

Department of History

Proposal for a Three-Year Pilot Project: Variable-Course Workload Policy

The Dean of the College of Humanities has asked all departments in the college to establish work-load policies based on variable course assignments. The following document outlines a pilot project, covering the next three academic years, which will implement a variable workload policy for the Department of History.

Rationale.

Any changes to the way in which course-load is determined in the Department of History should attempt to:

1. improve the quality of teaching
2. improve the quantity and quality of research
3. make more efficient the scheduling and delivery of courses to History Majors and to general education students
4. maintain or **to** increase enrollments.

The Department will attempt to measure outcomes of this three-year pilot project by assigning the Chair's Advisory Committee to:

1. Monitor the self-reporting of research, teaching, and service in the yearly activity reports;
2. Monitor the number of books, articles, and chapters published, the number of papers and invited lectures given, and other data listed in yearly activity reports indicating the research profile of the Department
3. Develop a survey to be sent out to faculty after year one and year two of the pilot project
4. Monitor enrollments at all levels (100, 300, 500, 700, and 800).

The Department currently has a two-tiered teaching-load system that is on its face inequitable. Contractually, there are 35 colleagues who have a 5-course load; 15 who have a 4-course load (including assistant professors in their first 4 years of service); and 5 others who have a 2.5 course obligation to the History Department because they are shared with other units.

The 4-course contracts for colleagues other than assistant professors have occurred through hiring at the senior level and through negotiation over outside offers. In short, our competitors (many of whom are on a semester-based system) operate on 4-course loads, and we have had to meet that threshold if we were to attract and retain highly sought-after faculty.

In fact, when the statistics are studied, there are many 5-course colleagues who teach fewer than 5 courses; and there are some 4-course colleagues who teach fewer than 4 courses on a year-to-year basis. The reductions occur for a variety of reasons. Some are customarily given for heavy service assignments (the Chair, Vice Chair, Graduate Studies Chair); others for SRAs; and still

others at the discretion of the Chair and the Dean of Humanities to meet personal situations (e.g., heavy service or teaching obligations in the department, college, university or profession).

Over the period 2000-2001 to 2004-2005, the Department's courses-per-colleague-per-year ranges from 3.29-3.72. (See attachments.)

After looking at past trends in scheduling and in granting course-reductions, the Department of History realized that a more simplified and equitable system of assigning courses, which still included the flexibility of the current system, was available. The proposal recognizes that "workload" includes scholarship, teaching, and service. The standard course load for all faculty will remain at 5 course/year, but faculty actively engaged in research, in teaching at all levels of the curriculum, and in service will be able to schedule 4 courses/year on a normal basis. This new policy will establish a series of oversight procedures to ensure that faculty members are contributing to scholarship and meeting expectations in service.

There are a number of reasons why faculty members might be assigned to teach five courses/year. Some faculty members might choose to teach five courses, for example, if they are working on a long-term research project that will not yield articles or a book manuscript for several years. In those intervening years, they may wish to have their salary be determined by having a higher percentage of merit assessed to teaching. If faculty are not contributing to scholarship on a regular basis and/or are not performing service, the Chair and the elected members of the Chair's Advisory Committee may determine that such faculty members should have a five-course teaching load. In all cases, however, any move for a colleague to a five-course load will not be a permanent assignment; rather, it is a recognition that the duties of every faculty member involve a commitment to research, teaching, and service. If a colleague does not make a balanced commitment to all three, then adjustments in workload must be made for a period of time until that balance is restored.

The Pilot Proposal.

1. According to the Faculty Rules the Chair is ultimately responsible for assigning teaching. The Chair and the elected members of the Chair's Advisory Committee may make adjustments in the work-load policy when s/he believes doing so is in the best interests of the Department and individual faculty members. **The goal is to establish an equitable workload policy that takes into account a balanced commitment to scholarship, teaching, and service.**
2. In any give year, all faculty may choose to be on a 4-course load per academic year. Per Faculty Rules, all faculty will be on duty three of the 4 quarters.
3. All two-quarter 800-courses will count as one course.
4. Faculty members will ordinarily teach no more than one graduate-level course per academic year (700- and 800-level courses); the service course 786 will not count.

5. All faculty will continue to teach at least one service course (a GEC 100-level or 597, 398 or 786) per academic year. Faculty are strongly encouraged to teach more than one every other year or so.

6. Scheduling. Working through the various “teaching areas,” faculty have been flexible in responding to the need to balance offerings from one quarter to another to meet undergraduate and graduate commitments. To maintain current enrollment and a balance of offerings across the academic year, faculty agree to remain flexible and to adjust their initial course proposals and schedules to meet Departmental requirements. The custom of encouraging assistant professors during their first four years to schedule their courses over two quarters will continue.

7. Course-reductions from the 4-course load would be limited to:

Chair (3-course reduction)

Vice Chair (1-course reduction)

Graduate Studies Chair (1-course reduction, normally taken in Winter Quarter)

None of these reductions may be “banked” for later use. (All currently “banked” courses will be honored.)

8. Special Research Assignments (SRAs) will result in a one course reduction to 3 and will release the faculty member from service for the quarter in which the SRA was taken.

9. Faculty wishing to teach more than 4 courses in one academic year may do so. The extra course(s) may not be “banked” and will be reflected in the calendar-year-end report and thus would change the percentage considerations for raises from 50-30-20 (research, teaching, service) to 40-40-20 (for 5 courses) and 30-50-20 for 6 courses).

10. The Chair and the Chair’s Advisory Committee will implement and monitor the variable-workload pilot project.

a) If the Chair and the Chair’s Advisory Committee detects in the record of a faculty member a sustained deficiency in scholarship and/or service, it may recommend to the Chair that s/he assign a 5-course load to that faculty member for a period of time to be determined by the Chair, in consultation with the Advisory Committee and the colleague in question.

b) The Chair’s Advisory Committee will develop an approach to implementing the procedure in 10.a) above, which will be based in large measure on the current practice of reviewing Annual Activity Reports.

c) Changes to the Annual Activity Reports (AAR). AARs currently include 1) a section on scholarship, in which the faculty member reviews recent activity and plans for future activity, and b) a section on self-evaluation of teaching.

Beginning in January 2007, tenured faculty will include in their AARs a review of their records of service over the past five years and indicate their plans for service over the next five years.

These plans should address the following: availability for major service positions in the department, such as Vice Chair and Chair of Undergraduate Teaching Committee, Chair of Graduate Studies, and Chair of the Promotion and Tenure Committee; participating on search committees; service to the college, the university, and the community; and, work in professional societies (e.g., as officers or members of book-prize committees).

The Chair's Advisory Committee will draw up for Departmental approval by the 8th week of Autumn Quarter a model of how this new section of the AAR should be filled-in.

11. Over the first year of the pilot program, the Chair and the Chair's Advisory Committee will:

- 1) Discuss and develop a policy on whether editing journals, newsletters, etc. should be counted as service or research.
- 2) Discuss and develop a definition of "on-duty, not teaching."

The Chair's Advisory Committee will bring the fruits of its discussions to the Department in Spring 2007.

Can the Pilot Program Maintain or Enhance Enrollments?

The Ad hoc Committee has looked over statistics furnished by Jim Bach and Rich Ugland for teaching over the last 10 years and the way in which course-loads have been distributed.

Given the change in 800-level courses (the 2-quarter seminar counts as one course) and the elimination of course reductions for all but a few service duties, the committee believes that the department can meet student demand under the pilot program with a minimum of increase in class-size, *if the Department hires one more lecturer or visiting assistant professor*, and if colleagues cooperate with one another and with the Chair in planning course offerings.

A review of past patterns and next year's (2006-2007) schedule of teaching confirms this conclusion. This analysis does not take into account any colleagues who might wish to take advantage of the variable work load policy and teach 5 courses.

For the last six years the department has used an "Ideal Schedule" to determine how many courses at each level we should schedule to maximize enrollments. This was based on past enrollments and sections offered and what we anticipated needing to increase our enrollments. While using this ideal schedule our enrollments have risen from approximately 16,000 students annually to over 18,000 students annually. The "Ideal Schedule" is the *optimal number of sections required to sustain or increase enrollment* numbers; for the past four years we have seldom met the target figures set by the Ideal Schedule at every level of the curriculum; faculty winning grants, fellowships, Faculty Professional Leaves, and Special Research Assignments always force adjustments. In recent years some unexpected retirements have also made the target figures hard to attain at every course level. Nonetheless, our enrollments from 2003-2005 did show slow, steady growth when using the Ideal Schedule as a guide to scheduling courses.

From the raw data presented in Table 1, we have concluded that if the sections continue to draw the same number of students that they have over the past 5 years, and if the department hires a visiting assistant professor, then current enrollments would be maintained. The data in Table 1 is also shown in the form of a histogram (Table 2), comparing the average number of sections for the years 2003-2005 with the Ideal Schedule and a projected 2006-2007 schedule based on a 4-course load. The numbers under "06-07" reflect our best estimate right now of sections scheduled if a 4-course policy were instituted, and faculty members maintained a teaching schedule that balanced departmental needs across the curriculum.

Each year we lose faculty sections for faculty on grants, fellowships, or internal awards that reduce teaching. Our average from 2000-2005 has been 7 grants or fellowships, 2 FPLs, and 4 SRAs; next year we project 5 grants or fellowships, but we have awarded 5 FPLs and 6 SRAs, which means that an abnormal number of faculty will be unavailable for teaching assignments next years. As Table 1 and Table 2 indicate, we will have seven fewer 100-level courses projected for faculty members to teach, but the rest of the schedule meets or exceeds the ideal schedule with the four-course load of the Pilot Program. We are asking for *a visiting assistant professor or a one-year senior lecturer to cover that shortfall for next year*. According to Table 1 and Table 2, the only other area where we fall short of the Ideal Schedule and our pattern of courses from 2003-2005 is at the 500-level, but we can make up any modest shortfall in enrollments with the increased number of high-enrollment 300-level offerings and raising the limits on some popular 500-level offerings. As a result, the proposal above laying out the 4-course load policy will work starting next year.

(The data reflect only faculty-taught courses and thus assume that graduate students and instructors would teach the same number of sections.)

Table 1: Number of Faculty Sections Taught by Level per Year

	Schedule, 2003-2005		Ideal Sched.	06-07*
100	30.5	(up from 22.5, 2001-3)	34	27
300	14.5		18	24
500	61.0	(up from 53.5, 2001-3)	54	52
398	19.0	(only 15 in 2004-5)	20	19
598	18.0	steady	15	17
700	34.5	(up from 27, 2001-3)	32	31
800	8.0	steady	8	8
				+1**
Total	185		181	179

We also examined the preliminary breakdown of sections per quarter for 2006-2007.

Table 2: Number of Faculty Taught Sections for 2006-2007

Summer:	9
Autumn:	58
Winter:	68
Spring:	58

These numbers are based on our Academic Program Coordinator's calculations on which would be the most appropriate courses for each faculty member to schedule for next year. As Table 4 "Number of Faculty Sections Taught by Quarter," indicates, the balance of courses projected for next academic year falls within the normal range for the years 2003-2005. The larger number of courses offered in the winter offsets the relatively fewer sections offered in the spring. Moreover, the overall balance of offerings project with the four-course load in 2006-2007 is better than in several other previous years. Once again, the projections for the Pilot Program for next year appear to work effectively to maintain or increase enrollments.

Another reason for our optimism about having our faculty move to a 4 course load is our projected, gradual rise in Full Time Equivalents (FTEs). In Academic year 2003-2004, the department had 51.1 FTEs, which rose to 52.1 in 2004-2005 and 53.4 in 2005-2006. With no projected retirements in 2006-2007, we expect the department's FTEs to rise to 56.1 and the next year, 2007-2008 it may rise to 58.1, if there are no additional retirements. By hiring more junior faculty to balance the demographic structure across the ranks, we are able to have the department grow modestly and still remain within our budget parameters. The larger number of FTEs will give us greater flexibility in meeting our teaching obligations and meeting our enrollment projections.

In any given year we anticipate losing approximately 10 FTEs with faculty on grants (5-7 average annually), FPLs (2-4 average annually), SRAs (4-5 annually). We will also lose the equivalent of one FTE for course reductions for the Chair (3), Vice Chair (1), and Graduate Studies Chair (1). Since we have managed to have our enrollments grow from 2003-2006 with 40.1 FTEs each year (51.1 FTEs minus approximately 11 FTEs for grants, FPLs, etc.) the gradual rise to 58.1 FTEs by 2007-2008 minus the 11 projected lost FTEs will still give us 47.1 FTEs in any given year for teaching. This rise from 40.1-48.1 FTEs over the years from 2003-2007 should give us the flexibility to meet our teaching obligations and increase enrollments. As a result, we should need a visiting assistant professor or one-year senior lecturer appointment only for next year, when our FTEs will not yet have grown to 58.1 and when we have an unusually large number of faculty members on grants, fellowships, FPLs, and SRAs.