History Honors Program
(Information and Application Packet)

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**History Department Honors Program:**

The history department offers a honors program for students who wish to research and write a thesis during the course of their senior year.

**Entry into the Honors Program:**

During the second term of the sophomore year or early in the junior year, interested students should speak to a faculty member or faculty adviser about the honors program.

The requirements for entry to the honors program are:

- a 3.5 GPA in courses taken within the History Department
- Each student must submit an application form and writing sample. Students bring the application form, a transcript, and writing sample to the Director of Undergraduate Studies, for formal admittance into the honors program. The writing sample is ideally a paper submitted for a 2000-level seminar, but may also be a writing sample from a discipline other than history.
- To continue in the program, students must secure the written agreement of a faculty member to serve as a supervisor to direct the thesis

**Preparation for Thesis Writing: History 4000 (Junior Year)**

Students planning to write an honors thesis must take History 4000, the Honors Proseminar, in the fall or spring semester of their junior year. History 4000 is offered in both the fall and spring semesters. Those considering pursuing an honors thesis should thus plan their academic schedules accordingly.

**Junior Year Abroad**

History majors who wish both to study abroad (or in Cornell-in-Washington) and to enter the honors program should consult their advisors or the DUS as soon as possible after declaring a major. The department requires honors students to enroll in History 4000 before writing a thesis in their senior year. Planning ahead is essential, especially if you intend to spend a full year abroad.

**Selecting a Thesis Supervisor and First Reader**

Before the beginning of the senior year, the candidate presents, in conversation or in writing, a thesis proposal to an appropriate member of the faculty. Faculty must be members of the department or field of history. Faculty approval of the topic must then be confirmed by the DUS by May 1st of your junior year.

In consultation with the supervisor, the honors candidate selects a first reader. The first reader provides additional guidance in areas of specialization. At the conclusion of the
student’s senior year, the supervisor and first reader conduct the student’s oral exam; the first reader also serves as one of the two referees of the honors thesis in a written report to the honors committee.

**History 4001 and History 4002 (Senior Year)**

At the beginning of their senior year, students who wish to pursue an honors thesis and who have met the prerequisites enroll in History 4001, Honors Guidance. History 4001 is a regular seminar, which is attended by all students writing honors theses. It meets once a week for the first month and then generally biweekly thereafter. Its purpose is to provide honors students with structure for their research, to introduce them to research techniques, and to allow them to pursue their research and writing in a seminar format. Honors students continue to consult with their supervisors throughout both semesters.

In the spring semester of their senior year, Honors students continue their research and writing in History 4002. History 4002 is a seminar meeting weekly from the beginning of the semester until the first week in April. Students share and discuss their written work, while continuing to meet on an individual basis with their supervisors.

**Submission and Evaluation of the Honors Thesis**

The following are formal requirements that each thesis must meet: the text of the Honors essay may not exceed 60 pages (not including notes, which can come at the end, or bibliography); it must be double-spaced; and the citation style is footnotes, no in-text citations. Three copies are due during the second or third week of April. An additional thesis will need to be submitted if the student wishes that their thesis be entered into competition for History prizes, given in May.

Each honors candidate is given an oral examination administered by the supervisor. The examination focuses on the essay as well as the sub-field of history in which the student has conducted research (e.g., Periclean Athens, seventeenth-century science, nineteenth-century American politics).

The completed thesis is evaluated by two readers: the first reader and an anonymous second reader chosen from the History Department faculty.

In determining whether to award Honors and at what level (honors; high honors; highest honors), the honors committee weighs: the student’s thesis; the readers’ reports on the thesis; the student’s performance in their end-of-year oral exam; and, the student’s grades in History 4001 and 4002.
Structure of the Honors Program for January Graduates:

As History 4001-4002 are offered in strict fall-spring sequence, January graduates cannot take these courses in sequence. January graduates must plan ahead and take the Honors 4001-4002 sequence beginning the last semester of their junior year. Or may enroll in History 3002 (both fall and spring semesters) as a one-on-one directed research overseen by their supervisor (non-honors designation).

Graduation Requirements for Honors Students in the History Major

- 10 history courses (with a grade of “C” or better), which include:
  - History 4000
  - History 4001/History 4002 (counted as one course)
- At least a 3.5 average within the History major.
- 3 of the ten courses must be in history before 1800.
- 4 of the ten courses must be outside of U.S. History.
- 2 of the ten courses, must be seminars. One of these seminars must be a 4000-level seminar. HIST 4000, 4001, 4002 and service-learning 4000-level courses may not be used to fulfill the 4000-level seminar requirement.
Cornell History Department
Application for Honors
(Please Print)

Name:_______________________________ Date:____________________

Local Address: Permanent Address:
_____________________________ ____________________________
_____________________________ ____________________________
_____________________________ ____________________________

Local Phone:_________________________ Email:____________________

Please make sure to include the following information when submitting this form to
the head of the Honors Program:

A. A transcript
B. A writing sample
C. Indicate semester in which you anticipate taking History 4000 (Honors
Pro-seminar) ________________

Semester of graduation:____________ Major Advisor:_____________

1. Provide the following information for all Cornell History courses you have taken, with
grades for all courses completed to date. (No student will be admitted to the Honors
Program with a grade point average less than a 3.5 in the major.)

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2. Provide the following information for courses you have taken in fields other than
History, that you believe to be relevant to your History major and/or honors project.

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3. A) What was your cumulative GPA as of the end of the last semester completed? ____

B) What was your average in the History major as of the end of the last semester completed? ____

4. Provide a brief statement of your major interests in History.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Chair of Honors Committee signature:_________________________________________

Applicant’s signature:______________________________________________________

Please return this form to the Undergraduate Coordinator, Judy Yonkin.