

# HISTORY DEPARTMENT STUDENT LEARNING GOALS AND CURRICULUM MAP

(Adopted Oct. 12, 2011)

The Department of History aims to provide its majors with a broad grounding in the history of the United States, Europe, and the world by requiring that history majors take courses in each of these areas and by offering a diverse array of courses in U.S., European, Asian, Middle Eastern, African, Canadian, and Latin American history. The program is intended to develop historical awareness and a more cosmopolitan (global) world-view on the part of majors. Additionally, it seeks to expand their historical knowledge and understanding of historical significance, and to increase their understanding of historical causation and consequences. The history curriculum emphasizes the development of critical thinking and writing skills. History majors study the complexities of the human experience, deepen their knowledge of their own society and its past, explore other cultures and societies, and prepare for life in a multicultural and international community.

The Department's Student Learning Objectives have been formulated with close attention to the standards of the American Historical Association (AHA), the leading professional organization in the discipline of History. In "Criteria for Standards in History/Social Studies/Social Sciences," the AHA recommends that History standards should:

1. Strongly emphasize a number of analytical skills, beyond standard critical thinking skills.
2. Provide clear emphasis on chronology and periodization.
3. Delineate a balance among various major facets of the human experience in the past.
4. Provide systematic global perspectives in history.<sup>1</sup>

In addition, in "Best Practices: Encouraging Research Excellence in Postsecondary History Education," the AHA maintains that:

1. Exposure to and acquisition of a variety of research skills is an essential part of undergraduate education in history.
2. Students enter into meaningful engagement with the past by using primary sources.

Students need to be exposed to the full range of research materials, including written primary and secondary sources and material culture, visual materials, data sets, oral sources, and other non-textual materials.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> "Criteria for Standards in History/Social Studies/Social Sciences," <http://www.historians.org/teaching/policy/CriterisForStandards.htm>  
Accessed April 21, 2008

<sup>2</sup> "Best Practices: Encouraging Research Excellence in Postsecondary History Education," <http://www.historians.org/Perspectives/Issues/2000/0010/0010aha1.cfm> Accessed Apr. 21, 2008

**The Department of History's *Student Learning Objectives* are as follows:**

- I. Development of Historical Consciousness
  - a. Expand the student's knowledge of important historical developments and understanding of these developments' significance
  - b. Movement from a presentist to an historical point of view, and from an ethnocentric to a global world view
  - c. Read, interpret, and understand, and differentiate primary and secondary sources
- II. Development of Historical Research and Analytical Skills, including:
  - a. Ability to locate historical sources (primary and secondary) for student research
  - b. Ability to analyze and evaluate primary and secondary sources
  - c. Ability to develop and support/sustain a thesis based on multiple primary and/or secondary sources
  - d. Ability to understand and incorporate historians' interpretations (historiography) into written and/or oral presentations
- III. Development of Professional Skills and Values
  - a. Develop an understanding about the professional duties and responsibilities of historians, which can include: high standards of fidelity to evidence; an understanding of the role of the historian as both an individual scholar and a member of a cooperative community of scholars sharing their work in public venues; creative thought; and engagement with diverse approaches to obtaining, interpreting, and applying historical knowledge.

## Curriculum Map

*The history department's Student Learning Outcomes reflect our goal of combining skill acquisition and content at each level of student development. Our curriculum offers regional and chronological diversity and creates multiple opportunities for skills to be acquired and developed. The curriculum map below highlights the ways that our courses accomplish both of these goals.*

### **AT A MINIMUM, 100-level courses (excluding HIST 100, 133, 134, & 135) will fulfill: IA, IB, and IC**

Surveys of American, European, and World history will introduce students to large conceptual themes in the study of history. Students will learn about key historical events and the different ways that historians have interpreted them. Change over time and the importance of evaluating events within their own historical context will be emphasized. These classes will familiarize students with the difference between primary and secondary sources and provide opportunities to read, interpret, and write about those sources.

### **AT A MINIMUM, 200-level courses (excluding HIST 201) will fulfill: IA, IB, and IC**

200-level courses provide students with some of the same skill sets as introductory-level courses, but they do so at an intermediate level. Focusing on a smaller portion of the world than a 100-level survey— Africa, Latin America, South Asia, or the Islamic World, for example — these classes provide students with more specialized knowledge about a particular region, emphasizing vocabulary and concept acquisition. They introduce students to some of the historiographical debates that take place among historians without necessarily expecting students to undertake historiographical analyses of their own. Students will produce interpretive papers based upon their reading of primary and/or secondary sources.

### **AT A MINIMUM, 300-level courses will fulfill: IIB & IIC**

Because 300-level courses have prerequisites, we assume that students already have a broad understanding of key themes to be addressed in these courses. This allows us to focus our 300-level courses on a more specific theme, group, or period. This narrower focus allows students to gain a greater understanding of the way that people, ideas, and events can change history or reflect and respond to changes that have already occurred. Professors can challenge students to study events from multiple perspectives, gaining a better understanding of the role of the historian as the interpreter of different, sometimes conflicting voices. Students will engage with both primary and secondary sources and they will be required to write papers expressing and supporting a clear thesis.

### **Professional Skills Courses:**

#### **AT A MINIMUM, HIST 100 will fulfill: IIIA**

Broadly, HIST 100 introduces freshmen to note taking techniques and good study habits, skills necessary for success in the major. More specifically, they are introduced to the essentials of the historians' craft, such as the difference between primary and secondary

sources and the basics of library research. Students in this 1-unit, five-week course learn a clear definition of plagiarism and why it is such an anathema to historians. They are introduced to the proper techniques to cite the words and thoughts of others.

**AT A MINIMUM, HIST 201 will fulfill: IIA-D, IIIA**

HIST 201, ideally taken in the student's sophomore year, expands the student's knowledge of the historian's tools. Students are introduced to the importance of creative approaches to a topic: they are usually expected to select their own topic (within the confines of the class theme); they are expected to decide upon their approach to that topic (they might consider it from a political, social, economic, or cultural point of view, for example); and they are expected to select their own sources in a way that reflects their approach to the topic. They conduct research and present their analysis of primary and secondary sources in both oral and written formats. Students will be introduced to the responsibilities and duties of the historians' profession, becoming acquainted with the process of sharing work as a member of a community. Class discussions can demonstrate the ways that readers of the same material can reach different conclusions and can benefit from the insight of others; oral presentations (followed by question-and-answer or discussion) might be likened to the conference experience; or students might engage in peer review of one another's papers just as academics submit their work to peer-reviewed journals. This sharing of information and ideas has the additional benefit of teaching students to recognize the usefulness of a variety of approaches to and interpretations of historical knowledge.

**AT A MINIMUM, HIST 495/499 will fulfill: IIA-D, IIIA**

HIST 495/499 provides a capstone to the History degree. Students will be expected to conduct self-directed research, becoming experts on their own topic (self-selected within the parameters of the class) so that they can present and interpret sources with and for their classmates. The professor serves as a mentor, providing guidance on an individual level. As in HIST 201, students will be expected to demonstrate the ability to work as individual scholars as well as the ability to work as a member of a cooperative community of scholars. They will be encouraged to present their work in a public forum, ideally at OSCAR or at a student conference.