An Overview
The undergraduate history program at UMKC offers majors the opportunity both to explore a wide range of historical fields and to develop expertise in a particular area of study. Courses are generally divided into three categories: 1) broad surveys, 2) specialized lecture courses, and 3) seminars. Writing is emphasized in virtually all history courses, even at the survey level, and research is integrated into many of them. Because writing, analysis, oral presentation, argumentation, and critical thinking form the essence of historical study and debate, the history major prepares students for careers in a variety of fields: law, journalism, teaching, business, public service, library sciences, museums and archives, international work, historical research, and many more. Because historical study highlights the variety and complexity of the human experience and fosters an appreciation for long-term processes of change, the history major also prepares students to be responsible and thoughtful citizens of the world. In the fall semester of 2010 the history program included 110 majors.

Learning Objectives
The history department faculty members have developed a set of carefully crafted learning objectives. Simply put, we expect history majors to acquire specified levels of knowledge, perspectives, and skills through the study of the past. The learning objectives are designed to help you succeed in your undergraduate history major, as independent, creative, and self-directed learners. More important, they will help you to be successful in your pursuit of a career and to hold a life-long appreciation for the humanities and social sciences. The objectives are enumerated as follows:

Knowledge of the Past
- Acquire knowledge of the world's civilizations and peoples, and their political, economic, social, and cultural histories.
- Gain in-depth knowledge of a historical field by specializing in one of several departmental concentrations.
- Gain exposure to a range of historical subjects outside the concentration.
- Complete at least one course that examines a non-western society.

Perspectives
- Develop a historical understanding of an increasingly multicultural society and interdependent world.
- Understand the variety and complexity of the human experience and foster an appreciation for processes of change.
- Comprehend how constructions of class, race, and gender dynamically shape social structures, national identities, and all forms of human relationships.
- Realize the interlocking relationships among science, technology, the environment, and society.
- Appreciate the value of interdisciplinary perspectives and methods.
**Analysis and Interpretation**

- Critically evaluate secondary, textual evidence by identifying a thesis, noting sources and methods used in argument, discerning the conclusions and determining the perspective, bias, and reliability of the argument.
- Think critically, and master the art of interpretive analysis based on the widest possible array of primary sources: written, material, and other cultural texts.

**Research and Communication**

- Locate printed and online information sources to research a topic exhaustively.
- Write clear, well organized, properly documented, and grammatical prose.

**Requirements**

**General College Requirements**
The student must fulfill the requirements of the General Requirements for Bachelor’s degree in the College as outlined in the Undergraduate Catalog.

**History Department Requirements**

- Two courses, or 6 credit hours, are required in World Civilization: History 206 – 208 (or the History 201 – 202 sequence). These courses may also fulfill UMKC general education requirements.
- Ten courses, 30 hours, in history at the upper division (300-400) level.
  - Four of the courses, or 12 credits, must be inside the student’s field of concentration.
  - Four of the courses, or 12 credits, must be outside of the student’s field of concentration and include at least one non-western course. In our department non-western courses include those that deal primarily with Africa, Asia, Latin America, and indigenous North Americans.
  - The final two courses, or 6 credits, come from History 301 WI “Historiography and Method,” and History 498 WI “Senior Capstone Seminar.”

We strongly urge history majors to pursue competence in a foreign language by continuing their foreign language training beyond the thirteen-hour general education requirement.

**Field of Concentrations**
Refer to the department website for a list of courses by concentration.
Required Courses

HIST 301: Historiography and Method
History 301 WI, “Historiography and Method,” is required of all history majors. The purpose of this course is to explore why and how historians study the past. Rather than requiring students to master a field, it challenges them to ask searching questions about the nature of historical knowledge. Is there such a thing as historical truth? What intellectual limitations do scholars face as they reconstruct — or deconstruct — the past? What methods have they adopted to negotiate the obstacles? What is the state of the discipline today? Why have historians increasingly emphasized the importance of cultural change and popular constructions of class, race, and gender? What is the relationship between cultural history and social history? Where does more traditional political history fit in? How has the globalization of world politics, economics, and culture influenced historical inquiry?

Students enrolled in this writing intensive course will not only think about history, they will also read and write it. The semester-long assignment, due at the end of the term, will be to develop a research prospectus; that is, a clearly articulated plan for writing a history research paper based on both secondary and primary sources. The prospectus assignment will allow you to define the topic for your upcoming senior capstone, identify and consult with a faculty mentor who can serve as an auxiliary adviser for the senior project, compile a working bibliography of secondary and primary sources, and develop an interpretive perspective or theme. The course is also designed to develop and improve student reading, writing and analytical skills.

Choosing a Topic for Your Research Prospectus
The most important rule to remember in choosing a topic: choose a topic that can be done from Kansas City. By your junior year you should be able to imagine an almost infinite number of interesting and compelling research topics — many of which occurred to you during previous coursework. But unless you have your own funds for research travel, you will have to conduct your research, with the assistance of the Internet and the Chicago Center for Research Libraries, from your home base in Kansas City. Rule #2: Choose a topic that interests you. Rule #3: Just because something interests you does not mean that it is a good topic. As you are considering a topic, try to write three sentences that describe it. Then ask three questions you want to know about it. Then determine three types of primary sources to which you might go to answer those questions. If you cannot do these things, rethink the topic, but be sure that it is something absolutely compelling to you.

Students sometimes choose a topic that is simply too broad to be completed in an article-length paper. Think carefully, are you imagining a topic that would actually make for a good book: the fall of the Roman Empire; manners and mores in Victorian Britain; the impact of U.S. consumer culture on modern Europe; the decline in the U.S. birthrate in the nineteenth century? If you can envision a book, or if books already exist on the topic, rethink your approach. Imagine writing a chapter of the book you have in mind: Alaric and the Goth’s sacking of Rome in 410; British press coverage of Victoria’s “playboy” son, Edward; German consumption of Hollywood films during the Weimar; birth control in women’s prescriptive literature in the U.S., 1870-1900.

Or perhaps imagine tackling your topic from a more local perspective. Instead of Mexican immigration to the U.S. during World War II, try Mexican immigration to the Kansas City area during World War II. Bear in mind that your topic will almost always be redefined, narrowed, broadened, or even changed altogether in the course of creating the proposal, researching, and writing the paper.
Search the secondary literature to determine what exists and what does not exist on your topic. At this early stage, you want to be sure that enough secondary literature exists to guide you to new questions and sources, and you want to be sure that someone has not just published an important book that answers all of the questions you want to ask of a topic. In History 301WI, and other upper division courses, you will learn how to use electronic data bases – such as JSTOR and LEXIS-NEXIS – to build a bibliography. Once you begin to acquire articles and books that either directly or indirectly on your topic. Do not worry that there are no topics "left." A good topic is truly yours. It springs from a unique combination of your interests, your education, your experiences, and your temperament.

If you are having trouble identifying a topic that compels you and seems accessible, search the Miller Nichols Library web site. You should also visit the web site of the Center for Research Libraries in Chicago. The Center is a consortium, of which UMKC is a member, which shares interlibrary loan privileges for a wide array of U.S. and international research materials. In addition, you should investigate the holdings of archival depositories in the Kansas City area: the Harry S. Truman and Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Libraries, the Northern Plains Division of the National Archives, Linda Hall Library, the Mid America Black Archives, Western Historical Manuscripts Collection, the Missouri Valley Room of the downtown Kansas City Public Library, the KU Medical Center Archive, the Marr Sound Archive, and the Snyder Collection in Miller Nichols Library are just a few of the possibilities.

Choosing an auxiliary research adviser
Your instructor in History 301WI will help you identify an appropriate faculty member to play this role. The auxiliary adviser is a person who is more knowledgeable of your topic, or the field to which your topic relates. Usually the auxiliary adviser is a member of the history department, but you may find the faculty expertise you need in related fields: Black Studies, American Studies and Religious Studies, for example. Your topic need not be fully formed before you seek an adviser; indeed, the adviser can help you refine it. You may want to discuss your topic with more than one faculty member. If your first choice as an adviser can take no more advisees, ask that person for his or her advice on someone else who might be a good adviser. The pages at the end of this handbook on Faculty Fields of interest list faculty members and their interests. Be energetic, flexible, and imaginative in searching for an adviser.

HIST 498WI: Senior Capstone
History 498WI, the Senior Capstone, is the second upper division course required of all history majors. It is taken during the senior year, and always taken after History 301WI, “Historiography & Method.” Learning to think as a historian thinks requires expressing oneself in writing. Historians think through complex problems but they must also find the language to communicate those problems, and their solutions. Research and writing are inextricably linked and are at the heart of the historical enterprise. Research ought also to be exciting and a pleasure.

For this reason, the Department of History views the Senior Capstone as the heart of its teaching. This research paper should be a proof, to yourself, more than to any advisor or reader, that you understand how historians ask questions, how they go about seeking answers, and what forms a historian’s answer to a good question might take.

The coursework you have previously completed has been designed in part to prepare you for this capstone experience. In most cases, students will carry the topic and preliminary research undertaken in History 301, in fulfillment of the research prospectus assignment, into the History 498 Capstone. The time has finally come for you to thoroughly exhaust the secondary and primary sources that you located for the prospectus; use the research, analytical, and writing skills that you honed in the prerequisite; and
actually become a practicing historian. At completion of the senior research paper, you will be the resident expert on your topic.

The History Department has high expectations for the senior project. We expect an original, well-organized, well-written paper based principally on primary sources. Although there is no quantitative length requirement, you should aim to produce the rough equivalent of a scholarly article, along the lines of what historians publish in professional, refereed journals such as *The American Historical Review*. Basically, that means a twenty to forty page manuscript, extensively foot or end noted, with a thorough bibliography. We do not expect you to know how to accomplish this task when you begin. This handbook, your 498 seminar leader, and your auxiliary research adviser are there to make sure that you accomplish your task.

Like any other major task, the senior project seems difficult when you consider it as a whole. The most important strategy you can have is to break it down into manageable tasks. Create a calendar and outline the elements necessary to produce an original piece of scholarship from primary sources. Writing the senior paper is a unique experience: both exciting and intimidating. As you delve into the primary sources, you will become first intrigued, then obsessed, with your topic. You will soon realize the joy of learning history from the past itself, rather than through classroom lecture.

**Registration**
Register for History 498 WI. To do so, you must have already completed History 301 WI, “Historiography and Method,” as a prerequisite.

**Getting Organized**
The first thing is to get organized, and to stay that way. It does not matter if you use note cards and a file box, a little notebook with cards, a large notebook with sections, or a computer database. Keep a separate section or sheet for things to be followed up, for new sources noted, for your sudden flashes of inspiration. And don’t carry all your notes around with you; the loss of a book bag or computer with three months of research efforts would be devastating. Keep your notes at home, re-organize them from time to time, think about them, but always protect them. Back up everything and keep copies separate.

**Posing Questions**
The writing of history is an active task; it is the process of answering questions. The historian does not simply get the facts about an issue, that’s what a news reporter does. The historian asks fundamental questions about it. As your inquiry proceeds some of your questions will be rephrased, altered, molded, perhaps discarded as you develop new angles of vision. But always remember, that your paper must answer one all-important, underlying question about the past. Otherwise it will be a narrative, a report, a chronicle, but not history.

**Outlining the Paper**
No later than the end of the first month of your capstone seminar, you should attempt at least a rough, sketchy outline of your paper. Your notes will help you to begin to give form to your material. All too often students research and research and research and never sit back to take a long look at what the material is saying. Everyone outlines differently. Some historians simply imagine the general structure of their written paper, and then commence with the task of writing with only a skeletal framework. Others develop a very detailed outline, even specifying the placement of quotations, statistics, and footnotes. The form is yours. This step is essential because it forces you to think analytically and
develop an argument. It will also assist you in detecting gaps or weaknesses in your research and areas for further effort.

It is important to remain flexible. What may seem like a logical progression of evidence and argument in the abstract may prove to be unwieldy or even illogical once you place it into prose. Thus, be prepared to adjust your outline as you commit your ideas and research to paper.

Since history is the study of societal change over time, it may be helpful for you to create a time line for your topic. When, or what year, does your study begin. Why? At what point in time will it end, and once again, why? Along the line, mark off major events, changes, developments that represent turning points in the story. Make note of the catalysts, or causes, that set those changes into motion.

Writing the Paper

Begin writing long before you feel ready to write. Indeed, you cannot know how much or how little you know before you begin to write. It may be helpful to write sections at a time, not necessarily in order or starting at the beginning. You might start on parts where you feel the research is complete, or where your grasp of the material is strongest. It will alleviate blank paper paralysis if you don't try to write the deathless introduction at this point.

If your seminar leader or auxiliary research advisor is amenable, give him or her sections as they are written; comments on content and style can then be incorporated into the next section or outline. It behooves you to remember that your professors have a lot of reading to do in the weeks before the deadline and can give your work more careful reading if it is early.

Break the task down into parts. Your paper will need a two to three page introduction that clearly states your topic, your theme or themes, your methodology, and the relevance of your topic to the existing historiography. Then need comes the body of the paper -- including a brief discussion of context, and followed by the a discussion of your findings and the logical presentation of your argument. Finally, write a convincing conclusion. This sort of original and argumentative essay needs a firm conclusion, one that tells us what you have told us and why it is important that we know it. Readers often read the introduction and the conclusion before plunging into the text. Be sure that the conclusion is clear, crisp, and confident in tone.

You will write several drafts before you have finished. Get a polished draft of the entire paper to your seminar leader in time for him or her to make comments on it and return it to you. It will take at least a week for him/her to read your essay. Please note that your seminar leader’s reading will do you the greatest service if he or she is not driven mad by awkward phrasing, disorganized paragraphs, and grammatical errors. Very, very few of us write polished prose the first time. Be sure to write more than one draft, spell check, grammar check, and polish your word choices before you hand in a draft. Visit the UMKC writing lab at the corner of 52nd Street and Rockhill Road if you feel you need additional editing help.

Once your seminar reader returns your draft, read the comments carefully. This is the most delicate part of the senior project process. At this point your seminar reader is teaching again, passing on years of paper writing experience. The criticisms are always instructive, never petty, and rarely an expression of stylistic differences. Be sure you understand the reasons for suggested revisions. You mentor is trying to show you how to build your argument so that it is logically advanced, how to use research evidence most effectively to back up your assertions, and how to communicate your findings with precision and clarity. So be sure to incorporate all of the suggested revisions.
Be early. The best papers, and the ones which are the most gratifying for the authors, are those written by seniors who have allowed sufficient time at the end for the small details, which make a truly admirable paper. The research paper should be in nearly final form a week before the deadline. This gives time for polishing.

The senior project is a challenge and should not be a chore. Some say scholarship is 50% system – so be disciplined. But the experience of writing the paper, when undertaken with intelligent and intellectual application, can indeed be the memorable capstone to four years at UMKC.

Components of the Paper
The research paper consists of three parts: the text, the notes, and the bibliography.

Use Kate Turabian's *A Manual for Writers* or the *Chicago Manual of Style*, both are available at the UMKC Bookstore. They provide the only styles acceptable. (That means that MLA or APA in-text documentation styles are not acceptable.) Citation is a complicated, risky business. Even seasoned historians keep style manuals close at hand. Do not assume you know what you are doing. Consult these manuals from the moment you begin to take notes and keep it by your side.

You may use either footnotes or endnotes. Do your notes completely and correctly the first time and save yourself trouble later. For example, you will have to have correct page numbers for citations from secondary sources and box and file numbers from manuscript sources.

The Bibliography should include all sources consulted and every single source cited in your notes. Many readers will turn first to the Bibliography to make sure that you have effectively surveyed secondary works in the field. Include works you have consulted, but not cited. Divide the sources into Primary Sources and Secondary Sources, with Primary Sources first. Do not separate books, articles, or dissertations within the Secondary Sources section; simply list them alphabetically. The essay will be judged incomplete/late if it does not include a bibliography.

Handing in the Paper
Include a title page with the title, your name, your seminar leader’s and auxiliary advisor’s names, and the date. Use consistent margins, number the pages, proofread, and submit two copies to your seminar leader.

The Evaluation & Grading of the Paper
Your 498 WI seminar leader, sometimes with the assistance of your auxiliary advisor, will evaluate and grade your senior capstone research paper based on several important considerations. They will evaluate your use of primary and secondary sources; the writing, argument, and form of the essay; the treatment of the topic, including your interpretation and objectivity; and the overall success of your effort. All categories count equally and collectively result in a letter grade for the work as a whole.

Submitting the Senior Research Paper to Your Portfolio
Once you receive your final draft back from your seminar leader, you need to submit it electronically – as a PDF file – to your portfolio. Since this is your last crack at it, you should use this opportunity to make any revisions you wished you had made before handing the paper in. You should definitely make revisions based upon the written or oral feedback your professors provide.