

APPROVED BY DEPARTMENT VOTE ON 12 JUNE 2014 WITH TWO FRIENDLY AMENDMENTS, reflected in this edited version:

- 1) the name for the new field will be “Global history” (rather than Global/Comparative/Transnational)
- 2) provisions regarding course releases have been removed from the amended motion.

To: History Department

From: Undergraduate Committee (Bob Haskett, George Sheridan, and Julie Weise) and April Haynes

We propose that the History Department should add a sixth field to the distribution requirements for history majors in Global history.

Current distribution requirements: 8 upper-division credits in each of three fields selected from the following list:

- African & Middle Eastern history
- Asian history
- European history
- Latin American history
- United States history

Rationale:

(A) Practical objectives: During the recent period of declining overall enrollments the World History survey has remained robust. Many students may wish to pursue global or comparative questions beyond the lower division. Although eight members of the teaching faculty currently offer upper-division courses that address such questions, the history department does not count all of their courses toward its distribution fields.<sup>1</sup> Students who take courses within an existing distribution field earn credits toward both the minimum credit requirement *and* the breadth requirement. Comparative or transnational courses, however, currently count only toward the minimum credit requirement. As our students face strong and increasing financial pressures to economize their time-to-completion, they are unlikely to enroll in courses that do not have the possibility of simultaneously meeting both requirements. At the same time, our students necessarily consider their preparation for careers in a globalized economy in connection to their studies as history majors. An exclusive emphasis on traditional regional clusters may not fully prepare them for future jobs in law, politics, journalism, education, or the non-profit sector. Other CAS majors, like International Studies and General Social Sciences, already cater to this changing focus. By expanding our degree requirements to include students who seek this kind of practical utility, the History Department will serve its majors more

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<sup>1</sup> Braun (415 Age of Imperialism), Dracobly (341 War in Modern World and 435 Iraq War), Furtado (415 Age of Exploration), Hanes (399 Pacific War), Haskett (483 New World Pirates), Haynes (410 Women & Revolution), May (388 Vietnam & US, 451 US & WWII, 451 Cold War), Weise (415 Global Migrations).

effectively and expand the appeal of its offerings beyond that constituency. In the process of expanding the breadth of our offerings and encouraging new axes of inquiry, we may also attract new students to the major.

(B) Intellectual objectives: The proposed field reflects contemporary and ongoing historiographical concerns. It attends to significant processes—e.g, migration and environmental change—which have not historically adhered to nation-state borders. We therefore conceive of Global history in thematic and methodological terms. This approach suggests multiple axes of inquiry rather than taking geography *a priori* as “the” way to organize history.

(C) Pedagogical objectives: The history department website explains our degree requirements in terms of two learning goals:

1. **Specialization & complexity.** “All history majors must take a preponderance of their classes for the major at the upper-division level, particularly in 400-level classes specialized enough in scope so that students can both attain a degree of mastery of a period or topic and learn to appreciate the complexity of historical experience.”
2. **Breadth & connectivity.** “All history majors are required to become broadly familiar with at least three geographical regions of the world, an invaluable experience in an increasingly interconnected world.”

This proposal enlarges the opportunities for our majors to become broadly familiar with interconnected regions of the world. It also promotes a distinctive form of specialization. Students who complete eight upper-division credits in the field of Global history will master the skills and methods associated with transregional analysis.

#### Criteria

To satisfy the Global concentration, a course must take as its central focus a particular set of historical cases, processes, or populations across two or more of the following regions:

- African & Middle Eastern history
- Asian history
- European history
- Latin American history
- United States history

#### Examples:

U.S. & Iraq War

Border Crossings

Women & Revolution

Global Disease Eradication

Age of Discovery

Pacific War

American Foreign Relations

Environment and Colonialism

Global Cities

War and Society

Muslims and other Religions

Early Modern Women<sup>2</sup>

Multiple 407s, including those recently or currently taught by Braun, Haynes, and Weise

### Development

Although lower-division courses do not apply to the distribution requirements, we support broadening our lower-division offerings as a means to boost enrollments. Several faculty members plan to teach new Global courses at the 100 and 200 levels in the future. We believe that, in the long term, such efforts will create more demand among prospective majors for upper-division courses of this kind to count toward their distribution fields.

The proposed field is inherently thematic in nature, as are many of our courses. We encourage faculty members to use the existing number for topics in advanced world history (415). By doing so, they would save the time and labor associated with the new-course approval process. Moreover, the Department as a whole would benefit from assuring the regularity of courses relative to the major. We also envision the gradual development of a series of special topics numbers to address various themes in Global history, e.g. Gender, Religion, Economy/Labor, etc. Given the current low enrollment at the 400 level, it may be most appropriate to develop such topics courses at the 300 level. These numbers would accommodate many of the currently-taught courses named above while retaining staffing flexibility. In each case, the only faculty member who would need to go through the course-approval process would be the one who originated the topics number relevant to her or his course.

We recommend that, at some future moment when we have lived with the Global field, the Department should consider revising our Distribution Requirements along thematic rather than spatial clusters.

We encourage faculty with similar intellectual interests who teach in different geographic regions to meet and discuss shared teaching objectives (e.g., environmental historians, historians of race and ethnicity, women's historians, intellectual/cultural historians). Such meetings may contribute to the development of a thematic cluster without requiring individual faculty members to teach beyond their geographic area of expertise.

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<sup>2</sup> This course has been taught as a European course in the past but may become a Global course in the future.