

Developing a New Global Focus Within the History Major

A Curriculum Development Proposal to the VPUE

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Overview

Over the past three years, the Stanford History department has begun building a program in global history, a fast-growing domain of scholarly inquiry and pedagogical innovation. The attraction of global approaches is clear; they allow scholars to transcend the spatial limits of the nation-state or empire in order to follow broader dynamics and border-crossing processes. Under various rubrics (including Imperial, Connective, Transnational, World, and simply "Big" history), thousands in this profession are turning their attention either to deep-rooted intercultural linkages or to the emergence of international regimes, up to and including the development of the global community as a whole.

Stanford historians are participating in this conversation in several related ways.

- At the faculty level, Stanford's History and Classics departments have begun a multi-year dialogue with their counterparts at the University of Michigan to brainstorm about approaches, share resources, and discuss best practices. Visits in both directions allow scholars on the Ann Arbor and Stanford campuses to become acquainted with each others' methods and to launch innovative programs in this emerging field, which is only now gaining traction at major research universities such as ours.
- At the graduate level, the department last year put in place a new track in Transnational, International, and Global History (TIG). Graduate students can now apply specifically to conduct projects that cross traditional field boundaries, and new graduate courses are being developed to meet their needs. Likewise in 2009, we instituted a graduate colloquium on World History linked to a pedagogy workshop geared to helping students create their own syllabi. A reading group on "Empires in World History" grew out of those courses, and will meet regularly throughout the current academic year.

- Finally, at the undergraduate level, the roster of imperial and transnational courses is steadily expanding. Undergraduates have responded to these course offerings with enthusiasm. Turnout for the department's offerings in Global Human Geography and Global Historical Geography, in particular, is booming.

At all levels, Stanford students are clearly eager for a historically grounded global education: one that provides a solid basis for understanding human affairs across the planet by tracing out the lineages of the modern world. But success creates new challenges. The burgeoning enrollments in classes with global coverage is straining departmental resources, pulling an already contracting pool of teaching assistants away from more focused survey courses in their regional fields. Moreover, being assigned to assist with these kinds of courses asks a great deal of the first-time TA. Compared with leading discussion on narrower or more familiar terrain, TA'ing for global courses can feel like boot camp.

This proposal represents our response to these challenges. Our vision is to link these varied projects at the graduate and undergraduate levels, and to meet the demand for the History Department's global offerings without putting undue pressure on either individual graduate students or our traditional core fields. We will accordingly be applying this year for targeted, coordinated funding in two areas supported by the VPUE: Curriculum Development and TA Training. This proposal represents the keystone for a TA training grant application that will follow in the Spring.

Curriculum Development: Responding to a Timely Opportunity

The foundational courses for a world history program for undergraduates at Stanford consist of three lecture classes in the History 106 sequence: *Global Human Geography A* (Africa and Asia); *Global Human Geography B* (Europe and the Americas); and *Global Historical Geography*. As their name implies, the first two are regionally organized courses that take the modern world as their starting point, explaining its development in historical terms. The third is chronologically organized, exploring the past 30,000 years through the medium of maps. Together, these three courses aim to provide a comprehensive framework for understanding both the differences among, and the linkages across, the earth's countries, cultures, and societies. Demand for these classes is strong and growing. Offered for the first time in Spring 2009, *Global Historical Geography* attracted 62 students; 106A, an annual fixture of the History curriculum since 2004, currently enrolls 174.

As the 106 sequence grows, the History Department is facing challenges in staffing these courses. Teaching assistants have had to be reassigned from other courses, disrupting the rest of the curriculum. Yet many graduate students crave training in this area, realizing that they are likely to be asked to teach in this fast-growing sub-discipline—one whose demand has grown steadily since the late 1990s, when an AP World History curriculum and standards were put in place for the nation’s high schools. Regularizing a program of T.A. training and support for the History 106 sequence would be an excellent investment for the university. But it will require strategic deployment of new resources to get this underway.

In order to turn the pressures created by the History 106 sequence into an opportunity to better serve our student constituency, we request curriculum development funds to support a course assistant who will work with Dr. Martin Lewis, the instructor for 106A, during the summer, with a mandate to develop and coordinate lesson-plans as well as grading standards across the TA team, and to design a workshop that will provide meaningful guidance to first-time teaching assistants in this demanding class. The course development assistant would be chosen from a pool of advanced graduate students who have completed History’s graduate course in world history. In addition, we request funds to purchase course development materials (e.g., maps, reference guides, textbooks) and provide a stipend to Dr. Martin Lewis.

Budget:

Course Assistant: **\$ 5415**

200 hours x \$25/hour \$5000

Fringe benefits \$ 415

Faculty Stipend: **\$ 3313**

Stipend \$ 2500

Fringe benefits \$813

Course Materials: **\$ 500**

Grand Total: **\$ 9228**

Implementation Schedule:

The course assistant will work with Martin Lewis between June and August 2011 on this initiative.

Evaluation Plan:

The Department of History will judge the effectiveness of world history curriculum development initiative in two ways. Discussion section course evaluations from 2011-12 will be compared to those from prior years to determine whether student feedback indicates sections in 2011-12 were more effective. The Department of History will distribute a questionnaire to graduate students who served as TAs in the History 106 sequence from 2009-10 through 2011-12 to assess whether the TAs in 2011-12 report a higher comfort level with teaching discussion sections outside their normal area of expertise.