

GRANT SCHREIBER

PhD Final Oral Examination

**“For ye haue the poore alwaies with you’: Experiments in Charity
in post-Reformation Oxford and Aberdeen, 1560-1640”**

ABSTRACT

When the Reformation swept through England and Scotland, it led to the rapid dismantling of the Catholic infrastructure in both kingdoms, including the systems that oversaw and provided charitable works. As a result, these newly Protestant regions needed new methods for caring for the poor.

This dissertation argues that local variables are crucial for understanding how charity developed in the new religious and political contexts of the two kingdoms. It examines how these efforts to experiment with new forms of poor relief occurred at the local level by comparing the burgh of Aberdeen and the city of Oxford. It does so by using a combination of local political and religious documents from the towns. These records reveal national and local perceptions and treatment of the poor and the poor’s identities as individuals with agency and unique experiences. The two towns had significantly divergent outcomes in the scale and breadth of their post-Reformation poor relief schemes. Aberdeen’s experiments with charitable works were far more successful than Oxford’s in terms of the number of people assisted and the amounts of money given to the poor. Notably, these outcomes run counter to prevailing narratives about national developments in the two kingdoms.

Date: January 5, 2026

Time: 2:30 - 5:30pm

Location: Hybrid

*Please email
histacademic@uoguelph.ca to
request the virtual link or the in-
person examination location.*

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