SCHOOL OF DIVINITY, HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY

ACADEMIC SESSION 2017-2018

HI4516: UNDERGRADUATE DISSERTATION IN HISTORY

30 Credits: 11 Weeks

PLEASE NOTE CAREFULLY:

The full set of school regulations and procedures is contained in the Undergraduate Student Handbook which is available online at your MyAberdeen Organisation page. Students are expected to familiarise themselves not only with the contents of this leaflet but also with the contents of the Handbook. Therefore, ignorance of the contents of the Handbook will not excuse the breach of any School regulation or procedure.

You must familiarise yourself with this important information at the earliest opportunity.

COURSE CO-ORDINATOR:
Dr Heidi Mehrkens
Office hours: Tuesday (4-5 p.m.) and Friday (10-11 a.m.)
Crombie Annexe
Room 111
01224 272466
heidi.mehrkens@abdn.ac.uk

Discipline Administration:
Mrs Barbara McGillivray/Mrs Gillian Brown
50-52 College Bounds
Room CBLG01
01224 272199/272454
history-ug@abdn.ac.uk
TIMETABLE
For time and place of classes, please see MyAberdeen

Students can view their university timetable
at http://www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/study/timetables-550.php

COURSE DESCRIPTION
Students will undertake their independent research under the supervision of a member of History staff. Most of the work will be done independently, as students focus on their individual projects. There will be a preliminary lecture to introduce students to the task, arranged in October before students start work on their project. The dissertation is a single piece of work: 10,000-12,000 words in length, worth 100% of the course grade.

INTENDED AIMS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES
• To frame an original and significant research question and to address it.
• To identify relevant primary and secondary research materials and to make appropriate use of them.
• To criticise and evaluate such primary and secondary materials.
• To identify and present key issues raised by your research.
• To offer a clear argument with coherent organisation and presentation of relevant facts with development of ideas.

LECTURE/SEMINAR PROGRAMME
• Two hour preliminary lecture to introduce students to the task, scheduled for early October 2017.
• Two hour general meeting for revision, scheduled for early February 2018.
GENERAL TEXTS ON WRITING A DISSERTATION


Carrie Winstanley, *Writing a Dissertation for Dummies* (Chichester, 2009).

RESEARCH ETHICS

There are well established rules and guidelines within the University which students must abide by when conducting research for a dissertation. In certain situations you will need to gain **ethical approval from the College Research Ethics Committee**. This is particularly important in the following circumstances:

1. The dissertation project involves human subjects / interviewees (or human remains).
2. It addresses potential conflicts of interest; the use of artefacts; environmental impact; financial inducements for subjects / interviewees or dealing with highly sensitive material (e.g. Northern Ireland Troubles).
3. The research activity might involve the sharing of data or confidential information beyond the period of consent granted by the subjects.

If you are in any doubt as to whether this policy will apply to your research please consult the course co-ordinator and your supervisor in the first instance (and certainly before you undertake your research).
THE ROLE OF THE COURSE COORDINATOR

Any queries about the dissertation process? Please contact Dr Heidi Mehrkens (heidi.mehrkens@abdn.ac.uk). The course coordinator’s role is to advise and help. Students who are experiencing difficulty with their work for whatever reason, or who require help or information should consult the course coordinator without delay. Contact details and office hours may be found above (in this guide), on the department’s Staff Pages and on MyAberdeen, or just make an appointment. Any feedback or enquiries about the course should also be addressed to the course coordinator.

THE ROLE OF THE SUPERVISOR

1. To offer meetings to discuss the topic
2. To help you choose and refine a title
3. To give bibliographical advice
4. To discuss research methods
5. To discuss your draft introduction
6. To discuss your developing arguments
7. To help you create your timetable and encourage you to keep it

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

1. To identify a suitable supervisor and set up the initial appointment
2. To meet regularly and/or keep in contact with your supervisor
3. To submit the required paperwork (forms) on time
4. To hand in a bibliography and draft introduction
5. To engage with feedback provided by your supervisor
6. To check your university e-mail account regularly for messages
7. To plan your work to allow submission before the deadline
WHAT IS A DISSERTATION?

A dissertation is not just a long essay. It is a focused piece of primary research which seeks to offer fresh and potentially original insights on a historical subject. These insights should be placed within the broader context of historiographical debate and scholarship.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD DISSERTATION TOPIC?

- A good topic addresses a broader historical issue or debate, usually with an original approach.
- It can be treated in a thorough manner in 10,000 to 12,000 words.
- It draws to a significant extent on primary sources.
- As a case study, it might shed light on a broader question, or look at a well-researched topic from a different angle.

FOR STAFF RESEARCH SPECIALISMS SEE THE END OF THE COURSE GUIDE. PLEASE DO CONTACT POTENTIAL SUPERVISORS AT THE EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER THEY ARE ABLE TO SUPERVISE A DISSERTATION THIS CURRENT SESSION.

PREPARING YOUR DISSERTATION

Your dissertation topic should be chosen after consultation with a potential supervisor. If you require additional information please contact the coordinator. It is important to choose topics that are viable within the word limits given below, can be completed by the due date, can be supported by the resources available and for which adequate supervision is available. While it is normal for topics to evolve during the research and writing processes, no substantial change in topic is permitted without the knowledge and agreement of the supervisor(s).
Please note that it is not permitted to replicate a summative essay you have submitted in another course.

Supervisors may give specific guidance relating to sources and general argument. However, as the dissertation is an original piece of work, supervisors cannot be expected to engage in detailed analysis and criticism of specific aspects of the dissertation prior to its submission.

Students will submit TWO pieces of work related to the preparation of their dissertations (by the end of January). They will receive formative feedback on these pieces of work from their supervisor(s): the work will not be marked but will serve as the basis for guidance and discussion of the dissertation process and progress. If the supervisor decides the work is of an unsatisfactory nature, the student may be required to re-submit.

FORMATTING YOUR DISSERTATION: GENERAL POINTS

1. Insert page numbers: Pagination should run consecutively from beginning to end and include any appendices and the bibliography. Cross references should also include page numbers.

2. Serious deviation from departmental formatting style in end/footnotes or bibliography (see below) will have a negative impact on the mark given to the dissertation.

3. Evidence of inadequate proofreading (such as repeated typographical errors, incomplete sentences, the use of contractions) will have a negative impact on the mark.

4. End/footnotes should be used to indicate the source of direct quotations and specific pieces of information (not widely known). They must also be used to indicate the source of ideas, analysis and ways of considering an issue unique to a given author (when you are paraphrasing someone
else’s thoughts and ideas). Failure to make adequate use of end/footnotes will have a negative impact on the mark.

5. The dissertation should also be clearly typed and double-spaced on A4 sized paper.

FORMATTING YOUR DISSERTATION: CONTENTS

The presentation of your dissertation will vary according to individual subjects. It might contain the following elements, which should be arranged in this order:

1. Title page (with only title, student ID and number of words)
2. Table of contents
3. List of maps, plans, tables and illustrations (if you have used any)
4. Note on abbreviations (if necessary)
5. Introduction
6. Individual chapters
7. Conclusion
8. Appendices (if necessary)
9. Bibliography

TITLE PAGE

The title page shows only the title of the work, the student ID and the accurate word count (word count including footnotes and appendices but excluding the bibliography). Sections 5-7 (introduction, individual chapters and conclusion) count towards the length of your dissertation. In total they should have between 10,000 and 12,000 words (including footnotes). Please note: One mark on the CGS scale will be deducted for every 1,000 words (or part thereof) above or below this range.
TABLE OF CONTENTS
The table of contents needs to be complete and contain accurate page numbers. If any of the chapters are subdivided, please list all titles.

LIST OF MAPS, ETC.
If you have loads of these, they should be consecutively numbered and the pages on which they appear should be given.

NOTE ON ABBREVIATIONS
Here you can list standard abbreviations for sources or publications with lengthy titles frequently referred to. If there are just a few cases where abbreviations need to be introduced, this can be done in the first footnote where they occur.

INTRODUCTION
A good introduction will

- outline the subject of the dissertation
- critically analyse the historiography / literature on the subject
- introduce the sources you will be using
- introduce the methods you will be adopting
- outline briefly the topics of your chapters
- give a brief indication of your conclusions.

INDIVIDUAL CHAPTERS
The main part of the dissertation should be divided into manageable chapters. If chapters are lengthy, the reader might lose track of the argument. If they are very short, there might be insufficient space for a fully developed
argument or example. Each chapter should have a clear descriptive title and start on a separate page. It might help to break the chapters into subsections.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion should relate the body of the text to the problem stated in the introduction and show how new insights have emerged from the research undertaken.

APPENDICES

It may be more convenient to place statistical tables, maps, illustrations, cartoons or a document to which repeated references are made in the appendices.

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND FOOTNOTES

Improving your Writing has been designed to support your progress in University of Aberdeen courses. Here you find techniques to develop your writing skills and present your written work.

Please use the departmental referencing guide (provided on MyAberdeen) when formatting your footnotes and bibliography. Failure to observe the stipulations (or any agreement made with your supervisor on referencing) may lead to a deduction of points in the Common Grading Scale.

If you are in any doubt on how to footnote your dissertation, please consult your supervisor.

FORMATTING: STYLE GUIDE
QUOTATIONS
Quotations from prose should run on in the text if they do not exceed two or three lines and they should be indicated by (single) inverted commas. Longer quotations should be indented. Inverted commas are not required when the quotation is indented. Quotations should keep the spelling used in original documents and not be modernised.

UNDERLINING AND ITALICS
Underlining or, more usually, italics should be used in the main text for a) titles of books, plays and periodicals, b) technical terms or phrases in language other than English (but not for quotations or complete sentences).

CAPITALS
Capitals should be used for institutions and corporate bodies when the name is the official title or part of an official title. For the titles pertaining to individuals, only use capitals if followed by the person’s name. For example, ‘Archibald Campbell, Marquis of Argyll’, but ‘the marquis’.

DATES
Dates should be given in the form 30 January 1649.

BINDING YOUR DISSERTATION
As the dissertation has to be bound, please work with generous margins, especially on the left hand side of the text. The Print Shop (which is now located at 23 St Machar Drive) provides information on how to prepare your work for binding: http://www.abdn.ac.uk/uniprint/binding/preparing-your-thesis/
You do not have to spend a lot of money to get your dissertations ‘book bound’. It is much more affordable to get them ring bound. Please ensure though that all pages are correctly placed in their proper order as the print shop will not check or change your pages once work has commenced.

**ASSESSMENT**

**SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT**

The Dissertation (10,000 – 12,000 words) (100%)

**FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT**

In addition to the summative assessment for the course, there are a number of formative assessments.

1. **Bibliography**: Your bibliography will list at least 20 sources, including a good mix of primary material, monographs, journal articles, and essays from edited volumes, according to the History referencing guide. Each bibliographical entry will be accompanied by a standard foot/endnote entry for the work as an example of how it would be presented in the dissertation (for the first or initial reference of a work in the dissertation), and by a short title entry (which is used to reference a work on subsequent occasions). This exercise is to ensure that the correct format is being used.

2. **Draft introduction (1000 words)**: The introduction outlines the subject of the dissertation and provides a critical analysis of the historiography or secondary literature on the subject. It will introduce the sources used for research and the methods you will be adopting. It also can give
a short outline of your chapter topics and a *brief* indication of your conclusions.

**DEADLINE:** Bibliography and draft introduction are both due Monday, 29 January 2018, 3pm (one hard copy of each assessment to be put into the drop-off box in Room C8008, 50-52 College Bounds, and one copy handed in electronically through Turnitin on MyAberdeen).

**ANY STUDENT FAILING TO SUBMIT SATISFACTORY VERSIONS OF EITHER OF THESE PIECES OF WORK RISKS LOSING THEIR CLASS CERTIFICATE (SEE THE SCHOOL HANDBOOK ON CLASS CERTIFICATES).**

To view the CGS Descriptors please go to MyAberdeen- Organisations-Divinity, History, & Philosophy Student Information for Undergraduates. The link to the CGS Descriptors is on the left hand menu.

**PLEASE NOTE:** In order to pass a course on the first attempt, a student must attain a Common Grading Scale (CGS) mark of at least E3 on each element of course assessment. Failure to do so will result in a grade of no greater than CGS E1 for the course as a whole.

If you submit your work on time, you can expect that feedback will normally be provided within three working weeks (excluding vacation periods) of the submission deadline.
ASSESSMENT DEADLINES

THE SUBMISSION DATE FOR THE DISSERTATION IS
WEDNESDAY, 25 April 2018, 3pm.

SUBMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

Please submit by the deadline TWO paper copies (cover sheet required) PLUS, ONE official electronic copy (no cover sheet required) as follows:

**Hard Copies:** Two hard copies typed and double spaced, together with an assessment cover sheet – this should have your ID number CLEARLY written on the cover sheet, with NO name and NO signature but EVERYTHING ELSE filled in – and should be delivered to the History Admin Office [Drop-off boxes located in CB008, 50-52 College Bounds].

**Electronic Copy:** One copy submitted through Turnitin via MyAberdeen. (For instructions please see http://www.abdn.ac.uk/eLearning/turnitinuk/students/) Students are asked to retain the Turnitin receipt so they are able to provide proof of submission at a later date if required.

In advance of uploading, please save the assignment with your student ID number listed in the filename, i.e. 59999999 HI4516 Essay 1.

When asked to enter a title for the assignment, please enter a title identical to the name of your saved assignment, i.e. 59999999 HI4516 Essay 1.

Both copies to be submitted by 3pm on the due date.

**Please note:** Failure to submit both an electronic copy to Turnitin and a hard copy to the school office, by the stated deadline, will result in a zero mark. N.B Turnitin doesn’t accept Mac documents in Pages. If using a Mac please go to File and export work as a Word document.
GUIDE TO STAFF RESEARCH INTERESTS

Dr Jackson Armstrong - Lecturer - Late medieval and early modern history, in England, Scotland and the British Isles; frontiers, conflict, chivalry and law

Dr Colin Barr - Senior Lecturer - Irish, British and British Imperial history in the long nineteenth century, Irish Diaspora, Victorian ecclesiastical history

Prof Stefan Brink - Professor in Scandinavian Studies - Society and culture of early Scandinavia - language and History in the Early Germanic World; Viking Slavery

Prof Michael Brown - Professor in History - Scottish and Irish enlightenment, political identity and the development of nationalism

Dr Hannah Burrows - Lecturer - Early Scandinavian Literature - Culture and Society

Dr Alessandra Cecolin - Lecturer in the History of the Middle East - Political history and diplomatic strategies that characterized sixty-year relationship between Iran and Israel; wider conflict between national and religious identity for Jewish minorities living in Middle East; Islamic and Judaic shared history in Middle East, history of political Zionism; absorption of Middle Eastern Jewish minorities in Israel.

Dr Lisa Collinson - Teaching Fellow - Medieval literary and cultural history (Scandinavia and the British Isles)

Dr Andrew Dilley - Senior Lecturer - British Empire, late nineteenth and twentieth century, especially the economics and culture of empire, relations with dominions

Prof David N Dumville - Professor of History and Palaeography - Early medieval history of England, Wales, Ireland and Scotland

Dr Marie-Luise Ehrenschwendtner – Lecturer in Church History - Later medieval history, especially religious history and the history of women

Prof Karin Friedrich - Professor in History - Early Modern Germany, especially political thought and urban history

Prof Robert Frost - Burnett Fletcher Chair of History - Polish history; military history in the early modern period

Prof Marjory Harper - Professor in History - Emigration within the British Empire since the 18th century; modern Scottish history; oral history
Prof Anthony Heywood - Professor in History - Modern Russian/Soviet History; Russia’s participation in the First World War; transport history

Dr Alastair Macdonald - Mackie Lecturer in History - Medieval Warfare; Anglo-Scottish relations; Sport history

Dr Elizabeth Macknight - Senior Lecturer - Nineteenth- and twentieth-century French History and Gender History

Dr Ben Marsden - Senior Lecturer - Cultural history, especially of science and technology, in Britain in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; food history

Dr Heidi Mehrkens – Lecturer in Modern European History - history of European monarchies, warfare, the media and political cultures in the long nineteenth century

Prof William Naphy - Professor in History - the Reformation, especially in Geneva; plague and plague regulations in early modern Europe

Prof Ralph O’Connor - Professor in History and Celtic Literature - early medieval Scandinavian and Celtic literature; history of science in the 19th century

Dr Frederik Pedersen - Senior Lecturer - Medieval social and religious history; the Hanseatic League and Scandinavian history

Prof Thomas Weber - Professor in History - 20th-century European, international and global political history; Jewish/non-Jewish relations; historical methodology

For further Information: Departmental Website: http://www.abdn.ac.uk/sdhp/history