



The Senior Exercise in the History Department builds from your experience as a history major. We fully expect your final research paper and oral exam to follow from the courses you have taken, research you have done, skills you developed in Practice and Theory (HIST 387), in some cases, off campus study, and finally, work completed in the Senior Seminar (HIST 490). For these reasons your senior exercise should reflect a topic of interest to you, in which you have acquired sufficient background, demonstrated academic expertise, and completed necessary coursework. The topic cannot be something completely new to you.

Therefore we have established the following steps to assure the integration and success of your senior project:

Before Senior Year: All History Majors will have completed HIST 387, The Practice and Theory of History and so they have written at least one extended research paper. You are welcome to refer to that paper and material you learned in Practice and Theory as you begin your senior exercise. You should also now own a copy of Kate Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (published by the University of Chicago Press) either the seventh or eighth editions will do. Be sure you are currently taking or have already taken sufficient courses in the area of study necessary for the project you are considering.

Senior Seminar: The Senior Seminar is the capstone experience of the History Major. In it, you begin writing the research paper that will form the basis for your Senior Thesis (Senior Exercise). Your senior seminar instructor will guide you through the process of narrowing your topic, finding appropriate sources, and producing several drafts. Revision is integral to the process of writing. The research proposal (proposed topic, argument, and sources) that you submit for your senior seminar will be vetted by the department.

Early in the fall: You will have the opportunity to talk about your proposed topic with members of the department. During this interview, you will be asked to state the argument you believe you are going to pursue and answer questions like the following: In your research project, what questions will you ask? What sources will you consult? What background do you have that will enable you to carry out this project? This interview will also give you the opportunity to get advice from the department and find out who you will need to consult in the course of writing your senior exercise. Experience tells us consultation is critical to the successful completion of the senior exercise.

In December: You complete the senior seminar and will have a final paper from which you will build a new thesis and substantially rewrite the project for the senior exercise due on **February 23, 2018**. (More on that below.)

In January: The Annual Senior Research Conference is **Sunday, January 21, 2018** from 3:00 pm to 8:00 pm, with a break for a catered dinner. Mark your calendars now. All seniors will present their research to one another and to members of the Kenyon community who attend. You will be assigned to one of the panels, which are organized according to commonalities among paper topics. Each panel is chaired by a faculty member and will contain three or four papers. Presenters have about 10 minutes to speak. Your presentation should state the argument of your senior paper and provide some key highlights. The more specific your presentation the better it is. After the presentations are complete, there will be some time for questions.

You may invite friends to attend and you will surely want to hear some of the other papers from members of your seminar or those that are on topics of interest to you. This is always an intellectually enjoyable time. In addition, the experience you gain from presenting your work and the questions from the audience are valuable in helping you to revise your paper and prepare for the oral exams in March.

► **Senior Exercise Portfolio is due February 23, 2018. The portfolio contains the following **THREE** elements:**

- (1) Your original senior seminar research essay with the “marked-up” notes/comments from the seminar instructor;
- (2) a revised and expanded senior research project of up to 35 pages, **preceded by a statement explaining** the chief ways it differs from your senior seminar essay. Following the senior research seminar, and in consultation with the student’s faculty advisor and faculty members who are knowledgeable in the subject matter of the essay, students will significantly expand their exploration of the subject they are studying. *It is not enough simply to edit the senior seminar project. The revised and expanded senior research paper involves: significant reconceptualization; additional research (and thus an expanded bibliography); and generally either profoundly deepening the existing theme(s), or taking one or more aspects of the project in a different direction.*
- (3) **History Checklist Form** - You are required to print out a final version of your history majors checklist form and submit with your senior exercise portfolio in February of the spring semester of your senior year. Please enter this link in an open browser for instructions on how to complete the History Requirements Checklist:
<http://www.kenyon.edu/academics/departments-programs/history/academic-program-requirements/history-requirement-checklist/>

► **Preparing your portfolio**

- A. At any stage of your work, feel free to consult with members of the history faculty about the Senior Exercise. Indeed consultation is the best way to ensure that you pass and produce your best work. You will be advised about which faculty are most appropriate to consult. They expect to hear from you but it is your responsibility to make that contact.
- B. Submit a project that meets high analytical, stylistic and technical standards. To be acceptable, a Senior Exercise must be not only well researched and thoughtfully designed, but also well written, proofread, and accompanied by proper notes and bibliography. For proper form, please consult Kate Turabian’s, A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations.
- C. Submit ***two complete copies*** (two each of original essay, revised essay, and Field Within the Major form) of the portfolio held together by staples or binder clips. *Folders or notebooks are not necessary.* In addition, keep a third copy for yourself, since you may wish to review your work before the oral interview
- D. ***Don’t forget to submit your checklist.*** Be sure it is accurate and think about how it reflects your field and experience within the major. This may be part of the discussion at the Oral Interview.

► **Oral interview**

- A. In the next week after you submit your senior exercise portfolio, you will come by Seitz House and sign up for an oral interview with the team of two faculty members who have been assigned to read your Portfolio.
- B. The Oral Interview takes about forty-five minutes and will focus first on the research project and secondly on its relationship to prominent themes in your field of concentration. The oral interview counts in the evaluation of the senior exercise.

► **Evaluation**

- A. Two members of the history department faculty will read and evaluate each portfolio and conduct an oral interview.
- B. Readers will look for demonstrable competence: intelligent formulation of subject, thorough research, original and thoughtful development of interpretation, well supported arguments, fair consideration of alternative views, coherence, and imagination. See attached sheet for criteria.
- C. Satisfactory Senior Exercises will be graded “Pass,” “High Pass,” or “Distinction.” Those which are judged by the two readers either to be candidates for Distinction or to be unsatisfactory will be reviewed by the department before a grade is assigned. Unsatisfactory Senior Exercises will be graded “No Pass.” These must be rewritten. Students will be notified by the team who evaluated the exercise if they have received a “No Pass” and given directions and a date for revision.

► **Dates to Remember**

- A. Senior Research Conference, Required Presentation, **January 21, 2018**
- B. You must hand in your portfolio on **February 23, 2018** Seitz House Room 10, by 2:00 pm, without exception.
- C. Oral Interviews scheduled after Spring Break beginning **March 19, 2018**.

► **Composition of Senior Exercise for those students writing an Honors Thesis.**

Senior Honors students may rework the “preliminary draft” chapter that they submitted to the Honors seminar in the fall (and then its revised form) for the “new expanded paper” as described above. They should also explain how it fits into their thesis as a whole and draw on the suggestions and criticism offered in the seminar. Otherwise, Senior Honors candidates should follow the instructions contained in this handout.

► **QUESTIONS ~**

If you have any questions about the History Department Senior Exercise or Senior Seminar, please contact your advisor, senior seminar instructor, or the department chair – Ruth Dunnell, dunnell@kenyon.edu, 1-740-427-5323.