

UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

**SCHOOL OF HISTORY AND
CLASSICS**

HISTORY HONOURS

**INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS
COMMENCING SEMESTER 1, 2009**

School of History and Classics
University of Tasmania
History Honours
HTA 400 (full-time)
HTA 401 (part-time)

Information for Students Commencing Semester 1, 2009

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I. OBJECTIVES OF THE HISTORY HONOURS PROGRAM

The History Honours program is a program in which students with a love of the past and an enthusiasm to learn will immerse themselves in the History discipline. They will be working alongside staff and other students who also share a dedication to History. By the end of the program they will have gained a close familiarity with both the specialities of their research and course-work topics and also some broader theories and methodologies of the History discipline in general.

The objectives of the program are twofold. By the end of this program successful students will have demonstrated their capacity:

1. To master a range of research skills that are specific to the academic study of History. These skills relate both to each student's specific research interests and also to issues common to the History discipline overall. Some of these skills include:

- a refined ability to use, interpret, and analyse primary sources of different kinds;
- a capacity to synthesise coherently from information gathered from many different primary and secondary sources;
- an informed awareness of the methodological and theoretical nature of the historian's craft;
- an ability to transform information into historical argument through the effective deployment of evidence and the rigorous, critical evaluation and comparative analysis of scholarly opinion;
- an appreciation that historical argument has changed over time and that historical hypotheses are always open to challenge and revision on the basis of further investigations.

2. To refine, to an extent that goes beyond that of the Pass degree, skills in a range of general areas. These skills include such things as the capacity to:

- research efficiently and thoroughly in areas both familiar and unfamiliar to the student;
- plan, develop, and bring to completion a long-term research project to an acceptable professional standard and making a contribution to knowledge;
- work independently and to organise effectively their own schedules of personal study;
- employ the appropriate terminology and reporting conventions of a given discipline;
- identify and extract relevant information from a mass of disparate materials;
- write clearly and effectively.

In the Honours program these two objectives are met simultaneously. First, the program provides a comprehensive foundation for students hoping to pursue later

post-graduate research. Students will acquire both advanced research expertise in the contextual areas of their specialisation and also an informed awareness of the conceptual frameworks, theoretical debates, and methods of enquiry of the History discipline more broadly. Second, for students planning to move into professional degrees or employment the program refines their research and writing skills from the undergraduate degree and also introduces new skills such as the capacity to work independently and with guidance on a long-term project. Finally, the School hopes that all students who participate in the Honours program will enhance their love of History and will appreciate the intrinsically rewarding nature of studying the past.

II. HOW THE CONTENT AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS REFLECT THE OBJECTIVES

The Honours program is divided into four broad components:

- The Practice of History
- Two Honours Seminars, chosen from a list of offerings
- History Honours Special Project
- Thesis of 12,000-15,000 words, and related thesis activities

In all four components the content and assessment processes are directed towards attainment of the two program objectives (specific History skills, generic skills).

1. Practice of History (2 hours per week for one semester) [unit code HTA 402]

Objective 1 – Specific History skills

Content The aim of Practice of History is to induct students into the historian's craft (both broadly speaking, with reference to key methodologies employed in the historical discipline, and also in reference to the specific demands of the thesis) and the professional practice of history. Both the structure and content relate explicitly to issues of general concern in the History discipline overall and issues of specific concern to the thesis-writing process.

Assessment process Written work involves critical reflection on a range of contemporary methodologies and theories in the History discipline, in the form of a collection of short journal reports. Students are also assessed on seminar participation. Further details of assessment tasks and deadlines will be provided by the Practice of History convenor.

Objective 2 – Generic skills

Content Practice of History contains generic research training such as library skills information, organisational skills, strategies for dividing large research projects into manageable units, writing style, and referencing. Attention to public history and contemporary historical debates encourages students to relate and apply their historical training to contemporary issues in public and professional daily life.

Assessment process Although no assessment is exclusively focussed on this objective, general skills are constituent and unavoidable elements of the assessment tasks.

2. Two Honours Seminars chosen from a list of offerings, 2 x one semester long [unit codes HTA 403 – HTA 411]

Objective 1 – Specific History skills

Content The Honours Seminars involve in-depth study of a particular research area and whole-hearted immersion in genuine, contemporary, and pressing historical debates of the highest academic standard. Each Honours Seminar covers approximately 20 hours of class contact. In this high-intensity program students are required to read, research, analyse, and produce works of uncompromisingly high academic quality. The sophistication and rigour of analysis (both primary and secondary), the strong focus on scholarship produced by and for academic scholars, and the attention to complex historical debates all distinguish the Honours Seminar from a 2nd/3rd year unit, in which more general research and debates may be pursued.

Assessment process In each Honours Seminar there is written work of 4000 words, seminar participation, and a two-hour exam. These all assess students' achievements in mastering the conceptual frameworks, analytical strategies, methods of enquiry, and historiographical debates specific to the Honours Seminar. The variety of assessment tasks ensures that assessment involves a genuine process, in which students have the opportunity of enhancing their skills from task to task. Further

details of individual assessment tasks and deadlines will be provided by the relevant lecturers of each Honours Seminar.

Objective 2 – Generic skills

Content Generic skills are consistently integrated into the content of the Honours Seminar. Further, the Honours Seminars are focussed on small-group seminars in which the relatively small class sizes allow flexibility in presentation of the relevant content in response to the needs of the group.

Assessment process Generic skills are necessarily part of the overall skills demanded by each Honours Seminar's assessment. High level analytical and writing skills, the capacity to manage large amounts of information efficiently, superior flexibility in being able to argue to a high level of sophistication on a range of topics, and the ability to pursue an argument to a reasoned and logical conclusion on the basis of sufficient and well-chosen evidence are all general skills that are enhanced in the Honours Seminar.

3. History Honours Special Project [unit code HTA 420]

This unit is a compulsory part of the History Honours program. In the History Honours Special Project students complete a 5,000-word research essay on an approved topic related to material covered in one of their Honours Seminars (HTA 403 – HTA 411). There must be no overlap between work submitted in the History Honours Special Project and work submitted for the History Honours thesis. All essays in the History Honours Special Project must be approved in advance by the relevant Honours Seminar coordinator. There are no specific classes for the History Honours Special Project, but students will attend one 2-hour seminar per week as part of their attendance at the Honours Seminar (HTA 403 – HTA 411).

4. Thesis (and “thesis-related activities”), semesters 1 and 2 [various unit codes, depending on part-time or full-time status]. Note that there is a compulsory weekly 2-hour Thesis Seminar for one semester which covers thesis matters, eg research planning, planning for postgraduate study, and delivery of the compulsory oral thesis defences.

Objective 1 – Specific History skills

Content The thesis is the principal means by which students demonstrate their capacity to conceive, develop, and execute a substantial piece of advanced research. Skills acquired in other components of the Honours program are applied to the thesis project. This ensures that the thesis demonstrates advanced skills in the widest range of areas, namely methodological and theoretical precision, empirical solidity, and other discipline-specific characteristics demanded of the academic historian.

The “thesis-related activities” involve a preliminary research plan (submitted in a full-time student’s first semester of enrolment; submitted in a part-time student’s second semester of enrolment), the oral presentation and defence of thesis (delivered in the 2-hour weekly Thesis Seminar), seminar participation in the ‘Thesis Seminar’, and the written 1500-word thesis proposal (submitted one week after delivery of the oral presentation and defence of thesis). The “thesis” is 12,000-15,000 words.

Assessment process The “thesis-related activities” both force students to get organised with their theses early and also enable lecturers to provide advice and feedback that the students can then incorporate into the rest of their thesis work. Another way that lecturers provide ongoing formative assessment of the student’s work is through regular supervisory meetings. This enables the student to improve throughout the year in order to be well equipped for meeting the final objective. Skills developed in other areas of the Honours program will also be relevant here. When the thesis is finally assessed particular attention will be paid to assessing the work’s credentials as an advanced piece of research in its specific research area.

Objective 2 – Generic skills

Content In order to produce a sustained History argument over 12,000-15,000 words the student will necessarily need to develop and exhibit a large array of superior academic skills of a general nature. The ability to master new research areas quickly, decision-making abilities in determining when and how to follow up leads, large-scale management capacities in developing and pursuing a research project of significant magnitude, confidence and comprehensiveness in seeking out new information, and research precision and flexibility are simply some of the many skills consolidated and tested by the thesis and the thesis-related activities.

Assessment process The supervisory process facilitates ongoing formative assessment and provides students with techniques and suggestions for improvement.

The “thesis-related activities” necessarily demand demonstration of generic skills. When the thesis is finally assessed, there will necessarily be assessment of the degree to which these generic skills have been successfully employed.

III. ASSESSMENT WEIGHTING

1. Practice of History, one-semester unit worth 12.5% of final Honours mark.
(Written work is worth 10% and seminar participation is worth 2.5%)

2. Two Honours Seminars

- Each Honours Seminar is weighted at 12.5%. Thus, $2 \times 12.5\% = 25\%$ of final Honours mark.

3. History Honours Special Project, worth 12.5% of final Honours mark

4. Thesis of 12,000-15,000 words (and related thesis activities – i.e. preliminary research plan, oral presentation and defence of thesis, seminar participation in Thesis Seminar, written 1500-word thesis proposal)

- 50% of final Honours mark. (The thesis is worth 40%. The preliminary research plan is worth 2%. The oral presentation and defence of thesis is worth 2%. Seminar participation in Thesis Seminar is worth 2%. The written 1,500-word proposal is worth 4%.)

IV. ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

History Honours work will be assessed according to a range of criteria, including:

1. Research skills
2. Critical familiarity with relevant historiography
3. Skill in posing questions
4. Analysis of sources
5. Clarity and strength of argument
6. Contribution to knowledge
7. Structure and writing style
8. Presentation and observation of scholarly conventions

80+ FIRST CLASS

Works in this category are highly accomplished in all areas, and are extremely highly accomplished in most areas. They are characterised by a consistently excellent standard. This consistency is one of the features that separates them from works at the top end of the Upper Second scale.

Research skills Superior

- Evidence of wide research that demonstrates superior diligence, judgment, and initiative;
- Superior capacity for identifying relevant materials in a wide range of pertinent areas.

Critical familiarity with relevant historiography Superior

- As well as a thorough knowledge of relevant scholarship there is also sophisticated and critical assessment of this scholarship.

Skill in posing questions Superior

- Questions are asked explicitly, questions are relevant in terms of the current state of research, and questions are capable of being answered within the constraints of the exercise and the sources available.

Analysis of sources Superior, highly sophisticated

- Analyses demonstrate perceptiveness, care, and originality;
- Analyses consistently exhibit informed understandings of the particular contexts and specific demands of the sources.

Clarity and strength of argument Superior

- Argument is always explicit;
- Argument is developed clearly and methodically throughout the course of the work.

Contribution to knowledge Superior

- There will be a significant contribution to knowledge, including a degree of originality.

Structure and writing style Superior

- Structure is always clear and logical;
- Lucid writing style.

Presentation and observation of scholarly conventions Superior

- Presentation is of the highest academic standard;
- Consistently observes all the appropriate scholarly conventions.

70-79 UPPER SECOND

There will be considerable variation between work at the top end of this scale (work assessed overall as Very Good) and work at the bottom end (work assessed overall as Good). Work assessed at the top end of the Upper Second scale will often show some qualities of First Class work, but will generally be inconsistent and will be missing other First Class qualities, for example in areas such as overall contribution to knowledge, consistently critical engagement with relevant scholarship, sophistication of analysis, explicit posing and answering of relevant historical questions, and also the capacity for comprehensiveness and initiative in research. Work at the bottom end of the Upper Second scale will be characterised by diligence but also by some randomness in both conception and execution.

Research skills Very good or good

- In most instances the research is thorough and suitable;
- The principle of selection for readings/sources may be somewhat uneven, and the work may rely too much on general works and omit key specialist materials.

Critical familiarity with relevant historiography Very good or good

- There will be scope for more initiative, thoroughness, and critical engagement with the relevant historiography.

Skill in posing questions Very good or good

- Will generally pose relevant questions but there may be some inconsistency or lack of clarity throughout the work as to which are the main questions and which are subsidiary.

Analysis of sources Very good or good

- Generally sound throughout;
- May include some instances of perceptive analysis;
- Generally pays attention to the particular contexts and specific demands of the sources;
- Will occasionally favour description of sources over analysis of sources.

Clarity and strength of argument Very good or good

- The argument may be tacit rather than explicit; nonetheless, the work will still contain an argument.
- Overall, the argument is effective and well supported and demonstrates a generally good identification of relevant issues.

Contribution to knowledge Very good or good

- There will be a contribution to knowledge.

Structure and writing style Very good or good

- The work is clearly structured and organised, although the reasons for its structure may not be made explicitly clear;
- The writing style is generally good, although it can lack sharpness and differentiation which, in turn, contributes to the argument sometimes being more tacit than explicit;
- Grammar and punctuation are consistently sound.

Presentation and observation of scholarly conventions Very good or good

- Presentation is of a high or very high standard;
- Consistently observes all the appropriate scholarly conventions, although occasional lapses may be noted.

60-69 LOWER SECOND**Research skills** Competent

- The same work may sometimes show signs of competent effort and accomplishment in research but at other times show insufficient research.

Critical familiarity with relevant historiography Competent

- Will demonstrate familiarity with a reasonable, although partial, selection from the relevant scholarship, but this familiarity will rarely be critical;
- There will be errors of judgment in distinguishing between the most and the least relevant books/articles to consult.

Skill in posing questions Competent

- Lack of clarity in posing questions.

Analysis of sources Competent

- Will frequently describe the sources, rather than analyse the sources.

Clarity and strength of argument Competent

- Some works in this category will claim to have presented a clear argument but, unlike those works in the Upper Second class and above, they will be lacking sufficient evidence for their assertions and they will analyse the evidence uncritically;
- Other works in this category contain no explicit argument but are, instead, mainly descriptive. Works of this nature are, however, distinguished from Third Class works when they do include both potential for improvement and also signs of consistent effort and application. These works are at the lower end of the Lower Second Scale.

Contribution to knowledge Competent

- There may be signs of effort and promise, but shortcomings in research and other areas generally militate against the work being a genuine contribution to knowledge. Individual sections of the work may occasionally make some

contributions to knowledge, but when considered as a whole the work overall does not make a systematic contribution to knowledge.

Structure and writing style Competent

- The structure may not be entirely clear, but nonetheless there will be signs of some structural principles at work;
- The diction, grammar, and punctuation may have consistent weaknesses, particularly towards the lower end of the Lower Second scale, but this will not be enough to prevent a diligent reader from detecting the key points.

Presentation and observation of scholarly conventions Competent

- The overall presentation is of a competent standard, although some individual elements may reach the level of good;
- There is effort to observe most appropriate scholarly conventions, but there will usually be signs of inconsistency, omissions, and some consistent errors.

50-59 THIRD

These works will be under-developed in most, if not all, areas. They are distinguished from Fail works because, unlike Fail works, they do include (albeit usually in an extremely passing manner, and with possible misunderstandings and flaws) reference to key components of the task. They can be characterised as works which are completed at a minimally appropriate level.

<50 FAIL

There can be a range of fundamental problems which lead to a Fail assessment. For example, the amount of reading and, in particular, the academic quality of the readings used may be extremely low. There may be comprehensive misconceptions and misunderstandings based on this inadequate reading. A common feature is that there will usually be no attempt whatsoever to present an argument. Analysis may be severely limited. There will be no critical engagement with the relevant scholarship. The writing style may be simply unintelligible. The work may be so short so as to have no capacity for inclusion, let alone development, of all essential components of a

scholarly argument. There may be no detectable structure. There may be fundamental flaws in the observation of scholarly conventions such as footnoting.

V. ARRANGEMENTS FOR EXAMINATION OF THE THESIS

Every student's thesis is examined by three examiners. The supervisor does not examine the thesis. All examiners will provide written reports. The Head of School, as the Chief Examiner in the School, may act as the ultimate adjudicator of theses.

VI. PROCEDURES FOR REVIEW OF THE THESIS RESULT

Students are encouraged in the first instance to raise any queries with the Honours Coordinator and the Head of School. More formal reviews can be pursued through the University's official processes for assessment reviews.

VII. REFERENCING REQUIREMENTS

You must use a form of referencing that is a recognised academic form for History. Some recognised forms are the Chicago system (from *The Chicago Manual of Style*), the *Australian Historical Studies* system (itself based on the Chicago system), the Oxford system, and the system described in the School's green booklet ("Notes on Writing Essays" – 2009 version for the History discipline). You must never use the Harvard system (i.e. the system that places referencing details in brackets within the body of the essay). To repeat, you must use footnotes or endnotes (footnotes are preferable), and never include referencing details within the body of the essay.

Once you choose a system of referencing, you must use it consistently – do not mix different systems in the one piece of work. If you have used sources that the green booklet and other reference guides do not mention (e.g. certain kinds of manuscripts), you must still reference them – here you should consult your lecturer/supervisor in the first instance. For example, if you are using materials from the Archives Office of Tasmania or the National Archives of Australia you will find that there are right ways and wrong ways to refer to archival material, and that every archive has its own system – the easiest way is to ask the archives staff themselves what is the correct style. The Australian Government Publishing Service's *Style*

Manual for Authors, Editors, and Printers provides helpful examples of how to cite specific Australian sources, how to abbreviate common Australian terms, etc.

VIII. PLAGIARISM

Failure to appropriately acknowledge the ideas of others constitutes academic dishonesty (plagiarism), a matter considered by the University of Tasmania as a serious offence. For guidance on acceptable ways to acknowledge your sources, please see section VII above and also consult your lecturer or the Honours coordinator for relevant referencing guidelines.

University Statement on Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

"Plagiarism is a form of cheating. It is taking and using someone else's thoughts, writings or inventions and representing them as your own; for example, using an author's words without putting them in quotation marks and citing the source, using an author's ideas without proper acknowledgment and citation, copying another student's work.

If you have any doubts about how to refer to the work of others in your assignments, please consult your lecturer or tutor for relevant referencing guidelines, and the academic integrity resources on the web at

<http://www.utas.edu.au/tl/supporting/academicintegrity/index.html>.

The intentional copying of someone else's work as one's own is a serious offence punishable by penalties that may range from a fine or deduction/cancellation of marks and, in the most serious of cases, to exclusion from a unit, a course or the University. Details of penalties that can be imposed are available in the Ordinance of Student Discipline – Part 3 Academic Misconduct, see

<http://www.utas.edu.au/universitycouncil/legislation/>"

The University and any persons authorised by the University may submit your assessable works to a plagiarism checking service, to obtain a report on possible instances of plagiarism. Assessable works may also be included in a reference

database. It is a condition of this arrangement that the original author's permission is required before a work within the database can be viewed.

For further information on this statement and general referencing guidelines, see <http://www.utas.edu.au/plagiarism/> or follow the link to 'Plagiarism and Scholarly Referencing' under 'Policy, Procedures and Feedback' on the Current Students homepage.

IX. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE THESIS AND (A) THE HONOURS SEMINARS AND (B) THE HISTORY HONOURS SPECIAL PROJECT

Work that is submitted for assessment in an Honours Seminar cannot be submitted for assessment in the thesis. Likewise, work that is submitted for assessment in the History Honours Special Project cannot be submitted for assessment in the thesis. Please see the Honours coordinator if clarification is needed.

X. FAILURE TO MEET ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS, ASSESSMENT DEADLINES, AND WORD LIMITS

Attendance

Students are required to attend all sessions for the Practice of History and the Honours Seminars and the Thesis Seminar. Attendance rolls are taken and absences must be explained to the lecturer/convenor. Where there is assessment for participation and contribution, then reduced attendance will necessarily influence this component of the assessment. Individual lecturers and convenors may also impose specific attendance requirements.

Assessment Deadlines for Practice of History, Honours Seminars, and Special Project

Assessment deadlines for the Practice of History and the Honours Seminars will be given by the individual convenor/lecturer concerned. Assessment deadlines for the History Honours Special Project will be agreed between the student and the Honours coordinator. Deadlines are firm dates and failure to submit work by the due date, without prior extension, may be penalised.

Assessment Deadline for Preliminary Research Plan

This plan (which is part of the “thesis-related activities”) is worth 2% of the marks for the final Honours program. Full-time students must submit this in the first semester of their enrolment. Part-time students must submit it in the second semester of their enrolment. Precise deadlines will be arranged with the Honours coordinator.

Assessment Deadlines for Thesis

- Students who commence full-time Honours in semester 1, 2009 must submit the thesis at the end of semester 2, 2009 – date to be confirmed with the Honours coordinator. Students studying on a part-time basis should see the Honours coordinator for their thesis submission date.
- Thesis extensions can only be granted for serious and documented reasons. Formal written applications must be made to the Faculty of Arts, through the Head of School.

Word Limits

- When the stated word length is a single figure only, then there is a 10% leeway either side. Thus a stated word length of “3000 words” means 2700-3300 words. A stated word length of “5000 words” means 4500-5500 words.
- When the stated word length is a range rather than a single figure, then that range is strictly applied. Thus, a stated word length of the range “2500-3000 words” means no fewer than 2500 words and no more than 3000. The stated thesis word length is 12,000-15,000 – this means absolutely no fewer than 12,000 words and absolutely no more than 15,000.
- Work that is below the word limit puts itself at risk of not having met other criteria sufficiently (e.g. at risk of not having developed a clear and strong argument; at risk of not having analysed sources in sufficient detail). Work that is above the word limit, even if it is strong with reference to other criteria, will still be subject to penalties. Note that all quotes in the text do count in the word count, but footnotes, appendices, and bibliographies do not.

XI. ETHICS REQUIREMENTS

Some forms of historical activity may require University ethics committee approval before they can be undertaken. Some common activities needing ethics approval (and needing ethics approval before the relevant activity takes place) are:

1. oral interviews;
2. questionnaires;
3. recruiting people to participate in a project;
4. advertising (eg in newspapers, posters) for people to participate in a project;
5. consulting material (eg photos, letters, and unpublished material) held in private collections or held by private individuals.

All students are required to discuss ethics matters with their supervisor and/or lecturer at an early stage in their research, in order to ascertain whether approval might be needed. The Honours coordinator can also give you advice regarding ethics.

XII. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

The University is committed to providing a safe and secure teaching and learning environment. For further information see the University's policy at

http://www.admin.utas.edu.au/hr/ohs/pol_proc/ohs.pdf

XIII. FURTHER INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

If you are experiencing difficulties with your studies or assignments, have personal issues, disability or illness which may affect your course of study, you are advised to raise these with the Honours coordinator in the first instance. Please raise these matters with the Honours coordinator as soon as possible.

There is a range of University-wide support services available to you including Teaching & Learning, Student Services, and International Services. Please refer to the *Current Students* homepage at: <http://www.utas.edu.au/students/>. On the homepage, if you click on "Need help with your studies?", you can access information about

student learning workshops, independent learning plans, online resources, and other university facilities to help you in your studies, <http://www.utas.edu.au/tl/index.html>

If you require assistance in accessing the Library, visit their website for more information at <http://www.utas.edu.au/library/>

6 February 2009

Kate Brittlebank

History Honours coordinator