**General Education Course Inclusion Proposal**

**PERSEPCTIVES ON SOCIETY**

*This proposal form is intended for departments proposing a course for inclusion in the Northern Michigan University General Education Program. Courses in a component satisfy both the Critical Thinking and the component learning outcomes. Departments should complete this form and submit it electronically through the General Education SHARE site.*

**Course Name and Number: HS 120: Turning Points in History**

**Home Department: History**

**Department Chair Name and Contact Information**: Keith Kendall (x-1648; kkendall@nmu.edu)

**Expected frequency of Offering of the course** Every Semester

**Official Course Status**: Has this course been approved by CUP and Senate? YES

*Courses that have not yet been approved by CUP must be submitted to CUP prior to review by GEC. Note that GEC is able to review courses that are in the process of approval; however, inclusion in the General Education Program is dependent upon Senate and Academic Affairs approval of the course into the overall curriculum.*

**Overview of course** (please attach a current syllabus as well): *Please limit the overview to two pages (not including the syllabus)*

A. Overview of the course content: This is a variable topic course in which the professor will chose a major turning point or related set of turning points in history. The content, therefore, could have a virtually unimaginable number of mutations.

B. Explain why this course satisfies the Component specified and significantly addresses both learning outcomes:

History is about making evidenced-based arguments, which requires the assessment of the quality of the evidence and its subsequent integration into an argument. In the process of doing this we use a variety of critical tools subsumed under what we call the Historical Method. All people, by the time they have made it to college anyway, have some sense of history; hence, all college-level history courses involved addressing prior understandings of the past. This is done through papers or document analysis worksheets or tests with questions specifically relating to evidence

All history courses offer a perspective on society. In the process of making evidenced based arguments, we must analyze the social structures and events and synthesis that analysis into some conclusion about those structures and events. Historians are not technically ethicists, but the issues we address virtually always involve ethical questions. Of course, the entire point of history is to explore themes in the development of human society., this course allows the professor to focus on a singular moment, in context, that significantly impacted the development of society.

C. Describe the target audience (level, student groups, etc.): It is a 100-level course with no prerequisites

D. Give information on other roles this course may serve (e.g. University Requirement, required for a major(s), etc.): the course will count toward the history major or minor.

E. Provide any other information that may be relevant to the review of the course by GEC: this course is part of a substantial overhaul of the history department’s curriculum.

**PLAN FOR LEARNING OUTCOMES  
CRITICAL THINKING**

*Attainment of the CRITICAL THINKING Learning Outcome is required for courses in this component. There are several dimensions to this learning outcome. Please complete the following Plan for Assessment with information regarding course assignments (type, frequency, importance) that will be used by the department to assess the attainment of students in each of the dimensions of the learning outcome. Type refers to the types of assignments used for assessment such as written work, presentations, etc. Frequency refers to the number of assignments included such as a single paper or multiple papers. Importance refers to the relative emphasis or weight of the assignment to the entire course. For each dimension, please specify the expected success rate for students completing the course that meet the proficiency level and explain your reasoning. Please refer to the Critical Thinking Rubric for more information on student performance/proficiency in this area. Note that courses are expected to meaningfully address all dimensions of the learning outcome.*

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| **DIMENSION** | **DIMENSION GUIDANCE** | **PLAN FOR ASSESSMENT** |
| **Evidence** | Assesses quality of information that may be integrated into an argument | Type: tests and /or short papers, in class projects  Frequency: three to four papers or tests, regular in class activities  Importance: fundamental to the course tests, quizzes, and papers in a 100 level class typically constitute between 80 – 100 % of the grade; all papers and tests would clearly address this dimensions. Even in a class with a significant attendance/participation score, this would constitute at least ½ of a student’s grade.  Projected submission: late-in-the-semester papers or test samples and samples of class activities  Projected success: the course has never been offered, but we will aim for 75-80% based on the experience of existing 100-level courses |
| **Integrate** | Integrates insight and or reasoning with previous understanding to reach informed conclusions and/or understanding | Type: tests and /or short papers, in class projects  Frequency: three to four papers or tests, regular in class activities  Importance: fundamental to the course tests, quizzes, and papers in a 100 level class typically constitute between 80 – 100 % of the grade; all papers and tests would clearly address this dimensions. Even in a class with a significant attendance/participation score, this would constitute at least ½ of a student’s grade.  Projected submission: late-in-the-semester papers or test samples and samples of class activities  Projected success: the course has never been offered, but we will aim for 75-80% based on the experience of existing 100-level courses |
| **Evaluate** | Evaluates information, ideas, and activities according to established principles and guidelines | Type: tests and /or short papers, in class projects  Frequency: three to four papers or tests, regular in class activities  Importance: fundamental to the course tests, quizzes, and papers in a 100 level class typically constitute between 80 – 100 % of the grade; all papers and tests would clearly address this dimensions. Even in a class with a significant attendance/participation score, this would constitute at least ½ of a student’s grade.  Projected submission: late-in-the-semester papers or test samples and samples of class activities  Projected success: the course has never been offered, but we will aim for 75-80% based on the experience of existing 100-level courses |

**PLAN FOR LEARNING OUTCOMES  
PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIETY**

*Attainment of the PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIETY Learning Outcome is required for courses in this component. There are several dimensions to this learning outcome. Please complete the following Plan for Assessment with information regarding course assignments (type, frequency, importance) that will be used by the department to assess the attainment of students in each of the dimensions of the learning outcome. Type refers to the types of assignments used for assessment such as written work, presentations, etc. Frequency refers to the number of assignments included such as a single paper or multiple papers. Importance refers to the relative emphasis or weight of the assignment to the entire course. For each dimension, please specify the expected success rate for students completing the course that meet the proficiency level and explain your reasoning. Please refer to the Rubric for more information on student performance/proficiency in this learning outcome. Note that courses are expected to meaningfully address all dimensions of the learning outcome.*

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| **DIMENSION** | **DIMENSION GUIDANCE** | **PLAN FOR ASSESSMENT** |
| **Analysis of society** | Synthesis and analysis of social structures and processes or events | Type: tests and /or short papers, in class projects  Frequency: three to four papers or tests, regular in class activities  Importance: As the analysis of society is the very foundation of the discipline and everything historians do, this would be fundamental to the course; part of every graded assignment in the course; exclusive of participation points this maybe 80-100% of the grade  Projected submission: late-in-the-semester papers or test samples and samples of class activities  Projected success: the course has never been offered, but we will aim for 75-80% based on the experience of existing 100-level courses |
| **Ethical Issues** | Addressing ethical issues in society | Type: tests and /or short papers, in class projects  Frequency: three to four papers or tests, regular in class activities  Importance: fundamental to the course; every turning point in history involves serious ethical issues, hence this would be part of every graded assignment in the course; exclusive of participation points this maybe 80-100% of the grade  Projected submission: late-in-the-semester papers or test samples and samples of class activities  Projected success: the course has never been offered, but we will aim for 75-80% based on the experience of existing 100-level courses |
| **Development and context of society** | Explore themes in the development of human society | Type: tests and /or short papers, in class projects  Frequency: three to four papers or tests, regular in class activities  Importance: fundamental to the course and the essence of history as a discipline (it would be part of everything in the course) hence, part of every graded assignment in the course; exclusive of participation points this maybe 80-100% of the grade  Projected submission: late-in-the-semester papers or test samples and samples of class activities  Projected success: the course has never been offered, but we will aim for 75-80% based on the experience of existing 100-level courses |

*History: Studying the Past, Preparing for the Future*

HS 120

Turning Points in History

Professor: Alan Scot Willis

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Email: [awillis@nmu.edu](mailto:awillis@nmu.edu)

Course Description

Turning Points in History is intended to provide a sustained examination of major events with substantial long-term ramifications. The professor is free to choose from among hundreds of thousands of possible turning points. For this course, I have chosen the passage of the Bill of Rights in the United States. The Bill of Rights not only codified rights for citizens of the United States, but also codified the growing consensus of rights across the West and established a set of rights that was to become the standard of freedom around the world.

A Recipe for Success (and not just in class)

Be Present: of course you *will* come to class, but you should also be present in class. Class is not taking place on your iPad nor is being text-messaged to you. It's happening in real-life.

Be Open: some of the ideas and topics we will discuss will conform to ideas you've already held; but, some will be brand new and others will conflict with beliefs you already hold. Be as open to the new and the contrary as you are to the old and comfortable.

Be Careful: accept that unknowns will always exist, that it is impossible to know even most things, much less everything; in that knowledge of limitations, weigh the available evidence and arguments with care and caution.

Be Mindful: attend to the matters of the class, think them through, consider what they mean *and* what they could mean. Allow what you learn to become a part of you and a part of your life.

Be Challenged: challenges make life interesting and exciting. No matter how difficult or easy you find a task, you should always allow yourself to be challenged, and to challenge yourself. No one thinks twice when they hear "no pain, no gain" for physical fitness, yet few realize that the same is true in intellectual pursuits.

This Moment Matters: everyone will be something later, we all have the *next* thing to do; but let that wait until its time comes. For now, pay attention to what is *now* not what is *next*.

General Education Goals

This course is situated within the “Perspectives on Society” category of the General Education Program. Like all General Education Program courses, it emphasizes a trio of critical thinking in addition to the specific to the multiplicity of category-specific goals.

Critical Thinking (three goals):

Assesses quality of information that may be integrated into an argument

Integrates insight and/or reasoning with previous understanding to reach informed conclusions and/or understanding

Evaluates information, ideas, and activities according to established principles and guidelines

Perspectives on Society (three goals)

Synthesis and analysis of social structures and processes or events

Addressing Ethical Issues in Society

Explore Themes in the Development of Human Society

Rest assured, this course—like virtually all history courses, whether they are categorized as “Perspectives on Society”—address all six of these goals. Notably, at its fundamental core, history is about making evidenced-based arguments, which requires the assessment of the quality of the evidence and its subsequent integration into an argument. In the process of doing this we use a variety of critical tools ranging from fairly simple applications of basic logic through more complicated applications of language theory; yet, all of this is subsumed under what we call the Historical Method. All people, by the time they have made it to college anyway, have some sense of history; hence, all college-level history courses involved addressing prior understandings of the past.

All history courses offer a perspective on society. In the process of making evidenced based arguments, we must analyze the social structures and events and synthesis that analysis into some conclusion about those structures and events (though, of course, we do no synthesis the structures or events themselves). Historians are not technically ethicists, but the issues we address virtually always involve ethical questions. Of course, the entire point of history is to explore themes in the development of human society.

All of these will be assessed through test questions and the short papers.

Required Tests

Bowling and Bickford: *Creating the Bill of Rights: The Documentary Record from the Frist Federal Congress*

Breyer: *Active Liberty*

John J. Patrick, *The Bill of Rights: A History in Documents*

Most of the readings for this course are articles which will be provided via links on EduCat

“Fuzzy” – But Incredibly Important – Goals

Students will grow intellectually

Students will encounter and engage with new ideas

Students will reevaluate long held ideas

Students will learn something about themselves

People interested in quantifying the results of education do not like these types of goals because they are notoriously difficult to assess, and they have a tendency to manifest themselves long after the student actually experiences them.  They are also very difficult to pin down to one class, since many of them develop in the interplay between multiple classes and life beyond the classroom.  To the extent that these goals can or will be ‘assessed” it will be, primarily, through student self-reporting at the end of the semester. While it is possible that some evidence regarding the accomplishment of these goals may present itself in papers or in discussions, much of that evidence will be sporadic and disconnected making it difficult to use for “assessment” purposes.

General Course Policies:

The student is responsible for knowing what the assignments are and when they are due.

Please turn off the ringers/beepers of all cell phones and pagers.

Please do not use your laptops in this class unless specifically directed to do so; you will need your laptop on many Wednesdays.

Students are expected to come to class on time and stay through the entirety of the class period.

Students with Disabilities

University Statement:

If you have a need for disability-related accommodations or services, please inform the Coordinator of Disability Services in the Disability Services Offices at 2001 C. B. Hedgcock (227-1700; TTY 227-1543). Reasonable and effective accommodations and services will be provided to students if requests are made in a timely manner, with appropriate documentation, in accordance with federal, state and university guidelines.

My Statement:

I am happy to work with you and with the Disability Services Office; however, you need to notify me of the situation as early in the semester as possible. I will not lower standards or eliminate assignments as these are not *reasonable* accommodations.

Assignments, Tests and Grades

The tests are significantly based on document analysis and taken from Bowling and Bickford. There are three tests, equally weighted in calculating your overall test grade.

There are three essays. The essays—while short—will draw upon multiple sources of information, including the two assigned books and materials provided by EduCat. Notably, one paper (of our own choosing) will be enlarged into the “revised essay” which will also incorporate materials which you have located on your own. The two “regular” essays will account for 30% each of your essay grade, while the “revised essay” will account for 40% of your overall essay grade.

Your final grade will calculated by weighting your overall test grade as 40% of your final grade, and your overall essay grade as 60% of your final grade.

Basic Outline of the Course

Personal Freedoms (religion, speech, press, assembly, petitioning the government)

Arms and Militias (the second amendment)

Legal Protections (juries, warrants, and counsel)

Legacy and Impact