MEMORANDUM

TO: Academic Council
VIA: College Council, College of Arts and Letters
FROM: Kyle F. Zelner, Ph.D., Chair, Department of History
DATE: August 26, 2014
RE: Support of the Department for Online Versions of HIS 101 and 102

The History Department strongly supports the approval of two online courses to teach our offerings: HIS 101 World Civilizations to 1500 and HIS 102 World Civilizations since 1500. These courses, major requirements of the university’s General Education Core (GEC), typically enroll over 1,600-1,800 students each semester (fall and spring). With the advent of several fully online offerings at the university, the need for an online option for the GEC required classes is evident. Currently, this need is being met through the Mississippi Virtual Community College—but the department is concerned that it has no academic oversight of those sections—either in material, texts, or instructors. In order to keep control of the courses’ content, ensure their quality, and to be able to correctly assess the courses’ learning outcomes (a necessity for every GEC course)—the History Department has developed online versions of both of these courses and would like to start teaching them in the Spring 2015 semester.

The department has not undertaken this process lightly and has worked tirelessly to ensure the classes will have the same rigor and academic integrity as the face-to-face versions of the courses. The attached proposal is the effort of a subcommittee of the department’s undergraduate committee—spearheaded by Dr. Susannah Ural (Director of Undergraduate Studies) and Drs. Andrew Haley and Ken Swope. Their efforts were aided by the receipt of two Eagle Learning Online Course Development Grants from the Provost’s Office last year to work on this very issue. The grants proved key to helping prepare for the large undertaking of establishing large (400 student) sections of HIS 101 and 102 for online delivery. Our faculty and graduate students have already made progress—in anticipation of the approval of College and Academic Councils—creating course materials such as quizzes and writing assignments, exams, faculty lectures, and other items for courses. As chair, I have already begun to make scheduling arrangements for the classes in our 2014-2015 schedules in the hope they will be approved. I strongly endorse the attached application to approve both courses for online delivery. If you or members of either Council have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.