

Planning Your Humanities PhD

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On the next page, you will find a planner listing the required and recommended steps for completing your degree. To complete your PhD, you need to finish **all the degree requirement check boxes** . See the third page for notes. Please share this with your committee members.

When planning your degree, keep the following in mind:

- **All formal requirements** of a stage must be completed before you can begin the **formal requirements** of the next stage. E.g. You must finish your coursework before you can write your comps. (Note: you can study or work toward later requirements informally before you complete the milestone.)
- See our [Current students & advisors](#) page for details and links about each requirement.
- The planner gives a 4–5-year timeline for completing your PhD. Program averages are in the 5-year range. Timeline extensions are required after the 6th year.
- Follow the 4-term timeline for completing coursework. This is a key stage to keep you on track. (There are three terms in each academic year: Summer, Fall, and Winter.)
- The PhD has a 6-term residency requirement.
- A HUMA 884 Directed Study is recommended as **one** of your 4 electives to help with comps and discussions toward the proposal. However, it is not required.
- Your Humanities Major Field Advisor serves as your PhD Supervisor.
- As you plan, you should allocate time for applying for doctoral fellowships such as the SSHRC or FRQ if you have not already.

Implementing your plan:

Courses: Once you've decided on your courses, **register as early as possible**. This is especially important for electives, since courses can fill up. Returning students should register by mid-June; new students should register by mid-July. Register by contacting the Graduate Program Assistant. Your selection of electives requires consultation with your advisory committee and your supervisor's approval. Please submit these using the [graduate course registration form](#) on our [courses page](#).

Comprehensive examinations: our [website](#) provides all the information you need on the types of comps. Note that comps are set and scheduled through discussions with your committee members. The committee member overseeing a comp [schedules it through our online form](#).

Thesis proposal defences: our [website](#) provides information on thesis proposals. Your Major Field Supervisor schedules the defence by emailing the GPD to arrange a defence. This is also the time to ensure you are on track with the language requirement and research ethics approval, if needed.

Ethics approval: this is needed if you are collecting and publishing in your thesis data of any sort from human participants. Check and plan with your supervisor as early as possible.

Language requirement: this requirement must be satisfied **prior to the submission of your thesis**, see the Further notes section below for more details.

Humanities PhD Planner

Stage 1: [Coursework](#)

Year 1: Fall

- HUMA 888: Methodology Seminar
- Elective 1
- Meet with supervisor (or entire committee) to discuss your plan and topics

Year 1: Winter

- HUMA 889: Thematic Seminar
- Elective 2
- Meet with committee to plan comps reading lists

Year 1: Summer

- Elective 3
- Note:** At least one HUMA 884 directed study is recommended. Doing HUMA 884 in your first Summer can help accelerate your timeline

Year 2: Fall

- Elective 3 (if you didn't do it in the summer)
- Elective 4
- Meet with entire committee or individual members of your committee to set up your comps. Be sure to submit your comps plan to the Graduate Program Director and Graduate Program Assistant

Stage 2: [Comprehensives](#)

Year 2: Winter to Summer

- Comp 1
- Comp 2
- Comp 3
- Meet with committee members to prepare each comp
- Meet with your supervisor to work toward your proposal and to plan to acquire ethics approval if necessary & satisfying language requirement

Stage 3: [Thesis Proposal](#)

Year 3: Fall to Winter

- Meet with supervisor and other committee members as needed to develop your proposal
- Meet with supervisor and other experts to apply for ethics approval (if needed)
- Write proposal
- Defend proposal (HUMA 894)
- ◊ Ethics approval from HREC if needed (this is the **latest** moment to apply for ethics approval)

Stage 4: [Thesis Writing, Submission, and Defence](#)

Year 3 Summer to Year 4/5 Summer

- Write thesis chapters, submit them for review from your supervisor and committee, edit them (multiple times); meet as necessary to discuss drafts
- Complete thesis draft, submit for review, and edit the document
- Satisfy language requirement prior to thesis submission
- Submit thesis and schedule defense: plan this around [careful study of SGS's website on the thesis submission process, from the defence to graduation](#).
- Defend thesis (HUMA 895)
- Celebrate graduation!

Further Notes for students and committee members:

[The Humanities pages](#) on the CISSC website are key resources for planning and understanding the program, also [see our archive](#) discussed below.

- Your timeline might look different from this one depending on your individual circumstances:
 - If you are an international or co-tutelle student, your timeline could be accelerated to comply with the limits of your student visa.
 - If you feel financial pressure to complete the program within 4 years, it is crucial to plan all steps well in advance and co-ordinate with your committee.
- You could plan your courses in other ways, e.g., doing Electives 3 & 4 in the Fall of your second year. Some students do 3 courses in one term, but we don't recommend this, given the level of coursework and the university's expectations. Consult with your supervisor if you plan to take more than two courses per term.
- Keep in mind that PhD students rarely focus solely on coursework. Alongside courses, you might also be: applying for SSHRC (Canadian), FRQ (Québec), or other scholarships; working as Teaching Assistants or Research Assistants; writing papers to submit to conferences; creating art works to submit to galleries or shows; settling into life in Canada and Québec; taking care of other obligations outside the academy.
- The limit for completing the Humanities PhD is 6 years, beyond which Timeline Extensions (TLEs) are required. Requests for extensions require support from your supervisor and the Graduate Program Director.
- We have an online archive with various materials from workshops on applying for funding, postdocs, and so on; the archive contains, e.g., videos of workshops, materials from workshops, examples of successful applications shared by students in the program. It also contains important documents about the program, e.g., this planner, SGSs guidelines for PhD supervisions, a 2019 version of a student compilation of materials from the HUMA website. You can [find the archive here](#). Links to videos are given in text files.
- **Language requirement:** "Prior to submission of their thesis, doctoral candidates are required to demonstrate an ability to read and translate scholarly material in at least one language (other than the language of their thesis) relevant to their studies." The requirement can be satisfied by: a letter of attestation by supervisor (or relevant employer, who can attest to ability); a transcript from previous degree or diploma (e.g. university or high school showing courses in that language), or equivalent; a certificate from a language training program (e.g. Goethe Institute) demonstrating reading and translation ability, or equivalent; a translation test administered through our office. *Note that the thesis must be submitted to SGS six weeks prior to the defence--so the language requirement needs to be arranged well in advance.*

Check your unofficial transcript regularly to see your progress and grades, as well as to ensure the accuracy of your student record. You should see "continuing in program" at the bottom of the transcript. If ever this is not indicated, speak to the Graduate Program Assistant immediately to ensure you are still enrolled. Most students must maintain their enrolled status to access services and resources such as health and dental coverage. Errors can occur, so check your status at least once per semester.