

Assessment Findings and Curricular Improvements
Department of History
Undergraduate Program

Assessment Measures

The Department of History uses the following measures to assess departmental learning outcomes: Senior Papers, Pass rates on comprehensive examinations, grades, course evaluations and enrollment totals for the capstone seminar and the gateway courses to it; student perception surveys.

Assessment Findings

Senior Seminar Discussion (Attachments 1 & 4):

The Department of History analyzed course grade, evaluation, and enrollment data in HIST 401 Senior Thesis Seminar for a five-year period (Fall 2003 through Fall 2007) as well as selected data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) . Each spring, the Department of History uses the NSSE to benchmark the general education outcomes of its senior students against senior students enrolled in: Catholic University, Carnegie Peers, and the entire NSSE participant group.

Satisfactory performance in this course (a grade of C- or better) serves in place of a comprehensive examination in satisfying the university graduation requirement. During this period, enrollment remained between twenty-one and thirty-three students with the unusual exception of the enrollment of forty-two students in the Fall 2004 term.

Enrollment in individual sections is capped at eight students and the number of sections since Fall 2004 has never been less than four. We have 37 students pre-enrolled for the Fall 2008 term and we will be offering five sections. Maintaining quality is considered critical by the department in achieving our goals and that requires a low faculty/student ratio. Although students vary in their appreciation of the rigor of the work imposed on them and express this by a fluctuating (though still strongly positive) appraisal of the utility of the course as expressed in student evaluations, they uniformly seem to appreciate the amount of time teachers spend with them and express this by giving a strongly positive rating of the faculty members involved in a given year.

The vast number of students who enroll in the senior thesis seminar display good to exceptional performance (B- to A+). The average grade in this course hovered around 3.4 (B+) with a low in the Fall 2004 term of 3.26 (slightly below a B+). Over the entire period, very few students either failed the course (2) or withdrew from it (2). Given the rubrics attached to the A, B and C levels in this course as explained in the program statement, the data supports the conclusion that we are achieving our departmental goals for the undergraduate program. This conclusion is reinforced by data provided by the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). The survey of Spring 2007 graduates showed statistically meaningful differences in the quantity of written work demanded of our students when compared to their Carnegie Peers, the number of books read in

individual courses, and assignments which required the student to “show facility in critical analysis and reasoning,” and the ability to “critically evaluate information in relation to their specified purposes.”

Intermediate Course Discussion (Attachments 2a & 2b):

The Department of History analyzed course grade, evaluation, and enrollment data in HIST 387 and HIST 388 -the Junior Seminar- for a five year period (Fall 2003 through Fall 2007). During this period enrollment fluctuated between 24 and 45 in HIST 387 and between 25 and 39 in HIST 388. The average grade for students in HIST 387 has been remarkably stable (B) during that entire period but the student performance in HIST 388 fluctuated between a B- and a B+ average during that period. There were significantly more C grades in both courses but as in HIST 401, few students failed (a D grade must be repeated) and none withdrew. It was due to a concern over the number of minimally proficient grades and failures in HIST 388 in 2003 and 2004 that the department decided to look carefully at ways to assist weaker students in their preparation for HIST 401 (see curricular improvements below).

Introductory Level Course Discussion (Attachments 3a & 3b):

The Department of History analyzed course grade, evaluation, and enrollment data in HIST 101 World Civilization to 1700 and HIST 102 World Civilization Since 1700 for a five year period (Fall 2003 through Fall 2007).

The number of students enrolled in these two courses, which were operated as service courses as well as required courses for all History majors, was significantly higher than in any other courses offered by the department. Grades and evaluations were markedly lower than other courses offered by the department. For these reasons as well as because of a faculty belief that they did not fit pedagogically with the remainder of the major requirements, they are being eliminated as service courses and as part of the major structure (see curricular improvements).

Curricular Improvements

In the last three years, review of data and extensive faculty discussions led to two substantial (but not radical) changes. (1) Student evaluation forms, informal discussions with students completing the program, and the input of those professors who teach the junior and senior seminars led to a greater differentiation between HIST 387 and HIST 388, so that the latter begins the development of skills required to choose and research the senior thesis. As a result, students now effectively begin work on their senior thesis at the end of the spring semester of their junior year. This innovation, as well as improved coordination between the instructors in the 388 junior seminar and the assigned instructors in the senior 401 seminars has already led to improved performance in the latter course. (2) In response to instructor dissatisfaction regarding the pedagogic effectiveness of its survey offerings, the department has recently decided to revamp its survey structure. Previously students participated in two survey courses (world history from the end of the Roman Empire through the seventeenth century, and from the seventeenth century to the present), which were very broad in coverage, and enrolled as many as one hundred students, most of them freshman. On the basis of course evaluations, discussions

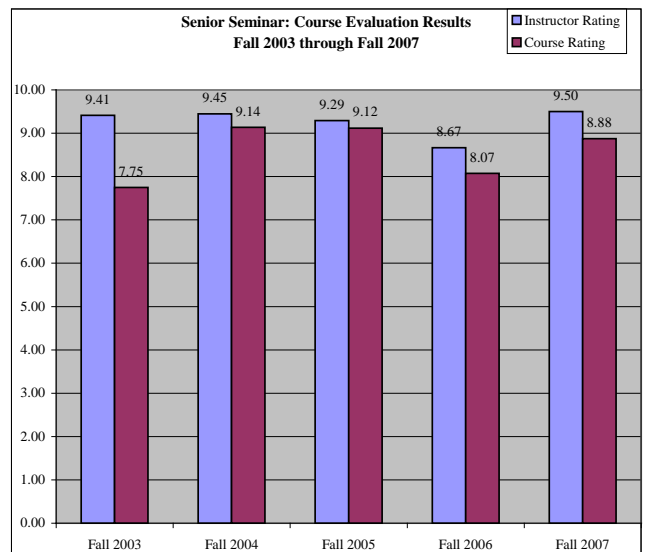
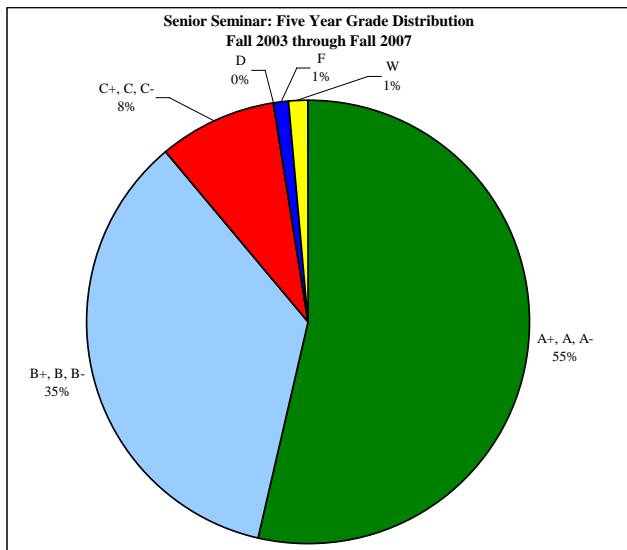
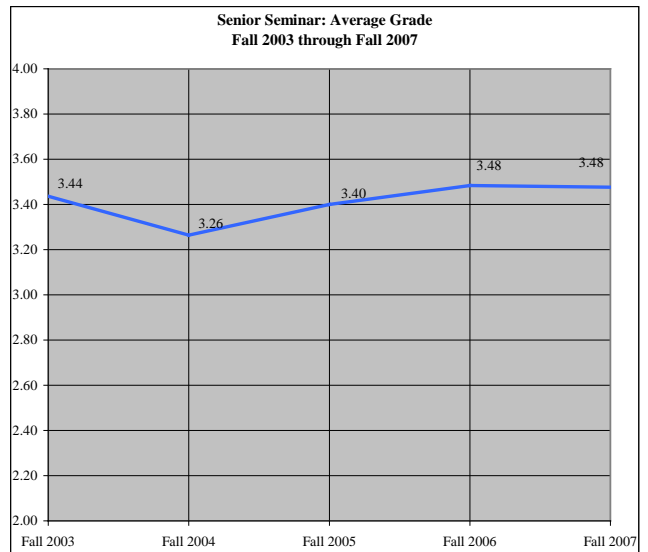
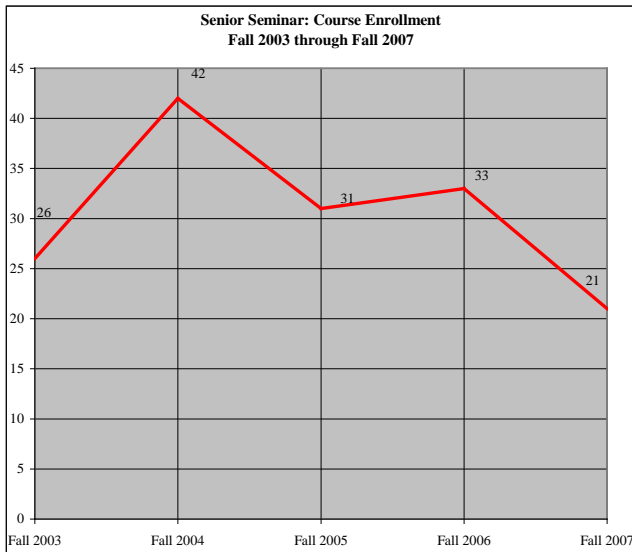
with teaching assistants, and the perception of the instructors, it was felt that courses of this size placed too great a distance between instructor and students, most of whom were novices in the study of history. The department decided to replace these extremely broad surveys with a selection of more focused surveys, to be taught in smaller classes.

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA
Outcomes Assessment

SENIOR SEMINAR SUMMARY DATA: DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
HIST 401 Senior Thesis Seminar*

Term	Course Enrollment	Course Grade		Course Grades Grade Distribution						Course Evaluation Results						
		Avg.	StDev.	A+, A, A-	B+, B, B-	C+, C, C-	D	F	W	Course Eval. #	%	Instructor Rating Avg.	StDev.	Course Rating Avg.	StDev.	
Fall 2003	26	3.44	0.58	15	8	2				1	17	65.38%	9.41	0.71	7.75	2.70
Fall 2004	42	3.26	0.81	20	16	5			1		29	69.05%	9.45	0.99	9.14	1.19
Fall 2005	31	3.40	0.83	17	10	2			1	1	17	54.84%	9.29	0.99	9.12	1.11
Fall 2006	33	3.48	0.51	18	13	2					27	81.82%	8.67	0.96	8.07	1.41
Fall 2007	21	3.48	0.58	12	7	2					8	38.10%	9.50	0.76	8.88	1.64

*In semesters where more than one section of the senior seminar or thesis option was offered, aggregate data is displayed.

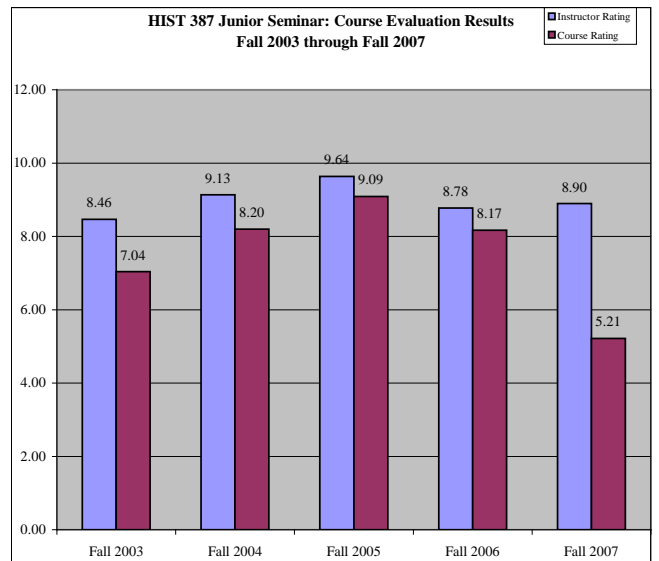
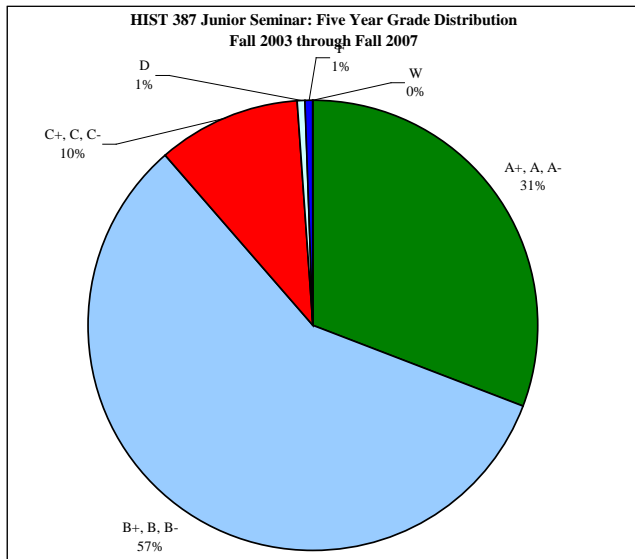
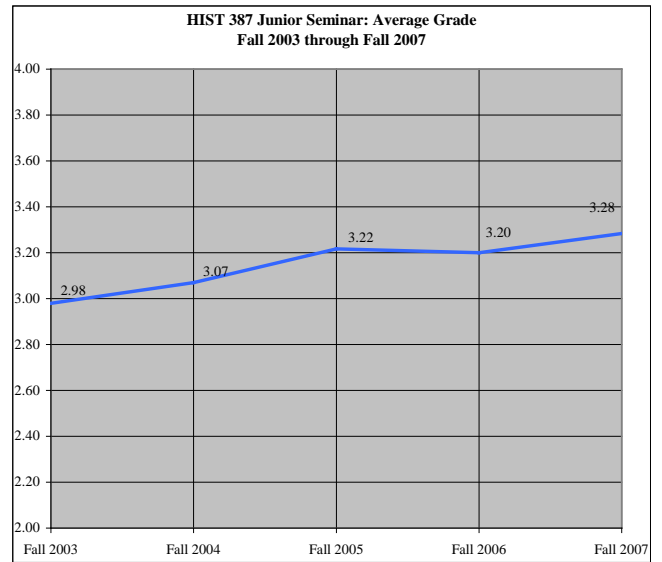
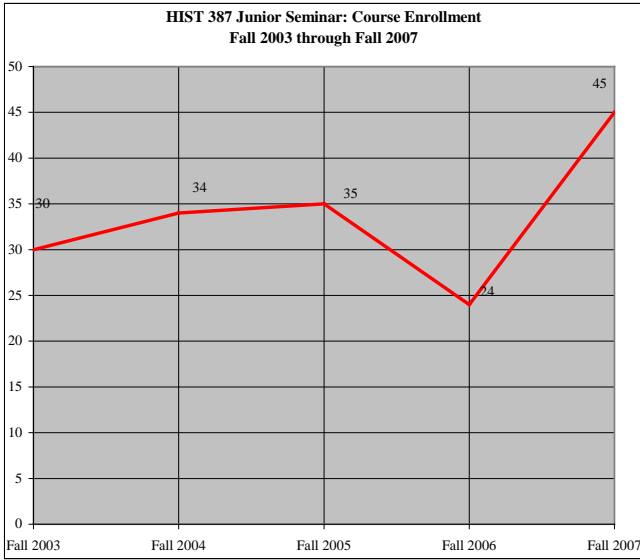


THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA
Outcomes Assessment

SENIOR SEMINAR SUMMARY DATA: DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
HIST 387 Junior Seminar*

Term	Course Enrollment	Course Grade		Course Grades Grade Distribution						Course Evaluation Results							
		Avg.	StDev.	A+, A, A-	B+, B, B-	C+, C, C-	D	F	W	Course Eval. #	Course Eval. %	Instructor Rating Avg.	Instructor Rating StDev.	Course Rating Avg.	Course Rating StDev.		
Fall 2003	30	2.98	0.65	3	26				1			28	93.33%	8.46	1.67	7.04	2.62
Fall 2004	34	3.07	0.70	11	15	8						30	88.24%	9.13	0.78	8.20	1.56
Fall 2005	35	3.22	0.61	12	19	3	1					11	31.43%	9.64	0.67	9.09	1.22
Fall 2006	24	3.20	0.49	8	14	2						18	75.00%	8.78	2.07	8.17	1.95
Fall 2007	45	3.28	0.64	18	23	4						29	64.44%	8.90	1.18	5.21	2.27

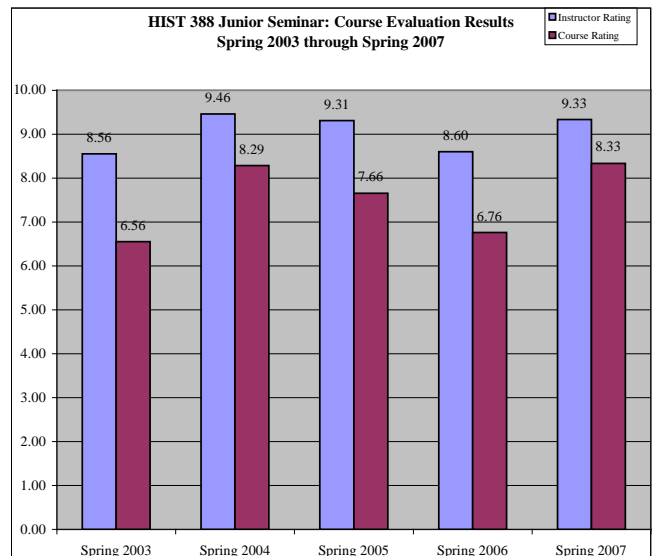
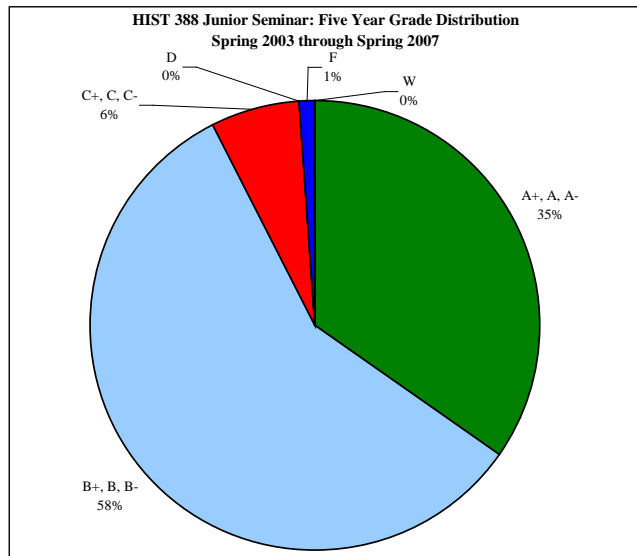
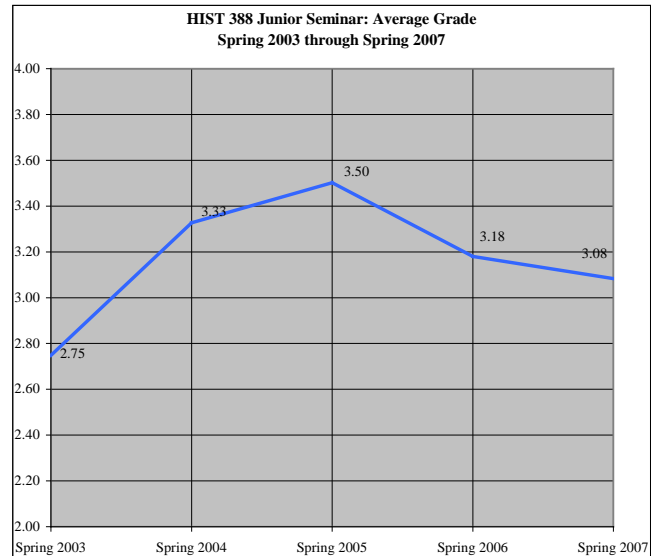
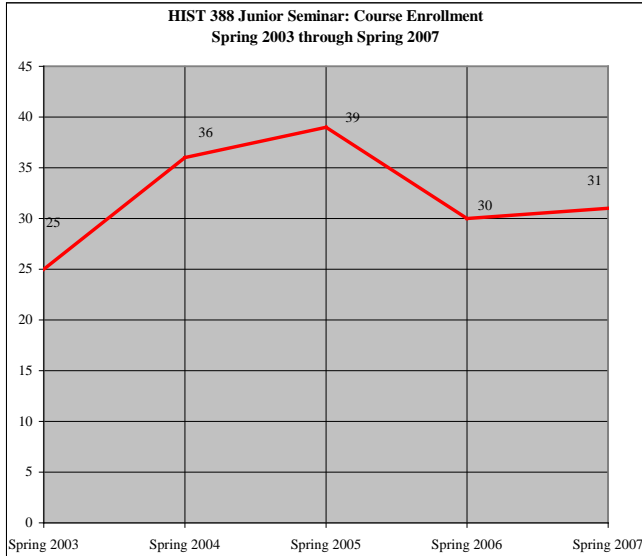
*In semesters where more than one section of the seminar was offered, aggregate data is displayed.



SENIOR SEMINAR SUMMARY DATA: DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
HIST 388 Junior Seminar*

Term	Course Enrollment	Course Grade		Course Grades Grade Distribution					Course Evaluation Results							
		Avg.	StDev.	A+, A, A-	B+, B, B-	C+, C, C-	D	F	W	Course Eval. #	Course Eval. %	Instructor Rating Avg.	Instructor Rating StDev.	Course Rating Avg.	Course Rating StDev.	
Spring 2003	25	2.75	1.04	5	13	5			2		27	108.00%	8.56	0.97	6.56	2.31
Spring 2004	36	3.33	0.47	12	22	2					14	38.89%	9.46	0.78	8.29	1.94
Spring 2005	39	3.50	0.43	22	17						29	74.36%	9.31	0.93	7.66	1.93
Spring 2006	30	3.18	0.35	6	24						25	83.33%	8.60	1.04	6.76	1.94
Spring 2007	31	3.08	0.59	11	17	3					6	19.35%	9.33	0.82	8.33	1.03

*In semesters where more than one section of the seminar was offered, aggregate data is displayed.

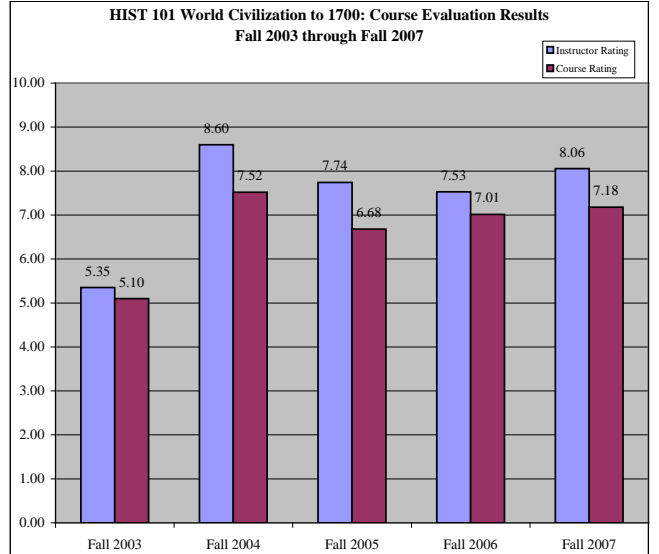
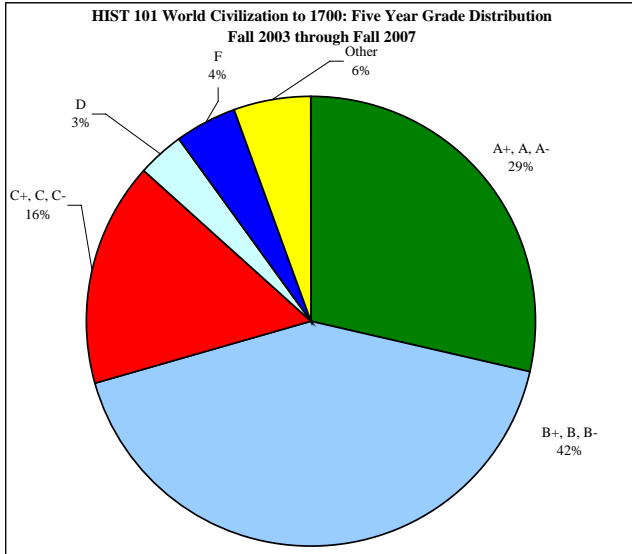
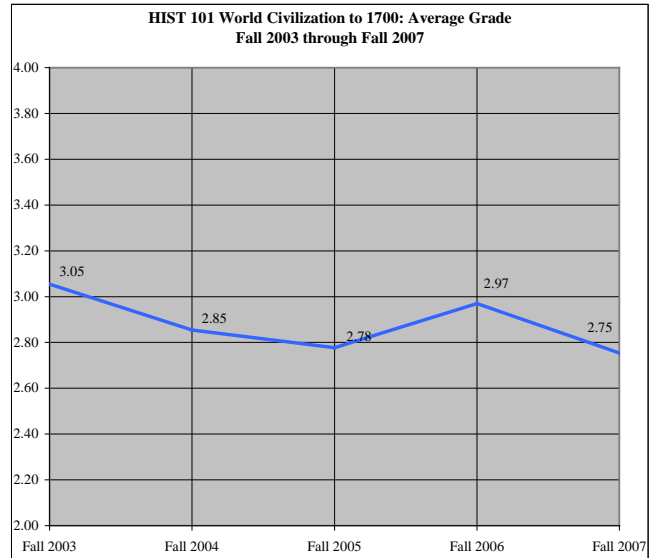
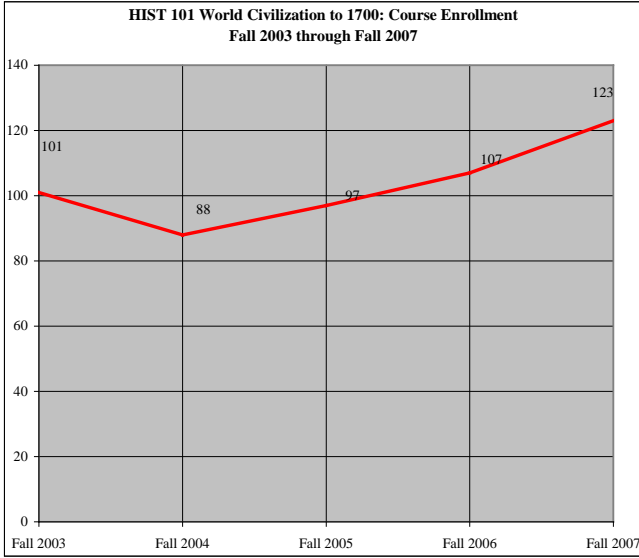


INTRODUCTORY COURSE SUMMARY DATA: DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
HIST 101 World Civilization to 1700*

Term	Course Enrollment	Course Grade		Course Grades							Course Evaluation Results					
		Avg.	StDev.	A+, A, A-	B+, B, B-	C+, C, C-	D	F	Other**	Course Eval. #	Course Eval. %	Instructor Rating Avg.	Instructor Rating StDev.	Course Rating Avg.	Course Rating StDev.	
Fall 2003	101	3.05	0.94	43	31	17	3	3	4	20	19.80%	5.35	2.98	5.10	2.47	
Fall 2004	88	2.85	1.10	27	33	18	1	7	2	62	70.45%	8.60	1.88	7.52	2.26	
Fall 2005	97	2.78	1.02	23	40	17	1	6	10	62	63.92%	7.74	2.16	6.68	2.16	
Fall 2006	107	2.97	0.84	30	52	13	4	2	6	77	71.96%	7.53	2.41	7.01	2.25	
Fall 2007	123	2.75	0.98	25	60	18	8	5	7	91	73.98%	8.06	1.49	7.18	2.06	

*In semesters where more than one section of the senior seminar or thesis option was offered, aggregate data is displayed.

**The "Other" category includes grades of I, W, AU, and P.

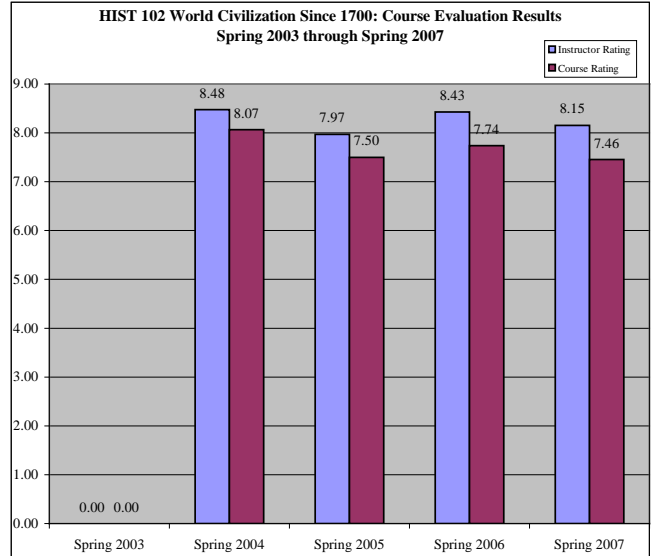
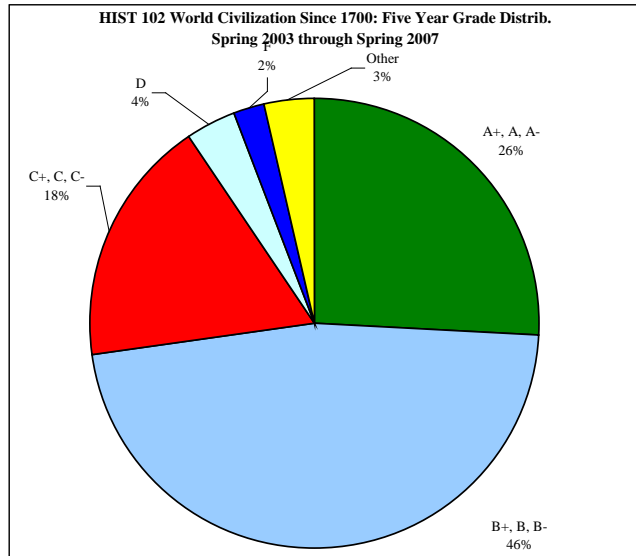
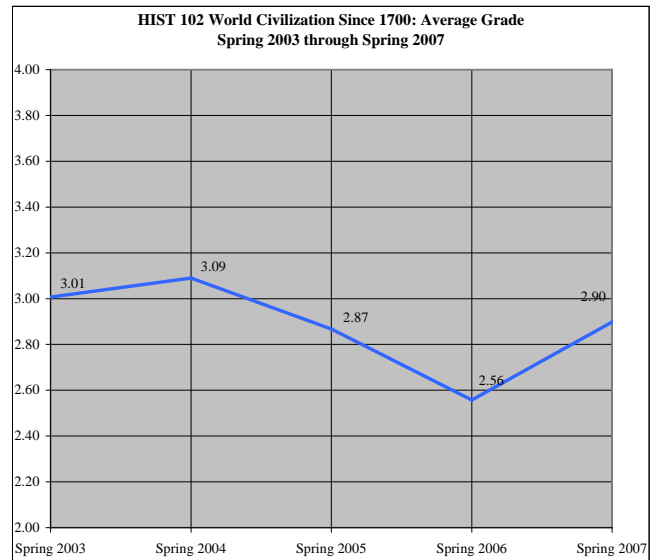
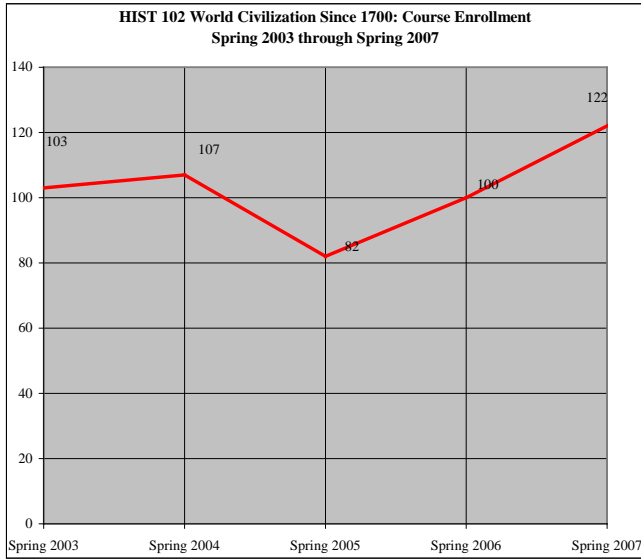


INTRODUCTORY COURSE SUMMARY DATA: DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
HIST 102 World Civilization Since 1700*

Term	Course Enrollment	Course Grade		Course Grades							Course Evaluation Results						
		Avg.	StDev.	Grade Distribution							Course Eval.		Instructor Rating		Course Rating		
				A+, A, A-	B+, B, B-	C+, C, C-	D	F	Other	#	%	Avg.	StDev.	Avg.	StDev.		
Spring 2003	103	3.01	0.85	30	47	20			3	3							
Spring 2004	107	3.09	0.69	32	60	11		2	1	1	92	85.98%	8.48	1.56	8.07	1.64	
Spring 2005	82	2.87	0.88	19	40	12		3	2	6	68	82.93%	7.97	1.75	7.50	1.86	
Spring 2006	100	2.56	0.93	18	38	29		8	2	5	77	77.00%	8.43	1.75	7.74	2.02	
Spring 2007	122	2.90	0.89	34	56	19		6	3	4	80	65.57%	8.15	1.98	7.46	1.88	

*In semesters where more than one section of the senior seminar or thesis option was offered, aggregate data is displayed.

**The "Other" category includes grades of I, W, AU, and P.



Standard 12: General Education : The institution's curricula are designed so that students acquire and demonstrate college-level proficiency in general education and essential skills, including at least oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, and technological competency.

**2007 National Survey of Student Engagement Mean Comparisons: Selected Catholic University General Education Goals
Department of History: Seniors**

Graduates will demonstrate proficiency in oral and written communication, including the composition of argumentative essays, research papers and presentations.

Department of History

Department of History compared with:

Catholic University

Carnegie Peers

NSSE 2007

	Mean ^a	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c
<i>During the current school year, about how much reading and writing have you done? 1=none, 2=1-4, 3=5-10, 4=11-20, 5=more than 20</i>										
Number of assigned textbooks, books, or book-length packs of course readings	3.77	3.35	.00	.40	3.08	*	.70	3.13	.00	.64
Number of books read on your own (not assigned) for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment	2.18	2.24	.00	-.07	2.17	.00	.01	2.17	.00	.01
Number of written papers or reports of 20 pages or more	2.07	1.73	**	.47	1.59	***	.65	1.62	***	.59
Number of written papers or reports between 5 and 19 pages	3.60	2.99	.00	.59	2.49	**	1.18	2.55	**	1.11
Number of written papers or reports of fewer than 5 pages	2.98	3.20	.00	-.18	2.93	.00	.04	2.96	.00	.01
<i>To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? 1=very little, 2=some, 3=quite a bit, 4=very much</i>										
Writing clearly and effectively	3.27	3.04	.00	.26	3.03	.00	.28	3.06	.00	.24
Speaking clearly and effectively	2.73	2.94	.00	-.24	2.92	.00	-.21	2.95	.00	-.24

Graduates will show facility in critical analysis and reasoning, particularly in disciplinary and cross disciplinary contexts.

Department of History

Department of History compared with:

Catholic University

Carnegie Peers

NSSE 2007

	Mean ^a	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c
<i>During the current school year, how much has your coursework emphasized the following mental activities? 1=very little, 2=some, 3=quite a bit, 4=very much</i>										
Memorizing facts, ideas, or methods from your courses and readings so you can repeat them in pretty much the same form	2.60	2.66	.00	-.07	2.78	.00	-.19	2.75	.00	-.16
Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory, such as examining a particular case or situation in depth and considering its components	3.38	3.36	.00	.02	3.22	.00	.21	3.23	.00	.20
Synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships	3.25	3.20	.00	.06	3.01	.00	.29	3.03	.00	.26
Making judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods, such as examining how others gathered and interpreted data and assessing the soundness of their conclusions	3.49	3.11	.00	.44	2.94	*	.63	2.96	*	.60
Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations	3.11	3.33	.00	-.28	3.18	.00	-.09	3.18	.00	-.09
<i>In your experience at your institution during the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following? 1=never, 2=sometimes, 3=often, 4=very often</i>										
Put together ideas or concepts from different courses when completing assignments or during class discussions	2.59	2.97	.00	-.43	2.91	.00	-.40	2.90	.00	-.39
<i>To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? 1=very little, 2=some, 3=quite a bit, 4=very much</i>										
Thinking critically and analytically	3.31	3.33	.00	-.03	3.32	.00	-.01	3.33	.00	-.03
Analyzing quantitative problems	2.84	2.70	.00	.14	3.05	.00	-.24	3.04	.00	-.22
Learning effectively on your own	3.04	2.97	.00	.08	2.99	.00	.06	3.00	.00	.04
Solving complex real-world problems	2.47	2.53	.00	-.06	2.75	.00	-.29	2.74	.00	-.28

Graduates will have scientific and quantitative reasoning and literacy.	Department of History	Department of History compared with:								
		Catholic University			Carnegie Peers			NSSE 2007		
		Mean ^a	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c	Mean ^a	Sig ^b
<i>To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? 1=very little, 2=some, 3=quite a bit, 4=very much</i>										
Thinking critically and analytically	3.31	3.33	.00	-.03	3.32	.00	-.01	3.33	.00	-.03
Analyzing quantitative problems	2.84	2.70	.00	.14	3.05	.00	-.24	3.04	.00	-.22

Graduates will identify the need for information, identify valid sources, access information efficiently, ethically and legally, and critically evaluate information in relation to their specified purposes.	Department of History	Department of History compared with:								
		Catholic University			Carnegie Peers			NSSE 2007		
		Mean ^a	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c	Mean ^a	Sig ^b
<i>In your experience at your institution during the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following? 1=never, 2=sometimes, 3=often, 4=very often</i>										
Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources	3.60	3.41	.00	.26	3.26	**	.45	3.29	*	.41
Included diverse perspectives (different races, religions, genders, political beliefs, etc.) in class discussions or writing assignments	2.86	2.70	.00	.17	2.74	.00	.13	2.80	.00	.07
<i>During the current school year, how much has your coursework emphasized the following mental activities? 1=very little, 2=some, 3=quite a bit, 4=very much</i>										
Making judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods, such as examining how others gathered and interpreted data and assessing the soundness of their conclusions	3.49	3.11	.00	.44	2.94	*	.63	2.96	*	.60
<i>To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? 1=very little, 2=some, 3=quite a bit, 4=very much</i>										
Learning effectively on your own	3.04	2.97	.00	.08	2.99	.00	.06	3.00	.00	.04

Graduates will be aware of and show appreciation for different cultures and religions.	Department of History	Department of History compared with:								
		Catholic University			Carnegie Peers			NSSE 2007		
		Mean ^a	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c	Mean ^a	Sig ^b	Effect Size ^c	Mean ^a	Sig ^b
<i>In your experience at your institution during the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following? 1=never, 2=sometimes, 3=often, 4=very often</i>										
Included diverse perspectives (different races, religions, genders, political beliefs, etc.) in class discussions or writing assignments	2.86	2.70	.00	.17	2.74	.00	.13	2.80	.00	.07
Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own	2.36	2.70	.00	-.33	2.68	.00	-.32	2.66	.00	-.30
Had serious conversations with students who are very different from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values	2.73	2.88	.00	-.16	2.71	.00	.02	2.71	.00	.02
<i>During the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following? 1=never, 2=sometimes, 3=often, 4=very often</i>										
Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective	2.92	2.85	.00	.08	2.81	.00	.13	2.82	.00	.12
<i>To what extent does your institution emphasize each of the following? 1=very little, 2=some, 3=quite a bit, 4=very much</i>										
Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds	2.19	1.97	.00	.23	2.41	.00	-.22	2.44	.00	-.26
<i>To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? 1=very little, 2=some, 3=quite a bit, 4=very much</i>										
Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds	2.11	2.20	.00	-.09	2.54	.00	-.44	2.59	.00	-.49