

Annual Report for the Department of History

2003-2004

Department Mission/Vision Statement

History is one of the humanities and a social science. The values and skills that the discipline offers make it an integral part of a complete liberal arts education for better citizens in our complex, culturally diverse, increasingly global society. The fundamental mission of the Department is to offer all lower division students the opportunity to learn historical facts, interpretations and methodologies. The Department emphasizes quality instruction within the core curriculum, including meeting a legislative mandate that all degree-holders in state-supported institutions of higher education demonstrate familiarity with state and national history. The Department's mission also includes the preparation of students for a bachelor's degree with a major in history. The Department recognizes that many of its upper division students are preparing for careers in teaching at pre-collegiate levels, and that this requires courses with global perspective. History seeks to provide caring and accurate advisement to its students. The Department believes that, after completing requirements for a bachelor's degree in History, a major should have learned to think analytically; read carefully; judge the difference between historical myth and reality; and be receptive to new historical and intellectual movements. Those who earn a Master's degree should have learned all of the above, and in addition, acquired individual research skills. Graduate students are expected to display more sophisticated historical judgment than undergraduate majors. All members of the History faculty are expected to have, or to actively be seeking, a terminal degree, to participate in professional organizations, and to remain abreast of literature appropriate to specializations.

History faculty members are expected additionally to regularly be engaged in research activities, both to update lecture and class material and to contribute new knowledge.

2: Departmental Statement of Goals, Process to Assess These Goals, and Assessment Results

The History Department teaches every student enrolled in this university in its core survey courses, as well as undergraduate History majors, students seeking certification in the social sciences, and undergraduate History minors, undergraduates in American Studies, Latin American Studies, and Women's Studies programs, and graduate students pursuing an MA degree in History. Faced with such diversity, the Department has numerous goals. First, it seeks to hire, tenure and promote historians who are competent, industrious and dedicated scholars and teachers. Because it believes that a link exists between competency in the classroom and on-going scholarship, History demands that its faculty be engaged actively in research and publication. In addition, by emphasizing fact and interpretation in all its classes, History's faculty seeks to assure that its students will understand the past, be capable of making judgments in their own right, and gain human self-knowledge that will help prepare them to be teachers, scholars, or simply adequately prepared to be citizens with a quintessential liberal arts background.

Assessment of goals: Department members teaching in the core meet as a team annually to determine the success of meeting the general goals and learning outcomes in their respective survey classes and to make changes in materials, pedagogy, and so on, to meet the needs of the faculty and the students. The Department assesses its fulfillment of these goals for majors by requiring its faculty to use rigorous testing procedures, to emphasize written assignments for the students in each course (where practical), and to require that its majors successfully complete both a Historical Methodology course and a Senior Seminar (a Writing Across the Curriculum course). The Senior Seminar requires a major research and writing component. Both also test the acquisition of factual knowledge and interpretation through the administration of a nationally normed standardized test. The model upon which the History Department draws is the American Historical Association report on “Liberal Learning and the History Major” (*Perspectives*, 1990), supplemented by literature from the University System of Georgia and the insights of the faculty within this Department. The faculty members of the Department are assessed annually through a self-report and evaluation by the Department Chair. The Department Chair and/or peers visit the classrooms of untenured members of the department, and others identified as needing further evaluation, followed by a discussion of the evaluation with the faculty person(s) involved.

3: Departmental Statement of Curriculum Learning Outcomes, Processes to Assess These Outcomes, and Assessment Results for each Degree Program

Undergraduate Major: B.A. Degree

Students completing the Bachelor of Arts Degree in History will:

- a. demonstrate a general knowledge of United States and World History. They will be able to classify and describe varieties of historical knowledge and demonstrate the relationship of geography to history;
- b. demonstrate an understanding of the major schools of historical thought (historiography) and a general understanding of historical causation;
- c. apply historical research methods to produce independent works through the use of primary and secondary sources and will be able to evaluate the results;
- d. demonstrate the ability to think critically about and to analyze selected historical materials;
- e. demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively both in written and oral form.

Graduate Program: Master’s Degree:

Students completing the Master of Arts Degree in History will:

- a. demonstrate the ability to undertake advanced historical research;
- b. show basic familiarity with historical literature in major and minor fields of study;
- c. demonstrate an understanding of historiography and its permutations over time;
- d. be able to identify and describe career options in the field of history;
- e. demonstrate knowledge of the theory and ethics of public history [for Public History concentration];
- f. demonstrate knowledge of the standards and practices for at least two fields in public history [for Public History concentration];
- g. apply practical skills in at least two fields of public history [for Public History concentration].

Assessment Plan and Results:

1) Undergraduate major:

Plan:

Each student graduating with a major in History will be able to demonstrate the abilities outlined in the Learning Outcomes through the preparation of an essay and delivery of an oral presentation in the Senior Seminar. A. Students will demonstrate general knowledge of United States and World History through the successful completion of a variety of courses in the field. B. Students will complete successfully a sophomore-level course in Historical Methodology where they will demonstrate their mastery of the material through an initial essay evaluated by at least two different members of the department, covering their knowledge of US and World History and their understanding of material covered in any other history courses already completed. This is the baseline from which their work will be evaluated in the Senior capstone seminar. C. Each History major will submit an analytical essay in the seminar that will display knowledge of both history and of historiography in exploring a theme proposed by the Seminar's coordinator. Students are expected to draw upon any appropriate member of the Department in preparing the essay. Two or more department members most proficient in the specific area of inquiry will evaluate the essay. D. Each History major will give an oral presentation in the capstone Senior Seminar, to be evaluated by at least two members of the Department. E. Graduating Seniors will complete a questionnaire, evaluating the History major, with the opportunity to make suggestions for future improvements in the program. F. The Department will conduct a survey of graduates through its newsletter every third year. In addition, it will seek to target those students who graduated five years before through individual letters. These former students are asked to evaluate their education at West Georgia, with specific reference to the History major, and to suggest ways in which the program might be improved to enhance their careers. The Methodology course and the Senior Seminar are departmental courses, taught on a rotating basis, which draw on the personnel of the entire Department. All assessment activities involve two or more faculty members from the Department. The examination given at the outset of the Methodology course, a copy of the analytical essay, a report on the oral presentation (and ultimately information from the alumni) are deposited by the History faculty with the Department Chair. The Chair (or designee) organizes the material and presents the results at a Department meeting in the fall semester. The results form the basis of any action the Department will take in revising its assessment plans, or in making programmatic improvements.

Results: In the Fall of 2003, 15 students took the Assessment Exam. In the Spring of 2004, 12 students took the Assessment Exam. Overall, Methodology students found our U.S. and World history surveys to be useful in preparing them for upper-division course work. For the most part, the courses' information and analysis provided students with the foundation for succeeding in upper-division courses. In general, the students felt that survey courses that relied on multiple choice exams to be inferior to those courses where essay exams were required.

Students' answers to methodological and philosophical questions about history reflected the strength of our program. Generally, students had a strong sense of how to explain changing interpretations of historical events and how to evaluate primary sources. Students also demonstrated appropriate levels of understanding about how to develop a suitable research project

Senior Seminar students take the ACAT exam at the end of each semester. In the Fall of 2003, 7 students took the test. Test results from the Fall 2003 examination revealed several trends. First, students tended to perform considerably better on the US portion of the exam than on the European section. This is consistent with the fact that they tend to mostly take U.S. history courses as under graduates. In general students performed fairly well on the exam, though two students had scores below the 50 percentile.

Senior Seminar students must write a fifteen-page research paper based on the courses theme. Overall, these research papers achieved levels of scholarship and writing commensurate with students in their final year of college. A few students, however, had difficulty in completing the paper because their reading, writing and study skills were not sufficiently advanced.

As a result of continuing assessment of the writing in the Methodology course and the Senior Seminar, the department has decided to increase the number of Writing Across the Curriculum courses in the department. Additional faculty have undergone training in Writing Across the Curriculum and at least two to three courses each semester in the department will be listed as Writing Across the Curriculum. As of 2003-2004, a total of seven classes were offered with the "W" designation as compared with four for the previous year.

Based on surveys of students in mid-career and in their last semester, the department is doing a solid job of training our students in the craft of history, as well as in reading, writing and critical thinking skills. There is room for improvement. First, we need to continue to strive to eliminate multiple choice exams in survey courses, while at the same time striving to provide courses that serve both the general student body and future history majors. As long as a shortage of faculty means that we will continue to offer large sections of the survey courses, eliminating multiple-choice examinations will prove difficult. Second, faculty must continue to encourage students to write multiple drafts of essays and research papers. The instructor in the Methodology and Senior Seminar course will change the structure of the course to require this, and other faculty will be encouraged to do the same in their courses.

2) Graduate Program:

Plan:

The M.A. in History at West Georgia has as its primary purpose the development of a more sophisticated understanding of the discipline of History for the post-baccalaureate student accepted into our program. The outcome such students should achieve in the 45-hour thesis, or 60-hour non-thesis, program include those listed above.

The assessment plan to assure each student meets these outcomes includes: successfully completing a Historiography course in which the student will write a research paper. In addition, students will complete successfully the required course hours for their track. Students opting for the non-thesis track are evaluated by means of an oral and/or written examination presided over by at least three members of the department. Students taking the M.A. thesis option are evaluated by successful completion and oral defense of their thesis as well as an oral examination over course material, again presided over by at least three faculty members in the Department. Graduating M.A. candidates also complete a questionnaire indicating their degree of satisfaction with the program and suggesting areas of improvement.

Results: 1) As a result of discussions in the department meeting, the Graduate Studies Committee will look at ways to improve the writing of graduate students in the M.A. programs. Last year the Graduate Studies Committee met and proposed that a more rigorous schedule be followed by graduate students and faculty to ensure that all members of the thesis committee

have a chance to review the prospectus and receive a draft copy of the thesis in time to make suggestions for revisions prior to the defense.

4: Statement of Departmental Condition - please indicate the specific strengths and weaknesses of your department.

The 2003-2004 academic year was a productive one for the department in many areas. We have hired three new faculty members, in African-American, Mediterranean and Classical World and Colonial American history. They will be joining the faculty in the fall of 2004. Our Public History program continues to expand and the Museum Certificate Program has expanded as well. The Center for Public History received several grants this year, including one from the Georgia Humanities Council, the Georgia Folklife Program and the Allen Foundation. Last year's grant to produce the Music CD, "Everyone's Tuned to the Radio," still is paying off in community concerts and public school programs and it received a Certificate of Commendation from the American Association for State and Local History. For further information on the Center's activities, see the department web site. Our relationship with the Atlanta History Center continues to enhance both our program and theirs. Numbers of both graduate and undergraduate students are up again this year over last year as are M.A. graduates. As will be seen below, the faculty members have been productive in scholarly and other activities this year. Our faculty produced six books or monographs this year, thirty-one peer-reviewed or other articles, and they gave over sixty paper or other public presentations. The Department also received a grant from the Board of Regent's to "Infuse World History into the New Social Sciences Curriculum." In the summer of 2005, seven faculty members will conduct workshops for area teachers as a result of this grant. The History Department hosted the Annual Phi Alpha Theta regional conference this spring and several of our faculty members served as moderators and judges for the conference. In addition, several of our graduate students presented papers at the conference. Other graduate students in Public History presented results of their research at regional or national conferences. The major problem the Department has at this time is a backlog of students needing introductory history courses to fulfill requirements in the Core curriculum. We do not have sufficient faculty to meet these demands.

Departmental Achievements:

5: Percent of Students passing licensing, certification, or other accreditation examinations related to their chosen field

N/A

6: Proportion of graduating students going on to graduate or professional schools

This is impossible to predict with accuracy. Of the seventeen students graduating, six indicated that they were going to begin graduate school the following semester. 35.3%

7: Types of Licensure N/A

8: How does the department prepare students for Licensure? N/A

9: Other notable achievements N/A

Student Achievements:

10: Total Published Research Papers 0

11: Total Presentations 7

Seven graduate students presented papers at various conferences this year. Two former graduate students pursuing Ph.D.s at Georgia State also presented at a conference the department hosted. Six other graduate students attended conferences. Activities of our Public History graduate students may be found on our web page.

12: Total Internships 14

13: Total Co-Ops N/A

14: Total Scholarships 4

15: Total Fellowships 18

16: Total Recipients of Notable Awards 10

17: Other notable achievements

Several students received awards at Honors Day. These included: Annie Derthick--Herndon Prize; Andrea Washington--Bryson Prize; Kimberly Peck, Jackson undergraduate paper prize; David Holmes—Hanser Graduate Paper Prize; Sam McRae—Parker Georgia History Paper Prize; Michael Harris--Goodwin Memorial Scholarship; Anna Wade--Whately Scholarship; Angie Jordan--Daughters of the American Revolution Scholarship; Erin Brasfield--Kennedy Graduate Award; and Teresa Beyer—Fitz-Simmons Public History Award. Three undergraduate students were involved in research projects (on Banning Mill, and the Southern Baking Project). Both graduate and undergraduate students (total of fifteen) in Dr. Bailey's Introduction to Public History class researched and produced a brochure about African-Americans at West Georgia.

Faculty/Staff Productivity:

Teaching:

18: Total New Course Developments	11
19: Total Faculty Teaching Honors Courses	4
20: Percent of Faculty involved in Academic Advisement	50

Research/Productivity:

21: Total Books and Monographs	6
22: Total Book Chapters	6
23: Total Peer Review Articles	4
24: Total Other Shorter Works	21
25: Total Paper Presentations	25
26: Total Other Presentations	30
27: Total In-House Publications	1
28: Total Juried Exhibits/Performances	N/A
29: Total Other Exhibits/Performances	12
30: Total Positions Held in Journal Editing/Review	1
31: Total Faculty involved in Notable Continuing Education Efforts	7

Public Service:

32: Total participants in Honors Organizations	16
33: Total offices held in Professional Organizations	6
34: Total Advisors of Student Organizations	8
35: Total Participants in Cooperative Consulting Efforts	2
36: Total System-Wide/UWG Committee appointments	30
37: Total participants in Public Service activities	16
38: Other notable achievements by Faculty	

Dr. John Ferling's book, *A Leap in the Dark: The Struggle to Create the American Republic* was selected as a History Book-of-the-Month Main selection. Five other faculty members published books this year: Dr. Michael deNie, *The Eternal Paddy: Irish Identity and the British Press, 1798-1882* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2004); Dr. Ronald Love, *SaskTel: The Biography of a Crown Corporation and the Development of Telecommunications in Saskatchewan* (Regina: SaskTel and the Canadian Plains Research Center, 2003) and *Dreaming Big: A History of SaskTel* (Regina: SaskTel and the Canadian Plains Research Center, 2003); Dr. Aran MacKinnon, *The Making of South Africa. Culture and Politics* (Prentice Hall, 2004); Dr. Elaine MacKinnon, ed. and trans. V.A. Kolov, *Mass Uprisings Under Khrushchev and Brezhnev* (M.A. Sharpe, summer 2002). Dr. Ron Love is working with Dr. Nichols to establish a Canadian Studies Program; Dr. Aran MacKinnon developed a grant for educating area teachers about the new Social Studies curriculum; Dr. Mel Steely hosted the "Why We Fight," series on UTV and continued to expand the documented interviews for the Georgia Political Heritage Project; Dr. Rebecca Bailey is working with students to collect oral histories from veterans in the region; Dr. Timothy Schroer is working on an oral history project to collect Holocaust survivor stories; and Dr. Jonathan Goldstein participated in a summer 2003 NEH workshop and will be one of twenty scholars in the country attending a Brandeis University program on Israel Studies. At least seven of our faculty are serving as M.A. thesis or Ph.D. dissertation directors or committee members and several are directing undergraduate student research projects. All are active in Honor and professional societies and all participate in community activities.

Grants/Awards:

39: Total Proposals Submitted	5
40: Total Proposals Funded	5
41: Total Amount Funded	\$82,500
42: Total Gifts Generated by Department	\$8719
43: Total Contracts Awarded	N/A
44: Total Fellowships Awarded	3

45: New Degree Programs or Deletions

While not a new degree program, the department has developed a new concentration in History for students seeking Broad Field Certification in Social Studies. Details may be found on the department web site.

46: New Departments or Other New Units; Also Any Restructuring of These

N/A

47: Accreditation or Similar Distinction or Renewal N/A

48: Other Awards, Distinctions, and Achievements N/A

49: Additional Comments Concerning Your Department N/A

50: Give an example of how your department used the assessment of goals and outcomes to change/improve a process.

Last year the Graduate Studies Committee met and proposed that a more rigorous schedule be followed by graduate students and faculty to ensure that all members of the thesis committee have a chance to review the prospectus and receive a draft copy of the thesis in time to make suggestions for revisions prior to the defense. The Department adopted this policy in May.