

**Thesis Hours, History 6699**  
**Dr. Ann McCleary, University of West Georgia**  
**Spring 2012**

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Offices: History, TLC 3-211, and Center for Public History, Ingram Library

Office hours: Tuesday, 3:30-4:45; Wednesday 1:30-4:30; Thursday, 11-1, CPH

### **Course Requirements**

- 1. Establish a goal or goals for the semester.** Please consider this now, and *send me your ideas no later than the first Friday January 13*. For some of you, the goal is to graduate this semester. For some of you first-semester thesis folks, your goal should at least include the production of a thesis prospectus, the creation of your committee, and a meeting with your committee as well as producing a bibliography for your thesis or thesis/project. The goals will vary depending on where you are in the process.
- 2. Create a schedule to achieve those goals.** Once we approve your goals, I will ask for a semester schedule to achieve those goals by next Friday, January 20. Be realistic with your schedule. For example, remember that you need to allow at least two but preferably three weeks for your committee to read a draft of an essay. You should allow time both for you to do your work but also for me and/or your committee to review your work, at your request.
- 3. Schedule a meeting with me in person or by phone to discuss your goals and schedule during the week of January 11-17.**
- 4. Submit a weekly report on your thesis work to Course Den every Friday, beginning January 13.** I will create a place for you to submit this in journal format. In each week's report, please describe what you did that week, what you plan to do the upcoming week, and what questions you might have. These updates are *required*.
- 5. Check Course Den at least once each week for any updates or messages that I might have sent.** Sometimes, in reading through the weekly reports, I see issues or topics that I could address to all of you, and I will do it through Course Den.
- 6. Participate in on-line discussions with other thesis students on Course Den.** Each student is expected to participate in discussions on Course Den weekly. Discussions on Course Den should focus on what you are doing with your thesis, what questions or issues or frustrations you might be feeling, and what help you might need from others. Sometimes, I might raise a question and ask you all to respond. I also request that you ask questions that will help you. Thesis work is a lonely process, but knowing others are going through it and feeling the same things can be extremely helpful. You'll find that your fellow thesis students may be very helpful in the process as well! Students are expected to post at least two comments each week, but more are preferred!
- 7. Meet or talk to me by phone at least every other week.** Even if it is only a short conversation, it allows a chance for us to touch base about what you are doing.

**8. Attend the Thesis Writers Colloquium series this semester.** The January 24 session is necessary only for those who have not had their thesis prospectus approved by their committee. The other two sessions are required for everyone. February 21 will focus on "Organization, Time Management, and Writer's Block." An additional March session will discuss "Revising and Responding to Criticism." More details on times and places will be announced.

**9. Submit a written, three- to four- page report at the end of the semester about what you accomplished and what you have left to do.** Of course, if you graduate, there is no report needed!

In terms of **deadlines** for meeting the spring graduation, I believe that these are posted online. Please be advised--and I can't emphasize this enough--that everything takes more time than you think. And this year, the deadlines are earlier than usual, since we have a shorter semester. Graduation for this semester April 28.

### **Thesis requirements**

Please note that requirements for the thesis and the thesis project are outlined in the History Department's Graduate Student Handbook, available on the History Department website at <http://www.westga.edu/~histgrad/Forms/Graduate%20Student%20Handbook.pdf>

Remember that if you are pursuing the thesis project, you will need to complete a project and a thesis essay. In addition, you will be required to write an overview of your project. More detailed descriptions are available in the Handbook.

### **Writing a Thesis or Thesis-Project**

Writing a thesis or producing a thesis project is hard work; it does not happen overnight. And writing a thesis essay is more than an essay that you would write in a class. It is the equivalent of a journal article. Both are demanding and require considerable time.

Both a thesis and a thesis essay require primary research and additional secondary reading; strong writing, analysis, and interpretation; and the review of three "peers," in this case your thesis committee, and usually *at least* two but often five or six revisions. Students are expected to give their faculty committee two weeks to read any draft.

Producing a thesis project is also challenging, as well it should be. You want to leave the program with confidence that you know how to take on a project in the real world and certain that what you produced is the best it can be. A project is, like a thesis, more than what you would produce in one semester for a class.

All of this is hard, demanding work. But I know you are all up for the challenge. And I have to say that it can be fun too, and you will learn a lot in the process. After all, if you already knew how to do all this, then you wouldn't be in the program, right?

I am looking forward to working with all of you. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions!