Contemplating the Thesis Proposal Review

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The Thesis Proposal Review is a gauge of progress. In its written and presented form it is appraised to determine the completion of HIST8103. University rules stipulate that if significant progress has not been made at the time of the review (generally 9-12 months in full-time study or its equivalent) a student’s candidature may be terminated. However, we do expect and hope that every student will succeed.

So...think of the TPR as the first formal hurdle in your steeplechase marathon (finishing line: the dissertation). You will need to convince your panel that you are ready to proceed, that you are moving in the right direction, and that you have the skills, resources and support you need to succeed.

There will be two workshops and one dress rehearsal to help you to prepare: **20 September (2-5 p.m); 10 October (1-3 p.m.); 21 November dress rehearsal (9 to noon, Hedley Bull 3).**

For the first workshop please arrive prepared with honest answers to the following three questions:

1. *Have you conducted a thorough review of secondary literature, as well as historiographical, and/or theoretical readings necessary to situate your research?*

2. *Do you have a clear idea of the historical records and other forms of evidence (e.g. interviews, site visits, material object) you will need to examine to reach your goal?*

3. *Have you come up with viable approaches and methodological tools to conduct your research?*

As you consider your responses to these overarching questions (which you will revisit throughout your marathon) you will begin to work toward your thesis proposal review. Aim to write about 5,000 words and to prepare a bibliography, ideally an annotated bibliography, which includes primary and secondary (historiographical, methodological, and theoretical) sources. The written TPR should also include a provisional chapter outline. As you work toward this milestone you should discuss your plans and seek advice from your supervisor and panel members (if appropriate) as you proceed.

Here is the checklist of points to bear in mind as you work on your written review. Sketching responses will also help you to develop a skeleton for your oral presentation:

- the nature of your inquiry (the question(s) you intend to pursue)
- the approach(es) and methodolog(ies) to be employed
- your review of the literatures that inform your analysis
- your projection of the ways in which your research will make an original and significant contribution to your topic (significance should be related to historiography, unanswered questions, new data etc.)
- outline of the fieldwork needed to pursue research (e.g. archival sources and their locations)
- indication of any ethical clearance required to pursue your research aims (NOTE: completion of HIST8103 is necessary before ethically-sensitive research may commence)
- indication of any skill sets required to undertake research (e.g. language training, statistical methods)

In the second workshop we will focus on your presentation abstracts, which will be pre-circulated in draft on a ‘buddy’ system.

**Thesis Proposal Presentation Day: 23 November 2016 (10 a.m. to noon, Hedley Bull 3)**

All commencing students must present an oral summary of their thesis proposal reviews in order to complete the requirements for HIST8103. Your supervisor and panel members should also attend (please make sure to inform them of the date well in advance). All members of the School of History will be invited to participate, and you may also invite colleagues from other programmes.

The dress rehearsal day will allow you to work on your presentation skills. It will take place in the same room where you will present formally, which will allow you to develop a feel for the space and to try out any visual aids.

Your presentation should comprise a 20-minute oral summary of your thesis proposal review, and you should also be prepared to respond to questions from the audience.

You will be rewarded with constructive critical feedback, support from the entire School, and a post-presentation reception.