

## Institutional Effectiveness

2018-2019

**Program:** History BS/BA

**College and Department:** College of Arts & Sciences – Department of History

**Contact:** Jeff Roberts

**Mission:** The Department of History offers a wide array of courses to diverse student populations. The department provides General Education instruction to a large number of students in the state-required American history sequence, while Western and World Civilization sequences satisfy TBR humanities requirements. In addition, department faculty offer numerous specialized courses that attract majors and non-majors alike.

The department has developed and maintains a comprehensive and successful curriculum for history majors. The programs are designed to provide future historians with the tools and knowledge for successful graduate study in the discipline, and to prepare graduates for careers in education, law, public service or business. Majors are expected to think analytically, ascertain facts and make objective judgments, and write clearly, communicating the results of reasoned analysis.

The department shares with the University both its broader commitment to cross-cultural understanding and its special obligation to serve the Upper Cumberland region of Tennessee.

### **Student Learning Outcomes:**

SLO 1: Students will demonstrate the ability to research and write a scholarly paper of professional quality.

SLO 2: The department desires to instill in students an appreciation of the past, to include a desire to explore history beyond the classroom.

SLO 3: History majors will demonstrate a reasonable command of general factual knowledge.

A departmentally developed curriculum map can be found in Appendix 1 that shows the connections between courses and student learning outcomes.

### **Assessment Methods:**

*SLO 1: Ability to research and write a scholarly paper*

Historical Methods and Senior Seminar Courses - Students capstone projects, completed in History 4900, are evaluating using a faculty developed rubric. The rubric includes the following criteria:

- Formulate an original thesis and defend it in a sustained argument
- Make effective use of primary sources (if possible) - AND/OR - Demonstrate and ability to professionally evaluate and employ secondary sources.
- Make proper use of citation conventions, thereby avoiding plagiarism.

- Use standard written English effectively and appropriately.
- Present a well-organized paper.
- Place the research topic and/or literature survey in broader historical context.
- Demonstrate critical thinking, reasoned analysis, and/or problem solving.
- Follow any additional directions as assigned by the professor.

*SLO 2: Participation in Extracurricular activities*

Student Participation in Co-curricular Activities - Tracking spreadsheet for the number of students who attend each co-curricular activity.

*SLO 3: General factual knowledge*

ACAT - The ACAT is an exit exam for students majoring in history. The ACAT includes four content areas including: U.S. 1820 to 1890, U.S. Colonial to 1763, U.S. Military/Diplomatic, and U.S. 1763 to 1820. Exam is administered in the senior seminar course.

**Results:**

*SLO 1: Ability to research and write a scholarly paper*

Dr. Elizabeth Propes taught the fall, 2018 seminar. Dr. Allen Driggers taught the spring, 2019 seminar. Dr. Propes had six students, while Dr. Driggers had twelve. One student took both seminars. Only five out of eighteen students met all requirements of the rubric and thus received A grades. While each paper had enough merit for passing grades (there was one student who withdrew late from each course, without refund) that not everyone received the same grade is indicative that students were held accountable for failing to meet all the standards of the rubric. Those who received "C" grades typically lacked in more than one area. The department did review and confirm the standards during our 2018 peer review, choosing to eliminate the historiographic option (the second half of item 'a') in future classes following confirmation from our reviewer.

*SLO 2: Participation in Extracurricular activities*

We expect at least 50% of all history majors to participate in extracurricular activities related to the discipline. Activities may include membership in the History Club or Phi Alpha Theta honor society, presentation of research, participation in field trips, or attendance at special lectures, cultural events, and historical conferences.

We excelled again regarding student activities in 2018-2019. We certainly surpassed the goal of 50% participation. The majority of our faculty offered field trips. Dr. Susan Laningham took three students to present papers at the Phi Alpha Theta State Conference at Belmont University, and one of our majors, Hannah Cowan, won first prize. Dr. Jeff Roberts took our freshman class (History 1066) to the Alvin C. York Site on October 8 (the anniversary of his heroism), and four of his Historical Methods students there on Armistice Day. Both groups got to see reenactments (especially the latter, who saw machine guns and aircraft) along with the museum and memorials. A few of our seniors even participated in the reenactments. Dr. Mike Birdwell also led several tours (some involving students, some not) to the York

Site, and took his Public History class to several sites in Cookeville and the surrounding areas. Dr. Roberts partnered with Dr. Paula Hinton to drive seven majors to various sites in Alabama and Georgia (Horseshoe Bend, Little White House, Fort Benning, Tuskegee Institute) for Spring Break. The students even had the chance to meet former President Jimmy Carter and First Lady Roselyn Carter in Plains, Georgia. Dr. Krystal Akehinmi, in her very first year on campus, took students to Fisk University and other sites in Nashville. The department hosted its annual Winchester Lecture featuring Dr. Carole Bucy in the spring of 2019. She commemorated Tennessee's role in passing the 19th Amendment for a large crowd (estimate 400) in Derryberry Hall. Dr. Theda Perdue, a nationally-recognized expert on Native Americans, spoke to somewhat smaller crowd (~150) at the third annual Pauline Womack lecture the previous fall. Lastly, Dr. Allen Driggers has been working to revitalize our History Club with a variety of guest speakers, pizza parties (Halloween for example) and the like. Dr. Susan Laningham started a new organization, Clío's Blue Stockings, targeting female majors, which held three events last spring. All-in-all, at least 75% of our majors participated in extracurricular activities during 2018-2019, again, far surpassing this goal. We are increasingly concerned, however, that some students who appear to be attempting to complete most of their requirements online will miss such opportunities entirely.

*SLO 3: General factual knowledge*

History majors will achieve a score at or above the national average on the ACAT achievement tests.

ACAT

Area	Fall 2018 N = 6		Spring 2019 N = 11	
	Std Score	%'ile	Std Score	%'ile
U.S. 1820 to 1890	483	43	482	43
U.S. Colonial to 1763	460	34	517	57
U.S. Military/Diplomatic	457	33	490	46
U.S. 1763 to 1820	455	33	515	56
OVERALL PERFORMANCE	458	34	506	52

Six students took the fall 2018 ACAT. One scored in the 75th percentile, but all others were below average, including one who scored in the 8th percentile. The top four averaged 51, but the overall average was 40. Given that these were predominantly European History students, forced to take American History tests, such scores are not really disturbing. Furthermore, some students did well in their specialty areas. Two who studied military history, for example, made raw scores of 557 and 570 (500 is average) on that section (#3) of the test.

Spring's scores were better. The overall average, for eleven students, was 52, with six individuals above average. One student scored in the 98th percentile(!), and another in the 91st. On the other hand, one scored in the 5th percentile, and some failed to even enter their names correctly. We suspect senioritis or just flippancy, especially from the 5-er, who also wrote the best paper in the class(!). Perhaps most disturbing was a student who scored in the 13th percentile, yet came to us from a community college with a 4.0 GPA.

## **Modifications for Improvement**

### *SLO 1: Ability to research and write a scholarly paper*

The department reviewed and confirmed the rubric standards during our 2018 peer review. The faculty chose to eliminate the historiographic option (it was the second half of item 'a') in future classes following confirmation from our reviewer. All future seminar papers will require at least some use of primary sources – in keeping with best practices in our discipline.

### *SLO 2: Participation in Extracurricular activities*

Given our overall success in achieving this goal, our plans for the future are essentially “more of the same.” We are considering at least some online activities for online students.

### *SLO 3: General factual knowledge*

The problems of flippancy and “senioritis” have been with us for decades. That the ACAT test has no bearing on final grades (and cannot be so incorporated) leaves the faculty with little recourse save to try to encourage top performance with verbal appeals to do your best.

The broader problem of a standardized testing in a subject all but devoid of national standards, and within a curriculum designed to allow for maximum diversity, has also been discussed. We have considered possibly designing an in-house test, but have rejected that as it eliminates any national comparative data. Testing basic American history – which is required of all students – seems the best route by which to measure at least some degree of factual competence.

## **Appendices**

1. History BS\_BA Curriculum Map

**Appendix 1: History BS\_BA Curriculum Map**

Basic Course #	Short Title	Factual Acumen	Research & Writing	Additional Career Readiness	Race/Gender Diversity & Citizenship	Global Awareness
1066	University Life				X	
1310	World Science	X				X
2010	Early US	X			X	
2020	Modern US	X			X	
2210	Early Western	X				X
2220	Modern Wstrn	X				X
2310	Early World	X				X
2320	Modern Wrld	X				X
3100	Tennessee	X	X		X	
3360	US Military	X	X			X
3390	Civil Rights	X	X		X	
3410	Methods		X	X		
3420	Archives		X	X		
3430	Digital History		X	X		
3550	Ancient	X	X			X
3710	Spain	X	X			X
3720	Mexico	X	X		X	X
3900	Environment	X	X			X
4010	Colonial	X	X		X	
4020	Early Republic	X	X		X	
4030	US Civil War	X	X		X	
4040	Gilded Age	X	X		X	
4050	Early 20th C	X	X		X	
4060	Postwar US	X	X		X	
4090	Pop Culture	X	X		X	X
4100	Appalachia	X	X			
4200	Old South	X	X		X	
4210	New South	X	X		X	
4230	Economic	X	X			
4250	US West	X	X		X	
4290	Science Tech	X	X			
4330	Religion	X	X			X

4350	Gender	X	X		X	
4360	US Social	X	X		X	
4380	Black Women	X	X		X	X
4390	African-Amer	X	X		X	X
4400	Film History	X	X			X
4420	Public History	X	X	X		
4440	Native Amer.	X	X		X	
4470	Sports History	X	X		X	
4520	Medieval	X	X			X
4530	Renn/Reform	X	X			X
4540	Abs/Enlightm	X	X			X
4550	French Revo	X	X			X
4560	19th C Eur	X	X			X
4565	World War I	X	X			X
4570	World War II	X	X			X
4620	Russia/USSR	X	X			X
4630	Mod France	X	X			X
4640	Mod Germany	X	X			X
4650	Early England	X	X			X
4660	Mod England	X	X			X
4680	Holocaust	X	X			X
4690	Br Cmmwlth	X	X		X	X
4710	Africa	X	X		X	X
4730	Middle East	X	X			X
4740	Japan	X	X			X
4750	China	X	X			X
4760	Vietnam	X	X			X
4790	Latin America	X	X		X	X
4800	Legal History	X	X			
4810	Sci. Cntrovrsy	X	X			
4880	Hist Medicine	X	X			
4890	Hist Nursing	X	X			
4900	Topics	X	X			
4910	Directed Stu.	X	X			
4940	Internship	X		X		
4990	SeniorSeminar	X	X			