History Department Plan and Bylaws

Planning Unit
Department of History
Planning Year 2021-2026
Approved April 28, 2021 (Language updated October 14, 2026; passed unanimously)

Mission Statement and Bylaws

The History Department at Appalachian State provides students with knowledge of their own cultural traditions and an appreciation of other cultures and societies of the past. It promotes an appreciation of the complexity of human affairs and the difficulties involved in interpreting them. At all levels of study—from our many offerings in ASU's General Education curriculum to undergraduate degree programs to master's work—we offer a broad curriculum in local, national, regional, and world history which encourages students to develop a comparative approach to human problems and which teaches students how to use the investigative, analytical, and expository techniques that comprise the historical method.

The teaching of history focuses on research techniques, analysis, and synthesis of varied sources of information, problem solving, critical thinking, and understanding social processes. Thus, history consists both of information about the past and a wide range of analytical tools which are useful not only for illuminating the past but also for understanding present-day problems. A degree in history offers valuable preparation for

- careers in law, journalism, and public history;
- careers in local, state, and national public service;
- careers in business, where a knowledge of domestic and foreign affairs is desirable;
- careers in teaching (at both the secondary and college level); and
- the pursuit of an advanced degree in history.

Because the study of history enables educated citizens to understand themselves and their society, it is an essential part of a liberal arts education. By exposing students to a variety of cultures and human experience and by training them in the interpretation of conflicting evidence, the History Department prepares students for the responsibilities of citizenship and for dealing with the ambiguities of human existence. Finally, the discipline of history provides an intellectual challenge as well as a stimulus to the imagination and to analytical thinking.

Bylaws

I. Structure. The Department of History (HIS) is housed in the College of Arts and Sciences at Appalachian State University.

II. Policy Authority

A. Governing Laws and Policies. The operations of the department are governed by federal and state law, as well as policies of the UNC System, Appalachian State University, and the College of Arts and Sciences. Department policies shall not contravene policies in any of these superseding documents.

B. Department Bylaws. Department bylaws shall set procedures for department meetings and procedures not specified in other governing laws and policies. An amendment to the department bylaws may be proposed by submitting it in written form to the Department Chair. The amendment must be placed on the agenda for a regular department meeting. At the announced department meeting, an

amendment to the department bylaws will be treated as a motion requiring a second and is subject to debate. The amendment will be approved by a majority of voting faculty attending the department meeting.

III. Membership. The department consists of highly trained and dedicated faculty as well as professional staff that support its mission.

A. Faculty. The faculty of the department includes all persons holding appointments at the rank of professor, associate professor, assistant professor, instructor, or lecturer; irrespective of modifying adjectives such as adjunct, clinical, distinguished, emeriti, research, senior, or visiting.

- Voting privileges. All members of the faculty, excluding emeriti faculty, adjunct faculty, and part-time faculty teaching less than 18 hours per academic year, may participate and vote in departmental meetings, serve on departmental committees, and represent the department on college/school or university committees, unless explicitly prohibited by superseding documents. At the discretion of the Department Chair, adjunct faculty may volunteer to serve on department committees.

B. Staff. Department staff include administrative support specialists and associates. All department staff members have the right to participate in department meetings unless explicitly prohibited by superseding documents. Department staff do not have voting privileges on departmental business matters.

IV. Meetings

A. Regular meetings. Department meetings shall be held monthly during the academic year at 1:00 pm on the last Wednesday of the calendar month (excluding December and May) or at a time determined by the Department Chair.

- Notice and Agenda. Written notice of all regular meetings shall be sent to each member of the department by the Chair prior to the meeting. All notices shall include the agenda and written text of planned action items.

- Conduct of Meetings. Meetings shall be conducted by a basic version of Robert's Rules of Order under the direction of the Department Chair. At the discretion of the chair, a Department Parliamentarian may be appointed for the duration of an academic year.

- Minutes. The Chair is responsible for appointing a recorder for the duration of the academic year and for reviewing the accuracy of the minutes before submission to the department for approval.

- Quorum. A quorum for a meeting of the members shall consist of at least fifty percent (50)% of the voting-eligible membership.

- Voting. Unless otherwise stipulated, issues to be voted on shall be decided by a simple majority. Voting shall only take place if a quorum is present.

B. Special Meetings. Special department meetings, including summer meetings, may be called at a designated time by the department Chair or by a petition signed by one-half of the total voting-eligible membership of the department. The requirements for notice and agenda, conduct of meetings, minutes, quorum, and voting for special meetings shall follow the same practices established for regular meetings.

C. Appointment, Promotion and Tenure Committee (APT)

1. The APT committee will follow the policies and procedures defined in the Faculty Handbook and relevant guidance from Academic Affairs.

2. Prior to September 1 of each year, the APT will elect a committee chair from among its members. The APT Chair will either be elected at an APT committee meeting or in an election organized by the Department Chair.

3. APT members may vote absentee if unusual circumstances prevent them from attending. Consistent with university policy, casting an absentee ballot must be approved by the Department Chair in consultation with the APT Chair. Once approved, absentee votes must be communicated in writing to the APT Chair prior to the relevant APT meeting. At the APT meeting, the APT Chair will cast absentee ballots according to current APT voting procedures.

Part A. Strategic Planning Vision Statement

History, being essential to a liberal arts education and foundational to the creation of an informed and engaged citizenry, has a pivotal place in the academy. In keeping with and in support of the Mission and Vision Statements of Appalachian State University and the College of Arts and Sciences, the Department of History will over the next five years work to provide our undergraduate and graduate students with a diverse curriculum and learning environment that:

- promotes scholarly curiosity and inquiry into a variety of historical subjects;
- engenders respect for different cultures, peoples, genders and nationalities;
- develops skills related to historical methods and professional scholarship;
- encourages student engagement in history curricular and extracurricular activities; and
- facilitates the ideal of the teacher/scholar for both faculty and students.

In this period of deliberate underfunding of the UNC System by the state government, when we are asked to contribute to the General Education curriculum, continue to offer innovative and invigorating courses for our majors at the baccalaureate and masters level, and maintain the high standards and volume of faculty scholarship/creative production to which we have become accustomed, the following is a plan in pursuit of these goals.

Part B. Strategic Plan

The Chairperson will be responsible for ensuring compliance with the following governance policies for the department:

Governance

A. Internal Positions To promote faculty governance in the department over the next five years, the department will observe the following in the selection of department-level admins:

Assistant Chair

Following the guidelines for the Assistant Chair position outlined in the Faculty Handbook, the department will institute the following criteria to govern the selection of the Assistant Chair:

- A job description for the position will be circulated before or as the selection process begins.
- Only tenured faculty may stand for appointment as Assistant Chair.
- The chair will send a call for applications to all eligible faculty with deadline dates clearly stated.
- All tenured and tenure-track faculty are allowed to submit written confidential comments to the chair about applicants' qualifications.

- All tenured and tenure-track faculty will examine the applications and select the top two choices from among the applicants, with runoff ballots done in the same fashion as the DPC voting.
- The top two selected will be passed to the Department Chair for the final selection.
- The Assistant Chair will serve a minimum of one 3-year term.
- Current holders of the position may reapply for one additional 3-year term.
- The Assistant Chair will be compensated with a salary increment increase provided by the Dean's office in the College of Arts and Sciences and a reduction in class load as budget constraints allow.

Graduate Advisor

The department will institute these criteria to govern the selection of the Graduate Advisor:

- A job description for the position will be circulated before or as the selection process begins.
- Only tenured faculty with Graduate Faculty standing may stand for appointment as Graduate Advisor.
- The chair will send a call for applications to all eligible faculty with deadline dates clearly stated.
- All tenured and tenure-track faculty are allowed to submit written confidential comments to the chair about applicants' qualifications.
- All tenured and tenure-track faculty will examine the applications and select the top two choices from among the applicants, with runoff ballots done in the same fashion as the DPC voting.
- The top two selected will be passed to the Department Chair for the final selection.
- The Graduate Advisor will serve a minimum of one 3-year term.
- Current holders of the position may reapply for one additional 3-year term.
- The Graduate Advisor will be compensated with a salary increment increase provided by the Office of Graduate and Sponsored Programs and a reduction in class load as budget constraints allow.
- The Graduate Advisor, with the support of the department should seek help from the development office for the Public History program and Graduate program funding.

Teaching

Teaching equity: To promote a greater sense of equity in teaching loads among members of the department over the next five years, the department will implement the following changes regarding teaching assignments:

- Responsibility for teaching Departmental service courses shall be shared among all faculty. Service courses include HIS 2800, HIS 4100, graduate classes, and our offerings to Gen Ed.
- Every faculty member is encouraged to teach one graduate course and/or HIS 4100 every four years.
- Faculty will develop a five-year teaching rotation in conjunction with the Department Chair at their annual reviews.
- The Department will survey faculty about their teaching preferences.

Peer Review: Consistent with University policy, the department "provide[s] for direct classroom observations by peers in at least two courses (when possible) per year for all probationary faculty" and "in

at least one course every three years for all tenured faculty." The department establishes the following minimums with respect to peer review:

1. Probationary faculty (untenured tenure-line faculty and non-tenure line faculty who have taught in the department for less than six years) must be peer reviewed at least once per year.

2. Senior Lecturers and other non-tenure track faculty who have taught in the department for at least six years must be peer reviewed at least once every three years.

3. Tenured faculty must have a peer review at least once during the five-year interim prior to their post-tenure review.

Regular peer review consists of classroom observation, review of teaching/instructional materials, and direct consultation with the instructor being reviewed. Two different faculty colleagues working as a team must be involved in the process of a peer review.

History Department Online Instruction Policy

(*Adopted SEPTEMBER 2021):

The University Registrar's office provides the following definitions for online teaching: Web hybrid, primarily lecture (<50%) Web-based hybrid (50-89%) Web-based majority (90-99%) Web- based entirely (100%) Following these guidelines, the History Department establishes the following online teaching policy:

1. Consistent with faculty governance, we respect the right of an individual faculty member to teach their course as they see best.

2. We affirm our degree programs to consist primarily of face-to-face classes. During the regular academic year, no faculty member will teach more than 50% online (Web-based hybrid, Web-based majority, Web-based entirely).

3. The decision to teach a summer course as online or face to face is entirely a decision of the faculty member and the Dept Chair, taking into account funding and enrollment requirements for the summer.

4. During the regular fall and spring semesters, at least 80% of our offerings will be face to face or web hybrid (<50%). It is the decision of the faculty member that will determine the hybrid component as long as it is less than 50%.

5. Recognizing that there may be health, personal, research, or pedagogical reasons to teach online, during the regular fall and spring semesters, the decision to offer a course as web-based will be a joint decision of the faculty member and Dept chair, as long as such offerings constitute less than 20% of total Department offerings. Whatever the amount of online teaching, it will not change the research and service expectations for the faculty member.

6. The Department Chair can make semester-by-semester adjustments to this policy when student/faculty needs require.

7. University and college policies, including ODR, supersede department policies.

Curriculum

A. The department will institute a rolling 2-year plan for teaching assignments. The Assistant Chair (schedule planner) will continue to work with the Curriculum Committee to develop the rolling 2-year plan.

B. The department will allow faculty to bank courses in order to facilitate research during the school year (so that faculty member A and faculty member B could shift their 3-3 loads to a 4-2 and 2-4 respectively, for example).

C. Summer teaching opportunities will be limited to full-time and ¾-time tenure-track and non-tenure track faculty, and will be based on seniority within each track. The most senior member of the tenure-track faculty will be offered a first class, and then down through the most junior member followed by the most senior member of the non-tenure track faculty, and then down through the most junior member. If there are still classes to fill, the courses will be offered again through seniority. Summer course offerings will be based on departmental need and will be determined by the Chair.

Research

A. The department will continue to advocate for greater university recognition of research and to encourage the administration to facilitate research effectively.

B. The department will advocate for the continuation of time reassigned for research in the form of a 3-3 teaching load for all tenured and tenure track faculty.

C. Pre-tenured tenure-track faculty will have at least one semester with a one-course reduction (3-2 load) before coming up for tenure. The timing of the course reduction will be negotiated with the Department Chair.

D. As a department, we will recognize faculty work in research and assist faculty in facilitating research by the following means.

- The department will continue the Faculty Research Seminar.
- The department will work to make research awards available to all faculty.
- The department will continue to advocate for OCSA availability for tenure-track as well as tenured faculty.
- The research committee will implement departmental recognition of research production with a departmental fete to honor achievements.

Non-Tenure Track Faculty

A. The History Department supports multi-year contracts (for three or more years, with eligibility for reappointment) to full-time non-tenure track faculty who have successfully completed a probationary period or otherwise demonstrated their effectiveness and contributions, (e.g. Senior Lecturers).

B. The History Department supports and encourages chairs to identify NTT faculty who meet the qualifications of Senior Lecturer to apply for promotion to that rank in the History Department.

C. The Chair shall appoint a committee from among the ranks of non-tenure track faculty to give advice on matters related to non-tenure track teaching and service within the department. This committee will be known as the NTT Committee.

D. The NTT Committee shall discuss and come back with concrete ideas that would enrich their work in the department. This should include, but not be limited to, maintaining the availability of travel funding to NTT faculty.

Service

A. The department will reinforce the vitality and necessity of service and clarify where and how service fits into the departmental mission.

B. Over the next five years, the general expectation will remain that each tenured and tenure-track department member will serve on one non-elected committee per year.

C. The department will utilize these criteria for the performance and assessment of service by non-tenure-track faculty:

- Service from non-tenure track department members at the Adjunct level
- is strictly voluntary and will never be compelled.

- Non-tenure track members cannot serve on the curriculum or the honors committee.

D. The department will act to lessen the service load on junior faculty so that they can concentrate on teaching and research necessary to achieve tenure.

- Junior faculty will do less service than senior faculty. Junior faculty can serve on only one appointed and one elected committee in the department.
- Additional service external to the department may be undertaken in consultation with the Chair, and is up to the individual faculty member.
- Junior faculty will not be expected to serve as chairs for committees.
- The language of the service document will reflect this commitment to "minimal service" requirements for junior faculty.

E. Over the next five years, the department will continue to discuss and implement ways to make service division more equitable and follow these criteria:

- Committee assignments will be rotated, whether yearly or every few years. No faculty member will be compelled to serve on the same committee for more than two consecutive years.
- Committee chairs will be rotated whenever possible.
- Non-elected department service will be lessened if mission-related service is done elsewhere in the university. (Example fields: public history, history education, academic advising for undergraduates and graduate students, etc.).
- Appointed departmental committees will be reviewed annually by the department. The department will advise the Chair regarding which committees to retain and remove in order to limit service load and improve efficiency.

Diversity and Increasing Our Majors

A. The Gen Ed Committee will monitor Gen Ed course offerings and descriptions in order to improve course titles and descriptions and market course offerings.

B. Continue to assess the geographic distribution requirements for History degrees and ensure that the department's requirements include global offerings.

C. Hiring Priorities: The best way to increase diversity in our department and to attract new majors is through hiring new faculty that are both diverse and can offer classes that will attract students. As adopted by the department on April 28, 2021, here is the priority list for future faculty hirings:

- Environmental history
- Russia/Eastern Europe
- Indigenous History
- Digital History and/or Science and Technology
- Hispanic/Latino/Chicano/Latinx U.S.

These priorities can change due to retirements, departmental needs, or future departmental discussions.

The History Department identifies itself as building and offering the following areas of strength, that include: History Secondary Education Public History Environmental History Transnational, Global, and Cross-Cultural History State and Regional History Providing students with the content and skills necessary to become active and engaged citizens of their community, nation, and world.