

Millikin University
College of Arts and Sciences
Annual History Major Assessment
2011-12
by
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2012

Executive Summary

In the 2011-12 academic year, both Dan Monroe and Timothy Kovalcik were awarded tenure, solidifying our American and European history lines, providing continuity that will be helpful in attracting students. We continued to employ a talented group of adjuncts--Bill Keagle, Bob Sampson, and Ellie Perelman--each of whom offered courses strong in content and popular with students. The History Department again received student evaluation ratings that are above both the college and university averages. Our newest tenure-line faculty member, Dr. Brian Mullgardt, has aggressively embraced his role as coordinator of the Social Science Education major; Dr. Mullgardt revised the eight-semester plan for Social Science Education, wrote a letter touting our program to high school history teachers that will be distributed by marketing, and shepherded our program through a difficult meeting of the Illinois State Board of Education. 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. Professor Ellie Perelman is currently offering excellent nonwestern history courses strong on content and popular with students; she has a Ph.D. from perhaps the best Asian history program in the United States, the University of California-Berkeley. 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. The department has an active chapter of the History honor society, Phi Alpha Theta, and that student organization sponsored dinners in December and May for all History and Social Science Education majors, events that were heavily attended. History and Social Science Education students presented papers at the Conference on Illinois History in September 2011, and at the annual meeting of the Illinois State Historical Society in Peoria in April, making the Millikin History Department one of the few, if not the only, undergraduate program in the region to sponsor student presentations at major scholarly conferences. Thanks to our partnership with the Illinois State Historical Society, Millikin students acted as chairs of faculty and historian panels at the annual meeting, an extraordinary achievement and a recognition of the intellectual heft of senior students in our program. Two of our graduating seniors, Kelby Dolan and Kara Allison, credited their conference presentations with helping them achieve post-graduation goals: Kelby was accepted into the museum studies program at Indiana University-Indianapolis, while Kara accepted a job offer from the Cantigny and McCormick Museum in Wheaton, Illinois. The department also actively encourages and arranges internships with state agencies and area museums; in the summer of 2011, our students worked at the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency and the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield, Illinois, and the McCormick Museum in Wheaton, Illinois. Our internship program is one of the best in the region for undergraduate students. The department worked throughout the year with Sarah Shupenus and the Millikin marketing department on outreach programs to draw prospective

students, including videos of graduating students saluting the value of the Millikin History experience. Our recruiting class for the forthcoming academic year 2012-13 was ten students, the best in my memory.

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 2011-2012, the History Department again expanded the range of its courses. Dr. Mullgardt offered new courses on 20th century popular culture and the 1920s. He is developing a new course on World War Two that will be on the schedule in the coming academic year. Dr. Perelman taught new courses on Japanese and Chinese history as well as an immersion course on the cultural history of Zombies that managed to be strong on content while meeting the ongoing student Zombie-mania. Dr. Perelman is working on future courses on the Ancient World, helping us offer classes in a field helpful for Social Science Education majors taking standardized tests. Dr. Sampson developed a substantive course on baseball in American history. Far from resting on our laurels, History faculty have shared their intellectual interests and research with students in the form of exciting new classes, bringing them remarkably diverse course offerings.

Snapshot

In 2011-12 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), and Ellie Perelman, Ph.D. University of California-Berkeley (Asia, Ancient World). 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 30 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

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|---------|-------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Courses | Goal #1: Students | Goal #2: | Goal #3: | Goal #4: | Goal #5: |
|---------|-------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|

| | will be able to express in oral and written form their understanding of the major issues and intellectual theories within the discipline of history. | 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. | Students will demonstrate an historical world-view that examines causes and effects of particular events, ideas, and time periods. | Students will demonstrate their awareness of a global perspective and appreciation of comparative models, diverse cultural traditions, and universal patterns. | 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 2012 seminar on the American Civil War enrolled sixteen students. The department chair collected and evaluated sixteen 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: 7 students | 35 points |
| Moderate degree: 9 | 27 points |
| Insufficient degree: | |
| TOTAL: | 62 points |

Analysis of Assessment Results

The data suggests that students overall performed reasonably well on the research paper assignment. Still, the results indicate that history students need more experience working with primary sources before enrolling in capstone courses.

Improvement Plans

The department instituted a formal system of artifact collection last year whereby papers are retained from either the seminar or historiography courses for assessment purposes. The chair collected the relevant artifacts for the purpose of assessing the department's content courses.

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. We have had discussions regarding the creation of such a course, but have yet to form a consensus on what precise form it should take and when to offer it. Our conversation is continuing and will be resolved soon.

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