SCHOOL OF DIVINITY, HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY

ACADEMIC SESSION 2016-2017

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 (3-4 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 also view their university timetable at http://www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/study/timetables-550.php
COURSE DESCRIPTION
Two hour preliminary lecture to introduce students to the task, arranged in the first semester before students start work on the project. Students will undertake their independent research under the supervision of a member of History staff. Most of the work of the dissertation will be done independently, as students focus on their individual projects. 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
(1. Frame an original and significant research question and to address it.
(2. Identify relevant primary and secondary research materials and to make appropriate use of them.
(3. Criticise and evaluate such primary and secondary materials.
(4. Identify and present key issues raised by your research.
(5. 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, lecture scheduled for early October 2016.

GENERAL TEXTS ON WRITING A DISSERTATION


Carrie Wistanley, Writing a Dissertation for Dummies (Chichester, 2009). (Despite the book’s title it is the most helpful and comprehensive of the three texts).
IMPORTANT NOTE ON 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. Involves human subjects/interviewees (or human remains).
2. Involve: 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. Any research activity that 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. You will be advised to fill in an ethical approval form. Please remember to contact me and fill in the form in good time before you conduct any research that falls under the guidelines. You cannot begin the research until you gain approval from the College Ethics Committee.

WHAT IS A DISSERTATION?

A dissertation is not just a long essay but it is a focused piece of primary research which addresses and 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.

THE ROLE OF THE SUPERVISOR

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

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Identify a suitable supervisor and set up the initial appointment.
2. Meet regularly and/or keep in contact with your supervisor.
3. Fill in the various forms and hand them in on time to the designated person.
4. Hand in a bibliography and draft introduction.
5. Listen to the feedback given by your supervisor.
6. Ensure your university e-mail account is functional at all times.
7. Plan your work to allow submission before the final deadline.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD DISSERTATION TOPIC?

- To address a broader historical issue or debate, usually with an original approach.
- Be confined enough to be treated in a thorough manner in 10,000 to 12,000 words.
- Draw to a significant extent on primary sources. A consideration of primary source materials available should be one consideration when choosing a topic and should be discussed with your supervisor at the earliest opportunity.
- Dissertations can be (although not exclusively) a case study shedding light on a broader question.

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 (2016-2017).

PREPARING YOUR DISSERTATION

Your dissertation topic should be chosen after consultation with a potential supervisor. If you require additional information please contact the co-ordinator Dr Heidi Mehrkens. 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 where there is adequate supervision. 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 **must** attend a preliminary lecture arranged in the First Half Session which usually takes place in early October and subsequently to have regular meetings with their supervisor(s).

Students will submit **TWO** pieces of work related to the preparation of their dissertations. 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 supervisory guidance and discussion of the dissertation process and progress. However, if the supervisor(s) decide the work is of an unsatisfactory nature, the student may be required to re-submit a satisfactory version.

**Students will be expected to work on their bibliography and their draft introduction over the Christmas Break with the expectation that students will submit BOTH pieces of work by the deadline at the end of January.**

**FORMATTING YOUR DISSERTATION: GENERAL POINTS**

- **DO NOT FORGET TO 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.
• **Serious deviation** from departmental formatting style in end/footnotes or bibliography (see below) will have a **negative** impact the mark given to the dissertation.

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

• **End/footnotes** should be used **NOT ONLY** for direct quotations but **ALSO** to show where specific bits of information (not widely known) have originated as well as 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 given to the dissertation.

• **The dissertation should also be CLEARLY TYPED and DOUBLE SPACED on A4 sized paper.**

**FORMATTING YOUR DISSERTATION: CONTENTS**

It is difficult to be entirely prescriptive about how to present your dissertation, as this will vary according to individual subjects, but it **should** contain the following:

1. The title page (with only title, student ID and number of words).
2. A table of contents
3. A list of any maps, plans, tables and illustrations (if you have used any).
4. A note on abbreviations (if necessary).
5. An introduction
6. The individual chapters
7. A conclusion
8. Any Appendices (if necessary).

The length of the dissertation (sections 5, 6, 7) should be 10,000 to 12,000 words (including footnotes). One mark on the CGS scale will be deducted for every 1,000 words (or part thereof) above or below this range. Each dissertation should be submitted with an accurate word count (including footnotes and appendices but excluding the bibliography) noted on the title page.

TABLE OF CONTENTS
The table of contents needs to be complete and contain accurate page numbers. If any of the chapters are subdivided the subdivisions need to be listed.

LIST OF MAPS, ETC.
Not all dissertations will make use of these, but where they are they should be consecutively numbered and the pages on which they appear should be given.

NOTE ON ABBREVIATIONS
(Standard abbreviations for sources or publications with lengthy titles frequently referred to need to be set out here on a separate sheet if there are a number of them.
If there are just a few cases where abbreviations need to be introduced it can be done in the first footnote where they occur.

INTRODUCTION
It is difficult to be absolutely prescriptive about this, but in the introduction you need to:
• Outline the subject of the dissertation.
• Any previous literature on the subject/A literature review.
• The sources you will be using and the methods you will be adopting
• A brief indication of your conclusions.

A short note on the literature review - a literature review is a short critical analysis of the historiography or secondary literature relevant to your chosen topic. This will be discussed further in the preliminary lecture. If you require any further advice, please do not hesitate to contact your supervisor or the course co-ordinator.

INDIVIDUAL CHAPTERS

Here’s the crucial requirement to strike the right balance. The main part of the dissertation almost always should be divided into manageable chapters which are long enough to present the constituent parts of the dissertation into manageable portions. Individual chapters should never be so lengthy that the reader loses track of the argument, but should not be so short there is insufficient space for a full development. In some cases it may help to sub-divide the chapters, although in others it will be better to have undivided chapters. Each chapter should have a clear descriptive title and start on a separate page. You may want to break down the chapters in subsections to help the reader.

NOTE ON QUOTATIONS

Quotations from prose should run on in the text if they do not exceed two or three lines. 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.

NOTE ON UNDERLINING AND ITALICS

Underlining or Italics should only be used in the main text under the following circumstances:
1. For the titles of books, plays and periodicals.

2. For technical terms or phrases in language other than English (but not for quotations or complete sentences).

NOTE ON CAPITALS

Capitals should be used as sparingly as possible. They 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. E.g. Archibald Campbell, Marquis of Argyll, but ‘the marquis’.

NOTE ON DATES

Dates should be given in the form 30 January 1649 and unless the contrary is indicated it is to be assumed that the date refers to the year beginning on 1 January.

CONCLUSION

The dissertation should end with a section in which your conclusions are given in full and drawing attention to those particular points which you wish to emphasise. The conclusion should relate the body of the text to the problem 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.

PLAGIARISM

‘Plagiarism is the use, without adequate acknowledgement, of the intellectual work of another person in work submitted for assessment. A
student cannot be found to have committed plagiarism where it can be shown that the student has taken all reasonable care to avoid representing the work of others as his/her own’.

Plagiarism is a serious offence everywhere, both within and outwith the academic community. All cases of suspected plagiarism will be reported to the Head of School in the first instance and cannot be discussed with or determined by a Tutor or course Co-ordinator.

Please note that students MUST refer to the School’s Undergraduate Student Handbook for more detailed information on what constitutes plagiarism, how to avoid it, and what the University’s procedure is should plagiarism be suspected.

FORMATTING YOUR DISSERTATION: BIBLIOGRAPHIES AND FOOTNOTES

Improving your Writing has been designed to support your progress in University of Aberdeen courses. Its aim is to help you to become a more skilful and effective writer and to improve the presentation of written work.

You MUST use the departmental referencing guide when writing and formatting your dissertation. You will find the guide on My Aberdeen: This guide MUST be used for all coursework for HI-coded History courses unless you are advised to the contrary by the course coordinator, in which case you are advised to obtain the details of the alternative requirements in writing from her/him.

In the absence of such instructions to the contrary, failure to observe the stipulations below will normally lead to a penalty of up to two grade points in the Common Grading Scale.
FOOTNOTES AND REFERENCING: SOME FURTHER GENERAL ADVICE

It is important to remember footnotes are only there to allow a reader to see where the evidence has been gathered and, if necessary, allow them to go back over the same ground if they wish to question any part of the dissertation. Therefore, it is vital that footnotes are clear and accurate.

Footnotes should appear at the bottom of the page. The nearer footnotes are to the text to which they refer, the quicker and easier it is for the reader to follow.

It is important to make sure any abbreviations in the footnotes are used correctly and consistently. The first footnote in which the title of a work is cited should contain the full title, but a short form of title may be used in any subsequent ones. Standard abbreviations for sources or publications with lengthy titles frequently referred to need to be set out in either the first footnote where they occur or, if there are a number of them, on a separate sheet just before the introduction.

Certain Latin abbreviations like loc. Cit. (loco citato, meaning in the passage already quoted) and Op. Cit. (Opere Citato, meaning in the work already quoted) are out of date and should NEVER be used.

You can, however, use ibid. (ibidem, meaning in the same book or chapter) and idem (the same author) and passim (to be found in many places scattered throughout this book, or other source).

If you are in any doubt on how to footnote your dissertation, please consult your supervisor.
BINDING YOUR DISSERTATION
It is important to remember that as the dissertation has to be bound, there should be generous margins, especially on the left hand side of the text.
The Print Shop in the Sir Duncan Rice library has a website which helps you prepare your work for binding. Please see link below:

http://www.abdn.ac.uk/uniprint/binding/preparing-your-thesis/

In particular please note the following:

'To ensure there is no loss of text during the trimming process, please ensure the margins are at least 35mm on the binding edge and 15mm on all other edges.
Please ensure that all pages are correctly placed in their proper order as we DO NOT check or change your pages once work has commenced. If the customer makes an error, this will result in extra charges being levied'.

Please note that the measurements are in mm and if using Microsoft Word it will ask for margin settings in cm.
If you have any further questions please ask myself, or your supervisor or the print shop.
In addition you do NOT have to spend £30 to get your dissertations “book bound” – you can spend less than £5 to get them ring bound.
SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT
The Dissertation (10,000 – 12,000 words) (100%)

FORMATIVE WORK - DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSION
In addition to the summative assessment for the course, there are a number of formative assessments.

1. **The first piece of work is a bibliography** which would normally consist of at least 20 sources (including primary material, monographs, journal articles, and essays from edited volumes). The bibliographical entries must conform to departmental standards. 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), accompanied 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 by the student.

   **The bibliography is due on Monday 30 January 2017 at 3 pm** – one hard copy to be put into the drop-off box in Room CB008, 50-52 College Bounds, and one copy handed in electronically through Turnitin on MyAberdeen

- **The second piece of work will be a draft introduction.** This will be 1000 words long and usually outlines the subject of the dissertation, any previous literature on the subject, the sources you will be using and the methods you will be adopting. It also can give a brief indication of your conclusions. **The draft introduction is due on Monday 30 January 2017 at 3pm** – one hard copy to be put into the drop-off box in Room CB008, 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).

ASSESSMENT DEADLINES: THE DISSERTATION

THE SUBMISSION DATE FOR THE DISSERTATION IS MONDAY 24 April 2017 AT 3.00 PM.

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.

SUBMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

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

**Hard Copy:** One hard copy 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](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 Viking 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 Viking Essay 1.
Both copies to be submitted by 3.00pm 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.

COURSE CO-ORDINATOR’S ROLE

Any queries about the dissertation process please contact Dr Heidi Mehrkens. The course co-ordinator’s role is not simply to teach, but also to advise and help. Students who are having difficulty with their work for whatever reason, or who require help or information should consult the course co-ordinator without delay. Her contact hours are on the department’s Staff Pages and she maintains Office Hours. Any recommendations, observations or complaints about the running of the course should be addressed to her.

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 Andrew Blaikie - Chair in Modern Scottish History - Historical Sociology, Memory and modernity in Scotland.

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

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. (On leave 2016/2017)

Dr Lena Liapi – Crime in Early Modern England and Scotland.

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

Dr Kirsteen Mackenzie – Lecturer - 17th and 18th Century British and Irish History; Jacobites and the Three Stuart Kingdoms in the Seventeenth Century.

Dr Andrew Mackillop - Senior Lecturer Scottish and Irish involvement in the East India Company, 1695-1813; the Highlands in the 18th Century.

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.

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

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 - Teaching Fellow in Church History - Latter medieval history, especially religious history and the history of women. (On leave 2016/2017)

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

Prof Robert I Frost - Burnett Fletcher Chair of History - Polish history; military history in the early modern period. (On leave 2016/2017)

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 Jane Stevenson - Regius Chair of Humanity - Early medieval history of ‘Celtic Britain’; Women in medieval and early modern society. *(On leave 2016/2017)*

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