

## **PHD QUALIFYING EXAMINATION GUIDELINES**

### **1. Expectations for students taking the oral exam in the major field.**

The oral exams are intended to weigh the student's general background on the entire sweep of the Middle Ages – the kind of command that is mandatory for teaching at both the graduate and undergraduate level. This is in addition to a more specialized knowledge in his or her given area of interest. Thus we expect the student to show a basic proficiency in the current historical literature of the field, including major trends, arguments, and historiographical perspectives. We also expect some familiarity with current theorists (e.g. Foucault, Geertz, et al.) used by historians from other disciplines with some sense of how this theory has been applied by medieval historians. Students should be prepared to discuss critically some of the texts or groups of texts that appear on a reading list prepared together with his or her examiners.

### **2. Expectations for students taking the oral exam in the inside minor field.**

The student should be responsible for developing a list of books and articles in consultation with the potential examiner for the medieval field. At least a third of these books should be quite broad, spanning several centuries or more or addressing very general issues in the Middle Ages (e.g. Barlett's \*The Making of Europe\* -- a general book that is not a textbook). The other two thirds of the bibliography should be divided between the student's interests and the subject of particular medieval courses s/he may have taken. The exam itself should first and foremost demonstrate that the student has sufficient command of the basic contours of the entire Middle Ages for teaching medieval history to undergraduates. This presupposes conversance with basic periodization, concepts, and terms in medieval history (e.g., feudalism; manorialism; the twelfth-century renaissance; inquisition, etc.). The student is further expected to have a more specialized knowledge in areas of medieval history that correspond with his/her interests in their own field. Thus if someone was planning a dissertation on gender in Europe between the two wars, they would be expected to have a knowledge of scholarship on medieval gender. S/he will also be responsible for the selected materials addressed in whatever medieval courses she has taken.

### **3. Guidelines for prospectus.**

The prospectus should be ca. 10 pp. plus bibliography. It should: 1). identify a project or problem that warrants a book length study; 2). discuss the sources that will be employed; 3). describe whatever method of analysis or theory that s/he anticipates using; 4). Provide a concise survey of work that has already been done on this and related subjects; 5). state what s/he believes will be his or her original contribution to field. We understand, however, that many of the proposed dissertations will require extended visits to European archives and libraries before it is clear whether or not a project is truly viable. For this reason, the medieval field may permit a more flexible prospectus than is usual in other fields, recognizing that certain levels of specificity are impossible at this early stage.