

**The University of Melbourne
School of Historical Studies**

**NOTES ON THE PRESENTATION AND EXAMINATION OF
FOURTH YEAR THESES 2008**

1. Presentation

- 1.1. Theses are to be typed or printed in double or 1.5 spacing on A4 paper. The title page should include: your name, the thesis title, followed by “**Honours Thesis, University of Melbourne**”, and an indication of the length (e.g. 10,500 words). Please also refer to the example title page enclosed in your information kit.
- 1.2. **Two covered hard copies plus a disk copy in Microsoft Word or in pdf format** must be presented for examination. A hard copy will be returned to you after the examination and the disk will be kept in the School. **Please do not use spiral or comb binding.**
- 1.3. The thesis should be **between 10,500 and 12,000 words in length**. Theses which exceed 12,000 may be penalised. The word-length counts all words in the text, **including** quotations. The word-length **does not include** footnotes, bibliography and appendices. Footnotes and appendices should be kept brief and to the point. They should **not** be used as ways of trying to circumvent the restrictions of the word-length. **Footnotes must be placed at the foot of the page containing the matter to which they refer.**
- 1.4. The discipline style for footnotes and bibliographies is Chicago 14A. See the citation style examples included in your Honours package. You may also wish to consult *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 14th edition.
- 1.5. You should not include original or rare documents as appendices. Such material should be photocopied, as the School of Historical Studies cannot accept responsibility for the custody and return of valuable material. In any case, material which is integral to the thesis should remain with it after examination.

If **oral interview material** is used for the thesis, the student must submit copies of the tapes or transcripts/notes of the interviews. If these are the student’s property and if the student wishes to have them back, they will be available after the examination of the thesis; but they must be made available for the examiners of the thesis to consult. A guide on conventions for the presentation of oral interview material is contained in Section 4 below.
- 1.6. A first draft of your thesis is due on **Monday 2nd June, 2008**. This draft is to be submitted to your supervisor who will immediately examine it. It is crucial that as complete a first draft as possible be submitted, allowing the remaining ten weeks for revision, polishing and typing. We expect you to hand in at least 6000 words in final form with a complete outline of the rest of the thesis and an up-to-date bibliography.
- 1.7. Hand your thesis in at the School of Historical Studies office on or before the due date, which is **4.00pm, Friday 10th October, 2008**. This is a formal University examination date. Extensions for theses are not granted except in extraordinary circumstances, computer related problems are not an acceptable criterion for extension of time for submission of the thesis. An application for an extension must be accompanied by all the work so far written, a letter of support from the supervisor, and a medical certificate.

A late thesis, unless the lateness arises from exceptional medical circumstances or is covered by an extension, may not be examined. A medical certificate may not reduce a penalty if it is clear that the thesis was behind schedule regardless of illness.

2. Examination Procedures

- 2.1 Two examiners will assess the thesis independently, and then confer. If the examiners agree in their assessment, they grade the thesis and submit their reports. These are then shown to the supervisor. If the examiners cannot agree, the thesis and the reports will be submitted to the Chair of Examiners, who will resolve any dispute after reading the written reports of the

examiners and discussing the issues with them. Where necessary a third examiner will be appointed.

If the supervisor considers the assessment does not do justice to a thesis, the supervisor can appeal to the Chair of Examiners in writing. The decision of the Chair of Examiners will be final.

You will receive examiners' reports on your thesis after the fourth year results have been announced. You may discuss the result and reports with your supervisor. It is your responsibility to make an appointment with your supervisor as soon as possible, in order to meet staff before they go on annual or study leave.

3. **Word length**

The length of the thesis is set at **between 10,500 and 12,000 words**, for the following reasons:

- i) A word limit is, most importantly, an **indication of effort**. It tells you that when you have written between 10,500 and 12,000 words you have satisfied one of the basic criteria of the thesis, and can lay down your pen. It also indicates the effort required relative to other subjects of the year's work. The thesis is, after all, only one component of your fourth year studies.
- ii) The length of the fourth year thesis is **in proportion**: a standard essay is 3,000 words, a research essay is 5,000, an M.A is 30,000 and a PhD. 100,000.
- iii) The suggested length is also **sufficient** for this level of historical enquiry. Hundreds of fourth year essays submitted to the School, which have observed this limit and gained the highest praise, demonstrate this. You should be aware that members of the School are under extraordinary pressure at assessment time. Fourth year essays and theses which exceed the recommended length are not likely to gain the sympathy or retain the interest of the readers.

4. **Oral History Theses: Presentation of Evidence**

4.1 Students should submit all tapes of interviews or notes of interviews where tapes were not made. Transcripts of interviews are not necessary. **Permission should be granted by the interviewee in writing before you use the material. You should check with the Honours Administrator and your supervisor about the need to apply for Ethics Clearance before conducting interviews, surveys, videotaping or projects based on group observation (see Ethics sheet in this welcome pack).**

4.2 Such tapes or notes are to be submitted for purposes of examination only. At the end of the examination period, it will be the student's responsibility to collect tapes from the School. Where students have gained permission of the Ethics Committee and if the Committee requires secure storage of the tapes the Honours Administrator will store the tapes for the required period.

4.3 Listing and citation of oral evidence:

Interviews should be listed in the bibliography as a sub-section of primary sources.

The subject, date, place and duration of the interview, and the form in which the interview is available, should be made clear, e.g.:

Agnew, Mrs. Albertina, 10 April 1981, North Melbourne, 2 hours, tape [or notes]

Pseudonyms may be used at the discretion of the interviewer.

Footnotes should take this form:

- i) Interview with Mrs. Albertina Agnew [or Mrs. A.] 10 April 1981, (Tape 6A, 450-455)

The above citation assumes that tapes are numbered, sides are distinguished as A or B, and the position of a quotation or reference is stated.

4.4 Presentation of tapes:

The names of the interviewer and interviewee together with the date of the interview should be clearly written on the cassette case. Each tape should also incorporate at the beginning a recorded message identifying the interviewer, subject and date.

It is also suggested that writers present in the bibliography or an appendix brief biographical notes on each person interviewed. These notes should demonstrate **the relevance of the interviewees to the thesis**. If the interviewer is related to the person interviewed, what is the relationship? What other persons, if any, were present at the interviews?

- 4.5 Students are advised to present a critical judgement upon the value of the taped material as historical evidence: e.g. hindsight, fallible memory, eagerness to please the interviewer, etc.

Catherine Kovesi
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