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28 August 2023

MEMORANDUM TO THE VMI BOARD OF VISITORS THROUGH THE ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: Approval of Curricular Changes

Background

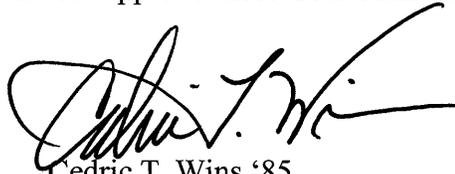
The Board of Visitors is charged with the responsibility of ensuring the academic quality and integrity of the Institute. The following changes to the Institute curriculum have been approved by the Academic Board and are submitted for the approval of the Board of Visitors:

- Programmatic Changes:
 - History Course Grade Requirements for International Studies and Political Science Majors – Enclosure (1)
 - Curriculum Revision – Leadership Studies Minor – Enclosure (2)

- New Courses – Enclosure (3):
 - BU 434 – Healthcare Management (3-0-3)
 - EC 400 – Housing Economics and Public Policy (3-0-3)
 - EC 450W – The Economics of Human Capability and Civic Engagement (3-0-3)
 - IS 451 – Law of Armed Conflict (3-0-3)
 - MA 404 – Introduction to Statistical Learning (2-1-3)

Recommended Motion

“The Academic Affairs Committee has considered the recommended Curricular Changes dated 28 August 2023. I move that the Board of Visitors approve these Curricular Changes and that they be made part of the minutes.”



Cedric T. Wins '85
Major General, U.S. Army (Retired)
Superintendent

History Course Grade Requirements for International Studies and Political Science Majors

The International Studies and Political Science (ISPS) Department proposes a change to the required grade in some History courses by its majors. Since the ISPS Department separated from the History (HI) Department in the late 1990's, its majors have been required to receive a C or better in the following four courses in order to qualify for an IS degree:

- HI 103 - World History I;
- HI 104 - World History II;
- HI 205/205W - History of the United States I;
- HI 206 - History of the United States II.

If this change is approved, ISPS majors would be eligible to receive an ISPS degree if they receive a D or better (not a C or better) in each of these four courses.

There are several reasons for the proposed change:

- The requirement is anachronistic: it is a holdover from an HI major requirement at the time of ISPS's establishment, when a new ISPS major relied upon other departments to assist in the management its curriculum. This is no longer the case.
- It is very rare for a VMI department to require its students to receive a higher-than-passing grade in a course *outside* the department in order to receive a degree from the department itself. Only the Engineering departments require their majors to do so in regard to some math courses that are predictive of success in major courses.
- The department believes that simply passing these courses is sufficient for to qualify for an ISPS degree.
- The C-or-better requirement has adversely affected timely graduation and perhaps even retention in the ISPS major. Multiple times over the past five years, cadets have been held up from graduation because they earned a D in one of these HI courses, giving them sufficient GPA and credits to graduate but still necessitating a fifth-year return, a ten-credit rule request to walk in graduation, or a last-minute waiver by the ISPS department head to ensure timely graduation. Also, as grades received by ISPS cadets in these courses have dropped in recent years (especially among NCAA athletes in HI 103/104), retention is threatened by necessitating the retaking of non-ISPS courses already passed and thus compressing the curricular timeline; and this problem is exacerbated by the fact that the courses in these sequences are (understandably) only offered on a per semester basis (i.e., HI 103/205 only offered in fall, HI 104/206 only offered in spring).

If approved, this change would be implemented immediately and would apply both moving forward and retroactively (i.e., current ISPS majors who have received a D in any of these courses would be considered in good standing in re: HI requirements for graduation).

Curriculum Revision – Leadership Studies Minor

The Psychology Department proposes a revision to the Leadership Studies Minor to remove courses no longer offered at VMI. In addition, the Department proposes changes to (1) update the minor's course offerings to ensure that these courses are available at least once every two academic years; (2) increase the number of course offerings to make the minor more accessible; and (3) provide a comprehensive, theoretically-based approach consisting of the domains of Interpersonal Knowledge and Skills, National Considerations, Organizations and Systems, and International Considerations.

Following are the courses that would be removed from the minor:

- BU 306 - International Business;
- HI 350 - French Revolution and Napoleon;
- IS 423W - Studies in Grand Strategy;
- PS 317 - Sports Psychology.

In addition to meeting the current requirements of the minor, cadets would be required to complete one course in each of the following domains of leadership conceptualization:

1. Interpersonal Knowledge and Skills

Cadets will gain perspectives on interpersonal effectiveness that are essential to effective leadership. This includes (a) personal abilities such as critical thinking, writing, and influence through effective communication, (b) greater understanding of leader and follower emotion, behavior, and motivation, and (c) enhanced interpersonal interactions to support others as unique individuals.

PS 301 - Psychology of Learning

PS 307 - Developmental Psychology

PS 308 - Motivation

PS 315 - Theories of Personality

PS 320 - Positive Psychology

PS 321 - Stress and Health

PS 323 - Psychology of Achievement

PS 401 - Cognition

PS 495W - Independent Project in Leadership Studies

ERH 203W - Ways of Reading

ERH 207 - Ethics

ERH 301 - Rhetoric and Public Address

ERH 302W - Civic Discourse

ERH 311 - Professional Writing

ERH 332 - Logic and Critical Thinking

IS 340 - Political Theory

IS 442 - Law, Morality, and Power
BU 220 - Principles of Management

2. National Considerations

The cultural environment within a nation has a great effect on a leader's ability to foster positive change. Cadets in these courses will have the chance to evaluate a leader's position within national contexts, norms, traditions, and prevailing philosophies.

ERH 201 - Rhetorical Traditions
ERH 202 - Rhetorical Traditions II
ERH 206WX - American Literary Traditions
ERH 322WX - American Literature in Cultural Context
IS 311 - The American Congress
IS 312 - The American Presidency
IS 320 - National Security Policy
IS 422 - Domestic Politics and International Conflict
HI-305 - Jacksonian America
HI-322 - The Civil War and Reconstruction

3. Organizations and Systems

Understanding how to navigate organizational structures is an important skill for all leaders. These courses will expose cadets to different systems of management in various fields such as (but not limited to) business organizations, military structures, and the U.S. political system.

IS 210 - American Government
IS 230 - Comparative Politics
IS 310 - American Foreign Policy
BU 322 - Human Resource Management
BU 340 - Entrepreneurship
HI-385 - U.S. Military History to 1919
HI-386 - U.S. Military History Since 1919

4. International Considerations

Leadership in an international context is complex. These courses challenge cadets to consider issues arising in relationships between nations and/or the dynamics of organizations that span international boundaries.

PS 329X - Psychology of Genocide
ERH 205WX - British Literary Traditions
ERH 211WX - Comparative Religions
ERH 303WX - Cultural Rhetoric

ERH 321WX - British Literature in Cultural Context

IS 220 - International Politics

IS 352 - International Law

IS 420 - Anarchy and Hierarchy

IS 428 - U.S. China Relations

IS 431W - Riots, Protests, and Social Movements

IS 434 - Authoritarianism

IS 443 - Morality of War

HI-311 - History of the Cold War

HI-335 - The Vietnam War

HI-355 - Grand Strategy in the Twentieth Century

HI-368X - Europe, 1919-1939

New Course Descriptions

BU 434 – Healthcare Management (3-0-3)

Course Description: BU 434 focuses on the complex adaptive systems that comprise the healthcare system, its use of technology, its sources of revenue, the costs of care, and the regulatory environment of the industry.

EC 400 – Housing Economics and Public Policy (3-0-3)

Course Description: This course is designed for students who are interested housing markets. This course will look at housing as both an investment and consumption good, building on topics learned in Intermediate Microeconomics and Business Finance. We will discuss the impact of federal and local housing policies on homeownership, neighborhood formation, and wealth accumulation. By the end of this course, students should be able to estimate the value of a house, determine whether or not a rental property is a good investment, understand what impacts the supply and demand of housing in local markets, evaluate housing policies, including residential zoning, redlining, and housing affordability, and understand how can use housing wealth to increase and smooth consumption in retirement.

EC 450W – The Economics of Human Capability and Civic Engagement (3-0-3)

Course Description: The objective of The Economics of Human Capability and Civic Engagement class is to use economic reasoning and analysis to understand and evaluate solutions that enhance the human capability to deal with contemporary social issues, and the role of civic engagement therein. Interdisciplinary perspectives will be weaved into every aspect of the class content. Topics covered include issues pertaining to, poverty, education, health care, racial and ethnic discrimination, immigration, law and order, and social security.

IS 451 – Law of Armed Conflict (3-0-3)

Course Description: This course introduces students to the body of law that regulates conduct during armed conflict, known as the Law of Armed Conflict or International Humanitarian Law. Students will learn the history and key principles underlying the law, as well as the various categories of law and relevant treaties. Particular areas of concentration include the distinction between military and non-military targets, the treatment of civilians and other non-combatants, and the regulation of weaponry. Additional relevant bodies of law will also be covered including those pertaining to the sea, sky, and space, human rights, criminal law, and cyberspace. Students will learn the body of law through classroom instruction and a series of individual and team exercises requiring legal problem-solving. Students will therefore learn not only the substance of the law, but also how to apply it to real-world conflict scenarios. They will gain a firm understanding of the subject by engaging critically and analytically with the law to build evidence-based logical arguments delivered through written and oral assignments.

MA 404 – Introduction to Statistical Learning (2-1-3)

Course Description: This course provides an introduction to statistical learning methods including multiple linear regression, logistic regression, discriminant analysis, model selection, resampling, and tree-based methods using R statistical software.