Millikin University
College of Arts and Sciences
Annual History Major Assessment
by
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Executive Summary

History Major Learning Outcome Goals

In each history course, students will:

1. be able to express in oral and written form their understanding of major issues and intellectual theories within the discipline of history
2. demonstrate their ability to research and analyze objectively any historical or social and cultural topic and generate an independent and original point of view
3. demonstrate a historical world view that examines causes and effects of particular events, ideas and time periods.
4. demonstrate their awareness of a global perspective and an appreciation of comparative models, diverse cultural traditions and universal patterns
5. demonstrate their ability to utilize critical and analytical skills in application to any subject

History Major Learning Story

The first-year curriculum in History introduces students to a broad sense of historical developments in the modern world. The second-year curriculum enables students to explore in a more specific manner the history of medieval and modern Europe, and of American history from its beginnings to the present. Third-year courses engage topics in European, American, non-Western, and global history, along with opportunities for independent study. The student's History curriculum culminates in two classes: the Seminar in History (a course in a specific content area, appropriate for juniors or seniors), and Historiography, the capstone class, always taken in the fall semester of the senior year.

The concentration in the History learning experience is on critical analysis – in part because the department is too small to hope to offer comprehensive coverage of anything so broad as "history," and in part because the History Department's approach makes the discipline intellectually vibrant and culturally relevant to students.

Learning goals are embedded in every class taught by History faculty. Every student is expected to master an increasing level of critical and analytical ability. This expectation is most clearly expressed in the capstone course, Historiography. In a developmental sense, the History Department moves students from survey-level courses, to 300-level content courses, to a seminar, and then to Historiography, with expectations increasing at

each level. The range of courses that is provided in accordance with these expectations is defined by who is in the department at any given time, both full- and part-time.

The range and sequence of courses and learning experiences in the History major includes the following requirements:

- Either History 201 and 202 (Rise of Modern Europe, to and since 1700), or History 203 and 204 (American History, to and since the Civil War);
- Six elective courses, four of which must be at the 300 level or above;
- One 400-level content seminar;
- History 480, Historiography and Research.

In academic year 2007-08, the department of history further expanded the range of its course offerings with Dr. Kovalcik's "Christianity in the U.S." and Dr. Murphy's "Vietnam and the American War" and "Introduction to Southeast Asia," both taught while he was a visiting professor at Webster University in Thailand. Dr. Kovalcik's course will be offered on a repeat basis, as will Dr. Murphy's "Vietnam and the American War," while the SE Asia course will inform certain aspects of Dr. Murphy's "Developing World" course.

Snapshot

The fulltime history department faculty are Kevin Murphy, Ph.D. University of Maryland (U.S. and Asia), Timothy Kovalcik, Ph.D. University of Suffolk (Europe and related subjects), Dan Monroe, Ph.D. University of Illinois (U.S., Islamic World and Latin America) and William Keagle, Ph.D. University of Illinois (U.S., World, religious).

Part-time faculty are Mary Jessup (U.S. and world religion) Kathryn Warnick (Methods of teaching history) Julie Jones (U.S. Women's history) and John Johns (Cultural geography) All part-time faculty hold an M.A. degree. The department offers wide-ranging coverage that reflects the broad preparation of its faculty.

Currently the department serves 42 majors, approximately half "pure" history majors, the other half history/secondary education majors. All majors must complete 33 credits, with greater flexibility available in the "pure" history major's curriculum. All majors must complete at least one course in each of three major fields: U.S., Europe, Non-Western or Global.

The department offers between 35 and 40 courses per year, and is a major contributor to University Studies requirements at both the sophomore level (IN 250) and junior level (IN 350). About 700 students per year pass through history classes at Millikin.

The department's senior capstone course HI 480 (Historiography) is a rigorous exercise in methodology, critical thought and writing. In the fall 2007 the Historiography course enrolled fourteen students.

History Curriculum Map

Courses	Goal #1: Students will be able to express in oral and written form their understanding of the major issues and intellectual theories within the discipline of history.	Goal #2: Students will demonstrate their ability to research and analyze objectively any historical or social and cultural topic and generate an independent and original point of view.	Goal #3: Students will demonstrate an historical world-view that examines causes and effects of particular events, ideas, and time periods.	Goal #4: Students will demonstrate their awareness of a global perspective and appreciation of comparative models, diverse cultural traditions, and universal patterns.	Goal #5: Students will demonstrate their ability to utilize critical and analytical skills in application to any subject.
HI 201 – Rise of Modern Europe, Medieval Period to 1700	X		X		X
HI 202 – Rise of Modern Europe, 1700 – Present	X		X		X
HI 203 – U.S. History to 1865	X		X		X
HI 204 – U.S. History Since 1865	X		X		X
HI 100 Intro to Modern World	X		X		X
HI 210 and 310 – Topics in United States History		X	X		X
HI 320 – Topics in European History		X	X	X	X
HI 340 – Topics in Non-Western History		X	X	X	X
HI 360 – Topics in Global History		X	X	X	X
HI 400 – Seminar in History	X	X		X	X
HI 480 – Historiography and Research	X	X	X	X	X

Assessment Methods

Students are assessed in HI 480, the departmental capstone course, since all history majors must take this course in their senior year. This course contains three major assignments that are used as direct measures of senior level performance.

(1) a paper written exclusively from primary sources followed by an oral defense at the end of the term;
(2) a long research paper; and
(3) a written essay exam.

These three student performances are collected at the conclusion of the HI 480 course and reviewed by two members of the history department using the rubrics below.

Each component is directly related to one or more features of the department's learning goals. The primary source paper is used to assess learning goals 2, 3 and 5. The long research paper is used to assess learning goals 2 and 5. The written essay exam is used to assess learning goals 1 and 4.

Primary Source Paper

Student papers that met departmental standards to a high degree were assigned 5 points, those to a moderate degree 3 points, those to an insufficient degree 1 point.

High degree: 3 students	15 points
Moderate degree: 7	10 points
Insufficient degree: 4	4 points
TOTAL:	29 points

Long Research Paper

Student papers that met departmental standards to a high degree were assigned 5 points, those to a moderate degree 3 points, those to an insufficient degree 1 point.

High degree: 6 students	30 points
Moderate degree: 7	21 points
Insufficient degree: 1	1 point
TOTAL:	52 points

Exam

Student exams that met departmental standards to a high degree were assigned 5 points, those to a moderate degree 3 points, those to an insufficient degree 1 point.

High degree: 4 students 20 points
Moderate degree: 8 students 24 points
Insufficient degree: 2 students 2 points

TOTAL: 46 points

Analysis of Assessment Results

The data suggests that students performed much better on the long paper and on the exam than on the primary source paper. This could indicate:

1. Students have insufficient experience working with primary sources before they enroll in Historiography.
2. The course is not structured appropriately to promote better performance.

Improvement Plans

One area for improvement is artifact collection. In the fall 2008 Historiography course, the department will be requiring students to submit both their long and short papers to "livetext." To ensure that the department has access to all relevant artifacts, Dr. Kovalcik will require submission before the final grades are assigned.

The history department faculty will meet to review the annual assessment report and agree on areas of needed improvement.

Appendix
History Department Assessment Rubrics

(1) Primary Source paper

Department learning goals are met to a *high degree* when this paper meets the following criteria:

*reflects a deep understanding of a wide variety of sources, including statistical data
*reflects an advanced ability to critically analyze original sources, with the clear ability to distinguish sources according to their reliability and importance
*reflects a genuinely original point of view, expressed in a very clear thesis

Department learning goals are met to a *moderate degree* when this paper meets the following criteria:

*reflects a fair understanding of a moderate variety of sources, including statistical data

*reflects a substantive ability to critically analyze original sources, with some ability to distinguish sources according to their reliability and importance
*reflects either an original or derivative point of view, expressed in a relatively clear thesis

Department learning goals are met to an *insufficient degree* when this paper meets the following criteria:

*reflects little understanding of a narrow of sources, omitting or de-emphasizing including statistical data
*reflects little or no ability to critically analyze original sources, with little or no ability to distinguish sources according to their reliability and importance
*reflects an entirely or mostly derivative point of view, without clear expression in a thesis statement

(2) Long Research Paper

Department learning goals are met to a *high degree* when this paper meets the following criteria:

*thoroughly researched, with an appropriate, extensive and relevant bibliography
*clear and original thesis and argument supported by a wide variety of primary (when appropriate) and secondary sources, including journal articles
*demonstrates a clear understanding of cause and effect in history
*reflects a high degree of critical thought in making distinctions between and among sources
*reflects an excellent ability to situate specific content in a relevant body of theory
*Oral defense reflects an advanced ability to express in oral form an understanding of relevant issues and intellectual theories related to the paper

Department learning goals are met to a *moderate degree* when this paper meets the following criteria:

*adequately researched, with an appropriate and relevant bibliography
*clear thesis and argument supported by a moderate variety of primary (when appropriate) and secondary sources, including journal articles
*demonstrates an adequate understanding of cause and effect in history
*reflects some degree of critical thought in making distinctions between and among sources
*reflects some ability to situate specific content in a relevant body of theory
*Oral defense reflects some ability to express in oral form an understanding of relevant issues and intellectual theories related to the paper

Department learning goals are met to an *insufficient degree* when this paper meets the following criteria:

*inadequately researched, with an incomplete bibliography
*unclear and unoriginal thesis, with argument inadequately supported by a narrow and limited range of sources
*does not demonstrates an understanding of cause and effect in history
*reflects little or no ability to apply critical thought and make distinctions between and among sources
*reflects little or no ability to situate specific content in a relevant body of theory
*Oral defense reflects little or no ability to express in oral form an understanding of relevant issues and intellectual theories related to the paper

(3) Essay Exam:

Department learning goals are met to a *high degree* when this paper meets the following criteria:

*reflects an advanced understanding of comparative models
*reflects a clear awareness and understanding of diverse cultural traditions in historical thinking
*reflects an original response to a variety of historians' work

Department learning goals are met to a *moderate degree* when this paper meets the following criteria:

*reflects some understanding of comparative models
*reflects some awareness and understanding of diverse cultural traditions in historical thinking
*reflects a somewhat original response to a variety of historians' work

Department learning goals are met to an *insufficient degree* when this paper meets the following criteria:

*reflects little or no understanding of comparative models
*reflects a limited awareness and understanding of diverse cultural traditions in historical thinking
*reflects a derivative or unclear response to a variety of historians' work