

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

AY 2011-2012

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 (as part of MDST 451 & 452: Senior Seminar), 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 or Undergraduate Advisor of the Center for Medieval and Byzantine Studies. The completed thesis is to be submitted in the spring semester of senior year (as part of MDST 452) 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 2011-2012 the program graduated one MBS major (as well as six minors who did not need to take comprehensive exams or equivalents). Due to the limited data set, no numerical assessment data is attached to this report.

Curricular Improvements

While MBS has never had a large number of undergraduate majors and minors (usually 1-2 majors and 3-6 minors per class), 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, Philosophy, and Law. In 2009-10 and 2010-11 we saw a significant increase in the enrollment of MBS minors, especially among Honors students, and the trend continued in 2011-12.

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 content areas and methodologies of Medieval Studies. Our new, team-taught, and modular gateway course (MDST 201: Medieval Pathways) was successfully implemented in Spring 2010. It continues to attract students from a variety of academic fields, either as a gateway to the MBS major or minor or as an elective course.

We make continued effort to support undergraduate advancement and involvement in research by inviting advanced undergraduate students to present at our annual on-campus graduate conference (held every April). 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 young scholars.

Submitted by Dr. Lilla Kopár, Director of the Center for Medieval and Byzantine Studies