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Spring 2015

### History Discipline Assessment Report 2014/2015

History Discipline

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#### Recommended Citation

History Discipline, "History Discipline Assessment Report 2014/2015" (2015). *Assessment of Student Learning Reports*. 174.

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## **History Discipline**

### **Assessment Report, 2015**

#### **Background:**

As part of our three-year plan, filed during Fall Semester 2014, we committed to assess Program Student Learning Outcome One during Academic Year 2014-15. Program Student Learning Outcome One for the History Discipline is "Students are introduced to the study of the human past across a diverse range of contexts."

#### **Proposed assessment project for 2014-15 (from three-year plan):**

"Over the course of academic year 2014-15, the discipline will work collectively to assess the range of courses offered (and proposed) for the period 2012-2016. We will examine syllabi for all courses to ascertain how well we are meeting our goal of temporal and geographical breadth within the limits of our disciplinary staffing and expertise. This assessment will inform our discipline's hiring plan and priorities beyond 2015. The data will be collected across the course of the academic year, with a report to the Division Chair completed by May 2015."

#### **Process:**

We have reviewed syllabi for all history courses taught at UMM between Fall Semester 2012 and Spring Semester 2015. Although we were unable to review syllabi for the courses scheduled (to date) for Academic Year 2015-2016, we were able to ascertain at least the same basic data drawn from the review of syllabi. Two to three courses remain to be added for Academic Year 2015-2016, due to changes in staffing, and are not included among the data we collected.

For each course, we determined: course number; term(s) offered; geographic focus; whether the course included pre-1750 content to meet our pre-modern distribution requirements; GER; whether the course contributes to another program (e.g., IC) or another major (e.g., GWSS, LAAS, Elementary or Secondary Education, Social Science); whether the course was (or is to be) taught by a contract faculty member, a pre-doctoral fellow, or a tenured or tenure-track faculty member; and whether the course is a requirement for the major and/or minor in history.

We assessed 129 individual course offerings taught by a total of 15 history faculty members. 53 offerings were taught/are scheduled to be taught by tenure-track or tenured faculty members, with the remaining 76 taught by contract faculty members (74) or pre-doctoral fellows (2). It should be noted that Kent Blansett and Ben Narvaez made the shift from contract faculty status to tenure-track faculty status during the period assessed.

In terms of course levels, we have offered (or are scheduled to offer) 6 distinct, non-IC, 1000-level courses; 5 distinct IC courses; 17 distinct, 2000-level courses; 26 distinct, 3000-level courses; and 1 4000-level course (our senior seminar, offered each semester, is our only regular 4000-level course).

Required courses for the major (Hist 1111, Hist 3181, and Hist 4501) and for the minor (Hist 1111) are offered at least once each semester (Hist 1111, Hist 4501) or once per year (Hist 3181). We have a

geographical breadth requirement for both majors and minors, and our course distribution each semester has included multiple geographic foci (Asian, Latin America, US, and European history have been represented every semester; most semesters have also included courses in American Indian history; and we have occasionally offered one course in Middle Eastern/Islamic history). Only once in the period assessed have we been able to offer a course in African history. We also require students to take at least one course with pre-1750 content; each semester, we have offered between 2 and 7 such courses.

Although not relevant to the assessment of our course offerings in view of our goals in 'coverage,' we think it pertinent to mention that our courses contribute to IC; Elementary and Secondary Education requirements; and the Social Science, GWSS, German Studies, Latin American Area Studies, American Indian Studies, and African American Studies majors and/or minors. Our faculty members also teach regularly in the Honors Program and offer study abroad courses. Over the period assessed, history faculty have also offered multiple courses during summer session.

### **Outcome:**

Our assessment reveals that we enable students to meet the geographical and temporal distribution requirements of the major quite easily; each semester includes multiple options across the 1000-level through 3000-level spectrum in 3-4 distinct geographical areas and multiple options to meet the temporal distribution requirements. We are assured that our program meets the program student learning outcome expressed as "Students are introduced to the study of the human past across a diverse range of contexts" and are confident that students go beyond the level of introduction in many, if not most, cases.

The geographical coverage we have in terms of faculty expertise, though, is limited: we still 'cover' the global South only through courses in Latin American history and some limited course content in African and South Asian history. Although we are excited to offer African history for the first time in nearly two decades, through the hire of pre-doctoral fellow Elliot James, it is lamentable that we are not able to provide significant coverage on a regular basis and cannot contribute consistently to UMM students' knowledge about these parts of the world.

Our assessment plan was intended to 'inform our hiring plan and priorities' for the future and does so primarily in the form of reinforcing the priorities we have discussed in terms of tenure-track search requests. The significance of Asian history to our curriculum is clear; courses offered in this area fill quickly, but we have been offering the same, introductory level courses repeatedly (often each semester) for the last several years and a tenure-track hire with an active research agenda and up-to-date knowledge in the field will help to enrich our offerings. Although we recognize that a tenure-line hire in African history is unlikely, we hope (despite their late addition to the schedule) that the courses offered in 2015-16 will illustrate that a demand exists for African history at UMM and may bolster a future request.

**Submitted by Jennifer Deane, Roland Guyotte, and Marynel Ryan Van Zee**