

OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

Department of History & Political Science

AY 2008-2009

October 15, 2009

History
Social Studies

B.A. Major
B.A. Major

Outcomes Assessment Report prepared by:

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Mission of the Discipline of History & Political Science

Historical and political awareness and understanding constitutes one of the chief attributes of a functional and involved citizen of the United States. It is the mission of this department to provide an education that will contribute to the realization of this ideal by every student. We also seek to train graduates to work in a variety of public and private sector jobs, utilizing their historical and political skills and knowledge. Finally, the department is committed to preserving, interpreting, and promoting the unique multicultural heritage of the region.

Goals of the History Program

It is our goal to train students for careers in teaching plus various kinds of professional employment as well as to prepare students for advanced graduate programs, especially law school. Professional applications of history include careers in public affairs, business, and the private sector where research, communication, and other liberal arts skills are appreciated.

Program Student Outcomes

1. Upon completion of the history major, students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of major historical periods, figures, and developments.
2. Upon completion of the history major, students will be able to demonstrate a comprehension of the fundamental processes of historical analysis.
3. Upon completion of the history major, students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the literature in given fields.
4. Upon completion of the history major, students will be able to write an historical paper using appropriate content, methodologies, and format; that is well organized; that states and defends a position or thesis; and that demonstrates competent use of language.
5. Upon completion of the history major, students will be able to demonstrate that they have been challenged by the history program and approve of the teaching and advising they have received.

- Please note that with HIST 480 Historiography being cancelled last spring because of low enrollment, the data that we expected from this course was not available for the preparation of this report.

Intended Educational Outcome 1

Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of major historical periods, figures, and developments.

First Means of Assessment for Outcome 1 & Data Results

A departmental "Portfolio Checklist for Outcomes Assessment" (see attachment) will be used to evaluate samples of student work.

Content (accuracy of factual material): 1.4

Understanding/review/use of literature in the field: 1.7

Comprehension of historical processes and interpretation: 1.6

Second Means of Assessment for Outcome 1 & Data Results

All majors will complete an exit survey-questionnaire (see attachment).

Understanding the field of history: 1.6

Student Comments: ----

Use of Results

We find these results quite encouraging, though we are aware that they could well depend more on this particular batch of quality students than on the program itself. Certainly this marks an improvement over last year.

Intended Educational Outcome 2

Students will be able to demonstrate a comprehension of the fundamental processes of historical analysis.

First Means of Assessment for Outcome 2 & Data Results

A departmental "Portfolio Checklist for Outcomes Assessment" (see attachment) will be used to evaluate samples of student work.

Content (accuracy of factual material): 1.4

Understanding/review/use of literature in the field: 1.7

Comprehension of historical processes and interpretation: 1.6

Use of relevant material to support thesis/arguments: 1.6

Organization (chronology, logical progression, assertion and conclusion): 1.6

Second Means of Assessment for Outcome 2 & Data Results

All majors will complete an exit survey-questionnaire (see attachment).

Understanding the field of history: 1.6

Critical analysis of written arguments: 1.9

Student Comments: ----

Use of Results

We find these results quite encouraging, though we are aware that they could well depend more on this particular batch of quality students than on the program itself. Certainly this marks an improvement over last year.

Intended Educational Outcome 3

Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of literature in given fields.

First Means of Assessment for Outcome 3 & Data Results

A departmental "Portfolio Checklist for Outcomes Assessment" (see attachment) will be used to evaluate samples of student work.

- Content (accuracy of factual material): 1.4
- Understanding/review/use of literature in the field: 1.7
- Comprehension of historical processes and interpretation: 1.6
- Use of relevant material to support thesis/arguments: 1.6

Second Means of Assessment for Outcome 3 & Data Results

All majors will complete an exit survey-questionnaire (see attachment).

Understanding the field of history: 1.6

Student Comments: ----

Use of Results

We find these results quite encouraging, though we are aware that they could well depend more on this particular batch of quality students than on the program itself. Certainly this marks an improvement over last year.

Intended Educational Outcome 4

Upon completion of the history major, students will be able to write an historical paper using appropriate content, methodologies, and format; that is well organized; that states and defends a position or thesis; and that demonstrates competent use of language.

First Means of Assessment for Outcome 4 & Data Results

A departmental "Portfolio Checklist for Outcomes Assessment" (see attachment) will be used to evaluate samples of student work.

- Content (accuracy of factual material): 1.4
- Understanding/review/use of literature in the field: 1.7
- Comprehension of historical processes and interpretation: 1.6
- Use of language: 1.6
- Use of relevant material to support thesis/arguments: 1.6
- Organization (chronology, logical progression, assertion and conclusion): 1.6
- Form (citations, bibliography, etc., as appropriate): 1.5

Second Means of Assessment for Outcome 4 & Data Results

All majors will complete an exit survey-questionnaire (see attachment).

- Understanding the field of history: 1.6
- Critical analysis of written arguments: 1.9
- Writing clearly and persuasively: 1.6
- Developing the skills necessary for research: 1.4
- Proper formatting for bibliography & footnotes: 1.1

Student comments:

“the research techniques I have learned”
“research methods and advisors”
“how to conduct research, which helped me to better understand the writing process”
“learning about research and writing”
“learning how to conduct research and formatting footnotes”
“learning about the library and getting more comfortable there”

Use of Results

We find these results quite encouraging, though we are aware that they could well depend more on this particular batch of quality students than on the program itself. Certainly this marks an improvement over last year.

Intended Educational Outcome 5

Students will demonstrate that they have been challenged by the history program and approve of the teaching and advising they have received.

First Means of Assessment for Outcome 5 & Data Results

All majors will complete an exit survey-questionnaire (see attachment).

Data Results

Quality of courses offered: 1.8
Variety of courses offered: 2.6
Availability of courses offered: 2.6
Accessibility and approachability of faculty: 1.4
Education and qualifications of faculty: 1.3
Quality of academic advising: 1.3
Overall, how would you rate the academic quality of the History program? 1.3

Student comments:

“more classes in general”
“more courses in SW studies”
“have more classes offered per semester”
“more is better”
“more contemporary subjects?”
“offering WebCT and ITV classes in the evenings”
“more classes in the summertime”
“Asian history”

Use of Results

Dissatisfaction with the variety of courses offered is a perennial criticism of our history program. Last year our request for a new history position was deep-sixed by the administration. But it is clear that we need to add a historian to our small, 3-member line-up.