

Millikin University
College of Arts and Sciences
Annual History and Political Science Majors Assessment
2017-18

by
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July 1, 2018

Executive Summary

In the 2017-18 academic year, the Department of History and Political Science faculty and students again were one of the most active and engaged academic units at Millikin University. Among the myriad of activities that the department sponsored, we welcomed speakers such as Congressman Rodney Davis, who spoke on human trafficking at the invitation of Dr. Laura Dean, and two former congressmen joined us for the biennial Congress to Campus event. The department sponsored student presentations at regional conferences and at our own Celebration of Scholarship, and also participated in the Model Illinois Government and the Model United Nations programs. Professor Kovalcik also led students on a tour of Holocaust sites in Europe, a popular biennial department offering. Hence, we have fulfilled our promise to offer unique opportunities to add value to History, Political Science, and Social Science Education majors. Specifically, with regard to the latter, 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 any other social science field. Thanks to our partnership with the Department of Education and Professor Christie Magoulias, the department now offers a content endorsement that will help our Social Science Education majors secure jobs after graduation and also attract prospective students to our program. Our graduating seniors secured jobs or graduate school admission, a tribute to our program and its ability to place students after graduation.

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. Our Political Science faculty--Amber Lusvardi and Laura Dean--includes adjuncts Michelle Sanders and Scott Reuter. The department is known for outstanding teaching, and, once again, History-Political Science 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-Political Science faculty regularly sponsor student presentations and internships, labor-intensive efforts that they willingly embrace. Both history and political science students presented at conferences, at the Conference on Illinois History for the former and at the Midwest Political Science Conference for the latter, efforts sponsored by Dr. Brian Mullgardt and by Dr. Laura Dean and Professor Amber Lusvardi. Dr. Mullgardt and Dr. Sampson both presented papers at the Conference on Illinois History. Our students and faculty have consistently participated in this important regional conference for many years, and in consequence, our department has an excellent reputation for scholarship in the regional history and political science community. The Millikin History-Political Science Department remains one of the few, if not the only, undergraduate program in the region to sponsor student presentations at major scholarly conferences. Dr. Dean led a student delegation

to the Model UN conference in Chicago in November, successfully shepherding our students. Professor Dean arranged for our students to represent Russia, an obviously influential and important nation at this moment in time, hence, our students had a great opportunity for content education and performance learning thanks to Dr. Dean's expertise in the field. Dr. Kovalcik took students to Europe in May/June for his biennial Holocaust course, once again returning amid accolades from attendees. He also taught a public history course in SP17, with the students forming a consulting firm that could provide professional advice to budding museums and archives, with funding provided by a grant from the Center for Entrepreneurship at the Tabor School of Business. Students presented the results of their research on the feasibility of a student-led consulting firm at the Celebration of Scholarship and in a stand-alone presentation to Tabor faculty. The department continues to sponsor, with the hard work of Professor Lusvardi, the Pi Sigma Alpha honors society for Political Science. New members were inducted in 2017-18 at a formal dinner that Professor Lusvardi organized. Professor Lusvardi also started in the Purdue graduate program in political science in F17. Despite being a full-time graduate student, Professor Lusvardi continued to teach and work in the department. She took students to the annual Model Illinois Government conference in Springfield; our political science and history students acted as state legislators, working on the floor of the Illinois House in a mock session of the Illinois State Legislature. 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 2018. 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. Thanks to Dr. Mullgardt (with an assist from Dr. Monroe), the department has been working with IHPA staff to 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. Dr. Mullgardt presented the first such award in SP18. Our faculty arranged internships for our students throughout the academic year, including internships with the Decatur City Council and with the Macon County Conservation District. Our internship program is one of the best in the region for undergraduate students. These endeavors are performance learning at its best! History-Political Science continues to be a leading provider of performance learning opportunities at Millikin.

History-Political Science 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. Dr. Monroe spoke on the Southern honor culture at the Oglesby mansion on September 24. Dr. Kovalcik appeared on WSOY-AM Decatur to discuss current events. Dr. Sampson organized the 17th annual Father Martin Mangan Lecture on Social Justice which is held each December in Decatur. Once again, Dr. Sampson organized and led the Millikin One Book Project, a reading and discussion group for faculty, staff, students, and friends of the University founded in 2012. Professor Lusvardi spoke on Alexander Hamilton at the local Unitarian Church. Dr. Dean spoke at a local event on the continuing problem of human

trafficking. History-Political Science 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-Political Science Club that stages meetings over pizza throughout the AY, trips to historic sites, and an annual holiday dinner in December.

All History-Political Science 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, IN251, 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. Dr. Mullgardt also taught in the Edge program, and Dr. Kovalcik offered a new version of his public history course that focused on history entrepreneurship. Dr. Laura Dean offered new courses on social movements and on human trafficking.

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 2015-16 the full time History-Political Science 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), Brian Mullgardt, Ph.D. University of Connecticut (U.S. and Social Science Education), Amber Lusvardi, MA, Eastern Illinois University, and joining us in August 2016, Laura Dean, Ph.D. University of Kansas.

Part-time faculty are Robert Sampson, Ph.D. University of Illinois (U.S., British, and Labor), Scott Reuter, JD, University of Illinois, and Michelle Sanders, JD, University of Illinois. All part-time faculty must hold at least an M.A. degree in History or Political Science. All current History 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.

In History, majors must complete 33 credits, with greater flexibility available in the “pure” History major’s curriculum. All History majors must complete at least one course in each of three major fields: U.S., Europe, Non-Western or Global. In Political Science, majors must complete 41 credits including an internship and a senior project.

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 and Political Science classes at Millikin.

History Curriculum Map

Courses	Goal #1: Students will be able to express in oral and written form their	Goal #2: Students will demonstrate their ability to research and	Goal #3: Students will demonstrate an historical world-view that	Goal #4: Students will demonstrate their awareness of a global	Goal #5: Students will demonstrate their ability to utilize critical
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	understanding of the major issues and intellectual theories within the discipline of history.	analyze objectively any historical or social and cultural topic and generate an independent and original point of view.	examines causes and effects of particular events, ideas, and time periods.	perspective and appreciation of comparative models, diverse cultural traditions, and universal patterns.	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 2017 historiography course enrolled five students. The seminar in the spring 2018 enrolled six students. Dr. Monroe taught historiography, while Dr. Kovalcik taught the seminar;

the department rotates the faculty assignments to these capstone courses. We have thereby fulfilled our previous goal of exposing students to different professors in the capstone courses. The department chair collected and evaluated eight 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: (5 pts) four students	20 points
Close to High (4 pts) two students	8 points
Moderate degree: (3 pts) two students	6 points
Insufficient degree: (2 or 1 pts)	

TOTAL: 34 points/8 = 4.25 average

Political Science Assessment

Professor Lusvardi did not submit artifacts for assessment in AY 2017-18. Hence, assessment of the political science major could not be completed.

Analysis of Assessment Results

The annual assessment of History produced score similar to results two years ago (4.8) and well within the range that suggests good results from the capstone courses. Papers were retained for both the seminar and historiography so we had good assessment materials. The data suggests that students overall performed reasonably well on the research paper assignments, and that the department's learning goals are being met. Political Science needs to submit artifacts in a timely fashion at the end of the AY or sooner so the major can be assessed..

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 ideally based on BOTH historiography and seminar papers, insuring a robust data sample. Papers from both historiography and the seminar were retained this year, the ideal scenario. The chair will be working with Dr. Laura Dean to develop a more professional assessment product for political science.

Dr. Brian Mullgardt completed the annual assessment of the Social Science Education major. That report has been forwarded to the CAS dean's office.

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