



# History Student Handbook

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**Department of History  
Updated: September 2015**

**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 B.A. 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
- treat the language requirement as an important part of your History program. When we learn about the past, it's important to be able to understand the sources in their original language. If you are thinking about graduate school, having an appropriate second language will be essential
- 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

## 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 any History class can be found in your course syllabus. Take a few minutes and read the syllabus thoroughly. Ask your instructor if something remains unclear
  - try to arrive a few minutes before the class starts
  - please remember that a number of students may have questions for the instructor before class, or during class breaks. Limit yourself to brief questions and use the instructor's office hours for larger issues
  - students are encouraged to meet with their 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 gain more insight into a specific problem
  - if you miss a class it is your 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
  - all communications between the student 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

- 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
- most professors will contact you via the Kwantlen email system should the need arise. To avoid missing important information either check this account regularly, or, forward the mail to an account that you do check (log onto myKwantlen → go to 'Email' → 'options' → 'auto-forward')
- technology:
  - technology can be both a benefit and a distraction in the classroom
  - each individual instructor will establish their own policy in regards to technology and this will 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
  - the only acceptable use of the Internet during class time (without the express permission of the instructor) is for the completion of in-class 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

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

- please be aware of the following 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
  - 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:
  - **you must have successfully completed or received transfer credit for a minimum of twelve (12) semester credit hours at Kwantlen;**
  - **you must have achieved a minimum CGPA of 3.00;**
  - **your enrollment must not result in exceeding the normal academic workload for your program;**
  - **you must be currently enrolled in at least one (1) other course at Kwantlen; and,**
  - **the course must be required for graduation (please see policy C.16 for full guidelines)**
- a student proposing to undertake a guided study must contact the relevant instructor to establish his or her willingness to take on a guided study AND must fill in the necessary forms to initiate the process. Forms are available from the departmental assistant and are returned to the DA upon completion
- 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
- each instructor will provide you with specific information on citing your research
- Chicago Style requires you to cite **accurate** page numbers from your sources. As you research your papers, **always** make a note of the source of the information and the page number, while you are taking notes
- use the style guide provided by your instructor and if you have questions or concerns regarding citations ask your instructor for help BEFORE you submit your paper

## **Section V: Links to Online Resources for History Students**

[What is an Academic Paper? Writing for College & How it Differs from Writing in High School](#)

[The History Guide – Resources for Historians](#)

[Internet History Sourcebooks Project](#)

[Google Books](#)

[Kwantlen Library Summon Search](#)

[KPU History Department Website](#)

## **Section VI: 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
- The history department at Kwantlen University has a distinct sense of community. While studying, I felt like I was part of a large group of amazing individuals working towards different yet mutually complementary goals. The professors were always available to give extra help, and this was a large part of my success in the program. My experiences studying history at Kwantlen more than prepared me for my post-undergraduate plans – Jordan McCuaig
- 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
- When I originally enrolled at Kwantlen, I had planned to complete an Associate of Arts degree in English, and then transfer to SFU. However, after taking numerous history courses, I not only switched my major to history, but also decided to complete my Bachelor of Arts at Kwantlen. I realized the value of being able to continue my studies under the guidance of faculty members who are not only readily available to help students, but who also actively engage themselves in helping students succeed. In addition to simply learning about the past, my history degree from Kwantlen taught me how to think critically, how to structure compelling arguments, and how to evaluate the validity of other arguments while respecting the perspective of the authors behind them. In the end, I firmly believe my history degree from Kwantlen is invaluable, as the interactive environment created within the small, student focused classrooms has inspired in me a desire to pursue higher education and, ultimately, to become a teacher – Andrew McCullough
- I found that the history department at Kwantlen, both the faculty and fellow students, provided a friendly and encouraging environment for learning; as someone who suffers from anxiety, I never felt daunted by my presentations or deterred from participating in a discussion – Erik Granholm
- There are nothing but positive things to be said about the History program at Kwantlen. During my time there, I became more receptive towards the many different viewpoints and perspectives available, which, in turn, helped me to develop a better understanding of both the world and myself. Of course, it was only possible with the help of the very accepting professors, who fostered and nurtured an open-minded atmosphere where all opinions are valued, and my many peers, whose honest and thought-provoking opinions only contributed to this atmosphere – Kevin Ho
- 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**