Dissertation Proposal Procedures

The proposal must be presented to a dissertation committee no later than six months after passing the major oral and written examinations. In exceptional cases a student may present a proposal before their examinations.

Students will discuss potential dissertation topics with their supervisor, who will form a dissertation committee of three faculty members (the supervisor and two others). The proposal will be distributed to the committee members in advance of a proposal presentation.

The proposal presentation provides a forum for the committee and the student to discuss intellectual and methodological aspects of the dissertation and to formulate research plans. Immediately following the presentation, the committee will determine if the proposal has passed or if it is in need of revision. The final, approved proposal will be distributed at the next full faculty meeting for further comment.

The written proposal consists of:

1) A narrative exposition of the dissertation subject detailing the state of current scholarship as well as the student’s own research aims. The proposal should demonstrate the viability of the project and should clearly set forth the research questions to be addressed with direct reference to sources and contexts. The narrative should not exceed 2500 words (approximately 8-10 pages). Arguments should be properly footnoted;

2) A chapter outline that is no more than one page;

3) A bibliography of principle references, divided as appropriate into separate archival and primary source sections;

4) Up to five images.