



**KWANTLEN  
POLYTECHNIC  
UNIVERSITY**

**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY**

# Student Handbook

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Updated: June 2020 – The COVID Edition 😊

**This brief guidebook will answer many of the questions you may have regarding the History Program, our department policies, faculty expectations, writing, and course availability issues.**

## Section I: Making Your Life Easier

- **declare** your major as early as possible; students who declare as History majors receive priority registration in our courses which, in a small program, can be the key to getting the courses you want throughout your four year degree
- work with the degree advisors in the Faculty of Arts to ensure that you are meeting all of your program requirements as you go along. **Don't wait** until your final semester to meet the advisors
- complete your **English** courses as soon as possible in your four-year program. History is a reading and writing intensive program and your grades will be impacted by your ability to write clearly and coherently
- if you are thinking about graduate school, having an appropriate second language will be essential; take advantage of the language courses available at KPU, as well as the cultural studies courses that will give you deeper insights into the regions of the world that you are studying
- get to know your instructors. At some point you may need letters of reference or endorsements; if the instructors know your strengths and abilities, they will be able to write more effective letters
- get to know your fellow students and enjoy building a sense of community with them as you move through the program. Having a solid support network will help you deal with stressful events. Consider getting involved in the History Student Society (KHSS)

## Section II: Transitioning from High School

- As you move from High School to University, the expectations placed upon you will change quite dramatically. You will find that success requires a great deal more individual effort and initiative
- some things to keep in mind:
  - most of the important information related to the inner workings of any History class can be found in your course syllabus. Take fifteen minutes and read the syllabus thoroughly. Mark anything that seems unclear and ask your instructor to clarify
  - try to arrive a few minutes before the class starts (whether in person, or online)
  - meet with your instructors in their designated office hours. This time is specifically set aside to go over assignments, to review issues that may be unclear, or simply to provide you with more insight into a specific problem
  - if you miss a class it is your own responsibility to catch up on any material missed. Check the course syllabus or the class web site and ask your fellow students if you can borrow the notes. You should not expect the instructor to provide you with notes unless that instructor ordinarily posts their notes to Moodle
  - all communications between you and the instructor should be conducted in a respectful manner. An email to an instructor should include your full name and course/section number. Remember that email inquiries will be answered in a timely manner, but you should not expect an instantaneous response, especially in an online environment when the instructor will be fielding dozens of emails each day

- use ONLY your email.kpu.ca email address to contact your instructors; this is an FOI/P requirement and instructors should not use another email platform to communicate with you
- communication in class should be courteous and respectful of others. Learning to engage in informed debate is a key skill that you will gain as you take more courses
- technology (in person delivery):
  - technology can be both a benefit and a distraction in the classroom
  - each individual instructor will establish their own policy on technology, and this should be clearly communicated in the course syllabus
  - as a general rule, mobile phones should be turned off before you enter the classroom, and under no circumstances should they be turned back on again except during any class breaks, or when you are asked to use technology in the completion of course assignments
  - if your courses use web-based resources access them on a regular basis; the instructor has created a class web-site to support and enhance your learning
- technology (online delivery):
  - when participating in synchronous (i.e., all students are online at the same time) classroom activities, try to give your fellow students the opportunity to participate
  - consider typing your comments in a separate document then you can copy them into the chat window – this saves *a lot* of time that is otherwise spent watching people type and waiting for comments to upload
  - when participating in online asynchronous (i.e., you are online at various times, when other students may or may not be there) activities use the same guidelines as you would in person: be respectful, be accepting of alternative opinions, and *always* provide evidence to back up your comments, personal attacks will never be tolerated

### **Section III: Course Availability**

- please be aware of the following general guidelines
  - third- and fourth-year courses are usually offered on a two-year rotation, with the exception of very popular courses. In order to graduate with a B.A. in History, you must complete History 4400: Applications of History, and at least six (6) additional credits at the 4XXX-level. Beyond this you are free to choose among any of our third- and fourth-year courses. This guarantees maximum flexibility in customizing *your* program
  - History 4400 is offered at least once a year, but additional sections may be added depending upon the number of students registered in the degree program
  - this website (kpu.ca/arts/history) includes a very preliminary course timetable to facilitate your degree planning; however, only the KPU Registration Guide and Timetable has the official course plan
  - the department always tries to offer at least one or two upper level courses in the summer; however, summer offerings often vary widely due to instructor availability

- courses at the 1000 and 2000 level are offered in a regular rotation whenever possible. Courses with high demand, such as Canadian, European, and World History, are ordinarily offered on all three academic campuses (Langley, Richmond, and Surrey)
- students who complete a wide range of courses (time periods and geographical areas) will be better able to meet the prerequisite requirements of upper level courses
- in a small department you may need to take courses outside of your primary area of interest. Enjoy the chance to learn something completely new!
- **Guided Study:** under certain circumstances you can apply to complete a course through guided study – usually one-on-one, or in a small group of students, with a particular instructor. However, you must meet certain requirements in order to request a guided study
- a student proposing to undertake a guided study must contact one of the Arts Degree Advisors in the Dean of Arts office; the advisor will guide you through the rest of the process after ascertaining whether or not you qualify for a GS
- the final decision on guided study contracts will be made in the Dean’s Office. Allow at least two months for the paperwork to be processed
- please remember that instructors are not required to take on guided study students; their willingness to do so will be related to their workload in any given semester

#### **Section IV: Chicago Style Citation (Turabian)**

- the Department of History uses the original **Chicago Style** (also known as Turabian) citation format – which requires footnotes or endnotes and a bibliography
- in-text citations accompanied by a works cited, are **not permitted**
- the use of Chicago Style has a significant purpose. Your writing should flow clearly and logically from one point to another without the interruption of in-text citations. As well, you may need to expand on a particular issue, but the aside would break the flow of the writing. In this case, footnotes/endnotes can also be used to provide the necessary exposition. These are called informational footnotes
- a department-wide citation guide can be found in this section of the website; if something remains unclear, ask your instructor for clarification

#### **Section V: Testimonials**

Do you love history, but at the same time wonder how it will help you as you move on in your life and career? The following testimonials come from students who have completed our program over the past several years:

- A BA from Kwantlen's History program does more than just give you an understanding of significant events in the past and how they've shaped our current world. You develop an entire skill set to help you in your future career, whatever it is. Critical thinking, the ability to write well, public speaking, the ability to

work towards a goal and meet deadlines, and a well rounded understanding of the modern world and the institutions that govern it will all make you more valuable to potential employers – Ian Hardacre

- A number of people wonder how a history degree will benefit them, especially if they don't want to teach high school. A history degree provides a number of benefits to anyone. For example, if you want to understand, critique and make successful arguments this is the degree for you. This can help you in any number of fields such as law, political science, and literature. Do you want to be able to understand current events? A history degree will do that for you. It did for me. There were so many times I would be watching the news or reading a newspaper and not understand the importance of what was being discussed because I didn't understand the context of the situation. The more classes I took, the greater my understanding became. The more I understood, the more sympathetic I was to both sides. In addition, if you're lucky enough to study at Kwantlen, you'll be learning and conversing with some of the best educators that will push you to strive for your best while encouraging and supporting you whenever and however they can – Connie Eytcheson
- The BA History program at Kwantlen offers not only an understanding of the world and what events have shaped the world we see today, but allows the opportunity to explore in a collaborative manner. I found the process of working with peers, having an open dialogue in the classroom, and a student centered environment to be very beneficial in my learning endeavors. Collaboration among peers and professors created a more meaningful interaction and learning experience. This notion of collaboration to explore ideas I have gained through Kwantlen's History program is something I aim to emulate in my Secondary Social Studies and Special Education classes – Nikki Puni
- The History program Kwantlen greatly increased my knowledge and love for the subject. The quality of instruction and passion for history from the professors had me hooked from my first class. These are people who keep in active engagement with history and it shows in the lessons they create. Rather than simply simply spouting off knowledge from a textbook, they create learning environments where the diversity of the class is used to create understanding that is communal, not simply top-down. It was this learning environment that helped me become a teacher and for that I am forever grateful. If you are even remotely considering taking a course in History at Kwantlen, please do it. You will be rewarded for your decision – Raj Brar
- People choose higher education to better prepare for their futures. The academic study of history – the past events of the world which have contributed to shaping our present – is one of the many social science disciplines which make people greater thinkers, accomplished writers, and competent analysts. It is not only these academic skills however which are enhanced by studying history; it is the capability for self-reflection and a greater understanding of the human experience that comes alongside those skills which are of even greater value. All of these capabilities make the student of history a more functional, articulate and intelligent human being who is better prepared to face the challenges of their future lives.

As quoted by Robert Penn Warren from *The American Imagination* "history cannot give us a program for the future, but it can give us a fuller understanding of ourselves, and of our common humanity, so that we can better face the future (100)." If you are a person who wishes to nurture your intellectual growth, increase your understanding and compassion for all the world's people, places and civilizations, and – most importantly – is someone who loves to be the high scorer in trivia games – choose History at

Kwantlen Polytechnic University. It will be one of the most amazing educational experiences you could hope to have – Andrea O’Connell

- Before I went to Kwantlen, I used to wonder how an Australian guy led the Scottish people to freedom. Now that I have a minor in history, I have the analytical skills to confirm that ‘Braveheart’ was a movie AND William Wallace wasn’t Australian. Aside from my broader understanding of Hollywood and the historical inaccuracies they put on the big screen, Kwantlen gave me the inspiration to become a teacher myself through their amazing professors... In a Kwantlen history classroom, it is subject centered learning as opposed to teacher-centered, so you can really contribute to the discussion in an open and friendly atmosphere. The teachers at Kwantlen are passionate about teaching and really care about their students —present and past. Now, living and teaching English in multi-cultural Frankfurt, Germany, I have also found what I learned was not just fun facts and interesting stories, but my history minor had also given me a broader understanding of cultural differences in my classroom where I have students from Italy, Spain, Iran, Greece, Turkey, Croatia, Serbia, Haiti, Hungary, Portugal and Thailand. Not to mention, that my knowledge of English speaking countries’ histories has allowed me to impart on my students a greater understanding of English speaking cultures and how they are not all the same: like why Brits apologize to tables when they bump into them and the Irish sing songs about prison ships to Australia when they get kicked out in the first round of the EM – Emily Kirkland
- **"We find this program meets or exceeds the standards of history majors in BC and, to our experience, in major universities world-wide." – External Review Panel, 2008**