

History MA / American History Certificate

Goal: Enhancing the Visibility of the MA Program

Goal Description:

The Department of History shall strive to increase the visibility of its online MA in History program within Texas, the United States, and the historical profession at large.

Providing Department: History MA / American History Certificate

Progress: Ongoing

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Performance Objective: Enhancing the Visibility of the MA Program

Performance Objective Description:

The faculty of the Department of History will participate in the development of new promotional activities and recruitment tools.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

KPI #1: Enhancing the Visibility of the MA Program

KPI Description:

The MA in History program shall develop a new promotional video highlighting the faculty research strengths, curricular innovation, and student outcomes.

Results Description:

The MA in History program developed and deployed a new promotional video highlighting faculty research strengths and the three thematic tracks organizing its curriculum. This video is available on the MA in History program website.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Action: Enhancing the Visibility of the MA Program

Action Description:

The program shall continue in its effort to recruit new and more diverse graduate students. The program shall work with Marketing and Communications to develop an advertising campaign. The program shall advertise across social media platforms, including Facebook.

Goal: Historical Literacy

Goal Description:

The MA in History at SHSU serves three student populations: (1) students who wish to pursue a doctoral degree in the discipline; (2) students who wish to gain certification to teach dual-credit or two-year college courses in History; and (3) general interest learners who wish to enrich their knowledge of history and understanding of the past. The MA program prepares students to critically analyze historical events; to assess major interpretive problems and historiographical debates; to weigh and interpret conflicting evidence; to assess change over time; to evaluate the complexities and contingencies of the past; and to gain an appreciation of the texture and diversity of the human experience. Students who complete the MA degree should be able to make and sustain a historical argument in professional prose; to situate those arguments in larger interpretive frameworks; to evaluate the merits of an historical argument; and to pose good questions, both about the past and their own particular moment. Students with the MA degree should be equipped to pursue doctoral studies in the discipline.

Providing Department: History MA / American History Certificate

Progress: Ongoing

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Learning Objective: Historical Research Skills**Learning Objective Description:**

Before graduating, students will be able to locate, evaluate, and interpret textual and non-textual historical evidence; articulate the significance of their work by positioning original research in larger historiographical conversations; and present findings efficiently and effectively, both orally and in writing.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Indicator, Criterion, and Findings: Historical Research Skills**Indicator Description:**

Non-thesis students in the MA in History program are required to take HIST 6394: Seminar in History during their penultimate or final semester in the program. The object of this capstone seminar is the production of an original, article-length interpretive essay rooted in primary sources. Each semester, the department's Graduate Affairs Committee shall collect a randomized sample of the writing artifacts produced across all sections of HIST 6394: Seminar in History for purposes of evaluation.

Criterion Description:

The department's Graduate Affairs Committee shall assess the thesis, evidence, organization, and mechanics of a randomized sample of writing artifacts produced in the capstone seminar course using the attached rubric. The department will consider it a success if all writing artifacts scored by the committee obtain a minimum score of "meets expectations" on the attached rubric.

Attached Files

 [HIST 6394 Rubric.pdf](#)

Findings Description:

Owing to administrative demands and continued disruptions invited by the COVID-19 pandemic, the program did not collect a randomized sample of writing artifacts from HIST 6394. The program will collect and evaluate the writing artifacts in the Fall 2022 semester.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Action: Historical Research Skills**Action Description:**

The department shall continue to collect and score, using an evaluation rubric, a randomized sample of the writing artifacts produced in the graduate capstone seminar. The graduate affairs committee shall prepare a report (including recommendations) to the full faculty based on the results of the scoring.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Learning Objective: Historiographical Literacy**Learning Objective Description:**

Before graduating, students will demonstrate their ability to evaluate major interpretive problems; engage in historiographical debates; and identify recent trends in historical literature. Students will likewise be able to distinguish the range of methodological tools and approaches that historians use to access the past.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Indicator, Criterion, and Findings: Historiographical Literacy**Indicator Description:**

All students are required to take HIST 5301: Methods in History during their first semester in the program. This course, which evaluates different methodological tools and analytical approaches, is designed to hone historical thinking skills necessary to undertake the MA degree. The program shall administer a pre- and post-semester assessment to all students in the course. This assessment shall gauge the acquisition of historical thinking skills and knowledge of various analytical tools and methodological approaches.

Criterion Description:

The program shall develop a scoring rubric to evaluate the pre- and post-semester assessment administered to all students who enroll in its HIST 5301: Methods in History course. This rubric shall be developed in Spring 2021 for deployment in Summer 2021.

Findings Description:

The program failed to develop the instrument described above. The program director shall work with the Graduate Affairs committee to develop this instrument in the Fall 2022 semester.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Action: Historiographical Literacy

Action Description:

The MA in History program shall develop and deploy an evaluation instrument to measure the acquisition of historical literacy in HIST 5301.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Performance Objective 1: Quality Instruction

Performance Objective Description:

In response to the quinquennial program review conducted in February 2020 and in an effort to ensure continued student success, the Director of Graduate Studies will work with the departmental faculty to clarify the graduate catalog and curriculum. The unit shall engage in substantive conversations about the content and contours of the three thematic tracks that organize the curriculum: (1) Rights & Identity; (2) War & Violence; and (3) Encounters & Exchanges. The program shall seek to lend greater coherence and clarity to the tracks by developing narrative descriptions of each track and its animating concerns/questions.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

KPI #1: Quality Instruction

KPI Description:

The program shall consider it a success if the departmental faculty engages in a series of substantive conversations about the thematic tracks and produces new narrative descriptions of each thematic track. These descriptions shall be added to the academic catalog, posted to the program's webpage, and included in the MA in History Student Handbook.

Results Description:

Over the academic year 2021-2022, the program engaged in a series of substantive conversations about the thematic tracks. This work resulted in a set of animating questions and bibliographies for each thematic track, as well as a revised narrative description for the Rights & Identity track. The program also built out a webpage for each thematic track, where these items now live.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Action: Quality Instruction

Action Description:

The program shall work to enhance student training in conducting original research. The program director shall work with the Graduate Affairs Committee to consider how to embed enhanced training in conducting archival research into the curriculum. The program, for instance, may

consider whether to require devoted research seminars as a part of the degree plan.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

KPI #2: Quality Instruction

KPI Description:

To further clarify its capstone requirement, the departmental faculty shall adopt a revised set of guidelines, policies, and procedures for the MA in History Portfolio process. The program shall consider it a success if the department adopts new guidelines that clearly establish the goals of the portfolio process, the timetable for completing the portfolio process, and the rights and responsibilities of both faculty and students.

Results Description:

The department successfully completed this work, clarifying for students and faculty their responsibilities in the MA in History portfolio process. See the attached memo from program director Benjamin Park to the departmental faculty.

Attached Files

 [Graduate Reform Proposals \(May 2021\).pdf](#)

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Action: Quality Instruction

Action Description:

In an effort to promote consistency and clarity, the program shall work to develop a set of standardized learning objectives for all graduate courses.

Goal: Quality Instruction

Goal Description:

To ensure quality instruction, the department will build on the success of its recent curricular reforms by working to clarify the three thematic tracks that organize its MA program.

Providing Department: History MA / American History Certificate

Progress: Completed

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

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Update to Previous Cycle's Plan for Continuous Improvement Item**Previous Cycle's Plan For Continuous Improvement (Do Not Modify):****Closing Summary**

In AY 2021-2022, the graduate program will continue to build on its curricular reforms and positive enrollment trends. The program will continue--and further promote--its newly launched webinar series, which has promoted a stronger sense of intellectual community among its many distance learners. The department will work to launch an online video archive of the series, which will serve to enhance the visibility of the MA program. The program will likewise complete work on a new promotional video.

The program's curricular reforms have now matured and demand updating. The program shall consider how to embed devoted research seminars into each of its thematic tracks, responding to a critique leveled by external reviewer Barbara A. Gannon in 2020. The program shall also work to enhance the coherence of the thematic tracks by building unique webpages for each theme. The webpages shall supply students with critical bibliographies, animating questions, and enhanced track descriptions. These webpages shall also better illustrate the connections between individual courses.

The graduate program director shall also work proactively with faculty to develop new courses that harmonize with the departmental mission of promoting an appreciation of the texture and diversity of human experiences. As part of this work, the graduate program director shall begin conversations about standardized learning objectives across all seminars. How to remedy perceived imbalances in workload and assignments across individual courses is an enormous challenge that will require creativity and cooperation from all stakeholders.

Update of Progress to the Previous Cycle's PCI:

The program launched a YouTube channel to archive videos of previous webinars. The program likewise completed work on a promotional video, highlighting the thematic tracks that organize the curriculum.

The program reviewed its curriculum reforms in light of the external review completed by Prof. Barbara Gannon of the University of Central Florida. This resulted in building out webpages for each thematic track, each of which include a list of faculty-authored animating questions and bibliographies.

The program director worked with faculty to develop new graduate seminars, including courses in Global Migration and Asian history. The program director also revised the MA in History portfolio process, clarifying the rights and responsibilities of faculty members and students.

New Plan for Continuous Improvement Item

Closing Summary:

The MA in History program shall strive to recruit new and more diverse students through greater outreach and program marketing. The graduate director shall work with Marketing and Communications to develop a summer advertising campaign. The program shall also consider new venues and vehicles for outreach, including a more conscious effort to recruit from SHSU's undergraduate population.

The program shall develop a set of standardized learning objectives and then develop new and consistent methods of measuring them. In particular, the department needs to create an evaluation instrument to measure the effectiveness of HIST 5301, the required historical methodology seminar. The standardized learning objectives should reorient the faculty and create more consistency across coursework.

The program should place a renewed emphasis on conducting original research. The program director shall work with the departmental faculty to embed enhanced training in the conduct of archival research into the curriculum.