

December 5, 2008

Colleagues:

The Department of History has been asked for its comments on the request that Classics 323 (Religion in the Greco-Roman World) be granted GEC Historical Studies status. After consultation with the Undergraduate Teaching Committee, the Department has the following concerns.

1) COMMENTS ON THE APPROACH

- a) We agreed that the course leaned toward Religious Studies or culture rather than History. From the relatively brief syllabus, we could not see significant signs of attention to such issues as historical development and historical modes of analysis. The syllabus is organized topically, which can be a historical mode of analysis, but needs more clarity here.

2) COMMENTS ON THE SYLLABUS

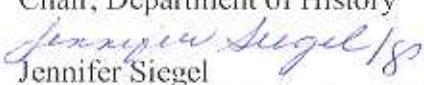
- a) We thought it unusual that a course be based strictly on in-class lectures, with no indication of specific reading in even one secondary source.
- b) We thought it unusual that the proposer could not specify which sources would be used.
- c) We came away from analyzing the syllabus with no sense of how much reading a student would be asked to do.
- d) We were surprised that no papers, long or short, are required. Without trying to tell the instructor what to do, this course seemed to call out for a term paper or brief analytical papers on sources. We do not think that two essay exams worth approximately 40% of the grade are adequate.
- e) In short, such a non-specific syllabus seems an inadequate basis on which to grant GEC Historical Studies status.

For the reasons stated above, the Department of History advises that Classics 323 not be granted GEC Historical Studies status.

Sincerely,

  
Peter Hahn

Chair, Department of History

  
Jennifer Siegel

Acting Chair, Undergraduate Teaching committee