

Millikin University
College of Arts and Sciences
Annual History Major Assessment
2014-15
by
Dr. Dan Monroe
2015

Executive Summary

In the 2014-15 academic year marked a seamless transition of our combined majors in History and Political Science in the new Department of History and Political Science. Among the myriad of activities that the department sponsored, we welcomed speakers such as Janelle Norman, head of the Decatur branch of the NAACP, who spoke on Constitution Day, Professor Michael Burlingame, the distinguished Lincoln scholar and holder of an endowed chair, who delivered the T. W. Samuels lecture, and State Senator Chapin Rose, who spoke to Political Science students. The department sponsored student presentations at regional conferences and at our own Celebration of Scholarship, and also participated in the Model Illinois Government program. 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 other social science field. Hence, the department is working closely with Professor Christie Magoulias 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. Our Political Science faculty is led by Amber Lusvardi and includes Jennifer Giardina, 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. History faculty and Social Science Education students presented papers at the Conference on Illinois History in September 2014. Dan Monroe and Bob Sampson moderated sessions on Illinois history and labor history respectively. Dr. Sampson also led a teacher workshop on vintage baseball in the history classroom (with Kevin Hale of Decatur Public Schools). Dr. Brian Mullgardt presented a paper on Millikin's campus in the long 1960s, Dr. Tim Kovalcik presented on the Millikin community and World War One, and Social Science Education major Lindsay Tipsword presented on African-American identity at Millikin in the 60s-70. 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. Andrew Taylor, Political Science, presented at the annual conference of the Illinois Political Science Association at Eastern Illinois

University, describing his research on citizen perceptions of the city of Decatur. Political Science students Taylor Morthland and Ed Lisecki presented their senior theses at the Celebration of Scholarship. 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. The department reestablished, with the hard work of Professor Lusvardi, the Pi Sigma Alpha honors society for Political Science. Four new members were inducted: Jenny Zima, Kate Wrigley, Andrew Taylor, and Jared Rixstine. 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 three students (Emily Crutchfield, Kristy Gifford, and Lauren Nesbitt). 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: Lauren Nesbitt worked on the Ewing Papers during the academic year and has an internship with the Children's Museum in Indianapolis, Indiana, for summer 2015. Carla Franzene has an internship with the Milwaukee Historical Society, and Mikayla Mendenhall has an internship with the Macon County Conservation District, both for summer 2015. Mikayla also worked as an intern for Congressman Rodney Davis during the academic year. Professor Lusvardi arranged internships for students with elected officials, including Congressman Rodney Davis, State Senator Chapin Rose, State Representative Sue Scherer, Judge Tim Steadman, and with the congressional campaign of Ann Callis. 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. Both Dr. Dan Monroe and Dr. Tim Kovalcik were featured experts on radio programs: Dr. Monroe appeared on WAZU-FM Peoria on February 12, 2015, to discuss Abraham Lincoln; Dr. Kovalcik appeared on WSOY-AM Decatur to discuss events in the Middle East. Dr. Monroe and Lauren Nesbitt spoke to fourth graders at the Dennis Laboratory School, an ongoing effort to assist area public schools. Dr. Mullgardt, Dr. Sampson, Professor Lusvardi, and Dr. Monroe all spoke, in separate appearances, at the Westminster Presbyterian Church in Decatur. Dr. Sampson organized the 14th annual Father Martin Mangan Lecture on Social Justice which is held each December in Decatur. In September, 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. Dr. Monroe spoke on Hemingway to the Golden K chapter of the Decatur Kiwanis organization in April 2015.

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.

Our faculty are also involved in the wider professional community and have growing national reputations in their respective fields. Dr. Sampson spoke, on January 24, 2015, in St. Louis to the Bob Broeg Chapter of the Society of American Baseball Research on the arrival of the game in Illinois in 1865-1867. During the Organization of American Historians meeting in St. Louis in April, Dr. Sampson was part of the panel, "Crafting the United States History Survey Course." Dr. Mullgardt serves on committee for the American Historical Association. Dr. Monroe spoke at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in October on Lincoln and Race, then again at the Civil War Museum, Kenosha, Wisconsin, and Carthage College in November. Monroe spoke on the Gilded Age in Jacksonville, Florida, and on Thomas Jefferson in Charlottesville, Virginia, in May 2015. Dr. Monroe and Dr. Mullgardt both presented papers at the annual meeting of the American Culture Association/Popular Culture Association in New Orleans in April. Dr. Kovalcik was elected vice president of the Illinois Medieval Association. Dr. Monroe was elected to the board of the Illinois State Historical Society and continues to serve on the advisory board of the *Journal of Illinois History*.

History-Political Science faculty have an outstanding publication record (four books and numerous articles and reviews), and that continued in the AY2014-15. Tim Kovalcik published a book review in *Eastern European Military Studies*. Brian Mullgardt published an article in *Chicago History*. Bob Sampson is researching a book on baseball in 19th century America, relying on newspapers from the period. 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-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 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. Professor Lusvardi offered two new courses, Harry Potter and Politics as well as Media and Politics. Professor Jennifer Giardina also developed and offered two new courses: Global Political Economy and Riots, Rebellions, and Revolutions, respectively. Dr. Kovalcik taught a new course titled Spielberg and History. 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 and Political Science students organizing and cataloging the holdings, an amazing opportunity for hands-on archival work. Our recruiting class for the forthcoming academic year 2015-16 is six students. The department still lacks a tenure line in nonwestern history and international relations, a requirement of all History, Social Science Education, and Political Science majors, **a position that needs to be filled before accreditation review**. Given the value added to the university from the department, approximately \$1.3 million in annual tuition revenue, investing in an additional faculty line that serves three majors would make a great deal of sense.

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 2014-15 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), and Amber Lusvardi, MA, Eastern Illinois University.

Part-time faculty are Robert Sampson, Ph.D. University of Illinois (U.S., British, and Labor), Jennifer Giardina, ABD, University of New Orleans, Scott Reuter, JD, University of Illinois, and Michelle Sanders. 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.

Currently the department serves 21 History 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. There are 27 Political Science majors at present. 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.

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 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 2014 historiography course enrolled seven students. The seminar in the spring 2015 enrolled ten students. Dr. Monroe taught historiography, while Dr. Kovalcik taught the seminar because Dr. Mullgardt was on sabbatical. We have thereby fulfilled our previous goal of exposing students to different professors in the capstone courses. The department chair collected and evaluated seventeen 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) five students	25 points
Close to High (4 pts) four students	16 points

Moderate degree: (3 pts) six students 18 points
Insufficient degree: (2 or 1 pts) two students 4 points

TOTAL: 63 points/17 = 3.7 average

Political Science Assessment

The department chair adapted the History assessment rubric to political science and collected capstone papers from Professor Amber Lusvardi. Political Science students are required to research and write a senior capstone seminar paper similar to the History seminar paper, though often of greater length and breadth of research. The evaluation of those artifacts produced the following results.

High degree (5 pts) two students	10
Close to high (4 pts) one student	4
Moderate (3 pts) one student	3
Insufficient	
Total	17/4 4.25 average

Analysis of Assessment Results

Our effort to retain artifacts again yielded a robust sample size for History. 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 had a smaller sample, but the results are quite good and suggest that seniors are producing excellent capstone papers.

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. The sample for Political Science assessment should be broadened. I have been discussing other artifact possibilities with Professor Lusvardi for the next assessment.

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