Rationale for teaching History 5900 at the 5000 level

By design, History 5900 is comparable to the 1000-level introductory course in Statistics. That is why it is appropriate for GE credit in Data Analysis. The 5000 number was imposed on the course by the History Department’s new course numbering system, with the approval of the Curriculum Committee. The History Department did not want to establish a separate course number for graduate students in the quantitative methods course, so it insisted that the course be placed at the 5000 level.

Graduate students in History are in general inexperienced in quantitative analysis. They need the 1000-level course, not an advanced course, as is evident from their undergraduate transcripts and from their quantitative scores on the GRE. The graduate school, however, will not give them credit for a data analysis course numbered below 5000. The undergraduates who have taken the course over the past thirty years have not been a bit overwhelmed by the graduate students. Indeed, the undergraduates have always gotten along famously with the graduate students. But given the cutbacks in our department’s graduate program, and the turn of our profession against quantitative analysis, we only have a handful of grad students who will be taking the course. It will be dominated by the undergraduates. So the department would like to make it first and foremost an undergraduate course.

If the Curriculum Committee would prefer, it would be possible to teach the course on the 3000 level (consistent with the Political Science Department’s introductory quantitative courses) and to create a separate 7000-level number for graduate students, if the university would permit the department to teach the two courses as a single course, for which the instructor would receive credit for teaching a single course.