

WRITING A DISSERTATION PROPOSAL IN THE HUMANITIES: **HISTORY**

Note:

This information is intended to serve as a general guide to outlining a dissertation proposal in History. Specific expectations may vary by committee. You should always ascertain the requirements of your specific advisor/committee members before completing the dissertation proposal.

Length:

While there is no required page count, the dissertation proposal in history is typically between 12-20 pages. It does not generally require a separate bibliography unless specifically requested by your dissertation committee members.

Contents:

1. Introduction

- a. This section should briefly introduce your topic and its significance to your field. It should specifically focus on addressing what questions you plan to ask in your dissertation, how the answers to these questions will contribute to your field, and what is new about your approach / how it addresses gaps in the existing scholarship.

2. Historiography

- a. This section should provide context on existing scholarship, e.g. the state of the research conversation in your field. It should address the most relevant secondary literature in all of the key areas your work may cover, and demonstrate an understanding of how your dissertation will fit into these existing debates / areas of emphasis / scholarship as a whole.

3. Primary Sources

- a. This section should address the primary sources you will need to use to build your argument, as well as their availability and how you plan to gain access (in person

or remotely) to them. This accounting should be as specific as possible (not just a research library you plan to use but a list of particular collections, manuscripts, or other primary sources you plan to utilize). If your work encompasses oral history, this section should include a list of people you plan to interview, where they are located, and any logistical concerns that may exist in gaining access to them.

4. *Organizational Plan / Chapter Summary*

- a. This section should include your preliminary organizational plan, including what sections or chapters you plan to incorporate and/or how your topics will be laid out. This might be a more general plan or a specific accounting of chapter contents depending non the requirements of your committee.

More information on the dissertation proposal in History may be found at:

<https://cgu0.sharepoint.com/sites/SAH/SitePages/History.aspx>