

History Program Rebuttal to “3 Reason & 3 Responses”

Preface Statement:

- The History Program was requested to develop a historical methods and theory class by CSUB’s History Department, in order to allow majors to have completed this material before transferring to CSUB. The intent is to offer a course in this prep per semester, to allow the majors to have this knowledge base.
- We are requesting Critical Thinking designation as that is what is being done in the class. Furthermore, the department has concerns that this course may not obtain sufficient enrollment in each term unless it has the Critical Thinking designation, due to the subject matter and the rigor of the course.
- In Fall 2019, this course was offered on TR at 1pm, but was canceled due to insufficient enrollment. At that time, we chose to pursue the Critical Thinking Designation.

Rebuttal to handout delivered via sign-in table at previous Curriculum Committee Meeting.

Note- the History Program had a significantly longer version of this paper, but has reduced it to the most salient points to express the essence of our objection to each of the 6 points identified. We are not attempting to divert attention from individual ideas/language in each of those 6 points, but simply trying to not overwhelm you to the point of tuning out. We are happy to address the full Curriculum Committee regarding individual points, but have refrained from providing lengthy responses to each element that was of concern.

Rebuttal:

Reasons not to approve:

1) – ‘no evidence that HIST B9 will improve critical thinking abilities’.

- Open and honest question- how often is any other course proposal required to submit *data* from scholarly studies to demonstrate that, say, Humanities or Social Science aptitudes and abilities are increased?
- The History Program does not recall any requirement for the presenting of data to corroborate the ability to develop Humanities or Social Science ‘aptitudes and abilities’ when other courses requested that designation.
- We do have specific concerns about the ideas expressed with the statements of “No BC Data or ANY academic research”, “Summarily rejected” and “Divert Students”, as we find them to be alarmist or misleading, at best.

2) ‘History Department has neither composition nor critical thinking expertise’

- The History Program [we are not a department- the department is Social Science. History is a Program] contends we are very well suited to this area, as the essence of History is critical inquiry, evaluation, analysis, and then creation of written documents/thesis/dissertations that logically incorporate evidence in support of a thesis.

- In this History Course, we require 6000 [+] words [approx.. 14 pages] of collegiate writing in a multitude of critical thinking assignments. The difference is that it is contextualized critical thinking- with the application of critical thinking and analysis to specific areas of inquiry, and the evaluation of the students' ability to do so. Our History Program believes we are essentially a balance blend of composition and critical thinking.
- "No department is ideally situated to teach IGETC 1B courses in composition and critical thinking."- We appreciate the recognition that no department is a perfect fit into this area. Yet, we find the arguments against our inclusion in this category, for HIST B9, to be spurious.

3) "Hist B9 is neither a composition nor a critical thinking course".

- Actually, it is both, despite the mischaracterizations of the course as having a 'dash' and 'smidgeon'.
- 6000 words is generally accepted to equate to about 14 pages of double spaced writing.
- We invite the entire committee to compare *our COR proposal* to existing CORs that meet this designation.
 - We are confident our rigor of composition is greater than some, and our critical thinking is greater than others.
 - As such, we believe our proposal to be at least as worthy of inclusion in the IGETC Critical Thinking designation as those others.

3 Responses to reasons given:

A) "No, nearly all critical thinking course statewide are in Phil/Engl/Comm"

- History never said that the above was not true. However, the essence of this statement was a request to rely upon tradition and history to determine actions- not the potential for developing innovative learning.
 - If we relied entirely on past precedents and didn't allow for innovation, think of all of the injustices we face in our country that would be worse, because we decided not to change our approach.
- "Outliers shouldn't determine your decision."
 - True- and neither should blind subservience to tradition. The proposal should be evaluate for what it contains- regardless of what department introduced it.

B) "No, there is no need at BC for a critical thinking course in History."

- This statement and explanation demonstrate either a lack of comprehension of the role this course would play in the History Program's offerings, or a mischaracterization of said role.
- Again, the purpose of Critical Thinking designation in HIST B9 is to recognize the rigor of the work that is being done in this course and to secure its' viability as a course, so that it [*a course our main transfer partner requested we provide*] is not canceled every term due to low enrollment.
- "For Fall 2020, at least a year before this course could be offered, ..."

- By this statement, it implies we couldn't offer this course until Fall 2021. If more delays are enacted, the approval of this course *will* be slower.
- However, the History Program offered this course in **Fall 2019** [NOT *Fall 2021*], and *it was cancelled due to low enrollment*.

C) "No, we should not just let IGETC reviewers decide for us."

- Whether you choose to use 'stochastic' or 'random', there *are* elements of uncertainty in the state approval process- we agree on that.
- And that is why we ask that the Curriculum Committee approve the designation. What the state does after that we can't control, but we should exercise control on what we do have power over- our processes, based on our proposals.
- As you all know, the proposal process is required to provide comparable courses and processes that are based in the Community Colleges of California- not using lower-division courses at the UC/CSU as our sole justification.
 - This is why reference was made to Taft College pursuing this same path.
- If we had been able to, our model would have been UC Berkeley's History Departments R1B- Reading & Composition courses.
 - This is a freshman level History Department course that meets IGETC 1B Composition and Critical Thinking GE requirements, and there are 4 section of this course offered this fall at UC Berkeley.
 - The four are not the same as our course as they focus analysis and critical thinking on issues such as:

R1B — Reading & Composition

R1B.001 — Reading and Composition in History: Refugees in global perspective 1945-2018 (Agnieszka Smelkowska)

R1B.002 — Writing, Documents, and Manuscript Culture in the Ancient World (Benjamin C. Daniels)

R1B.003 — Flourishing Merchants and Impoverished Samurai: Early Modern Japan, 1600-1868

R1B.004 — Evolution and Progress (David I. Delano)

These are courses that are taught by graduate students- not Ph.D holders. You find their names in the Grad Students section of the college listings- not the faculty.

- Yes, those links work. They do have a pop up about an error, but clicking 'ok' in the box opens the browser window to that page - unless you cut/paste the link and grab some extra punctuation.
- The BC History Program was saddened by the following phrasing as well: "The Bakersfield College Curriculum Committee should not "aspire" to be the Taft College Curriculum Committee."
 - We won't go into a lengthy riposte regarding the fairness of this characterization toward either Taft College's Faculty or the BC History Program.
 - Yet, we do wish to point out that BC's History Program is aspiring to be like UC Berkeley- or is that not good enough?