MA History Capstone Project Guidelines

In lieu of a thesis, students enrolled in the MA History non-thesis option complete a capstone project in which they pursue independent research on a significant historical question or problem, engage pertinent scholarly debates in the historical discipline, and produce a substantial project that reflects a deep understanding of the topic and has professional application. Capstone projects include, but are not limited to, article-length historiographic essays, annotated syllabi or lesson plans, and digital history initiatives. An oral comprehensive examination may be a component of the capstone project defense. Candidates are required to demonstrate their knowledge of their field of concentration as well as establish how their project contributes to that field of study.

Capstone projects are completed while taking capstone project hours, i.e., HIST 6993, Directed Research Project. HIST 6993 is a 3-semester hour-course. HIST 6993 may be repeated. But capstone projects should be completed in one semester, if possible. In terms of scope, workload, and expectations, capstone projects should be comparable to a 3-semester-hour graduate course.

Students complete capstone projects in consultation with a faculty advisor. Students should begin by discussing their proposed project with a prospective advisor, a Graduate Faculty member who is expert in the chosen field of study. (Written proposals, though not required, are useful in applying for History Department graduate scholarships and summer research support.) If the faculty member agrees to supervise the project, an Agreement to Supervise Capstone Project From must be completed by the student, signed by the supervisor, and emailed by the student to the director of graduate studies. A copy of the form is included at the end of these Guidelines. Copies are also available on the Department's capstone/thesis webpage and in the Department's Graduate Program Guidelines. Students must file the form, designating an advisor, by the last day of classes of the term in which they complete their first 18 semester hours in the program, a deadline intended to promote degree progress and save students both time and money.

Once the form is on file, the student is eligible to register for capstone project hours (HIST 6993, Directed Research Project) under the supervisor's direction. Students seeking to enroll in HIST 6993 in a particular term must initiate the process by requesting their supervisor's permission. Approving supervisors should then email the Department's lead administrative assistant, copying the director of graduate studies, requesting registration on the student's behalf. With DGS approval, the administrative assistant will enroll eligible students.

Once the Agreement to Supervise Capstone Project Form is on file, the capstone supervisor replaces the graduate director as the student's academic advisor. The student should consult the capstone supervisor for research, course schedule, and other academic advice.

To graduate, students must submit and defend their projects for advisory approval. Students must also pass a comprehensive assessment. Like thesis defenses, capstone defenses include an oral comprehensive examination, in which candidates are required to demonstrate their knowledge of their field of concentration as well as establish how their project contributes to that field of study. Unlike theses, capstone projects are not submitted to the Graduate School for review. Instead, advisors must notify the DGS that the student has successfully defended their project and passed

the comprehensive assessment. The DGS then petitions DegreeWorks to mark those degree requirements as completed. It is important for advisors to notify DGS. Otherwise, the Registrar has no way of knowing that the student has completed the degree requirements, possibly delaying graduation.

AGREEMENT TO SUPERVISE CAPSTONE PROJECT FORM

AGREEMENT TO SUPERVISE CAPSTONE PROJECT

I agree to supervise the capstone project of _____

(Banner ID # _____) beginning of _____ semester, 20_____

Preliminary Project Title: _____

_____
Signature of Professor

_____
Printed Name of Professor

_____
Date

_____
Signature of Student

_____
Printed Name of Student

_____
Date