**The Role of the Second Reader for Senior Theses**

*Undergraduate Education Committee (UNDED)*

*Department of History*

The role of the Second Reader for students undertaking the year-long senior thesis project is as follows:

1. To provide expert advice to the student during the fall semester regarding the researching and framing of the thesis topic; by the second week of December, the thesis seminar instructor and the Second Reader should consult briefly to ensure that the student has been in touch with the Second Reader and understands how to proceed with his/her topic; *the responsibility to contact the Second Reader rests with the student*.
2. To write an assessment of the project for the student and the seminar instructor before final submission in the spring. The main thing this written assessment needs to accomplish is to give advice on **revisions**. Second Readers should therefore focus on **substance**, **organization**, and **argument**; the seminar instructors will deal with things like style and format.

In the spring term, all Second Readers will be emailed a *Second Reader Comment Form* in which to complete the written assessments mentioned above. The *Second Reader Comment Form* has three audiences. The first is the **student**. The Second Reader system was instituted to insure that students would receive substantial written feedback from at least two faculty members on their year-long projects. The second is the **seminar leader**, who needs to consider your expert assessment in determining a grade. The third is the **UNDED** **prize committee**, which needs to consider your expert assessment in determining senior thesis prizes.

As a rule, Second Readers should be members of the History Department (whether at Columbia or Barnard), or on the Department's list of other faculty whose courses are approved for departmental credit. (Barnard faculty, who themselves all advise several Barnard theses, should not feel constrained in any way to act as Second Readers for Columbia students).

All members of the Department should be willing to act as Second Readers for at least one, but no more than two students. Because of the large number of theses in some areas, some students may not be assigned their ideal Second Reader and may have a reader a little outside their exact field.

In some cases, students may have developed an advisory relationship with a non-departmental faculty member or argue that such a professor would make the ideal Second Reader. Such students should feel free to work with and non-departmental faculty member; the DUS can approve exceptions in cases where no departmental Second Reader can be found.