

# **HISTORY PROGRAM**

## **ANNUAL ASSESSMENT REPORT 2010-11**

### **DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND POLITICAL SCIENCE, PLNU**

#### **DEPARTMENTAL MISSION STATEMENT:**

The Department of History and Political Science seeks to emphasize rigorous analysis of political structures, historical changes and continuities, and human relationships; to train students in the craft of communicating their ideas orally and in writing with precision and formal organization; and to equip students for immediate entry into either graduate or law school or a chosen career [from Catalog].

#### **PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

The History Program at PLNU consists of three areas: (1) the History major, (2) the History minor, and (3) the Social Science major. The Social Science major is designed to achieve the same program learning outcomes as the History major. It differs from the History major in that it is specifically designed for students pursuing a career in secondary-school teaching. The program learning outcomes [created May 2011] for all three areas are the following:

1. Students will conduct historical research, including analyzing primary and secondary sources, using appropriate citation methods, and construct historical arguments.
2. Students will identify and analyze change over time in various regions of the world.
3. Students will critically evaluate systems around the world in their historical context.

#### **CURRICULUM MAP:**

The current version [May 2011] of this map is attached (page 2). It is being modified as we gain a clearer understanding of where and why to put a "D", an "M", or leave blank.

#### **MULTI-YEAR ASSESSMENT PLAN:**

A multi-year assessment plan has not yet been created.

**Curriculum Map – History Major (as of May 2011)**

Point Loma Nazarene University		LO 1	LO 2	LO 3
HISTORY MAJOR		Students will conduct historical research, including analyzing primary and secondary sources, using appropriate citation methods, and constructing historical arguments.	Students will identify and analyze change over time in various regions of the world.	Students will critically evaluate systems around the world in their historical context.
Course	Course Title			
<b>LOWER-DIVISION REQUIREMENTS</b>				
HIS270	Research Methods	I		
<b>UPPER-DIVISION REQUIREMENTS</b>				
<i>Non-Western electives (select 8 units from the following):</i>				
HIS340	Russia to 1900	D	D	D
HIS342	Twentieth-Century Russia and the Soviet Union	D	D	D
HIS350	Islamic Civilization	D	D	D
HIS355	Modern Middle East	D	D	D
HIS356	Early East Asia	D	D	D
HIS360	Modern South Asia	D	D	D
HIS365	Modern Japan and Korea	D	D	D
HIS368	Modern China Through Film	D	D	D
HIS369	China in Revolution	D	D	D
<i>European electives (select 8 units from the following):</i>				
HIS308	Early Modern Europe	D	D	D
HIS311	European Intellectual History	M	D	M
HIS413	Nineteenth-Century Europe	D	D	D
HIS414	Twentieth-Century Europe	D	D	D
HIS415	Europe and the World	D	D	M
<i>American electives (select 8 units from the following):</i>				
HIS316	Colonial and Revolutionary America	M	D	D
HIS320	United States History, 1815-1914	M	D	D
HIS370	California History	D	D	D
HIS380	America in the 1960's	D	D	D
HIS425	United States Since 1914	D	M	D
HIS435	Asian-American History: 1800 to Present	D	D	D
HIS436	America in East Asia: 1800 to Present	D	D	D
HIS480	Seminar in San Diego History	M	D	D
<b>16 additional upper-division History units</b>				
<i>Choose from any of the courses listed above, below, or approved from a Study Abroad program advisor .</i>				
HIS372	Two Years Before the Mast and the History of Coastal California		D	
HIS375	African Cultures and Histories		D	D
HIS460	Internship in History	D	D	D
HIS473	Themes in History		D	D
HIS475	Topics in Women's History	D	D	M
HIS484	Ancient and Medieval Christianity	D	D	D
HIS486	Modern Christianity		D	D
HIS487	Ancient Historians	D	D	D

## 2010-11 ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

### METHODS OF ASSESSMENT AND CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS

The assessment project for the History program in 2010-11 was to create program learning outcomes, construct a curriculum map based on these outcomes, and to analyze from a big-picture perspective how well the current curriculum addresses the desired outcomes.

The creation of the outcomes and map was accomplished during a May 2011 meeting of History faculty. Staff members from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness were present at this meeting to provide guidance and answer questions. Program learning outcomes used by History departments at other institutions and suggested by the American Historical Association were used as guides to constructing appropriate outcomes. The Faculty present agreed on three outcomes (see page 1), with the understanding that they may include additional outcomes in the future.

A curriculum map was then created using these program learning outcomes. There was some confusion about how to fill in the boxes. Each of the program learning outcomes is present in some form in each of the courses in the curriculum, so it was difficult to draw a clear distinction between when a “D” (to be developed) or an “M” (mastery) was most appropriate.

### SUMMARY OF DATA COLLECTED

The analysis of the curriculum map revealed several potential problems in the current curriculum.

1. A lack of introductory courses. Aside from the two World Civilizations courses, there is only one lower-division (introductory) course in the major: Research Methods. This course is designed to introduce PLO #1. It touches on introducing PLO #2 and PLO #3, but these outcomes are not at the core of the course. Thus, majors typically are introduced to PLO #2 and PLO #3 in the first upper-division course they take, whatever that may be.
2. A lack of clear mastery courses. No course is strictly considered a “capstone” course where the student is expected to have mastered an outcome after progressing through a series of courses. In reality, the last History course a student takes (typically in his or her senior year) is considered the one where “mastery” is expected to be demonstrated. The obvious downsides of this are that (a) this makes assessment difficult and inconsistent and (b) because every course is potentially a “mastery” course, no single course has the responsibility to be *the* mastery course.
3. A lack of alignment between Faculty and curriculum. The History major is essentially divided into three areas: non-Western, European, and American. Each student must take 8 units (2 courses) from each of these areas (as well as 16 elective units). Currently, the Department has two faculty teaching non-Western and two teaching American, but only one teaching European. In addition, due to changes in the International Studies curriculum a few years back, there is an additional group of students required to take HIS415 [Europe and the World]. Together, this has placed a great deal of pressure on the European part of the History curriculum.

## USE OF RESULTS

The Department plans on discussing the results and generating ideas about how to address the potential problems in its first fall department meeting. However, there have been some informal discussions about how to possibly address the problems listed above. It should be noted that what follows are not steps the Department *will* take since it has not yet fully discussed them.

Potential remedies that have been informally discussed:

1. Create a new introductory course for freshmen and transfer History and Social Science majors. There appears to be adequate room within the requirements of the majors to add this course, with some modifications to the current curriculum. This could accomplish two goals:
  - a. It would provide a course that could introduce PLO #2 and PLO #3 in such a way that they do not get lost amidst the methodology of PLO #1 (in Research Methods).
  - b. It would enable the Department to stay connected to new History and Social Science majors. History majors, in particular, can have very little contact with the Department in their first year. Research Methods is ideally a sophomore-level course. Freshmen History majors are advised to take the two World Civilizations courses, but many entering History majors have taken the AP exams in history and are thus exempt from one or both of these courses. A freshman-level introductory course would not only introduce students to key concepts in History, but also to the History faculty, the Department, and their cohort.
2. Introduce a capstone course for senior History and Social Science majors. This would help, in part, to address the lack of mastery courses mentioned above. It would provide a course in which mastery of one or all of the outcomes is expected and could be more easily assessed.
3. Require all History and Social Science majors to present original research at the annual Clara Colt Student Conference in the spring semester of the student's junior or senior year. It is unclear how to "require" this since it wouldn't technically be connected to a course, but that's a different conversation. These presentations would enable the students to demonstrate (and the faculty to assess) mastery of PLO #1, both orally and in writing.
4. Align History faculty with the curriculum structure. Obviously, this could mean adjusting the faculty, the curriculum, or both. The ideal situation for the Department might be to hire another European History faculty position. Realistically, this is probably a non-starter at the institutional level. Using adjuncts in European History to achieve better alignment is also unlikely due to a lack of persons with the expertise to teach upper-division European History and who would be willing to do so part-time. Given these personnel restrictions, it may be necessary to adjust the requirements of the curriculum to align better with the current faculty positions. For example, the European requirement may be reduced to 4 units or the non-Western and European subdivisions might be combined and students would be required to take 12 units from this broader menu. A more thorough curriculum restructuring may be called for as well.
5. Leave things as they are for a while longer. The problems listed above may not be as potentially problematic as described above and over-reacting to the map may make things worse.