

Millikin University
College of Arts and Sciences
Annual History Major Assessment
2013-14
by
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2014

Executive Summary

In the 2013-14 academic year marked an exciting addition for our department as History merged with Political Science to create the Department of History and Political Science. Dr. Brian Mullgardt and Dr. Dan Monroe did extensive research during which we examined 124 combined History-Political Science programs at universities across the United States, research that suggested that a combined department was not only possible, it offered unique opportunities to add value to both the History and Political Science major. Specifically, a combined program meets accreditation requirements of both the ISBE and the NCSS. It also enables the department to offer a content endorsement in political science/government, and our research suggests that more Illinois high schools are advertising for teachers with the government endorsement than other social science fields. Hence, the department is working closely with Nancy Galen and Education to create a content endorsement that will help our Social Science Education majors secure jobs after graduation and thereby draw prospective students to our program.

All History faculty hold doctorates from prestigious graduate programs, both our tenure-line faculty—Dan Monroe, Brian Mullgardt, and Tim Kovalcik—and our adjunct faculty—Bob Sampson and Bill Keagle. The Department is known for outstanding teaching, and, once again, History received student evaluation ratings that are above the division, college, and university averages. Our faculty is devoted to student success in the classroom and to performance learning. Indeed, History faculty regularly sponsor student presentations and internships, labor-intensive efforts that they willingly embrace. History and Social Science Education students presented papers at the Conference on Illinois History in September 2013 (John Billimack, Max Couch, and Kayla Samuelson), and History faculty also participated: Dan Monroe and Brian Mullgardt moderated sessions while Bob Sampson presented a paper on baseball in Post-Civil-War Illinois. Dr. Tim Kovalcik also sponsored student presentations at the annual meeting of the Arkansas Historical Association in February. Two students, Kalee Mitchelson and Alix Warren, presented papers on race and culture in Eureka Springs in the Progressive Era, scholarly work that came from a summer SURF grant the previous year that enabled them to work at the Eureka Springs Historical Museum with Dr. Kovalcik. The Millikin History Department remains one of the few, if not the only, undergraduate program in the region to sponsor student presentations at major scholarly conferences. Dr. Brian Mullgardt continued in his role as coordinator of the Social Science Education major; Dr. Mullgardt wrote our annual education assessment report, dispatched a letter to high school history teachers touting our program, and attended the Illinois Council for Social Studies annual conference. At the latter conference, which Dr. Mullgardt attends at his own expense, Dr. Mullgardt met with high school history teachers to tout our program and urge them to recommend it to their students. Dr. Mullgardt also worked with staff at the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency in Springfield to arrange for our students to act as judges at the annual Illinois History Expo in May. This unique venture brings more than a

thousand high school students (and their teachers and parents) to the state capital where they present papers, documentary films, and posters on history topics, which are then judged and given merit awards. Our faculty and students have volunteered as judges; this year, Dr. Mullgardt and Dr. Kovalcik attended along with six students (Lindsay Tipsword, Emily Crutchfield, Kristy Gifford, Lauren Nesbitt, Alexa Hamilton, and Joe Kuczynski). In the future, the department will sponsor an annual award for the best project(s) that will be in effect applied to tuition at Millikin, a great method for drawing the best students in Illinois to our program. The department also arranged for student internships: T.J. Wieneke worked on the Ewing Papers and acted as the department computer technician, Joe Kuczynski worked at the Abraham Presidential Library and Museum, and Ian Connor worked at the Korean War Museum, the latter both in Springfield, Illinois. Our internship program is one of the best in the region for undergraduate students. These endeavors are performance learning at its best! History continues to be a leading provider of performance learning opportunities at Millikin.

History has a strong presence in the Decatur community, and indeed in Central Illinois, a presence that helps draw students to our program and creates opportunities for performance learning for our students. On the fiftieth anniversary of the assassination of John F. Kennedy in November 2013, both Dr. Dan Monroe and Dr. Brian Mullgardt were featured experts in a newspaper article in the *Decatur Herald and Review*. With the anniversary of World War One, the newspaper called on Dr. Tim Kovalcik for his reflections; Dr. Kovalcik teaches a highly regarded course on the war. History major Max Couch presented a paper on John A. Logan at the Decatur Civil War Roundtable in February, an appearance that came out of his outstanding presentation at the Conference on Illinois History the previous September. John Billimack was a featured speaker at a reception for Millikin alumni at the Champaign Country Club in February, a talk that was both reflective and charming. Kayla Samuelson reprised her paper on the civil rights movement in Decatur at Westminster Presbyterian Church; Dr. Mullgardt also gave a lecture at the church. History is known for community spirit in the Decatur area. We also work to create a caring atmosphere for students in our program. Faculty sponsor a History Club that stages meetings over pizza throughout the AY, trips to historic sites, and an annual holiday dinner in December.

History faculty have an outstanding publication record (four books and numerous articles and reviews), and that continued in the AY2013-14. Bob Sampson published two articles in the *Journal of Illinois History* and the *Journal of the Illinois Historical Society* respectively. Dan Monroe and Brian Mullgardt both published reviews in the *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* and *Reviews in American History*. Dr. Mullgardt also published an article in the *Journal of the Social Studies*. Dr. Monroe continued his ongoing work on a memoir of Millikin alum and former congressman Tom Ewing, as well as a biography of President James K. Polk.

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. Our faculty offer new and innovative courses virtually every academic year, and last year was no exception. Dr. Mullgardt offered a new honors course on the Long Sixties (1955-1975), and Dr. Monroe taught an immersion course on the American

South in Charleston, South Carolina in January. The latter course resulted in an article with photographs in the local newspaper; both courses were new additions to department offerings. Dr. Mullgardt also taught in the Edge program, and Dr. Kovalcik served as chair of the Council on Faculty. The department continues work on the Ewing Papers, with Millikin history students organizing and cataloging the holdings, an amazing opportunity for hands-on archival work. Our recruiting class for the forthcoming academic year 2014-15 is three students. The department still lacks a tenure line in nonwestern history, a requirement of all History and Social Science Education majors, a position that needs to be filled before accreditation review

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.

Snapshot

In 2013-14 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 Brian Mullgardt, Ph.D. University of Connecticut (U.S. and Social Science Education)

Part-time faculty are Robert Sampson, Ph.D. University of Illinois (U.S., British, and Labor), William Keagle, Ph.D. University of Illinois (U.S., World, Religion). All part-time faculty must hold at least an M.A. degree in History. All current faculty hold doctoral degrees from outstanding History programs at nationally ranked universities. The department offers wide-ranging coverage that reflects the broad preparation of its faculty.

Currently the department serves 28 majors as of the end of the academic year, down slightly because of graduations and not taking into account our incoming class, 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 HI 400 Seminar and HI 480 Historiography, since all history majors must take both courses. In the discipline of history, the seminar is typically the capstone course, while historiography provides an important overview of methodology and changing interpretations. Both courses represent 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 fall 2013 historiography course enrolled fifteen students; the large enrollment was a product of a number of graduating seniors who had yet to take the course. The seminar in the spring 2014 enrolled twelve students. Dr. Kovalcik taught both courses, a scheduling anomaly that will not be repeated; it is better for students to be exposed to different faculty in capstone courses. The department chair collected and evaluated twenty-seven research papers on whether the department's five learning goals were met.

Seminar and Historiography Research Papers

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: 10 students 50 points

Moderate degree: 17 51 points

Insufficient degree:

TOTAL: 101 points

Analysis of Assessment Results

Last year, the sample size was too small to be of much value for comparison purposes. This year, thanks to efforts to create a system to retain artifacts, the size is much more robust. The data suggests that students overall performed reasonably well on the research paper assignment, and that the department's learning goals are being met.

Improvement Plans

The department instituted a formal system of artifact collection whereby papers are retained from the seminar and historiography courses for assessment purposes. The chair collected the relevant artifacts for the purpose of assessing the department's content courses. Assessment is based on BOTH historiography and seminar papers, insuring a robust data sample.

Dr. Brian Mullgardt completed the annual assessment of the Social Science Education major. His report is attached.

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