TO: CAS Academic Policy Committee
FROM: Bruce J. Schulman, Chair, History Department
RE: Establishing an Expanded List
DATE: May 11, 2012

Committee Members:

I write to request your consideration of the History Department’s proposal to establish an “Expanded List” under the Social Sciences Divisional Requirements. Modeling our phrasing after that of Philosophy and Classics, we propose:

All 200- and 300-level CAS HI courses offered in the History Department, with the exception of HI 200.

The Department recently renumbered its courses, and all courses in the range 201-399 are lecture courses without prerequisites and equivalent in general approach and difficulty. In contrast to our 100-level courses, which serve as broad introductions to the discipline, our 200- and 300-level courses investigate a specific time or place, or examine a single theme or topic. They all introduce students to the basic tools of historical analysis: considering events in the context of causal relationships; weighing evidence, often contradictory; constructing interpretative arguments; and mastering a discrete body of knowledge. (HI 200 is excluded from our proposed wording because it is a proseminar for new history majors).

While our 200- and 300-level courses require more reading and writing than our 100-level courses, they are appropriate for freshmen and sophomores who want to explore a more specific time period or region of the world. Instructors are eager and prepared to teach students who come into these classes with little or no background knowledge. These courses are especially suited to students interested in history who might currently turn down our 100-level shortlisted courses because they mimic their high school curricula. In other words, we’d want a curious student who loves history but already took U.S. History and World History in high school to be able to immerse herself, for example, in Renaissance Europe or in the modern Middle East, and to know that these courses would fulfill her divisional requirements.

Thank you for your consideration.

Bruce J. Schulman