

# Liberal Studies Program

## Learning Outcomes and Writing Expectations

### HISTORICAL INQUIRY (formerly *Understanding the Past*)

Approved by Liberal Studies Council (February 2017) and  
Faculty Council (March 2017)

#### Learning Outcomes:

Historical understanding is a critical competence for our society and a fundamental component of a liberal arts education at DePaul University. Students who are competent in historical inquiry are able to achieve learning outcomes that demonstrate their successful development and application of historical knowledge, historical skills, and historical thinking.

Students have demonstrated a depth and breadth of **historical knowledge** of specified content when they are able to:

- explain historical developments in terms of continuity and change;
- describe the relevant political, economic, social or cultural contexts of historical events and developments;
- explain how people have lived, acted and thought in one or more particular historical periods.

Students have demonstrated **historical skills** when they are able to:

- analyze and evaluate primary and secondary sources;
- differentiate between historical facts and historical interpretations;
- articulate an historical argument;
- support an interpretation with evidence from primary and secondary sources.

Students have demonstrated **historical thinking** when they are able to:

- articulate how geography and regional differences affect the past;
- interpret the complexity and diversity among issues, events, and ideas of the past;
- distinguish among multiple perspectives that shape interpretations of the past;
- use the categories of race, gender, class, ethnicity, region, and religion to analyze historical events and developments.

Students will have demonstrated their abilities in historical inquiry to communicate in writing when they *compose written work that expresses historical knowledge, historical skills, and historical thinking.*

## **Writing Expectations:**

Instructors of HI courses should assign at least six pages of written work that students complete outside of class. Such writing assignments should be designed to evaluate both content-based knowledge and skills in critical thinking, reading, and writing; they should not be limited to “opinion” or “response” pieces. In lower-division courses, instructors are encouraged to favor shorter, more frequent writing assignments over long end-of-term papers, to create more opportunities for students to practice writing and to receive comments and writing instruction from faculty. Revision is especially encouraged and will be counted toward fulfilling the page requirement above (i.e., a 4- to 6-page paper graded separately as a rough draft and as a revised paper would constitute 8 to 12 pages total outside writing).