

Assessment of Student Learning

Department and Program Report

2011 - 12

College of Arts and Humanities

History Department

Program: History Major

- 1. WHAT STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES WERE ASSESSED AND WHY?** History majors, who are required to take History 302: Historical Methods (Formerly Introduction to History) as soon as they declare their commitment to the major, and History 481: Senior Thesis (formerly Understanding History), as they complete their degree, were assessed on their final research papers. The department faculty created a five-part assessment rubric with a tripartite scale as follows: exceeds expectations; meets expectations; and does not meet expectations. The five categories in the rubric for both courses are: 1, Writing; 2, Research Skills/Sources; 3, Analysis, 4, Documentation, and 5, Logical Organization.
- 2. HOW WERE THEY ASSESSED?**
 - A. What Methods were used?** Five-part assessment rubric with three possible responses to each part. See appendix for definitions of “exceeds expectations, meets expectations, and does not meet expectations. Ideally, all majors will “exceed expectations” in each part.
 - B. Who was assessed?** All History majors who enrolled in History 481 in fall 2011 (Dr. Knirck, instructor); in winter 2012 (Dr. Herman, instructor); in spring 2012 (Dr. Easley, instructor). All History majors who enrolled in History 302 in fall 2011 (Dr. Dormady, instructor).
 - C. When was it assessed?** Each major was assessed at the time they completed the final original research paper required in the class.

3. WHAT WAS LEARNED?

TOTAL 481 majors:

Fall 2011	13 enrolled
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Winter 2012	21 enrolled
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Spring 2012	18 enrolled
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TOTAL 302 majors:

Fall 2011	12 enrolled
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History 481 Findings:	Fall '11	Winter '12	Spring '12
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Category One: Writing			
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Exceeds expectations	3	3	9
Meets Expectations	9	13	6
Does not Meet Expectations	1	5	3

Category Two: Research Skills/Sources			
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Exceeds	3	10	5
Meets	7	6	9
Does not Meet	3	5	4

Category Three: Analysis			
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Exceeds	5	7	5
Meets	4	9	12
Does not meet	4	5	1

Category Four: Documentation			
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Exceeds	4	9	6
Meets	8	7	7
Does not Meet	1	5	5

Category Five: Logical Organization			
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Exceeds	4	8	4
Meets	7	8	13
Does not Meet	2	5	1

History 302 Findings:			
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Category One: Writing			
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Exceeds	2		
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Meets	7
Does not Meet	3

Category Two: Research Skills/Sources

Exceeds	2
Meets	8
Does not Meet	2

Category Three: Analysis

Exceeds	1
Meets	9
Does not Meet	2

Category Four: Documentation

Exceeds	3
Meets	7
Does not Meet	2

Category Five: Logical Organization

Exceeds	5
Meets	6
Does not Meet	1

CONCISE INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS: History majors did not reach ideal levels in any category. However, the number that met or exceeded expectations far exceeded those who did not. The rate of success was higher in History 481 over History 302, indicating that seniors, after completing most of their major courses, have mastered skills in which they were weak at the beginning of their major.

4. WHAT WILL YOUR DEPARTMENT DO AS A RESULT OF THAT INFORMATION? Since the mechanics of writing continue to be problematic for some students, faculty agreed to make use of the new Learning Commons in the Library by recommending or even requiring students to meet with writing consultants. Faculty also agreed to identify those students who do not meet expectations earlier in the quarter. For all students but especially students in HIST 302, faculty agreed to assign preliminary components to the final research paper, such as proposals, primary source analyses, historiographical essays, annotated bibliographies, citation exercises, and/or outlines.

5. WHAT DID THE DEPARTMENT OR PROGRAM DO IN RESPONSE TO LAST YEAR'S ASSESSMENT INFO?

The department raised the credits in the History Major from 60 to 74 credits in order to build a stronger foundation in all the skills required of good historians. Happily, the number of majors did not shrink but rose to 175, so the enhanced requirements did not deter interested students. The department heeded student surveys that pressed to replace vacancies in US, Asian, and African/Middle East faculty and pressed administration for replacement hires. Faculty basked in student commendations of effective teaching, dedicated instructors, and helpful advising. Noting student ambivalence about online courses, the department moved cautiously to expand online offerings.