Undergraduate Honors Program in History

In the second semester of their junior year, qualified history majors are encouraged to apply for History Honors. Honors students will produce a research paper written in consultation with a professor in the history department with whom they have previously worked. Upon admission to the Honors Program, students will complete two courses (six hours) of directed research and writing in their senior year. These courses are in addition to the 30 hours required for the major. The program encourages preliminary research over the summer between junior and senior years on the topic of student interest. Funding is available to support suitable research after approval by the supervising professor.

Requirements for Admission to the History Honors Program

- Students applying for honors must have a minimum grade point average of 3.50 in their prior work in history. Applications should include a Degree Audit.
- Priority will be given to students who have completed at least one research seminar in the department, work from which should be included in the application portfolio (discussed below).
- Application portfolio, including:
  1) One recommendation letter from the supervising professor
  2) A second letter of support from a professor in the department familiar with the student’s work.
  3) Two to three papers from prior courses in history, which are representative of the student’s writing and critical skills, and demonstrating his/her ability to work with primary and secondary sources.
  4) A project proposal (2-3 pages in length), indicating research goals, potential sources, awareness of the existing relevant literature, and the student’s own background knowledge.

The application portfolio is due mid-March. An announcement will be circulated at the beginning of the spring term specifying the exact date. Students selected for the Honors Program will be notified in time to attend the oral presentations of the prior year’s honors thesis projects in April (see below).

HIST 403: Fall Research Seminar

The goal of the seminar is to advance the student from preliminary research to the formulation of a formal prospectus for the honors thesis, and to move their research forward. Students will meet on a regular basis with their supervising professors over the course of the semester and with the
Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS) to discuss deadlines, drafts and issues of common concern to all honors students. The honor student’s responsibilities in HIST 403 will include:

*A 10-page long formal research prospectus will be due in mid-semester, and should include: 1) a concise and well-presented description of the project’s thesis and underlying argument, 2) a discussion of existing scholarship on the subject, and 3) a full bibliography of primary and secondary sources.

*At the end of the semester, honor students will present a “Summary Report of Research” (roughly 10 pages) describing the progress made in their research and writing. Actual due dates will be specified by the Director of Undergraduate Studies at the beginning of the semester.

These assignments will be evaluated by the supervising professor and the DUS. Upon approval of the prospectus and research report, students will be advanced to the second semester of the program. Students who do not choose, or are not approved, to advance to the second semester will receive a letter grade for HIST 403 and terminate their participation without receiving honors.

HIST 404: History Honors Thesis (Spring)

In the course of the Spring semester, students concentrate on the writing of an extended historical research paper of some 40-50 pages in text length, in addition to supporting documentation. An outstanding honors thesis makes use of primary sources and shows originality in methodology or interpretation. The essay must situate the problem in the existing scholarly literature on the topic and contain a clear appraisal of how its work fits into the debate and what intervention it proposes to make.

Students will meet individually and regularly with their supervising professor and are required to submit rough drafts by fixed deadlines. These rough drafts will be assessed by both the supervising professor and the DUS. A finished draft must be submitted by the beginning of April, whereupon the student will make an oral presentation of the paper to an open audience, including the supervising professor, members of the Undergraduate Committee, fellow honors students and others. Guests may be invited. The student will be expected to take questions and defend the thesis presented. After the oral presentation, students will be given the opportunity to make final revisions of their thesis, which will then be submitted for evaluation to their supervising professor. The professor will give the work a letter grade and make a recommendation for or against honors. This recommendation will be taken into consideration by the Undergraduate Committee who will make the ultimate determination regarding the award of honors.

Sample Timetable:
1. January 30\textsuperscript{th}: rough draft 1 shown to supervising professor (copied to DUS)

2. March 1: rough draft 2 shown to supervising professor (copied to DUS)

3. March 15: rough draft 3 shown to supervising professor (copied to DUS)

4. Early April: final draft shown to supervising professor and DUS

5. Mid-April: Oral Defense of Research Paper