

## Communication in the Major Application Template

**Name of the Major\*:**

BA or BS in History/BA or BS in Race and Ethnicity Concentration in History  
Major

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**Department/Unit:** History

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**Contact Person:** Nancy LoPatin-Lummis

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**Report of Dept. Vote:** 11 Approve 0 Oppose 0 Abstain Date: 3/26/12

\*Note: Each major must have Communication in the Major. Majors with multiple concentrations or options may need to have distinct Communication in the Major plans (and hence applications) if the relevant courses are not shared by the different options. Conversely, one application may suffice for multiple majors in a department/unit that share the Communication in the Major portion of the curriculum.

### Communication in the Major Learning Outcomes (Step 4)

Communication in the Major courses provide students with systematic opportunities to develop oral and written communication skills in the context of their chosen fields, beginning the process of learning to communicate effectively in discipline-specific formats and styles.

*Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:*

- Apply discipline-specific standards of oral and written communication to compose an articulate, grammatically correct, and organized presentation/piece of writing with properly documented and supported ideas, evidence, and information suitable to the topic, purpose, and audience.
- Critique their own and others' writing/oral presentations to provide effective and useful feedback to improve their communication.

### Communication in the Major Course/Instructor Criteria (Step 5)

1. The Communication in the Major requirement addresses discipline-specific communication that builds on the Written and Oral Communication learning outcomes of the Foundation level.
2. Departments or units will designate a minimum of six credits at the 200-level or above within each major to meet the Communication in the Major requirement. Departments may distribute this requirement over any number of courses. These courses may, when appropriate, come from other departments but must be included as part of the major. List the course(s) designated as the Communication in the Major component for this major:

History 300: Methods and Skills in History  
History 489: Selected Historical Problems: Colloquium **or** History 490: Selected Historical Problems:

Seminar History 490 is the course number designated for topics in which there is a reasonable expectation that students can conduct primary source research in order to produce their required paper. History 489 is the course number designated for topics in which availability of primary sources is limited and/or in which language skills to conduct that research is also problematic. For these areas of history, the seminar is one in which English-language, secondary literature, is the primary basis for the research paper.

3. These courses must include a plan for how student achievement of the approved Communication in the Major learning outcomes will be assessed. Please describe the overall plan for how Communication in the Major will be assessed within your major:

Direct assessment: instructors identify papers that represent the best, weakest and average work in the seminars.

Indirect assessment: Student questionnaire to be completed by all students in the capstone course, assessing preparation for oral presentations and written research papers in both History 300 and History 489/490.

4. All instructors teaching Communication in the Major courses must complete a workshop coordinated by the Center for Academic Excellence and Student Engagement.

- A. The General Education Committee will work with Bill Lawlor (current WE coordinator) and a representative from the Division of Communication to develop a Communication in the Major training (combining both written and oral communication skills). This will be handled similarly to how WE is handled now. **We will rely on departments to comply with the requirement to ensure that those who teach Communication in the Major components have the required training.**
- B. Anyone who is currently WE certified will be asked to complete an abbreviated training (focusing on the oral communication aspect of the new Communication in the Major requirement). This will allow existing WE instructors to migrate into the new GEP fairly easily.
- C. New instructors completing the new Communication in the Major training will be “reverse grandfathered” and be granted WE certification. (WE classes will need to be offered beyond 2013 for those students who are completing their degrees under the GDR system.)

5. Communication in the Major courses should have sufficiently small enrollments so that students will receive adequate personal feedback, from both instructors and their peers, on their communication skills. Please describe the approximate enrollments in the various courses that will be included in your Communication in the Major requirement:

History 300 has been taught as a WE course, so enrollment has been limited at 21 students. We would continue this target enrollment. History 489/490 has been capped at 25 to ensure

discussion and ability of instructor to given timely feedback on research and writing. We anticipate keeping the same enrollment.

6. Assignments should be based on the kinds of communication typical of the relevant discipline or profession. Describe the oral and written work that students will do in your Communication in the Major courses and explain how these reflect what is typical in your discipline. Attach a representative syllabus and assignment for at least one course.

This course introduces history and Broadfield Social Science majors to the methods of historical research and writing, as well as the various approaches and philosophies behind the discipline of history. It allows students to experience the process of historical research, writing, debate and critique. History 300 is a seminar, not a lecture class. Student-led discussion of assigned readings and individual research is the key to the class and students are expected to question, discuss and even debate the content of assigned reading. Outside of the classroom, students will conduct in their own research on an area of history of their choosing. They will be required to write a paper on this research, utilizing the research and writing techniques they have learned and a final oral presentation on the student's research will be given to the class as a whole. Students will also write historical book reviews, abstracts of their research papers, critiques of other student papers and several drafts of their research paper.

7. Both writing and speaking instruction should be integrated into course discussions and activities and include grading criteria, revision experiences, and opportunities for student peer review. Writing and speaking instruction can be taught together in a single course or divided among courses. Describe (or attach) the grading criteria for the oral and written assignments in your Communication in the Major courses and describe the way that peer review and revision will be incorporated into these courses.

See below for sample grading criteria.

**Essay Rubric for Communication in the Major (History):**

Criteria	Excellent – 90-100	Good – 80-89	Fair – 70-79	Poor – 60-69
Introduction and Thesis	First paragraph is catchy; Thesis is evident and point to be argued is well stated.	First paragraph has a weak attention “grabber.” Thesis is mixed among many sentences and hard to piece together.	A catchy beginning was attempted, but was confusing rather than catchy. Thesis is not entirely apparent although the topic is evident.	No attempt was made to catch the reader’s attention in the first paragraph. Thesis is not apparent nor is the topic of the essay.

Accuracy of Facts	All facts presented in the essay are accurate and relate back to the thesis.	Almost all facts presented in the essay are accurate and occasionally relate back to the thesis.	Most facts presented in the essay are accurate (at least 70%). Evidence is sputtered about rather than used to prove one's thesis.	There are several factual errors in the essay. There is no real effort to make the piece cohesive.
Content and Organization	The essay is well organized. Five or more paragraphs are evident. One idea follows another in a logical sequence with clear transitions. Claims and ideas are supported and elaborated. Alternative perspectives are carefully considered and represented.	The essay is fairly well organized. Five paragraphs are evident. One idea may seem out of place. Clear transitions are used. Most Claims and ideas are supported and elaborated. A few Alternative perspectives are carefully considered and represented.	The essay is a little hard to follow. Paragraphs are unclear. The transitions are sometimes not clear. A few Claims and ideas are supported and elaborated. Alternative perspectives are offered, but not carefully considered and represented.	Ideas appear to be randomly arranged.  No effort at paragraph organization. Claims and ideas are not supported and elaborated.  No Alternative perspectives are considered.
Focus on Assigned Topic	The entire essay is related to the assigned topic and allows the reader to understand much more about the topic.	Most of the essay is related to the assigned topic. The essay wanders off at one point, but the reader can still learn something about the topic.	Some parts of the essay are related to the assigned topic, but the reader does not learn much about the topic.	No attempt has been made to relate the essay to the assigned topic.
Mechanics	The essay has few, if any, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, or usage errors.	The essay has two or three mechanical errors.	The essay has four or five mechanical errors.	The essay has more than five mechanical errors.