

Millikin University  
College of Arts and Sciences  
**Annual History Major Assessment**  
**2009-10**  
by  
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2010

### **Executive Summary**

In the 2009-10 academic year, the History Department operated with only two of three tenure line positions filled in the fall and with only one in the spring as the other remaining tenure-line faculty member, Tim Kovalcik, was on leave. An outstanding adjunct professor with a PhD in History from the University of Illinois, Robert Sampson, was recruited and taught courses that prevented any diminution in department offerings. In addition to Dr. Sampson, the department recruited another adjunct instructor from a nationally ranked History program, Ellie Perelman, late of the University of California-Berkeley. The two tenure-line faculty both received positive pre-tenure reviews and will present tenure packages in August 2011. All History faculty, adjunct and tenure-line, have been instructed to include department learning goals and CAS required language in course syllabi. The department continues to be a leading provider of IN250 and IN350 courses, and History maintained a high number of students per full time equivalent faculty member.

### **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, often 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. In a developmental sense, the History Department moves students from survey-level courses, to 300-level content courses, to the seminar and 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 the academic year 2009-2010, the History Department further expanded the range of its course offerings with Dr. Monroe's seminar on the United States and the Middle East, a content course that involves readings in U.S. and Middle Eastern history with evaluation by essay reading quizzes, a primary source research paper, and an oral presentation. Dr. Kovalcik received junior faculty leave and traveled to South Africa, a trip that resulted on two new courses, the History of AIDS and Sub-Saharan Africa, 1950-2000. Dr. Sampson taught a new course on Ireland in America.

### **Snapshot**

In 2009-10 the full time History Department faculty are Dan Monroe, Ph.D. University of Illinois (U.S., Islamic World and Latin America), Timothy Kovalcik, Ph.D. University of Suffolk (Europe and related subjects), and William Keagle, Ph.D. University of Illinois (U.S., World, religious).

Part-time faculty are Robert Sampson (U.S., British, and labor), Maire Foxx (U.S. Women’s history), John Johns (Cultural Geography), and Ellie Perelman (Asia). All part time faculty must hold at least an M.A. degree in History. The department offers wide-ranging coverage that reflects the broad preparation of its faculty.

Currently the department serves 35 majors, approximately two-thirds “pure” history majors, the other third 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 requirements at both the sophomore level (IN 250) and junior level (IN 350). About 700 students per year pass through history classes at Millikin.

### 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 the content seminar HI 400, since all history majors must take this course. In the discipline of history, the seminar is typically the capstone course. It represents an opportunity for a credentialed faculty member to instruct students in a content area that has been a major focus of that faculty member's research and writing. Students are assigned advanced articles and scholarly monographs in the content area and are assessed via essay quizzes. Students also complete a research paper based on primary sources and present that paper to the class in a formal oral defense.

The spring 2010 seminar on the U.S. and the Middle East enrolled fifteen students. The department chair collected and evaluated the research papers on whether the department's five learning goals were met.

### **Seminar Research Paper**

Student papers that met department 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: 11	33 points
Insufficient degree: 1	1 point
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>49 points</b>

### **Analysis of Assessment Results**

The data suggests that students overall performed moderately well on the research paper assignment. The results indicate that history students need more experience working with primary sources before enrolling in the seminar.

### **Improvement Plans**

The department needs to a formal system of artifact collection whereby papers are retained from both the seminar and historiography course for assessment purposes. The chair has asked Dr. Kovalcik to collect artifacts from historiography in the fall, while seminar papers in the spring will also be retained.

The department also needs to consider a method to give students greater familiarity with primary sources before they reach the seminar course in junior or senior year. One possibility is to create a course at the sophomore level on research methods that would introduce students to the uniquely rigorous process of historical research which requires judgment and discernment in the use and employment of primary source material.

The History Department will meet and review the annual assessment report and agree on areas of needed improvement. The departure of the previous long-serving chair provides an opportunity to review current learning goals and assessment methods.

## **Appendix**

### **History Department Assessment Rubrics**

#### 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 demonstrate 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