

**Annual Key Assessment Findings and Curricular Improvements**  
**Medieval and Byzantine Studies Program**  
**B.A. Program in Medieval and Byzantine Studies**

**AY 2009-2010**

**Key Assessment Findings**

Graduating seniors in Medieval and Byzantine Studies are required to complete a Senior Thesis based on an interdisciplinary research project developed over the course of two semesters, which fulfills the comprehensive examination requirement. The choice of a research topic, the research itself, and the crafting of a paper of significant length are done under the close supervision of a faculty member (area advisor) and it is preceded by the completion of relevant coursework in the field. The area advisor is chosen for his or her expertise in the relevant area of study. The choice of the project must be approved by the Director of the Center for Medieval and Byzantine Studies. The completed thesis is to be submitted in the spring semester of senior year and it is read and evaluated by the area advisor and a second faculty member. Both faculty members confer in assessing the success of the thesis in meeting the goals outlined in the student learning assessment rubrics.

In Academic Year 2009-2010 the program graduated one senior with a BA. Therefore, the small size of the program precludes detailed presentation of the data. A senior thesis rubric was developed and applied. Results will be aggregated over time and discussed in future years to preserve confidentiality.

**Curricular Improvements**

While MBS has never had large numbers of majors, the quality of students has usually been very high. Recent graduates have gone on to prestigious MA and PhD programs in Medieval Studies, English, History, etc., most recently to the University of York (UK), to Cornell, and even to Columbia University Medical School. In 2009-10 we saw an increase in our enrollments with two freshmen and a transferred sophomore major, as well as a number of new MBS minors (currently 10).

It was felt by the faculty that for an interdisciplinary program that draws from a broad array of departments and schools, a unified gateway course under the aegis of the Center would be invaluable in initiating students in the themes and methodologies of Medieval Studies. Our new, team-taught gateway course was successfully implemented in Spring 2010 and drew 22 students, many of whom declared an MBS minor.

A new initiative to support undergraduate advancement and involvement in research was to integrate undergraduate students in our annual on-campus graduate conference and to encourage graduating seniors to give a presentation of their work. This is primarily meant to give students recognition for the effort invested in their senior theses and other projects, to gain valuable feedback on their work, and to further strengthen a community of scholars. The conference presentation is only strongly encouraged but not mandatory, thus it is not part of the assessment rubrics.