Historical Analysis and Perspectives

I. Description of Purpose and Content
Courses in “Historical Analysis and Perspectives” should provide students with a broad introduction to the study of human groups and individuals of the past through an examination of change over time, its causes and its consequences. While faculty are encouraged to offer courses that focus on a particular theme, society, time period, or body of source material, contributions to “Historical Analysis and Perspectives” should demonstrate a chronological range across multiple centuries and include a cross-cultural perspective that places specific regions in a transnational or global context. Courses in “Historical Analysis and Perspectives” should also expose students to different bodies of primary-source material, consisting of texts in various genres as well as visual and material evidence. Furthermore, while they should approach the study of the past through a variety of interrelated social and cultural phenomena seen in their unique context, courses in “Historical Analysis and Perspectives,” whether they deal with the distant or more recent past, should address the relationship of the past to the present world. Contributions to “Historical Analysis and Perspectives” should engage students in discussion of both primary sources appropriate to the subject matter of the course and the analytical framework and debated questions among scholars working in that field. Drawing on course materials and their own independent work, students will write projects crafting rigorous historical arguments that employ evidence to understand change over time.

II. Learning Outcomes

- Students will know the chronological sequence and geographical framework appropriate to the subject matter of the course.
- Students will be able to analyze primary sources of multiple varieties and distinguish them from scholarship (secondary sources).
- Students will understand that historical knowledge emerges from debates over the interpretation of evidence.
- Students will learn to construct arguments about the past based on evidence and utilizing critical language appropriate to the subject matter and discipline of history.
- Students will value the complex process by which the present emerged out of the past.

III. Defining Characteristics

- Coherent interpretive framework which articulates a clear set of historical questions to be examined.
- Sufficient chronological scope (that is, one reckoned in terms of centuries, not decades).
- Cross-cultural perspective.
- Variety of evidence (must include textual evidence; must also include non-textual evidence).
- Rigorous writing assignments based on primary sources obtained at least in part through independent work and integrated into the interpretive framework of the course.