

Minutes for the ***Carolina Core*** Committee Meeting
October 8, 2013, 12:30 – 2:00 pm
Thomas Cooper Library, Room 204

Members Present:

Pam Bowers (ex-officio), Mary Ann Byrnes, Ron Cox, Helen Doerpinghaus (Administrative Co-Chair), Kris Finnigan (ex-officio), Andy Gillentine, Stuart Hunter, Allison Jacques, Carrie Linder (ex-officio), Joe Rackers (Faculty Co-Chair), Jerry Wallulils, Virginia Weathers

Members Absent:

John Bowles, Kenneth Campbell, Sara Corwin, Kimberly Glenn, Brian Habing (ex-officio), Stuart Hunter, Carolyn Jones, James Kellogg, James Knapp (ex-officio), Gene Luna, Chris Nesmith, Donald Miles (ex-officio), Susan Parlier, Kimberly Simmons

Specialty Team Chairs Present:

Saskia Coenen-Snyder, Erik Doxtader, Chris Holcomb, Douglas Meade, Shelley Smith

Specialty Team Chairs Absent:

Alexander Beecroft , Sam Hastings, George Khushf, Camelia Knapp, Mary Robinson

Joe Rackers called the meeting to order. The September minutes were approved unanimously. Joe reported on the successful Town Hall in September. The Town Hall was well-received and strengthened faculty understanding of the need for assessment and the process that we will use for review and continuous improvement of the Carolina Core.

The Committee discussed revision of the GHS Learning Outcome. There was strong support for the change and the revised language was approved unanimously (see attached).

Discussion ensued on the Carolina Core website. The website needs to make clear which pages are for proponents submitting courses, instructors teaching courses, or advisors guiding students about course selection. Student information also needs to be clearly identified. This will make the website more useful for everyone and will improve efficiency in administering the Carolina Core.

The Information Literacy pilot is underway and a report will be provided to the full committee once data are available.

Submitted by H. Doerpinghaus

ATTACHMENT

Proposal to revise Carolina Core main learning outcome language for GHS Component

September 10, 2013

The professors of history and related disciplines at the university of South Carolina propose to change the descriptive wording of the main learning outcome for the Global Citizenship and Multicultural Understanding: Historical Studies (GHS) Component of the Carolina Core. The current wording describing the GHS Component reads:

~~*GHS: Use the principles of historical thinking to assess the relationship between modern societies and their historical roots.*~~

The revised wording we propose would read:

GHS: Use the principles of historical thinking to understand past human societies.

We are proposing this revised wording to ensure that GHS courses properly reflect the principles of historical thinking applied within the discipline. An important principle of historical thinking is the notion that past human experiences and communities should be studied in and of themselves.

It is tempting to view the past through the lens of our present experiences, and to assume certain similarities. But as historians at USC and elsewhere emphasize in their undergraduate teaching, past societies and cultures can be startlingly different from their modern counterparts. Multicultural understanding demands that we honestly explore these differences. Otherwise we cannot identify deeper connections between present and past experience.

It is equally tempting to study only “historical roots” – the assumed chain of cause and effect that led to current conditions. Yet cause and effect in human history is frequently non-linear, involving complicated systems that can be known through surviving records only imperfectly. Historians often seek to understand the relationship between past and present. Those who seek only the “roots” of the present, however, risk missing the complexities of historical causation.

The result of overlooking differences between present and past, or seeking only the roots of present circumstances, is a distortion that historians call presentism. For students to think historically, they must understand the problems of presentism, and gain practice in studying the past as a complicated world that may differ sharply from their own.

The implications of revising the main GHS learning outcome are straightforward. All approved GHS core courses have seven specific learning outcomes, six of which already reflect the proposed revision. Adopting this change would entail removing only the one learning outcome for each course that repeats the discarded wording (ie. “use the principles of historical thinking to assess the relationship between modern societies and their historical roots”).