**History Courses**

All history courses must address the four student learning objectives (PSLOs) identified by the department as central to our program:

• Identify sources

• Analyze sources

• Construct arguments about the past

• Explain change over time

The descriptions below indicate minimum benchmarks for each of these objectives at the four course levels in the department.

**100-level: Historical Perspectives**

This is the required, 3-credit hour core curriculum course for all university undergraduates. These are “topics” courses, with faculty free to determine the focus and scope of their individual classes.

The Historical Perspectives course differs from a topics course at the 300-level by serving as an introduction to the study of history. The difference is therefore less about subject matter than the skill level at which students are expected to work. In this regard, some topics may lend themselves more to a 300-level course than a 100-level course, and faculty are encouraged to think carefully about selecting topics that will be too difficult for someone new to the discipline. For instance, if the best way to address a topic is through challenging debates in secondary scholarship, then that topic is probably more suited to a 300-level course.

PSLO 100-level benchmarks

Identify sources • Students are able to differentiate between primary and

secondary sources.

Analyze sources • Students are able to compare two primary sources.

• Students are able to place a primary source within its

historical context.

• Students are able to articulate the argument in a secondary

source (not a textbook).

Construct arguments • Students are able to discuss cogently questions and

about the past arguments about the past.

• Students are able to use appropriate evidence to build a

logical argument.

Explain change over time • Students are able to explain how historians explain

change over time.

• Students are able to explain the intersection of individuals,

society, and environment in creating change over time.

**200-level: Survey courses**

These are 2-semester surveys of major areas (Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, United States, World) intended to provide broad geographical and chronological coverage for History and Education/Social Studies majors and minors. In addition to challenging students to think about history on a large scale, the courses reinforce and develop skills introduced at the 100-level.

PSLO 200-level benchmarks

Identify sources • Students are able to differentiate among types of

secondary sources (textbooks, monographs, articles).

Analyze sources • Students are able to articulate the argument in a

secondary source (not a textbook).

• Students are able to place a primary source within its

historical context.

Construct arguments • Students are able to discuss cogently questions and

about the past arguments about the past.

• Students are able to use appropriate evidence to build a

logical argument.

Explain change over time • Students are able to explain how historians explain

change over time.

• Students are able to identify different categories of change

(social, political, economic, technological, etc.) and their

complex intersection.

**300-level: Elective topics courses**

These are topics course that have a significant historiographical component. Historiographical analysis is often a challenging skill for undergraduates, so its repeated emphasis in the 300-level electives is important. Some topics may be more suited to teaching at the 100-level—if, for instance, there are not any engaging and/or accessible scholarly debates for students to analyze.

PSLO 300-level benchmarks

Identify sources • Students are able to use databases for locating scholarly

sources.

Analyze sources • Students are able to analyze and compare the arguments

presented in scholarly sources.

• Students are able to articulate the place of a historical

argument within a broader historiographical context.

Construct arguments • Students are able to discuss cogently questions and

about the past arguments about the past.

• Students are able to construct an argument that explains

similarities and differences between at least two different

scholarly works.

Explain change over time • Students are able to identify different categories of change

(social, political, economic, technological, etc.) and their

\ complex intersection.

**400-level: Research Seminars**

The 400-level seminar requires juniors and seniors to execute an independent research project. Faculty often structure the seminar around shared readings and assignments, which provide a common framework for students to pursue individual research interests.

PSLO 400-level benchmarks

Identify sources • Students locate databases or other resources independently.

• Students identify sources that are applicable to the question

being asked.

Analyze sources • Students evaluate sources and select the one that are most

appropriate to the question at hand.

• Students analyze the relationship between the source and its

historical context.

Construct arguments • Students construct an historical argument based on their

about the past own research.

Explain change over time • Students use their own research to explain change over time.