

History BA Assessment Report: 2016

Overall Recommendations for Future Data Gathering and for Closing the Loop:

Closing the Loop from 2015: In 2015, the History Department made the following recommendation for improving the BA program: "Pilot a new course called Case Studies in History which, in focusing on significant but narrowly defined topics, will enable students to cover and gain mastery of a substantial sampling of relevant secondary and primary source material." Pursuant to this recommendation, Dr. Goodson will be teaching a pilot version of this course in the Fall 2017 semester.

Recommendation for Improvement 1: Teach most upper-division courses as Writing Intensive, aligning with the BA Learning Outcome that "Students will demonstrate writing skills that reflect persuasive historical arguments based on evidence and proper citation."

Recommendation for Improvement 2: This recommendation concerns assessment methodology, rather than a direct improvement to the BA program proper. The History Department is dedicated to gathering assessment data both in survey courses and at the major level, and thus assessing student progress towards the Learning Outcomes in the Core and in the BA respectively. One additional source of data, however, that has not been optimally utilized to date is students' own impressions of their progress on our learning outcomes, whether in the surveys or at the upper-level.

This gap in data gathering could be remedied by indirect assessment that could take the shape of focus groups with students at both survey level and major-level courses during classes in the Fall 2017 semester. Students already fill out questionnaires in Methodology and in Senior Seminar that are helpful for gathering student perspectives on the department's offerings. Survey-level students, however, are the department's biggest "customer," and are not currently included in the discussion. Furthermore, majors themselves may be a wonderful resource to turn to as we strive to grow the major, and try to better meet the needs of our students at all levels of instruction.

The Department's Undergraduate Program Re-Evaluation committee will undertake this task in Fall 2017, with the goal of surveying all students taught by the department at all levels. The committee envisions three distinct surveys for three different constituencies: survey students, students in the department's upper-level courses, and graduate students who had completed their BA in History at UWG.

HIST 1111: Assessment Report for Fall 2016

Submitted by Nadya Williams

ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT AND METHOD

In the Fall semester of 2016, HIST 1111 assessment was conducted in a large lecture course of 286 students, team-taught by professors Pidhainy, Van Valen, and N. Williams. Administered as part of the final exam, the assessment instrument consisted of the following essay question, which aligns to the Learning Outcome for the course:

“In an essay of 3-5 pages (double-spaced; 12 point font) please answer the following question: **what was the role of religion in three different civilizations studied in this course, and what impact did religion have on the history of that civilization?** You may only use materials from this class, whether readings or films.”

The students also received the following instructions to assist them with the assignment:

A good essay will include a clear thesis statement. One possible way to come up with a thesis is to complete this statement: "In this essay, I argue that _____."

In addition, a good essay will include body paragraphs that connect to the thesis, clear examples from the readings and/or films that illustrate each point that you make, and a solid conclusion, explaining the impact of your argument in the paper on our understanding of world history.

At least two of the three civilizations that you discuss should be from after the midterm exam:

Late Rome

Early Native Americans

Medieval Europe

Africa

Muslim World

Mongols

One of the three civilizations that you discuss may be from those covered before the midterm (Egypt, Ancient Israel, Greece, Roman Republic, India, and China).

The essay question was valued at 60% of the final exam, was scored according to the standard 4 point scale as follows:

4 (exceeds expectations) 54-60

3 (meets expectations) = 42-53

2 (developing) = 36-41

1 (does not meet expectations) = < 36

RESULTS

228 students completed the assessment with the following score distribution:

4 (Exceeds Expectations)	3 (Meets Expectations)	2 (Developing)	1 (Does not meet Expectations)
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31 (14%)	174 (76%)	8 (4%)	15 (6%)
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These scores show that overall, the students did well in the course, and the majority of the students were able to meet expectations of the course, which were quite rigorous. Indeed, quite a few students scored a very high 3, just barely short of a score of 4 on the assessment instrument. Thus, overall, these results show the successful approach to learning that the course presented. Taught as a flipped-classroom and through film, the course presented minimal lectures, but emphasized honing writing skills via analysis of the different civilizations presented. The students' writing ability, as well as their ability to analyze historical phenomena, improved dramatically over the course of the semester.

At the same time, however, 10% of students were either developing or did not meet expectations, and almost all students in the latter category received the low marks or no marks on the assignment because of plagiarism. The prominent phenomenon of plagiarism on written assignments shows the need for further education of students on this topic, as many appeared genuinely confused as to what constituted plagiarism, as opposed to mere additional research.

Finally, while many students showed impressive mastery of the course material, many struggled to organize their thoughts in the assessment essay. Ultimately, with a written assessment instrument, it is difficult to separate writing skills from knowledge of the course content. Thus one suggestion for improvement that we have is that all sections of HIST 1111 (and, really, ideally all sections of the survey) provide some opportunities for students to work on analyzing historical documents or events in writing. The historical profession very much relies on the medium of writing for presenting thoughts and ideas, and it is apt to expose even our survey students to this art.

HIST 1112, Assessment Data for Fall 2016

History 1112, 87 students assessed.

The assessment instrument was a series of three multiple choice questions each about five primary sources. Faculty conducting the assessment were given the option of either asking these questions as a stand-alone quiz, or incorporating them into an exam. The numbers below represent the number of questions out of three that the students answered correctly. Thus a score of zero means that the student did not answer any of the three questions correctly; a one means he or she answered one of the three correctly, etc.

Scoring from 0 to 3 (0 = unacceptable, 1 = developing, 2 = proficient, 3 = excellent)

Primary Source #1 (Atlantic Slave Trade)

0—7 (8 %)

1—25 (29%)

2 —31 (36%)

3—24 (28%)

Primary Source #2 (Declaration of the Rights of Man and Declaration of the Rights of Woman)

0—2 (2%)

1—18 (21%)

2—37 (43%)

3—30 (35%)

Primary Source #3 (Communist Manifesto)

0—4 (5%)

1—30 (35%)

2—31 (36%)

3—22 (25%)

Primary Source #4 (Jules Ferry speech)

0—6 (7%)

1—19 (22%)

2—31 (36%)

3—31 (36%)

Primary Source #5 (Edgar Canisius on Rubber Collecting in Congo)

0—4 (5%)

1—16 (18%)

2—29 (33%)

3—38 (44%)

Self-Assessment

Exemplary: 20 (23%)

Proficient: 55 (63%)

Developing: 12 (14%)

Unacceptable: 0

Interpretation of Data

The members of the SAC for HIST 1112 met in the spring of 2017 to discuss the data from 2016. We concluded that students are doing reasonably well in meeting the the learning outcome. However, we concluded that students might learn more if they were required to engage creatively with primary sources.

Improvement Plan

The improvement plan is to add a creative writing assignment for one of the assigned primary sources. Dr. McCullers described her experience in fall 2016 using a creative writing assignment dealing with primary sources on the French Revolution. She found it to be a way to strengthen student engagement with the material. We already have the requirement of doing a writing assignment, but we thought we could specify that we do both an informal analytical writing assignment and a creative writing assignment. This new creative writing assignment, like the analytical writing assignment improvement decided on after reviewing 2015 data, is a writing-to-learn exercise designed to help students meet the learning outcome. It is not a new assessment instrument measuring how well students have met the learning outcome.

All students in HIST 1112 will be required to complete a creative writing assignment for one of the assigned primary sources before the students' understanding of the material is assessed. Individual instructors have discretion regarding the length of the writing assignment and whether or how to grade it.

Assessment Report for History 2111, Dept. of History, University of West Ga.

Keith Bohannon

In the spring of 2016, the tenured members of the History Department who teach History 2111 met to discuss implementing a new instrument to measure student learning outcomes. We created an assignment consisting of twenty-five multiple choice questions that test students over basic information that we all cover in our 2111 courses. We decided that the test would be administered for the first time in the fall of 2016 to a single survey class. The test would then be administered to all sections of 2111 starting in the spring of 2017.

Keith Bohannon administered the test in his fall 2016 double section of 2111. The test was made available to students on Course Den at the beginning of the semester for a period of seventy-two hours. I emphasized to students that they should not feel the need to study or prepare for this initial test, as we administered it to measure the amount of knowledge they had at the time they started the course. I administered the same test at the end of the semester. Students received points on their course grade for simply having completed both tests. A high percentage of the students took both tests.

This semester, all instructors teaching History 2111 (nine classes, most of them double sections) have administered the pretest on Course Den. After the same test is administered at the end of the semester, we will have enough data to start examining student learning outcomes. We will continue administering the test next academic year when our meetings will include all faculty (tenured and non-tenured) teaching 2111. We hope that analyzing this data will help to improve learning outcomes and possibly gauge the effectiveness of single and double sections, face-to-face, hybrid, and online courses, etc. We also hope that the data generated from these assessment tests can assist with the state-wide G2C (Gateways to Completion) Initiative where History 2111 courses are under review.

Daniel K. Williams

Assessment Report for HIST 2112

January 2017

Learning Outcome:

Students will demonstrate the ability to understand the political, social, economic, or cultural dimensions of American history.

Assessment Procedure and Success in Meeting 2016 Assessment Goals:

Last year, the HIST 2112 assessment team set two goals for the fall 2016 assessment:

- 1) Every HIST 2112 instructor would give the students a graded primary source-based writing assignment that would not be assessed, but that would potentially prepare the students for the assessment exercise at the end of the semester.
- 2) Every HIST 2112 instructor would use the department's HIST 2112 assessment exercise to assess at least one of their HIST 2112 sections.

We nearly accomplished both of those goals this semester. Five out of the six HIST 2112 instructors assessed at least one of their HIST 2112 sections, and all five also reported giving the students a graded primary source-based writing assignment.

As we had expected, the strong emphasis on training students to analyze the “political, social, economic, or cultural dimensions of American history” through writing about primary source documents during the semester resulted in a strong performance on the assessment exercise at the end of the course.

As we had done for the previous two years, we assessed our HIST 2112 sections by giving the students an in-class writing assignment during the final week of classes or the final exam. The writing assignment gave the students 50 minutes to answer an essay question that required them to analyze two primary source documents in relationship to the “political, social, economic, or cultural dimensions of American history.” Instructors then assessed each student essays on a 4-point scale according to the following standard: “How well did the student demonstrate the ability to understand the political, social, economic, or cultural dimensions of American history?” A score of 4 was given for “exemplary” work (90-100 percent); a 3 represented “proficient” work (80-89 percent); a 2 was given for an essay that “needed improvement” (60-79 percent); and a score of 1 signified “lack of understanding” (below 60 percent).

Assessment Result:

We assessed a total of 310 students, distributed across six sections of the course. In previous years, we have usually assessed no more than about 50 students, so this was a substantial increase in the number of students participating in assessment. Fourteen of the 310 students were enrolled in an honors course; the others were enrolled in regular sections of HIST 2112 taught on the Carrollton UWG campus. Not surprisingly, the honors students demonstrated a high degree of proficiency with this assessment exercise (all scored at least a 3, and most scored a 4), but in general, most of the other students demonstrated substantial competency as well. Only 8 percent of the students demonstrated a complete lack of understanding of the “political, social, economic, or cultural dimensions of American history”; all of the others were able to recall at least some information from the HIST 2112 course that enabled them to discuss the historical context of the primary source documents that they analyzed. Twenty-nine percent of the students demonstrated this ability at an “exemplary” level, and an additional 31 percent demonstrated this ability at a “proficient” level.

The results were as follows:

Score of 4 (exemplary): 29 percent (89 students) – compared to 26 percent in fall 2015.

Score of 3 (proficient): 31 percent (101 students) - compared to 46 percent in fall 2015.

Score of 2 (needs improvement): 31 percent (96 students) – compared to 24 percent in fall 2015.

Score of 1 (lack of understanding): 8 percent (24 students) – compared to 5 percent in fall 2015.

The Non-Assessed Primary Source-Based Writing Assignment:

Instructors chose a wide variety of approaches to the required non-assessed primary source-based writing assignment. One instructor required his students to write seven short essays answering historical questions using assigned primary source documents from David Shi and Holly Mayer’s *For the Record*. Another instructor assigned his students to write a short paper on President Franklin Roosevelt’s Inaugural Address of 1933. One instructor assigned his students to read a modern historian’s analysis of Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X, and then assigned the students to read two primary source documents from King and Malcolm before writing a short paper that engaged both with the primary source documents and with the secondary source’s interpretation of that material. Yet another instructor gave her students two primary source-based writing assignments – one that required them to engage with excerpts from diaries of World War I soldiers and a second that required them to write a paper answering specific questions about what Melton McLaurin’s autobiography, *Separate Pasts: Growing Up White in the Segregated South*, revealed about race and the “etiquette of segregation” in the mid-twentieth-century rural South. Another instructor gave her students five in-class writing assignments over the course of the semester that required them to answer specific interpretive questions about assigned primary sources.

Most of the instructors believed that by giving students writing assignments that required them to analyze primary sources in their historical context, their classes prepared students to perform successfully in the final assessment exercise. We may not have enough data to conclusively demonstrate this, but it appears to me that students who were required to complete multiple primary source-based writing assignments over a period of two or three months tended to do better on the assessment exercise than students who were given only one such assignment – though better data would probably be needed to rigorously test this hypothesis. Nevertheless, more than one instructor involved in this assessment exercise noted this phenomenon. One instructor wrote: “I think the multiple primary source exercises helped to sharpen their analytical capabilities in this exercise, which I included as part of the final exam (and, therefore, after they’d completed five in-class primary source exercises). If there is a way for students to engage with primary sources in a more regular way throughout the semester in survey classes, I think they’d be more familiar with the work that historians do and with the fabric of U.S. history (reading voices of historical actors as opposed only to a textbook, for example). I also think that incorporating multiple engagements with primary sources sharpens their ability to read and think critically. We may not be able to require all instructors to include multiple assignments (especially as they take time to assess and grade), but perhaps we could encourage it.”

Four of the five instructors involved in this assessment process expressed a general satisfaction with the idea of requiring students to write on primary sources and using such an exercise to assess students’ understanding of the “political, social, economic, or cultural dimensions of American history.” One of the instructors, though, did express doubts about this approach, and suggested that a multiple-choice exam given at the beginning and end of the semester might be a better way to assess the knowledge that students gained during the course of the semester.

Conclusion:

I am generally very pleased with the results of our approach to assessment this semester. It seems that we succeeded in our goal of encouraging all instructors to give greater emphasis to primary source analysis and written assignments in HIST 2112, and we also found some evidence to indicate a correlation between students’ completion of these assignments and students’ ability to meet the learning outcomes of the course by demonstrating understanding of the “political, social, economic, or cultural dimensions of American history.” In addition, students who complete primary source assignments gain practice in demonstrating one of our history B.A. program learning outcomes: “Analyze primary and secondary sources for their historical content and interpretations.” Under our current structure of assessment, we have ensured that HIST 2112 is linked to our larger program learning outcomes, and that this course will therefore help to prepare students for other courses in history.

However, this assessment exercise also revealed a division between tenure-track members of the department (who each taught a total of only 15-86 students in HIST 2112 this semester) and our adjunct faculty and lecturers who, this semester, were each teaching a total of 170-200 students in HIST 2112 in addition to teaching other classes. For tenure-track faculty, multiple primary

source-based writing assignments over the course of the semester may not be a substantial burden, and they can be a very useful pedagogical tool. But for our adjunct faculty who teach several hundred students each semester, the task of grading multiple primary source-based writing assignments may prove to be almost impossible. Of the two adjunct faculty or lecturers who were teaching HIST 2112 this fall, one did not participate in the assessment exercise, and the other participated but expressed reservations about it.

I don't know how to balance the value of pedagogical excellence with the reality of workloads for adjuncts. It seems clear to me that students benefit greatly from multiple primary source-based writing assignments, especially when instructors design those assignments creatively. It also seems clear that most of our adjunct faculty are not in a position to devote the enormous time to their courses that would be required to grade or assess these assignments.

Methodology, Spring 2016 Section 01D

23 students completed the course

Professor: Colleen Vasconcellos

During the Spring of 2016, I taught Methodology as a Partially Online Course, with all but eight class meetings taking place online. One class meeting was spent in the library with Blyne Olivieri and Jessica Critten leading a joint workshop on what the library offers history majors. Class content not only covered the standard material covered by our department's methodology classes, but I also offered pedagogical content for students going on to teach in K12 since we have a large number of students heading in that direction.

I assessed three items in Spring 2016: an indirect assessment questionnaire administered on the first day, a primary source analysis paper, and a book review with a rewrite requirement. That data is as follows:

Indirect Assessment Questionnaire

21 students participated

1. I have general knowledge of U.S. and world history and in-depth knowledge of a particular historical question.

33% Strongly Agree
52% Agree
10% Uncertain

5% Disagree
0% Strongly Disagree

2. I am able to recognize and to pose significant historical questions.

19% Strongly Agree
81% Agree
0% Uncertain

0% Disagree
0% Strongly Disagree

3. I am able to find useful primary and secondary sources.

14% Strongly Agree

57% Agree

	24% Uncertain 5% Disagree	0% Strongly Disagree
4. I am able to analyze sources critically.	19% Strongly Agree 38% Agree 38% Uncertain	5% Disagree 0% Strongly Disagree
5. I am able to cite sources properly.	19% Strongly Agree 24% Agree 38% Uncertain	14% Disagree 5% Strongly Disagree
6. I am able to write in standard English.	57% Strongly Agree 43% Agree 0% Uncertain	0% Disagree 0% Strongly Disagree
7. I am able to make an effective ten-minute oral presentation.	19% Strongly Agree 53% Agree 14% Uncertain	14% Disagree 0% Strongly Disagree
8. I am able to construct a persuasive historical argument based on evidence.	19% Strongly Agree 71% Agree 5% Uncertain	5% Disagree 0% Strongly Disagree
9. I am able to think historically.	19% Strongly Agree 76% Agree 5% Uncertain	0% Disagree 0% Strongly Disagree
10. History professors at UWG advise students effectively.	43% Strongly Agree 57% Agree 0% Uncertain	0% Disagree 0% Strongly Disagree
11. History professors at UWG teach effectively.	48% Strongly Agree 52% Agree	0% Uncertain 0% Disagree

0% Strongly Disagree

12. History professors at UWG care about their students.

48% Strongly Agree

52% Agree

0% Uncertain

0% Disagree

0% Strongly Disagree

13. What improvements would you recommend in the History program at UWG?

- n/a
- Not able to comment at this time
- I haven't had a history professor I didn't like :)
- More variety of different class [sic]
- Less busy work and more hands on learning
- More hands on assignments w/real world applicability
- I have liked all my history classes so far so as of now there aren't any changes I would make
- By making the information interesting to the students. Make the teachers interesting ☺

Primary Source Analysis Papers

Students had the freedom to choose any primary source housed on one of the many databases available from Ingram Library or GIL. 20 of 23 students completed the assignment.

Observations:

The papers were generally well written, and students seemed to have a solid grasp of how to cite sources according to Chicago format. Most students produced a summary heavy analysis, and only a few students had significant critical analysis as the main focus of their papers. I encouraged students to choose a source that they would use for a paper that they would be writing for another class that semester.

1. Does the paper analyze the primary source critically?

Exemplary (90-100 percent) 7 [35%]

Proficient (70-89 percent) 10 [50%]

Developing (60-69 percent) 3 [15%]

Unacceptable (below 60 percent) 0

2. Does the paper cite its sources correctly?

Exemplary (90-100 percent) 17 [85%]

Proficient (70-89 percent) 3 [15%]

Developing (60-69 percent) 0

Unacceptable (below 60 percent) 0

3. Is the paper written in standard English?

Exemplary (90-100 percent) 15 [75%]

Proficient (70-89 percent) 5 [25%]

Developing (60-69 percent) 0

Unacceptable (below 60 percent) 0

4. Does the paper construct a persuasive historical argument based on evidence from the source?

Exemplary (90-100 percent) 9 [45%]

Proficient (70-89 percent) 11 [55%]

Developing (60-69 percent) 0

Unacceptable (below 60 percent) 0

5. Does the paper demonstrate an ability to think historically?

Exemplary (90-100 percent) 6 [30%]

Proficient (70-89 percent) 14 [70%]

Developing (60-69 percent) 0

Unacceptable (below 60 percent) 0

Book Review and Book Review Rewrite

21 students completed the book review of Tony Horwitz' *Confederates in the Attic*, and 17 students submitted the required rewrite.

Observations:

As with the primary source analysis, the majority of the book reviews submitted were summary heavy with minor critical analysis. Rewrites took feedback to heart, and made substantial analytical revisions. I was impressed with their rewrites and their grades reflect their hard work.

Book Review

A: 3

B: 15

C: 3

D: 0

F: 2 (not submitted)

Book Review Rewrite

A: 14

B: 3

C: 0

D: 0

F: 6 (not submitted)

Suggestions for Course Improvements: Offering this as a partially online has been pretty successful, as there is much of the content that can be transitioned to an online format. My goal is to transition this course to a 100% online format, and I will gradually begin to offer more content online beginning in Fall of 2016. The workshops with Blyne and Jessica were very productive, but I'd like to have 2 workshops instead of one in order to give students an opportunity to discuss more with each. Lastly, I think it is important to have students take this course in either their sophomore or junior years, before they begin to take their upper level classes. I know that Dawn Liverman has been working with our freshmen and sophomore majors in an effort to get them into the course ASAP, but we still have a wide spectrum of students at varying points in their major. I think more work can be done here.

Methodology, Fall 2016, Section 01

15 enrolled, and 11 students completed the course

Professor: Colleen Vasconcellos

During the Fall of 2016, I taught Methodology again as a Partially Online Course, with all but five class meetings taking place online. Two class meetings were spent in the library with Blynn Olivieri and Jessica Critten, who both led workshop on what UWG's special collections and the library in general offer history majors respectively. As with the previous semester, class content not only covered the standard material covered by our department's methodology classes, but I also offered pedagogical content for students going on to teach in K12 since we have a large number of students heading in that direction.

I assessed three items in Fall 2016: an indirect assessment questionnaire administered on the first day, a primary source analysis paper, and a book review with a rewrite requirement. That data is as follows:

Indirect Assessment Questionnaire

11 students participated

1. I have general knowledge of U.S. and world history and in-depth knowledge of a particular historical question.

36% Strongly Agree	0% Disagree
64% Agree	0% Strongly Disagree
0% Uncertain	

2. I am able to recognize and to pose significant historical questions.

0% Strongly Agree	0% Disagree
36% Agree	0% Strongly Disagree
64% Uncertain	

3. I am able to find useful primary and secondary sources.

36% Strongly Agree	0% Disagree
46% Agree	0% Strongly Disagree
18% Uncertain	

4. I am able to analyze sources critically.

0% Strongly Agree	0% Disagree
100% Agree	0% Strongly Disagree
0% Uncertain	

5. I am able to cite sources properly.

27% Strongly Agree	0% Disagree
55% Agree	0% Strongly Disagree
18% Uncertain	

6. I am able to write in standard English.

73% Strongly Agree	0% Disagree
28% Agree	0% Strongly Disagree
0% Uncertain	

7. I am able to make an effective ten-minute oral presentation.

28% Strongly Agree	0% Disagree
55% Agree	0% Strongly Disagree
17% Uncertain	

8. I am able to construct a persuasive historical argument based on evidence.

9% Strongly Agree	0% Disagree
73% Agree	0% Strongly Disagree
18% Uncertain	

9. I am able to think historically.

18% Strongly Agree	0% Disagree
64% Agree	0% Strongly Disagree
18% Uncertain	

10. History professors at UWG advise students effectively.

27% Strongly Agree	0% Disagree
46% Agree	0% Strongly Disagree
27% Uncertain	

11. History professors at UWG teach effectively.

36% Strongly Agree	0% Disagree
45% Agree	0% Strongly Disagree
19% Uncertain	

12. History professors at UWG care about their students.

45% Strongly Agree
36% Agree
19% Uncertain
0% Disagree

13. What improvements would you recommend in the History program at UWG?

- More cohesiveness between History and the College of Education
- More course offerings per semester
- I don't know yet. I just started the program this semester.
- More specific ancient/pre-renaissance course subjects for specialized study
- I wouldn't change a thing. History at UWG is great!
- I don't know. It seems fine to me.
- None

Primary Source Analysis Papers

Students had the freedom to choose any primary source housed on one of the many databases available from Ingram Library or GIL. 10 of 11 students completed the assignment.

Observations:

The papers were very well written, and students seemed to have a solid grasp of how to cite sources according to Chicago format. Most students produced a critical analysis of their chosen sources and that source's historical significance, but one student failed to really grasp the point of the assignment and largely just produced a summary with parenthetical references. I encouraged students to choose a source that they would use for a paper that they would be writing for another class that semester.

1. Does the paper analyze the primary source critically?

Exemplary (90-100 percent) 7 [70%]
Proficient (70-89 percent) 2 [20%]
Developing (60-69 percent) 1 [10%]
Unacceptable (below 60 percent) 0

2. Does the paper cite its sources correctly?

Exemplary (90-100 percent) 3 [30%]
Proficient (70-89 percent) 6 [60%]
Developing (60-69 percent) 1 [10%]
Unacceptable (below 60 percent) 0

3. Is the paper written in standard English?

Exemplary (90-100 percent) 7 [70%]
Proficient (70-89 percent) 3 [30%]
Developing (60-69 percent) 0
Unacceptable (below 60 percent) 0

4. Does the paper construct a persuasive historical argument based on evidence from the source?

Exemplary (90-100 percent) 3 [30%]
Proficient (70-89 percent) 5 [50%]

Developing (60-69 percent) 2 [20%]
Unacceptable (below 60 percent) 0

5. Does the paper demonstrate an ability to think historically?

Exemplary (90-100 percent) 8 [80%]
Proficient (70-89 percent) 1 [10%]
Developing (60-69 percent) 1 [10%]
Unacceptable (below 60 percent) 0

Book Review and Book Review Rewrite

11 students completed the book review of Tony Horwitz' *Confederates in the Attic*, and 10 students submitted the required rewrite.

Observations:

The majority of the book reviews submitted were summary heavy with minor critical analysis, and it was quite obvious that some students simply had not read the book. 5 out of 11 students took feedback to heart, and made substantial analytical revisions, while the remainder of the class simply made grammatical changes or no changes at all. Students who did not make significant changes received the same grade that they did on their original draft.

Book Review

A: 1
B: 6
C: 4
D: 0
F: 0

Book Review Rewrite

A: 5
B: 5
C: 0
D: 0
F: 1 (not submitted)

Suggestions for Course Improvements: Offering this as a partially online has continued to be successful, and students responded well to increased online content from Spring 2016. My goal remains to transition this course to a 100% online format, and I will experiment with ways to do that in Spring 2017. The workshops with Blynnne and Jessica were very productive, and students benefitted greatly from having a full hour and fifteen minutes with each. I will continue to do that, and am flirting with the idea of having a separate workshop with Career Services in those semesters that the alumni panel does not take place. I am also looking into using a workbook called *The Methods and Skills of History: A Practical Guide* more frequently in class, and am considering assigning it as a regular semester long text. I have only used a few activities from the book rather than assign the book in full, but I think it will help students work on some of the skills that are more difficult to teach in an online setting. Lastly, I still think it is important to have students take this course in either their sophomore or junior years, before they begin to take their upper level classes. This class seemed to have more students who were in the early stages of their major in the past, so I think we are starting to see a difference thanks to Dawn Liverman's advising skills.

University of West Georgia Department of History
Senior Seminar Assessment Report
Spring 2016
Charles Lipp

I. Assessment Numbers

- The class consisted of 15 students, 13 of whom completed the 20 to 25 historical research paper.
- Those 12 papers were assessed according to the rubric described below. That rubric conforms to the History Department's revised learning outcomes.
- Following the rubric, each paper was assessed according each of the four departmental learning outcomes (LO) and a four point scale (1 = did not meet expectations; 2 = developing; 3 = proficient; 4 = exceeded expectations). After calculating assessment results for each individual learning outcome, I then averaged the numbers.
- The overall results were as follows:
 - Student 01 = 2.25
 - LO 1 = 3; LO 2 = 2; LO 3 = 2; LO 4 = 2
 - Student 02 = 3.25
 - LO 1 = 4; LO 2 = 3; LO 3 = 3; LO 4 = 3
 - Student 03 = 4.00
 - LO 1 = 4; LO 2 = 4; LO 3 = 4; LO 4 = 4
 - Student 04 = 3.25
 - LO 1 = 4; LO 2 = 3; LO 3 = 3; LO 4 = 3
 - Student 05 = 2.00
 - LO 1 = 3; LO 2 = 2; LO 3 = 1; LO 4 = 2
 - Student 06 = 4.00
 - LO 1 = 4; LO 2 = 4; LO 3 = 4; LO 4 = 4
 - Student 07 = 2.00
 - LO 1 = 3; LO 2 = 2; LO 3 = 1; LO 4 = 2
 - Student 08 = 3.00
 - LO 1 = 3; LO 2 = 3; LO 3 = 3; LO 4 = 3
 - Student 09 = 1.75
 - LO 1 = 3; LO 2 = 1; LO 3 = 1; LO 4 = 2

Student 10 = 3.00

- LO 1 = 3; LO 2 = 2; LO 3 = 3; LO 4 = 3

Student 11 = 3.00

- LO 1 = 3; LO 2 = 3; LO 3 = 3; LO 4 = 2

Student 12 = 2.50

- LO 1 = 3; LO 2 = 3; LO 3 = 2; LO 4 = 2

- To Breakdown further:

Total Averages	# of Results
4.00	2 of 12
3.00-3.99	5 of 12
2.00-2.99	4 of 12
1.00-1.99	1 of 12

Learning Outcome 1	# of Results
4	4 of 12
3	8 of 12
2	0 of 12
1	0 of 12

- The results for Learning Outcome 1 suggest students in the course were able to demonstrate historical content knowledge satisfactorily.

Learning Outcome 2	# of Results
4	2 of 12
3	5 of 12
2	4 of 12
1	1 of 12

- The results for Learning Outcome 2 indicate the majority of students fell into the developing and proficient categories almost equally as regards their abilities to analyze sources. This may be area to focus attention for student improvement.

Learning Outcome 3	# of Results
4	2 of 12
3	5 of 12
2	2 of 12
1	3 of 12

- The results for Learning Outcome 3 indicate a majority of students could research according to historical methods. However, considering that 5 of 12 students either did not meet expectations or fell into the “developing” category suggests this area may also be a place to focus attention on.

Learning Outcome 4	# of Results
4	2 of 12
3	4 of 12
2	6 of 12
1	0 of 12

- The results for Learning Outcome 4 indicate that half the students in the class demonstrated writing skills at the “developing” level. As before, this indicates a need to focus attention on this area.
- Overall, although students in the class proved capable of summarizing details and presenting content knowledge, many proved challenged by the skills of critical research, analysis, and writing.

II. My Impressions

- Overall, I believe that although the above results come from one Senior Sem only and should not be taken as reflective of our majors as a whole, they do indicate a need for the continuing discussions of the History Department’s Undergraduate Program Revisions Committee. Issues of research, analysis, and writing cannot be solved in a single semester at the end of the B.A., but, rather, need to be developed across the major, from the survey level onwards.
- The biggest issues I saw in the class included:
 - Non-attendance. The three students who failed failed for this main reason.
 - A failure to begin research and writing early in the semester.
 - A failure to approach their topic critically. Several students believed right from the beginning of the semester that they already knew everything there was to know about their topics.
- Next time I offer the class, I am considering:
 - Dropping most of the oral presentations. First, our revised learning outcomes no longer demand this assignment. Second, students overall, including the best, did not well on this task as it requires time during the semester that students could not devote as they needed to write. In fact, I felt that the large amount of time the presentations took could have better been devoted to other tasks more clearly linked to the overall aim – the crafting of a 20 to 25 page historical research paper.
 - Working with students from the first day on organizing and structuring their time and their research. To this end, next time, I will follow Dan’s example of having outside guests, including Jessica Critten from the Library, Career Services, and Stephanie and Ann from our Grad Program. I want future students to think strategically during the semester, both about the short-term goal of completing the paper and about the long-term goal of using their degrees to launch a career.

Senior Seminar Research Paper Rubric

Learning Outcomes for the Bachelor of Arts in History (adopted 2016):

Students who earn the Bachelor of Arts in History will be able to:

1. Demonstrate content knowledge of history.
2. Analyze primary and secondary sources for their historical content and interpretations.
3. Demonstrate ability to research according to historical methods.
4. Demonstrate writing skills that reflect persuasive historical arguments based on evidence and proper citation.

The History Department believes that these learning outcomes will contribute to a student's ability to think historically, which includes:

- understanding the people of the past.
- understanding the perspective of historical actors and to view those historical actors from a critical, scholarly perspective.
- recognizing that people, events, ideas, and cultures have influenced later people, events, ideas, and cultures.
- recognizing that history involves both change and continuity over time; and,
- explaining connections between particular people, events, ideas, or texts and their historical contexts.

Learning Outcome	Rubric Score 1	Rubric Score 2	Rubric Score 3	Rubric Score 4
1				
2				
3				
4				

explanations of Rubric Scores follow on pages 2-4.

- **Learning Outcome 1: Demonstrate content knowledge of history.**

- 4 (exceeds expectations):
 - States basic and more complicated historical content knowledge, including names, dates, events, and processes, with no errors.
- 3 (proficient):
 - Able to state basic historical content knowledge, including names, dates, events, and processes, among others, with only a few errors.
- 2 (developing):
 - States some basic historical content knowledge with more than several errors.
 - Remains vague about content knowledge and does not demonstrate mastery of material.
- 1 (does not meet expectations):
 - Unable to state basic historical content knowledge.

- **Learning Outcome 2: Analyze primary and secondary sources for their historical content and interpretations.**

- 4 (exceeds expectations):
 - Has moved away from just summarizing source.
 - Can demonstrate how the source's content connects to a broader historical context.
 - Can reveal many subtexts and implications of a source's argument.
 - Can combine material from multiple sources to build a more complicated analysis.
- 3 (proficient):
 - Though mostly focuses on analysis, still contains moments of summary unconnected to the analysis.
 - Makes some connections between the source and the broader historical context.
 - Can reveal some subtexts and implications of a source's argument.
 - Can combine material from multiple sources at a basic level.
- 2 (developing):
 - Mostly offers a summary of sources, with few moments of analysis.
 - Makes a few connections between the source and the broader historical context.
 - Can reveal a few subtexts and implications of a source's argument.
 - Cannot combine material from multiple sources.
- 1 (does not meet expectations):
 - Offers only summary.
 - Makes no connections between the source and the broader historical context.
 - Cannot reveal subtexts and implications of a source's argument.
 - Cannot combine material from multiple sources.

Learning Outcome 3: Demonstrate ability to research according to historical methods.

- 4 (exceeds expectations):
 - Can identify and find an effective amount of appropriate primary and/or secondary sources.
 - Can identify an extensive amount of useful material within appropriate primary and/or secondary sources.
 - Overall, needs minimal guidance and tutelage in conducting research.

- 3 (proficient):
 - Can identify and find some appropriate primary and/or secondary sources.
 - Can identify some useful material within appropriate primary and/or secondary sources.
 - Overall, needs some guidance and tutelage in conducting research.

- 2 (developing):
 - Can identify and find only a few appropriate primary and/or secondary sources.
 - Can identify only a small amount of useful material within appropriate primary and/or secondary sources.
 - Overall, needs extensive guidance and tutelage in conducting research.

- 1 (does not meet expectations):
 - Cannot identify and find appropriate primary and/or secondary sources.
 - Cannot identify useful material within appropriate primary and/or secondary sources.
 - Overall, needs continuous guidance and tutelage in conducting research.

Learning Outcome 4 on the next page →

Learning Outcome 4: Demonstrate writing skills that reflect persuasive historical arguments based on evidence and proper citation.

- 4 (exceeds expectations):
 - Uses standard English in a professional manner with no grammatical errors.
 - Has a clear specific and insightful thesis statement that makes an historical argument.
 - Remains focused on the argument and analysis throughout and avoids mere summarizing of material.
 - Supports argument throughout with evidence drawn from primary and/or secondary sources.
 - Writes in an organized and structured manner, both in terms of the paper as a whole and within each paragraph.
 - Uses proper citation format (Chicago, aka Turabian, Style).
 - Does not plagiarize.

- 3 (proficient):
 - Uses standard English in a professional manner with a few grammatical errors.
 - Has a mostly clear and insightful thesis statement that makes an historical argument.
 - Remains mostly focused on the argument and analysis, thus mostly avoiding mere summarizing of material.
 - Mostly supports arguments with evidence drawn from primary and/or secondary sources.
 - Mostly writes in an organized and structured manner, both in terms of the paper as a whole and within each paragraph.
 - Uses proper citation format (Chicago, aka Turabian, Style).
 - Does not plagiarize.

- 2 (developing):
 - Does not fully use standard English in a professional manner and makes continual grammatical errors.
 - Has a simplistic thesis statement that does make a fully historical argument.
 - Does not remain focused on the argument and analysis and so does at times just summarizes material.
 - Does not fully support argument with evidence drawn from primary and/or secondary sources.
 - Does not maintain an organized and structured manner to the writing, both in terms of the paper as a whole and within each paragraph.
 - Does not use proper citation format throughout (Chicago, aka Turabian, Style).
 - Does not plagiarize.

- 1 (does not meet expectations):
 - Does not use standard English in a professional manner and makes numerous grammatical errors.
 - Does not provide a clear thesis statement that makes an historical argument.
 - Does not provide argument and analysis to any great extent, rather offering a summary of material.
 - Does not support argument with evidence drawn from primary and/or secondary material.
 - Does not use proper citation format (Chicago, aka Turabian, Style).
 - Plagiarizes.

Fall 2016 Senior Seminar

Stephanie Chalifoux

My fall 2016 Senior Seminar was by most measures a success. Seventeen students remained enrolled in the course throughout the fall semester. Fifteen students submitted final papers. The two students who did not submit papers included one student who stopped attending in October and the other student plagiarized the introduction and historiography assignment resulting in an F in the course.

Paper topics were diverse and most students put forth sincere effort to complete their capstone paper. I structured this course around two central premises: the first was the curriculum set forth by the department which required a 20-25 page paper, a section of the paper on historiography, and precedent set forth by other colleagues such as peer review, presentations, and guest speakers. My classes visited the library to meet with Blyne Olivieri to discuss what collections the university houses. She led the class in helpful exercise on how to utilize primary sources and she discussed ways to access digitized materials through other university collections. We also visited with Jessica Critten who provided information about the databases the university subscribes to and what sources these databases may contain. I also wanted to talk with students about turning their degree into a career. I invited career services to talk with students about postgraduate career options and resume building. Lastly, Ann McCleary and I discussed graduate school options with the class.

The second premise on which I based this course was the production of an independent scholarly work that reflected student interests and student skill gained through their tenure as undergraduate History majors. My hope was that students understood our discipline's demand on producing not just consuming history and that they continued to see the significance of historical research to illustrate the importance of the past and their unique contribution to our field's scholarship.

LO1: Demonstrate content knowledge of history.

Exemplary (90-100 percent) 41 percent Proficient (80-89 percent) 24 percent Developing / Needs Improvement (60-79 percent) 24 percent Unacceptable (below 60 percent) 11 percent

Comments: The majority of the students demonstrated sound knowledge about US or world history related to their topic. Some students however chose subjects where they had little knowledge. Several students took initiative to learn more to place their topic in context. Others, despite my insistence, neglected to conduct preliminary historical research and failed to get a strong sense of the era or events surrounding their subject. This lapse in effort led some students to struggle to place their questions in historical context and to recognize the significance of events and ideas influencing their subject of study.

LO2: Analyze primary and secondary sources for their historical content and interpretations.

Exemplary (90-100 percent) 41 percent Proficient (80-89 percent) 24 percent Developing / Needs Improvement (60-79 percent) 24 percent Unacceptable (below 60 percent) 11 percent

Comments: All students were able, to some degree, analyze sources. Most students excelled in their assessment of secondary sources more than primary sources and at times did not always seem comfortable drawing conclusions without some guidance. Like most of my colleagues, I assigned a Primary Source presentation. The presentations varied in sophistication and substance. Many students were not as skilled in their ability to present or analyze the source when the presentation was scheduled. I believe changing the structure or eliminating it may prove valuable to our overall goals in the course. I will address the issue at the end of this report.

LO3: Demonstrate ability to research according to historical methods.

Exemplary (90-100 percent) 41 percent Proficient (80-89 percent) 24 percent Developing / Needs Improvement (60-79 percent) 24 percent Unacceptable (below 60 percent) 11 percent

Comments: Students worked diligently to locate solid sources. However, a few struggled due to the nature of their topics and due to the limited scope with which they wanted to explore their subjects. The databases in the library presented some problems for students researching world history topics. Overall, most students understood the difference between the historiography section and their research section. Similar to LO 1, some students simply ignored advice and instruction on engaging and following the practices of our discipline. Again, this lapse was reflected in their final papers and detracted from their grade.

LO4: Demonstrate writing skills that reflect persuasive historical arguments based on evidence and proper citation.

Exemplary (90-100 percent) 41 percent Proficient (80-89 percent) 24 percent Developing / Needs Improvement (60-79 percent) 24 percent Unacceptable (below 60 percent) 11 percent

Comments: Through exercises, discussions, and assignments, the majority of students were able to recognize and pose important questions. Many succeeded in turning their interests into important questions, but others lacked the ability to do this or to turn their interest into a more sophisticated examination of their subjects beyond the superficial. However, many student paper arguments improved throughout the semester with each task. While not all excelled at the same pace, many reworked their arguments as they discovered new evidence.

Citation and Turabian format: I administered an open book, ungraded citation quiz to students. My goal was not to determine whether they could memorize the Turabian style guide, but that they could use the guide to find the information they needed to cite their courses properly. The exercise was successful and beneficial to show students the time it takes to cite properly. Some students also relied on a computer applications offered through the Ingram library to create citations that conformed to Turabian. The application prompts the students to input information and then the application formats the information.

Final thoughts and suggested improvements:

The Reflective Essay: My impression of the reflective essay is that students took it seriously, but found it onerous. I asked them to write about their entire experience as an undergraduate

history major. Some talked only about Sr Sem and others more about the program as a whole, highlighting particular classes or professors. The essay counted for 5% of the total final grade and I gave everyone full credit for submitting it.

Presentation: In theory, I think presentations are important and I stressed the need to know how to create a presentation and to speak in front of an audience since most employers will require that at some point. I believe I assigned the primary source presentation too early and some students approached the assignment in a more professional manner than others. In some cases, students had not finished their research and their analysis was acceptable, but not exceptional as they were still figuring out how the source would work in their larger project. My final thought on this assignment is that it takes up entirely too much class time. The assignment took almost three class periods. To make this presentation work, I think it needs to be a presentation on the entire project at the end and a longer presentation. The only solution though is to reduce the number of students in the class. Unless required, I will not assign the presentation in a future Sr Sem class.

Distribution of points for assignments: Because we do not have a requirement on how points are distributed for assignments throughout the semester I made the final paper worth 40% of the grade. I may differ from my colleagues, but I believe the process was as important as the final product. Although some final papers were stronger than others, I saw marked improvement for all but three students on the final paper. Therefore, student final grades may have been somewhat higher than in other Sr Sem courses taught by colleagues.

Attendance and assignments: One of the best decisions I made in this class was to require mandatory attendance and mandatory assignment submission. Students were allowed to miss two classes before they incurred penalties. However, missing a class did not negate the responsibility of submitting an assignment. Students were required to submit all assignments, or they would fail the class. With the exception of a student who ceased attending and a student who plagiarized, all students passed my course. I recommend other faculty consider these requirements. I explained to my class my reasoning for mandatory submission and that each assignment helped to build upon their skills and knowledge. Several students commented to me that initially they found the mandatory assignments burdensome, but realized the value of each assignment and did not see the tasks as busy work.

Recommendations:

Smaller class size: I sometimes felt I could not work as closely with students because of the large class size. We broke into groups at times so students could receive peer feedback and talk about their obstacles and accomplishments. I met with individual students approximately 40 times. These were often lengthy meetings and after hours (students were employed or working practicums/internships during the day). These meetings were enjoyable and I am happy that students sought my assistance as often as they did, but I also wondered if it was because we could not always get to everyone's project and students need more guidance than class time allowed.

Paper length: I think the paper length should be reduced to 18-20 pages if we continue to require a 3-page reflective essay.

Outside Resources: I set up visits with Jessica Critten and Blynne Olivieri for research assistance and ideas for the class. Ms. Olivieri's presentation was very beneficial, but no students utilized Special Collections. I am not sure how to entice students to use records in the collection, but would like to brainstorm about how to encourage utilizing the resource. Our meeting with Jessica Critten was helpful, but students expressed their need to understand the nuts and bolts of the databases, rather than primary and secondary sources distinction, which was the focus of the workshop. Lastly, students were energized and enthusiastic after a representative from career services talked to our class. They also expressed their appreciation for the information they gained about our graduate program from Ann and myself. The least beneficial was the talk by the representative from the College of Education. I am not sure if this was particular to the presentation, the students, or the COE.