

k-state

study guide

kansas state university

History

A link between the past and the present, history is the record of humankind's accomplishments and failures. It deals with vital contemporary problems, including the interrelationship between society and its environment, issues of war and peace, and the conduct of decision making. History is a source of rigorous intellectual conditioning; it involves a process of disciplined thinking and training the mind to assess evidence and reach rational conclusions.

Careers

Many students become history professionals: teaching history on the secondary level; university teaching, writing, and research; historic preservation, or museum and archival curatorship; governmental research; or public history. Some of these professions may be entered with a bachelor's degree, while others require advanced professional training.

Other history majors, regarding their degrees as liberal arts backgrounds, enter a variety of nonhistory careers and professions. Recent graduates of the K-State history program work in government, business and commerce, the arts and entertainment, law and jurisprudence, the military, medicine, journalism, politics, social service, nonprofit corporation management, the ministry, and education.

Employers value the communication and research skills of history students. History graduates' training in the analysis of human affairs and their knowledge of social, political, and cultural issues makes them versatile individuals who frequently rise to positions of leadership.

Many law schools and medical schools regard the history degree as excellent preparation for their programs.

Programs

The history program at K-State is not only for history majors, but is also intended for all students seeking a rewarding educational experience. Its most noteworthy feature is a curriculum containing courses in both traditional and nontraditional fields. Because the history faculty specializes in a wide variety of areas, the department offers courses in many fields:

Geographical areas

United States history

More than 30 specialized courses ranging from the colonial era to contemporary times give students not only a sense of our society's past, but also the skills to evaluate historical data. Courses include African-American history, the American West, and Native American histories, in addition to traditional courses on the American Revolution, Jacksonian America, the Civil War and Reconstruction, and the history of the United States in the 20th century.

European history

Specialists in European history give instruction in topics as diverse as medieval religion and politics; the Renaissance and Reformation; the history of France; the cultural-intellectual history of Europe; and Russian civilization and Soviet studies. Those interested in international studies may supplement their historical work with a secondary major consisting of interdisciplinary course work.

Non-western history

In an era of global interdependence, a familiarity with world regions beyond Europe and the United States is crucial. Offerings include history of East Asian civilization, the civilization of South Asia, China since 1644, and the history of Japan.

Thematic fields

Military history

The American Civil War, World War I, World War II, the history of war and society, and the history of American military affairs are among the many offerings in this strong specialization. Military history and the study of technology mesh in courses that focus on the history of military organization, while themes such as military thought, logistics, and the role of political institutions in the conduct of war and foreign relations receive major attention.

Agricultural and environmental history

Farmers have changed the ecology of the earth dramatically. The evolution of Kansas State University is part of this larger story. Courses in this specialization include American agricultural history, American environmental history, world environmental history, Kansas history, and American Indians and the environment. Students enrolled in the natural resources and environmental sciences secondary major will be interested in this emphasis, as well as those interested in the history of science.

Religious history

Religion has played a significant role in human history, and many courses devote significant attention to it. The department offers courses on the history of Christianity, religion in American history, religion and science, death and dying, and the history of the occult and witchcraft.

History of gender and ethnicity

Recent developments in the historical investigation of gender roles are represented in our courses on women in European and American history. Similarly, African-American history exemplifies offerings in ethnicity, supplemented by

courses such as the history of the American South, Native-American history, and the attempted destruction of the European Jews and other peoples in the Holocaust. Several history courses count toward the major in Women's Studies and the secondary major on American ethnic studies.

Social history

Historians pay much attention to the history of common people and the structure of everyday life in past eras. Courses on cultural history, the social history of sport, and religion in society typify this creative thrust in the department's offerings.

History of science

History of science courses explore the interactions between science and society. Although most people realize that science has had a major impact on recent history, there is less understanding of how culture has influenced science. Departmental courses in this field demonstrate that science has not developed independently from cultural and social values, but rather has been dependent upon them.

Special opportunities

Study abroad

The department encourages history majors to gain international experience through study at universities outside of the United States. Information can be obtained from the Office of Study Abroad, 304 Fairchild Hall, or from the website, www.k-state.edu/oip/students/index.htm. A semester or year abroad can be arranged in almost any region of the world. History advisors work with students to be sure they receive proper academic credit for international studies.

Internship in history

Students may gain practical professional experience by participating in this program for one or two semesters. Faculty and working professionals supervise the interns. The department offers internships at the Riley County Historical Museum, the Fort Riley Cavalry Museum, the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, the Kansas State Museum and Library, and other historical institutions.

Related activities

Each semester the department sponsors guest speakers, special seminars, and colloquia for students and faculty.

Extracurricular activities include Phi Alpha Theta, the international honorary society in history that sponsors speakers, films, and social events. Students with a potential for high scholastic achievement may be invited to join the honors program of the College of Arts and Sciences, as well as the K-State chapter of Phi Beta Kappa and Phi Alpha Theta.

Community service programs

An excellent way to gain practical experience and serve communities at the same time is to participate in one of K-State's summer or international teams. K-State students are placed in communities of Kansas or in developing countries for eight to 10 weeks during a summer. See the community service website, www.k-state.edu/csp/.

Curricula

The B.A. degree emphasizes the liberal arts and humanities foundation of the discipline and requires the study of a modern foreign language. The B.S. degree trains students in social science methodologies, requiring quantitative studies such as mathematics and statistics.

In both programs students take 36 hours in history, beginning with a two-semester Western Civilization sequence or a two-semester United States history sequence. Each student chooses a combination of courses according to personal interest and professional needs. In order to obtain breadth of study, history majors must distribute course work so that it includes the study of preindustrial societies, the Third World, and the United States.

During the junior or senior year, majors take a historical methodology seminar in which they gain foundation skills in research and writing.

All students must meet general college requirements outside the field of history. Both programs contain strong components in the social sciences, the humanities, and the natural sciences. In addition, students may select up to one-third of their university credits as electives, creating programs that fit individual needs. Students may take a second major, an interdisciplinary secondary major, or a combination of courses to build a professional expertise.

Students earning a double major must complete 30 hours in history rather than the normal 36 hours.

The history minor consists of a minimum of 21 hours in history, of which at least 15 must be at the 300 level or higher. The department also offers master of arts and doctor of philosophy degrees.

Secondary education certification

Students earning a B.A. or B.S. in history may prepare to receive state certification to teach on the secondary level. Thirty hours in history are required in this program. Students work closely with advisors in the history department and the College of Education, who supervise the certification process. They take a concentration of courses in education leading to the semester of student teaching in the senior year.

For more information about history, contact:

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