

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF UNDERGRADUATE HISTORY COURSES

(approved by the History Department faculty, spring 2015)

Undergraduate courses in the Department of History are designed to increase in complexity from 100-level to 600-level and to reflect the following learning objectives:

1. Students will learn how to do history: to pose an historical and analytical question, pursue that question through research in original sources, evaluate evidence, and create an argument in response.
2. Students will learn to evaluate historical claims and conflicting arguments on the basis of evidence, methodology, and sources so that students can develop their own judgment on historical issues.
3. Students will learn about a variety of cultures and societies in order to increase their understanding of past cultures and societies with the result that students can explain and discuss the challenges of examining a past society that may be quite different from their own.
4. Students will deepen their knowledge of a particular field of historical study as reflected in an ability to explain and discuss intelligently major issues related to that field.
5. Students will learn to understand a society and culture in the particularity of time as well as the process of change over time so that students can analyze and discuss the complexity of the dynamics of change.

The following is a rough description of each course level. Students should keep in mind that these descriptions reflect **general patterns**, which individual courses may follow to varying degrees.

Courses numbered 1-99

First Year Seminars in History (see <http://fys.unc.edu/>) do not presume any background in the topic or in the college-level study of history and are intended to offer hands-on introductions to both. They typically are designed to meet learning objectives #1 and #3 above; they may also meet additional learning objectives.

100 Level

Introductory 100-level classes provide survey coverage of the broad fields of history (e.g., United States, European, African), typically defined geographically. They are often the first exposure that undergraduates have to the general problems of interpreting texts and developing historical arguments. Most 100-level classes draw large enrollments (at least 55 and usually at least 90), and can either employ teaching assistants to conduct small discussion sections or graders, whose primary duty is to evaluate student work by marking papers, but who can be asked to do more as agreed upon by the professor and the grader(s). The learning objectives for

these courses include #3 and #5 above; they may, particularly through the use of discussion sections, also include #1 and #2. Generally students in 100-level courses are required to produce 10-16 pages of graded written work (excluding exams).

200 Level

Like 100-level classes, 200-level classes provide survey coverage, but their subjects are more specific in their geographical, chronological, or thematic coverage. They are usually limited to at least two of these dimensions (e.g., Japan in the 20th Century, or Religion in North America). 200-level courses expose students to historical scholarship of a more specific nature than is generally presented in textbooks. With some exceptions, these classes consist of large lectures with teaching assistants or graders as in 100-level courses. Besides acquiring familiarity with the particular topic of a course, students should develop competency in the craft of writing historical papers; that is, they should learn to interpret texts and marshal evidence in support of a historical argument. Thus their learning objectives include #2, 3, 4, and 5, above and, when possible, #1.

300 Level

Like 200-level courses, the subjects of 300-level courses are usually limited to two of the major dimensions of geography, period, and theme (e.g., Popular Culture and American History). They may be lecture-based courses or seminars, including the research seminars for history majors numbered 398. Such courses give students a sense of the professional concerns, methodologies, and standards of historians. As such, they reflect all five departmental learning objectives.

400 and 500 Level

Courses at these levels parallel 100 and 200 level courses in topic (that is, 400 level courses focus on broad geographic surveys and 500 level courses are more focused in topic), but since they are open to graduate as well as undergraduate students their content is more rigorous. These courses may take the form of lectures, seminars, or combinations of the two. In general, however, they enroll 30 students or less. Their learning objectives include #2-5, above, as well as, when possible, #1.

600 Level

With some exceptions, courses at the 600 level introduce students to various methodologies in history (e.g. oral history) and include the seminar for students writing honors theses. Typically these courses enroll 15 students or less. At a minimum, their learning objectives include #1 above.