Educational Objectives, Villanova University Undergraduate History Program

I. Introductory History Courses (History 1040, 1050)

A. Objectives

1. Acquaint students with fundamental knowledge about diverse cultures of the past across a broad chronological spectrum.

2. Introduce students to basic historical concepts and forms of evidence.

3. Introduce students to skills that allow them to analyze critically various historical texts, interpretations, and perspectives.

4. Provide opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and skills to understand and evaluate historical continuity and change.

B. Outcomes

1. Distinguish between primary and secondary historical sources.

2. Recognize various kinds of primary sources, identify how, when, where, by whom, and for whom they were produced, summarize their content and make inferences from them.

3. Identify and summarize historians’ arguments about the past, and differentiate interpretations of the same historical problem.

4. Recognize the basic features of political, economic, social, religious and cultural institutions, systems and ideologies.

5. Describe and explain patterns of continuity and change in those systems over time, and evaluate their consequences.

6. Describe differences and similarities among different societies, political systems, economies and cultures in the past, and recognize how they resemble and differ from contemporary societies in the United States and the world.

7. Distinguish and give examples of interactions between different nations, empires, societies and cultures in the past, particularly between western and non-western societies.

8. Use examples of historical events or changes to illustrate cause and effect in the past.
9. Construct historical arguments using appropriate evidence and examples.

10. Understand and evaluate the role of human choice in history.

II. 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.