guidelines – War and Society Program, Chapman University***

### ***The M.A. Thesis Project***

All candidates for an M.A. degree in War and Society at Chapman University must successfully write and orally defend a master's thesis to complete the program. The thesis is an original piece of scholarship, based on primary source research, that examines aspects within the larger intersections between war and society.

The student will select and work closely with a Wilkinson College faculty member who will act as his or her thesis advisor and committee chair. A thesis committee (a minimum of three qualified members) must be selected by the student and approved by the program director.

Once the student enters the final year in the War and Society program, he or she is ready to begin the formal process of writing the M.A. thesis. Coursework related to this research and writing sequence (HIST 696 and HIST 698) must be taken over the span of two semesters. The student will select and research a topic of their choosing prior to admission into HIST 696. During the research and writing sequence, the student will construct and defend an argument that is supported by primary sources and reflects the relevant literature on his or her topic.

By the end of the final semester, the student will be expected to orally defend his or her thesis in front of a faculty committee. Students enrolled in the War and Society program part-time, or students who choose to skip a semester, must complete all program requirements within seven years from when they first enrolled in the program. The M.A. thesis project and defense must be completed successfully for degree conferral.

### ***Milestones for Advancing from HIST 696 to HIST 698***

#### **Thesis Proposal**

Thesis proposals must be submitted and approved by the War and Society program director and thesis advisor within the first month of the student having enrolled in HIST 696. A research proposal of approximately 1,000 words must outline the thesis project and include the following: proposed historical question or thesis, discussion of relevant historiography, proposed methodology, proposed contribution the thesis will have on the field of study, and preliminary bibliography.

### Gateway Objectives to Advance to HIST 698

Following submission and approval of the thesis proposal, students must accomplish the following gateway objectives to successfully advance from HIST 696 to HIST 698 by earning a passing grade:

- Completion of a historiographic essay that informs thesis
  - Demonstration of how interdisciplinary/transnational works will inform final thesis
- 75-80 percent complete with primary source research
- 75-80 percent complete with secondary literature research
- 25-30 percent complete with writing
  - includes well-developed thesis with completed introduction or draft body section
  - completed outline for entire project

### HIST 698A War and Society Thesis: Thesis Completion

This course is for graduate students who need additional time, beyond the summer session, to complete their MA thesis. Enrolling in this course allows students to remain in an active status and enable them to utilize university resources. Students will be charged a continuous enrollment fee, equivalent to one credit, to remain in this enrolled student status. This course cannot be substituted for any program or graduation requirement.

### ***Thesis Requirements***

During the term in which the student intends to complete and defend their thesis, the student must have already successfully completed HIST 696 and be enrolled (in good standing) in HIST 698.

The thesis should be approximately 100 text pages, double-spaced, in twelve-font, Times New Roman, and formatted using *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 16<sup>th</sup> edition. (The front matter and bibliography are not included in the page count.) Citations must be formatted as footnotes and must conform to *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 16<sup>th</sup> edition. The organization of the thesis should be structured as follows:

- I. Title Page
- II. Abstract
- III. Acknowledgements
- IV. Table of Contents
  - a. List of Tables and Figures (if applicable)
  - b. List of Abbreviations
- V. Text
  - a. Appendices (if applicable)
- VI. Bibliography

Each page, except the title page and the abstract, is numbered. The number should be at the bottom and middle of each page. Preliminary pages (those before your text) should be lowercase Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, iv, etc.).

The thesis must demonstrate comprehension of the following War and Society Learning Outcomes:

1. Globalization: Students will demonstrate expertise in collecting and evaluating primary and secondary transnational sources using appropriate war and society methodologies.
2. Student Writing: Students will demonstrate the ability to formulate an original historical argument in thesis-driven academic essays (including a masters' thesis), apply appropriate methods of citation, and use a clear writing style that conveys historical knowledge, ideas and evidence in a mature, readily understood manner.
3. Faculty-Student Research: Students will prepare and revise a masters' thesis in consultation with a faculty mentor which they will present at a formally organized history conference and submit for research grants and publication.
4. Personalized Education: Students will develop a critical stance in relation to historical arguments and methodologies and formulate an original historical argument supported by primary and secondary sources.
5. Interdisciplinarity: Students will utilize interdisciplinary approaches to analyzing historical materials.

### ***Thesis Committee Structure***

A Thesis Committee Form must be submitted to the War and Society program director within the first three weeks of the semester during which the student is enrolled in HIST 696. The committee will consist of the Committee Chair, the Second Reader, and the Third Reader. The student will select a committee with the thesis advisor acting as the Committee Chair. The thesis chair must be a full-time faculty member teaching as part of the War and Society program or within the History Department. The second reader must be full-time faculty of Wilkinson College. The third reader should be a relevant specialist, and does not need to be a member of the full-time faculty. If the third reader is not a member of the full-time faculty, a C.V. must be included with the Thesis Committee Form. No full-time faculty member can serve as a member on more than five committees in a single semester and, especially if serving as the chair for multiple thesis projects, should limit participation to three. The chair and both readers are required to participate in the Thesis Defense.

The completed thesis must be submitted to all committee members at least two weeks prior to the defense, unless all committee members negotiate a different time schedule. Faculty on multiple committees may need additional time to prepare for closely scheduled defenses.

In the event that a committee member anticipates a temporary absence during the time the student is working on the thesis, arrangements must be made for communication with that faculty member during the leave or the student must designate an appropriate substitute.

If a dispute or disagreement arises between a student and a member of the committee, the Committee Chair shall call a meeting with the committee and student to resolve the issue. If the

dispute cannot be resolved through this process, or if the proposed solution is found unacceptable to the student or one of the committee members, the disagreeing party or program director may request that the Dean of the College review the problem and recommend a solution. If the problem cannot be resolved at the department level, the dispute should be appealed to the Vice Chancellor for Graduate Education, which will be the final level of appeal.

In the event a student does not register for HIST 696 / HIST 698 or fails to maintain an active status in the program within one semester or term after official acceptance by a thesis committee, the Committee Chair has the option to dissolve the committee, in which case a new committee must be secured and approved before registration can be authorized.

### ***Thesis Defense***

The thesis defense will be an in-depth discussion of the thesis/central argument, methodological approach and research process, historiography, and how the thesis fits within the larger field of war and society. The student is responsible for establishing a meeting time for the thesis defense as well as coordinating with the Wilkinson Graduate Studies Program Coordinator to reserve a room for at least two hours.

The student must be prepared to speak for most of the duration of the defense, demonstrating that he or she is an expert on their topic. The Committee Chair should open the defense by asking the following questions:

- Why did you chose your topic?
- What is your main argument? Key supporting arguments?
- How did you defend your main argument throughout your thesis?
- What was your research methodology?
- What major conclusions did you draw from the research and writing process?

The committee's readers are expected to prepare no fewer than three questions pertaining to the thesis (the student will not be given the questions in advance) and a written commentary about the work that the candidate can retain. The Chair should conclude the defense by asking where the student wants to head if deciding to pursue the topic further. The main intent of the defense is to provide students with professional feedback on their work.

The Committee Chair and readers must complete an assessment rubric before leaving the defense. If the defense is successful, each committee member must sign and date the Thesis Approval Form. The Committee Chair will collect the completed rubrics and Thesis Approval Form and then submit them to the War and Society director within two business days of the Thesis Defense.

Upon the successful conclusion of the defense, the student will have the opportunity to make any changes to the thesis based on the committee's suggestions before submitting for archival purposes. If the student fails to successfully defend their thesis, the Committee Chair will coordinate with the War and Society program director to establish a timeline for resubmitting.

### ***Thesis Evaluation***

The thesis project will be graded through the student's enrollment in HIST 696 and HIST 698. All students must earn at least a B grade in HIST 696 (and the thesis advisor's consent) before moving on to HIST 698. If students receive an "incomplete" for HIST 696, they have one year from the first day of the term in which the incomplete was recorded to resolve the grade, unless a shorter period of time is specified by the advisor. (Professors have the option of granting a "satisfactory progress" (SP) to those students who are likely to complete HIST 696 requirements in a timely fashion as designated by the thesis advisor and program director.)

Students will be assessed a letter grade for HIST 698 with the thesis constituting 85% of the final grade and the defense 15%. The student can only pass HIST 698 by meeting the requirements for the thesis and by completing a successful defense.

### ***Thesis Submission and Acceptance***

To complete HIST 698, the student must submit the defended thesis, along with the signed Thesis Approval Form, as a pdf to the War and Society program director. Within ten business days of a successful defense, the student must also submit an electronic copy of their defended thesis, along with the Thesis Approval Form, to Leatherby Library for inclusion in the Digital Commons and in ProQuest. There is no cost associated with these submissions. You may find the instructions for submission, the required checklists, and further information [here at the Library's website](#).

Ensure you refer to the library's website for submission procedures and contact information and for the Dissertation/Thesis Checklist (for formatting), along with templates and FAQs. Contact the library's Thesis Administrator with any questions. Review by the library of the thesis is a multi-step process that can take up to two weeks; the library may request quick corrections if any formatting errors are found. If the student has not heard from the library's Thesis Administrator within two weeks, the student should contact that person to confirm the thesis met the library's requirements.

The library's Thesis Administrator must email the War and Society program director when the thesis is submitted and approved; this should be done at least 48 hours prior to Commencement and should include the student's name, the title of the thesis, and the student's ID number.

The War and Society program director cannot confirm thesis completion with the Registrar's Office until the final thesis is submitted to the program director as a pdf and to the library according to their guidelines.