

2003-2004 Executive Summary
Five-Year Reviews of UM-St. Louis Departments and Centers

Department : History

College: Arts and Sciences

Departmental and Program Mission: At the undergraduate level, the Department of History offers B.A. and B.S. (Education) degrees. At the graduate level, the Department offers the M.A. and the M.A. with an emphasis area in Museum Studies.

Strengths and Distinguishing Characteristics of the Programs: The strength of the undergraduate degree program rests primarily on the extraordinary qualifications of the faculty. The Department of History staffs its undergraduate courses with teacher/scholars who have earned PhDs in their teaching fields from the leading universities of the United States. The faculty maintains an impressive rate of scholarly publication with the result that the faculty is knowledgeable about the latest scholarship in their fields and they are active participants in the creation of that scholarship.

At the introductory and intermediate levels (1000 through 2000 level courses), students are offered an array of survey courses in United States, European, East Asian, African, African Diaspora, Latin American and Mexican history. In these courses, students are introduced to the problems and interpretations of these broad fields of history. They are also introduced to the campus' course management system, My Gateway, and to the fundamental electronic search systems maintained by the library – e.g. Merlin, Mobius, America: History and Life, and Historical Abstracts.

At the advanced level (3000 level courses) students are introduced to the secondary literature and historiography of more specific eras and fields – e.g. U.S. urban History, Europe in the Early Middle Ages, and West Africa Since 1800. In each upper division course students write a formal research paper in which they master basic research skills in secondary and primary sources, as well as the basic forms of scholarly citation employed in historical writing (i.e. the Chicago style for footnotes and bibliography).

The capstone experience for undergraduates in History is the five credit Senior Seminar. In this Seminar students are expected to build on the skills acquired at the upper division level and write a thesis that is an original piece of historical research. In the Senior Seminar, History students become historians in their own right.

The B.A. and B.S. (Education) students all follow this progression from the introductory survey through Senior Seminar. They are all expected to acquire the same sets of skills. The B.S. (Education) students also follow a course of study that leads to state teaching certification in Secondary Education Social Studies. At the upper division level, B.S. (Education) students also acquire classroom skills specific to their teaching field. In a series of courses cross-listed in History and Secondary Education – Curriculum and Methods of Teaching Secondary School History and Social Studies, United States

History for the Secondary Classroom, World History for the Secondary Classroom and the Social Studies Teaching Intern Seminar – the Department prepares B.S. (Education) students to become leaders among the region’s secondary school educators.

The exceptional quality of the History faculty also distinguishes the graduate programs in History. The Department offers two options in the regular M.A. program. The thesis option requires students to write a formal thesis and to demonstrate competence in a modern foreign language or in quantitative methods. This option is designed primarily (although not exclusively) for students who wish to pursue a Ph.D. The non-thesis option is designed primarily (although not exclusively) for students who are pursuing the M.A. degree as part of their career advancement as secondary school educators. In place of the thesis requirements, students engage in research in three broad fields – e.g. United States Post 1865, Europe Pre 1715 and East Asia.

Students apply (and are admitted) separately to the M.A. program in Museum Studies. Students admitted to the Museum Studies program must meet the basic requirements for admission to the regular M.A. program, and they must complete the basic core requirement for the regular M.A.. But, beyond the core, Museum Studies students study History Curatorship, Foundations of Museology, Effective Action in Museums, and complete a Museum Studies Master’s Project. The Museum Studies program regularly receives applications from more qualified applicants than can be admitted and the program has maintained an excellent record of placing graduates as museum professionals.

Assessment: History enrollments at the undergraduate and graduate levels have remained steady in recent years although class sizes have increased due to loss of faculty positions. Graduation rates are also steady. For example, in April 2004, 12 students received M.A. degrees, 7 received certificates in Museum Studies, 16 received B.A. degrees and (probably) an equal number received B.S. degrees in Secondary Education Social Studies (that distinction is not made in the campus graduation figures).

Productivity of Faculty in Scholarship and Public Service: The extraordinary productivity of the Department of History in scholarship and public service is documented fully in the Department’s annual reports to the College of Arts and Sciences. The key accomplishments listed for CY 2003 will illustrate the high rate of productivity of the faculty and their extraordinarily high level of scholarship and public service.

- John Gillingham received the Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Research and Creativity and was the campus’ nominee for the President’s Award for Excellence in Research and Creativity.
- Louis Gerteis (PI) and Andrew Hurley (co-PI) won a second multi-year grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to develop the Virtual City Project into a prototypical electronic urban archive.
- Andrew Hurley participated in the HUD funded Old North St. Louis Project.
- Adell Patton participated as a Fulbright Foundation lecturer in Nigeria in a Citizenship and Democracy program.

- John Gillingham and Carlos Schwantes published scholarly books with university presses.
- J. Frederick Fausz lectured frequently to the community on Lewis and Clark.
- Gerda Ray lectured frequently to the community on government secrecy and the Patriot Act.
- Laura Westhoff delivered a scholarly paper at the Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association.

Curriculum Quality: The quality of the History curriculum is uneven. Quality remains high in the fields of United States, and East Asian history. The curriculum is limited by unfilled positions in Africa (one historian is currently on the faculty), Europe (three historians are currently on the faculty) and Latin America (one historian is currently on the faculty and serving as Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences). Early retirement of a faculty member forced the Department to eliminate the Middle East as a field of study. We hope to offer Southeast Asia as a field of study in the future. A newly hired joint appointee in History and IWGS in Fall 2004 will permit the Department to continue to offer its introductory course in Mexican history.

Program Accreditation: NA

Long-range Goals and Strategies: The Department of History is committed to moving away from the focus on national history that shaped its formation in the early 1970s. The Department's goal is to move toward a focus on Metropolitan and Regional Studies emphasizing World History. National history dominated the History profession in the twentieth century, but that dominance is changing in the twenty-first century. The Department of History is striving to position itself at the forefront of this transformation. The Department will continue to seek new appointments and will strategically shape these positions to advance its ability to contribute to an emerging transnational historical scholarship.