

## **Educational Objectives, Villanova University Undergraduate History Program**

### **Core Courses**

#### **I. Goals for the History core course:**

- A. Students will develop an understanding of the specific historical content of the course.
- B. The course will acquaint students with the rich variety of sources that historians use to explore the past.
- C. Students will begin to develop critical historical skills including chronological reasoning, an awareness of periodization, the ability to analyze sources, and an ability to make comparisons in context.

#### **II. Outcomes for the History core course:**

- A. The course will help students “achieve a synthesis of knowledge that provides a basis for informed judgment, not simply fact finding,” by teaching them to develop an appreciation of how different historical circumstances contribute to a diversity of views and experiences in the human community.
- B. Students will learn that historical inquiry is an ongoing process, “that the present is recognizably formed from past influences” but also that the present influences our understanding of the past. They will learn to identify the historical roots of contemporary issues and challenges, with attention to social values and the role of religion in the human experience.
- C. Students will acquire a new understanding of specific historical subjects that will provide an entrée into other core courses and programs such as Peace and Justice; Environmental Studies; Humanities; Gender and Women’s Studies, and various area studies programs.
- D. The course will enhance students’ ability to communicate, in written and verbal form, thesis-driven arguments about the past and strengthen their critical thinking by teaching them how to analyze and critique historical evidence and arguments.

#### **III. History Major**

##### A. Objectives

1. Provide a broad range of courses and other educational opportunities that encourage majors to develop their historical awareness, perspective and understanding.
2. Provide instruction and guidance to enable majors to apply sound historical research skills.
3. Train majors to understand the standard forms of historical expression, to critique historical arguments made by others, and to produce historical arguments themselves.

4. Provide information and opportunities to acquire the necessary skills to identify and pursue post-graduate opportunities for employment or further education.
5. Assist students in identifying career options most suited to their skills, strengths, and interests.

## B. Outcomes

### 1. Knowledge

- a. Demonstrate historical knowledge across a range of chronological, cultural and geographic areas.
- b. Demonstrate a familiarity with the concept of historiography, including a sense of changing historical interpretations and an understanding of various approaches to historical explanation.
- c. Describe how different aspects or types of human endeavor and experience may be connected.
- d. Identify the historical roots of contemporary issues and challenges, with attention to social values and the role of religion in the human experience.
- e. Construct historical questions and arguments about the problems that run through history.
- f. Understand and evaluate the role of human choice in history.
- g. Recognize a range of career options available to undergraduate history majors.

## 2. Analytical and Research Skills

- a. Demonstrate the ability to reconstruct historical events from available evidence.
- b. Demonstrate familiarity with contemporary historical tools including the use of primary and secondary source collections, print resources, visual and material artifacts and sources, computer databases, and other computer-mediated resources.
- c. Analyze and evaluate a variety of texts, data, and interpretations in terms of credibility, authenticity, interpretive stance, audience, bias, and value for answering the research question.
- d. Synthesize evidence from research to support a historical argument.
- e. Apply a critical perspective to evaluating historical arguments, including the quality of sources, the validity of the interpretations of those sources, and the soundness of the argument's use of evidence to support that interpretation.
- f. Articulate objectives for post-graduate employment or further education.

## 3. Expression

- a. Demonstrate effective written and oral communication skills, including the ability to:
  - i. Summarize historical findings, arguments and interpretations
  - ii. Reconstruct historical events
  - iii. Formulate and support an argument in a well-focused, logically organized piece of historical writing.
  - iv. Review and evaluate others' arguments and interpretations.