

**Profile of the
Department of History
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire
2006 Regents Teaching Excellence Award Recipient**

Fostering Excellence in Teaching

- Through hiring top-notch faculty who enjoy teaching and can engage students using a variety of methods.
- By developing a curriculum that is rigorous, invigorating and requires mastery of a complex set of analytical skills, honed through extensive writing and emphasis on the practice of history within and beyond academe.
- By providing a breadth of courses that enable students to meet the challenges posed by a global economy and transnational political systems.
- By creating opportunities for students to be involved in projects with local and state-wide historical agencies.

Teaching as a Public, Collaborative Activity which Creates a Positive Climate for Student Learning

- The Department has always valued collegiality and collaboration, and both students and faculty engage in collaborative initiatives with different departments, colleges, historical agencies, and museums within the broader community.
- The Department has an outstanding record of attracting external grant funding to launch innovative programs to improve history education at the elementary and secondary levels. During the last five years, the Department secured grants from the U.S. Department of Education, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Wisconsin Humanities Council, and the American Council of Learned Societies.
 - These grants have funded two graduate programs for teachers of American History and involved 104 teachers as fellows earning 9-15 credits, and 192 teachers as study group members earning 2-4 credits.
 - Both of these programs involve close collaboration with local museums and Cooperative Educational Service Agencies throughout the state of Wisconsin.
 - Grants have also provided project-based learning strategies that enable K-12 teachers to engage their students in historical research. For example, faculty from the Department and from the UW-Eau Claire College of Education and Human Sciences worked collaboratively with the Augusta, Wisconsin, school district to engage students in interdisciplinary research on the history of their small community.
 - One grant funded the hiring of a public historian in 2003, who has spearheaded the creation of a curriculum in public history and who is now in a tenure-track appointment. These graduate and undergraduate courses have attracted a growing number of students who work on public history projects that directly benefit the community and region.
- The Department of History has a number of other important internal partnerships.
 - The Center for History Teaching and Learning, created in 2002, formalized an historic relationship between the Department of History and the UW-Eau Claire College of Education and Human Sciences. They are not only partners in developing future teachers, but also in continuing education for practicing teachers.
 - Partnering with the Department of Foreign Languages enabled the History Department to offer curricula in the area of Ancient Studies.
 - A newly emerging partnership with the Wisconsin Historical Society has enabled the department to bring in a coordinator who works with historical societies to provide internships and collaborative projects for students of history.

Curricula that Challenge and Prepare Students for the Future

- The Department's curriculum is broadly structured to include a wide range of offerings in the major fields of American History, European history, Public History, Native American History, Gender and Women's History, Military History, and World History.
- The Department has increasingly emphasized the importance of engaging students in historical research, from historiography to archival research, and builds course content through collaborations with community institutions, such as the Chippewa Valley Museum, the Eau Claire Historic Preservation Foundation, and the City of Eau Claire.
- In the past several decades, the Department has emphasized diversity in its curriculum and staffing. Of fourteen tenured or tenure-track professors, six are women, one is African-American, one is Latino, one is Native American, and one is Asian. Curricula represent the diversity of the world's regions and cultures, touching on a variety of aspects of the human experience.

- In addition to providing strong advising and mentoring to students, the department continually adjusts and improves its curriculum through the development and monitoring of a web-based, portfolio assessment system.
- The department emphasizes strong writing skills throughout its curriculum, culminating in a capstone experience in which students engage in a rigorous senior research paper.

In the Words of the Department's Students

- “In what is perhaps its hallmark feature, the history department at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, thanks to its faculty’s expertise and their personal commitment to seeing their students excel, boasts a wonderfully encouraging and positive environment for educational explorations and achievement, one that makes students feel involved, confident, knowledgeable, and exceptionally prepared for their future.”
 - Shane Butterfield, Ph.D. candidate in History at the University of Rochester and graduate in History from the UW-Eau Claire
- “Looking back upon my time at UWEC, perhaps the greatest thing about the History Department – and, I think, at UWEC in general – was the freedom students are given to direct their studies toward topics and projects of their own personal and intellectual interest. The faculty gave me constant guidance, advice, and support, but never tried to dictate what I should work on. Rather they allowed me to explore avenues of research that interested me and provided every sort of aid they could to help me grow personally as a scholar. I know I was able to learn and gain so much more from this intellectual freedom coupled with sound academic support.”
 - Christopher Cantwell, Ph.D. Candidate in History at Cornell University and graduate in History from the UW-Eau Claire
- “Being a part of the Eau Claire history experience has enriched my life in more ways than I can possibly mention. There are extensive course offerings, in all genres of history, and available to varying categories of students (...). The climate in the department is wonderfully refreshing, as each and every one of the faculty members speaks of his or her colleagues in the highest of esteem. Professors have convenient and wide-ranging office hours, and they are always willing to help.”
 - Holly Sampson, third-year student and history major at UW-Eau Claire

Department Facts, Activities, and Resources

- *Personnel:*
 - Fourteen tenured or tenure-track faculty, one faculty member partnered with the Department of Foreign Languages, and one on-site internship coordinator from the Wisconsin Historical Society.
 - The Department has consistently recruited new faculty from the best graduate programs in the country and has virtually always been able to hire their first choice, often in competition with major research institutions.
 - During the past five years, Department faculty members have brought in more than \$4 million in grants for teacher education programming, public programming, and scholarly research.
 - “The history faculty includes dedicated teachers, who all have a great passion for teaching and an ability to connect with students.” – Chad Anderson.
- *Students:*
 - The Department serves 117 History majors in the College of Arts and Sciences and 97 in the College of Education and Human Sciences.
 - There are 65 History minors, and in general education, the Department provides 400 student-credit hours each semester to students in a variety of programs.
 - 28 students enrolled in the Master’s program.
 - Working closely with local societies and museums in the region, the Department continues to provide numerous opportunities for student internships and collaborative projects.
 - The Senior Capstone enables to students to carry out historical research on a breadth of topics and to present that research to local museums, societies or at conferences.
 - During the past two years, 32 History undergraduates have participated in Eau Claire’s Student Research Day, and 8 History students have presented research papers at the Northern Great Plains History Conference.