Revised Course Outline for HIS 100: Introduction to History

Course Description:

HIS 100 is a basic skills course that does not focus on any one geographical or chronological area. Students will learn: geography, writing, footnoting/citing, methodologies, technology, library skills, etc.- all the fundamentals that they will need to be majors. This course also includes a brief introduction to historiography. Students must enroll in this course within one semester of declaring the History major.

General Education: First Year Navigation

General Education: Critical Thinking

Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Analyze primary and secondary (historical literature) sources;
2. Use WCSU library resources and relevant on-line resources;
3. Use and employ notes and citations in a manner appropriate for historical scholarship.

First Year Navigation Outcomes:

4. Understand the physical and virtual WCSU campus;
5. Identify resources in the university community, including faculty, staff, and administration;
6. Understand the necessary procedures that contribute to academic success and graduation at Western;
7. Understand the culture and expectations of academics at the university level;
8. Understand habits and practices necessary for continuing academic success.

Critical Thinking Outcomes:

Upon completion of the Critical Thinking Competency, students will be able to:

9. Recognize arguments: Students will distinguish between arguments and unsupported claims or opinions, and identify the central claim of an argument;
10. Analyze arguments: Students will determine the components of a given argument and their relation to the whole;
11. Critique arguments: Students will evaluate assumptions and the quality and reliability of evidence. They will apply relevant criteria for evaluating different types of arguments,
including potential counter-arguments;

12. Synthesize arguments: Students will formulate good arguments, which justify positions by bringing together reasons and evidence in a coherent structure that provides persuasive support for a conclusion.

13. Apply arguments: Students will apply critical thinking through a discipline-specific method.

Outline:

I. **Introduction**
   This section of the course focuses on explaining what it is that historians do and provides students with an opportunity to examine why they have chosen this major.

   The following are suggestions of discussion topics appropriate for this section of class:
   a. Introduction: What is history?
   b. Introduction: What is an historian?
   d. Introduction: How has the practice of History developed and changed?

II. **Study Skills**
   This section of the class focuses on helping students develop necessary study skills to prepare them for college level History courses.

   The following are suggestions of lessons appropriate for this section of class:
   a. Geography
   b. Library skills
   c. Technology in the classroom
   d. Databases and Research methods
   e. Historical sources
   f. Primary sources
   g. Trends in methodologies

III. **Writing Skills**
    This section of the class focuses on helping students develop necessary writing skills to prepare them for college level History courses.

    The following are suggestions of lessons appropriate for this section of class:
    a. Grammar reviews
    b. Constructing an argument
    c. Footnoting/Citing
    d. Plagiarism
    e. Quoting
    f. Style
Justification for History Courses Fulfilling the General Education:
First Year Navigation Competency

The History Department certifies that courses marked General Education: First Year Navigation would fulfill the objectives of these competencies in ways including, but not limited to, the following:

1. Understand the physical and virtual WCSU campus;

   **Justification:** First year navigation courses in history will fulfill this outcome through activities including but not limited to any of the following: visiting the WCSU library, visiting the WCSU archives, visiting the career center, encouraging or scheduling visits to the writing center, familiarizing students with aspects of the WCSU website.

2. Identify resources in the university community, including faculty, staff, and administration;

   **Justification:** In addition to the activities noted under point one, first-year navigation courses will fulfill this outcome through activities including but not limited to any of the following: recruiting members of the history faculty for guest lectures on their areas of interest; meeting with the University Archivist and/or other library personnel.

3. Understand the necessary procedures that contribute to academic success and graduation at Western;

   **Justification:** First year navigation courses in history will fulfill this outcome through activities including but not limited to any of the following: Discussing four-year plans and advising within the history department; discussing the careers available to typical history majors and how to get there; discussing study habits; and studying the writing mechanics and Chicago citation format.

4. Understand the culture and expectations of academics at the university level;

   **Justification:** First year navigation courses in history will fulfill this outcome through activities including but not limited to any of the following: describing the requirement expectations of 100, 200, 300, and 400 level courses; describing humanities and social science methodologies; and articulating standards for writing papers.

5. Understand habits and practices necessary for continuing academic success.

   **Justification:** First year navigation courses in history will fulfill this outcome through activities including but not limited to any of the following: discussing study habits; providing for rough drafts and revisions; and discussing note-taking techniques.
Justification for History Courses Fulfiling the General Education:
Critical Thinking Competency

The History Department certifies that courses marked General Education: Critical Thinking would fulfill the objectives of these competencies in ways including, but not limited to, the following:

1. Recognize arguments: Students will distinguish between arguments and unsupported claims or opinions, and identify the central claim of an argument;

   **Justification:** History Critical Thinking Gen Ed courses fulfill this outcome through activities including but not limited to any of the following: assigning presentations in which students must identify the thesis of a work; assigning texts and presenting lectures which distinguish between theses and topic sentences and between claims, warrants, and evidence.

2. Analyze arguments: Students will determine the components of a given argument and their relation to the whole;

   **Justification:** History Critical Thinking Gen Ed courses fulfill outcome through activities including but not limited to any of the following: Assigning research papers in which students must present an argument that contains sub-elements of arguments; assigning presentations, class discussions, or in-class debates in which students are asked to distinguish between types of evidence; through the discussion of the difference between primary and secondary historical sources.

3. Critique arguments: Students will evaluate assumptions and the quality and reliability of evidence. They will apply relevant criteria for evaluating different types of arguments, including potential counter-arguments;

   **Justification:** History Critical Thinking Gen Ed courses fulfill this outcome through activities including but not limited to any of the following: Presentations which require students to critique an article; through students being asked to present such a critique in in-class discussions; through paper assignments that ask them to compare and critique arguments.

4. Synthesize arguments: Students will formulate good arguments, which justify positions by bringing together reasons and evidence in a coherent structure that provides persuasive support for a conclusion;

   **Justification:** History Critical Thinking Gen Ed courses fulfill this outcome through activities including but not limited to any of the following: papers in which such Justifications and structures are an integral part of the grade; in-class discussions and debates in which students are being evaluated on their ability to compare methods and articulate historical arguments.
5. Apply arguments: Students will apply critical thinking through a discipline-specific method.

*Justification:* History Critical Thinking Gen Ed courses fulfill this outcome through activities including but not limited to any of the following: through in-class discussions and paper assignments that compare different approaches to historiography and historical method.