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TO: Writing Across the Curriculum Committee
Board of General Education
FROM: History Department Faculty
Frank J. Byrne, Chair
RE: The History Department's Revised Writing Plan (Revised October 2009)

I. Introduction: Writing Across the Curriculum and the History Major

Popular with the general public, works of the history are read by many for pleasure as well as instruction. Public interest in history reflects both curiosity about the past and the fundamental appeal that stories have as a vehicle for communicating values, information, and the immense variety of the human condition.

Learning to write, as well as read and understand history is therefore a process that entails, in part, mastering techniques of exposition that build upon the natural appeal of the discipline's subject matter. In addition, the History major must learn how to frame arguments, analyze evidence, and evaluate historical investigations by others.

Acquisition of these skills and dispositions are emphasized in both lower and upper division history classes, culminating in a capstone seminar in which the student attempts to follow the "best practices" of professional historians who seek to understand the patterns of the past and explain them to others. Whether cast in a narrative or analytical mold, the historical writing done by students should, ideally, tap into the general population's enthusiasm for history without compromising or abandoning the quest for solid evidence and arguments relevant to their inquiries.

II. Writing Goals for Undergraduate History Majors

Analyzing and Interpreting:

1. Learn to read critically and analytically various types of written sources - e.g., documents, chronicles, monographs, texts, newspapers, correspondence, fictional sources, etc.
2. Learn to distinguish between and utilize effectively primary and secondary sources.
3. Learn to distinguish between and employ basic types of writing in the discipline of History - i.e., descriptive/ analytical writing, objective/ subjective interpretations, persuasive/ argumentative expression, polemical writing, propaganda, narrative/ theoretical writing, etc.
4. Learn to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of various arguments and interpretations.

Communicating:

5. Use appropriate research methods to write substantive research papers.
6. Learn and use the various theoretical perspectives of the discipline.

7. Use writing effectively to demonstrate mastery of subject matter (in term papers, essay exams, research papers, reports, journals, reaction papers, etc.)
8. Use writing to communicate ideas and interpretations clearly to others.
9. Develop writing as an active learning process to promote critical thinking (e.g., writing circles, reaction papers, journals, writing portfolios). Help students approach critically and analytically established explanations and new interpretations.
10. Use writing to summarize and synthesize information from many different sources. Students need to learn the value of composing an historical argument after having completed extensive research. Students should use writing to make sense of what they have uncovered during research.
11. Learn how to document properly the sources used in research and writing.

III. Writing Program Objectives:

Since writing is a developmental process, various types of writing activities and 'writing to learn' strategies will be integral parts of the History curriculum from introductory to advanced courses, for a total of five writing courses including at least one capstone research seminar.

1. Lower Division Writing Courses - Lower division students will be required to enroll in an additional two approved writing courses which incorporate significant writing activities such as essay exams, term papers, reaction papers, journals, dialogue journals, short essays, book reviews, reports, presentations, etc. (e.g., see attached list of lower division writing courses). For designated writing courses in History, at least 25% of the student's evaluation will be based on written exams, papers, reports, or other writing activities.
2. Upper Division Writing Courses - Upper division writing courses will be required for advanced History majors, one of these courses must be HIS 302 which is required for the major. Advanced writing courses in history will generally involve some research component utilizing primary as well as secondary sources. A variety of writing activities may be employed similar to those listed for lower division courses, only, at a more advanced level (e.g., see attached list of upper division writing courses). For designated writing courses in History, at least 25% of the student's evaluation will be based on written exams, papers, reports, or other writing activities.
3. Upper Division Writing Seminar- The upper division writing seminar will incorporate a significant research component that will emphasize use of various primary and secondary source materials, critical interpretation of sources, developing a thesis, organizing information, taking notes, examining the secondary literature on the topic, outlining, proper annotation, developing a bibliography, presentation of a draft for critical comments, revision and re-writing, and other related tasks. Generally, these advanced seminars require a research paper totaling 20 pages or more. All of the existing advanced research seminars required for completion of the History major incorporate most of these writing activities and involve extensive reading and research. (e.g., see attached list of advanced Research/Writing Seminars).
4. Writing Courses from Other Academic Programs or Institutions - The History department will also allow majors to complete one or two writing courses (upper or lower division) outside of the discipline, under advisement. For internal and external transfer students, this judgment will be based on transcript evaluation.

The History faculty views this writing program as a process for the progressive development of the writing, research and critical thinking skills of History majors and other students who pursue writing experiences in these courses and seminars.

HISTORY DEPARTMENT WRITING PLAN

Student _____

Advisor _____

SUMMARY

The History major is required to take:

- 1) 2 lower-division writing courses
- 2) His 302 Historiography: Perspectives on Historians and Histories
- 3) 1 300 or 400-level writing course
- 4) Capstone seminar

For a total of five WRITING courses

- A student may take a maximum of two of the writing courses (other than 302 or the capstone seminar) at the lower- or upper-division level outside the history department with her/his advisor's approval.
- Lists of history courses approved for each category are provided in the text of the plan above. A student who transfers in at least 60 credits is exempted from the entire lower-division part of the writing plan in the major.

- A. Lower Division Writing Courses - The following courses are identified as lower division intensive writing courses

HIS 102 World History in the Twentieth Century
HIS 201 The American Experience
HIS 206 Africa to 1800
HIS 207 Africa since 1800
HIS 208 Modern Asia
HIS 209 Traditional Asia and Its Legacy
HIS 212 Women in History
HIS 215 Introduction to Latin American Civilizations
HIS 230 Western Heritage I
HIS 231 Western Heritage II
HIS 248 Women in American History 1607-1920

- B. Upper Division Writing Courses

- A. HIS 302 Historiography: Perspectives on Historians and Histories
- B. ONE 300-400 LEVEL COURSE FROM THE FOLLOWING LIST

HIS 300 European Intellectual History in the 19th Century
HIS 301 European Intellectual History in the 20th Century
HIS 307 World War I
HIS 310 Religion in African History
HIS 312 Early Middle Ages

HIS 313 High and Late Middle Ages
HIS 314 Ancient Greece
HIS 315 Ancient Rome
HIS 317 Renaissance Europe
HIS 318 Reformation Europe
HIS 322 Nazi German (Hitler's Germany 1914-1945)
HIS 323 Europe Between the World Wars, 1917-1939
HIS 324 Europe Since 1945
HIS 326 World War II
HIS 328 Women in Modern Europe
HIS 329 The Cold War
HIS 330 Russia to 1900
HIS 331 Twentieth Century Russia
HIS 334 Modern Britain
HIS 340 History of American Labor
HIS 341 America's Vietnam War
HIS 342 U.S. Diplomacy in the 20th Century
HIS 344 American Immigration and Ethnic History
HIS 345 The Early Republic: U.S. 1789-1848
HIS 346 History of Organized Crime
HIS 348 Women in Twentieth Century United States
HIS 350 Slavery in America to 1865
HIS 353 The Black Power Movement
HIS 354 The Indian in American History
HIS 356 Civil War and Reconstruction
HIS 366 The Age of Big Business
HIS 369 U.S. Since 1945
HIS 373 History of Mexico
HIS 383 Modern China
HIS 385 Modern Japan
HIS 387 History of Modern India
HIS 389 History of the Modern Middle East
HIS 393 Women and War in the 20th Century
HIS 395 Historic Preservation and Heritage Tourism
HIS 452 Colloquium Regional and Local U.S. History
HIS 490 History Honors Thesis
HIS 491 History Honors II
HIS 499 Independent Study

C. Capstone Seminar

HIS 412 Seminar in Women's History
HIS 416 Seminar in Medieval History
HIS 424 Seminar in Modern European History
HIS 450 Seminar in American History
HIS 482 Seminar in Third World History