



The Senior Capstone Project 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 capstone project 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 capstone 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) any edition, seventh or later, 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 capstone project. Experience tells us consultation is critical to the successful completion of the senior capstone project.

In December: You complete the senior seminar and will have a final paper of about 20-25 pages in length (5000-6250 words) from which you will substantially revise the project for the senior exercise due on **February 21, 2020**. (More on that below.)

In January: The Annual Senior Research Conference is **Sunday, January 19, 2020** 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.

History Department Senior Capstone Portfolio is due February 21, 2020. 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 senior research project** of 25-30 pages, preceded by a **self-assessing narrative that addresses revisions to the paper based on the seminar instructor’s comments, conference feedback, and meetings with relevant faculty.** The narrative should explain how and why students have expanded or deepened their exploration of the topic of study, and the chief ways that the revision differs from the original senior seminar essay.
- (3) **History Majors Degree Evaluation OR History Majors Checklist Form** – HIST Seniors are required to have a completed final version of your history majors degree evaluation [please black out course grades] generated by the Registrar’s Office and submit it with your senior capstone portfolio on the due date of February 21, 2020. Degree Evaluation Instructions are at this link: <https://www.kenyon.edu/directories/offices-services/registrar/resources-for-students/degree-evaluations/> **OR a PDF final version of your History Majors Checklist Form** and submit it with your senior Capstone portfolio on the due date of February 21, 2020.

History Majors Checklist Form at this link:

<https://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 your Senior Capstone Project. 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 **your entire portfolio** (original essay, revised essay, and History Majors Degree Evaluation) electronically by the deadline, **February 21, 2020, to Pamela Burson, bursonp@kenyon.edu**. You should be sure to keep a safe electronic copy of the work for yourself and are advised to bring a copy of your portfolio with you to the Oral Interviews.
- D. ***Don’t forget to submit your Degree Evaluation OR History Majors Checklist.*** Be sure it is accurate and think about how it reflects your field and experience within the major. This will be part of the discussion at the Oral Interview.

Oral interview

- A. After you submit your senior capstone 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 Capstone Projects 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.

► **Composition of Senior Capstone 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 “revised senior research project” as described in item ‘2’ under ‘*The portfolio contains the following THREE elements*’ section. 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.

► **Dates to Remember**

- A. Senior Research Conference, Required Presentation, **January 19, 2020**
- B. You must submit an electronic copy [MS word or PDF] of your portfolio on **February 21, 2020** to Pamela Burson, bursomp@kenyon.edu, by 2:00 pm on the due date without exception.
- C. Oral Interviews scheduled after Spring Break beginning **March 16, 2020**.

► **QUESTIONS ~**

If you have any questions about the History Department Senior Capstone or Senior Seminar, please contact your advisor or the department chair – Eliza Ablovatski, ablovatskie@kenyon.edu, 740-427-5892.