

Degree Program Student Learning Report

Revised November 2019

Department of History & Political Science

BA in History

For 2019-2020 Academic Year

PART 1

Degree Program Mission and Student Learning Outcomes

A. State the school, department, and degree program missions.

University Mission	School Mission	Department Mission	Degree Program Mission
Our mission is to ensure students develop the skills and knowledge required to achieve professional and personal goals in dynamic local and global communities.	Central to the mission of the School is the preparation of students to achieve professional and personal goals in their respective disciplines and to enable their success in dynamic local and global communities. Our strategy is to foster an academic setting of diverse curricula that inherently incorporates an environment of service and collegiality.	The mission of the Department of History and Political Science is to support discipline-specific degree programs as well as the University's general education program.	The Bachelor of Arts Degree in History is designed to help students develop research, analytical, critical thinking, and oral and written communications skills and competencies.

B. Align school purposes, department purposes, and program student learning outcomes with their appropriate University commitments.

University Commitments	School Purposes	Department Purposes	Student Learning Outcomes
To provide quality associate, baccalaureate, and graduate degree	The School offers innovative degrees, which focus upon	Offers innovative and quality teaching both within the	

University Commitments	School Purposes	Department Purposes	Student Learning Outcomes
opportunities and educational experiences which foster student excellence in oral and written communications, scientific reasoning and critical and creative thinking.	developing skills in oral and written communication, critical thinking, creativity, empirical and evidenced-based inquiry, experimental investigation and theoretical explanation of natural phenomena, and innovative technology.	classroom and through distance education.	
To promote an atmosphere of academic and intellectual freedom and respect for diverse expression in an environment of physical safety that is supportive of teaching and learning.	The School educates its majors to think independently and have the knowledge, skills and vision to work in all types of situations and careers and communicate with all types of people.	Foster the skills of critical thinking, writing, research, and oral communication among our students	Students will demonstrate analytical and critical thinking skills through oral presentations and papers dealing with history.
To provide a general liberal arts education that supports specialized academic programs and prepares students for lifelong learning and service in a diverse society.	The School offers general education courses of high quality and purpose that provide a foundation for life- long learning.	Serve the University and the community through the provision of quality general education courses.	Students will demonstrate a solid understanding of historical events have influenced the United States and/or the world. This will provide the background for lifelong learning and service.
To provide students with a diverse, innovative faculty dedicated to excellence in teaching, scholarly pursuits and continuous improvement of programs.	The School fosters a community of scholars among the faculty and students of the institution.	Foster values of scholarship, creativity, appreciation of diversity, and community service among our faculty, staff, and students.	
To provide university-wide student services, activities and resources that complement academic programs.			
To support and strengthen student, faculty and administrative structures			

University Commitments	School Purposes	Department Purposes	Student Learning Outcomes
that promote shared governance of the institution.			
To promote and encourage student, faculty, staff and community interaction in a positive academic climate that creates opportunities for cultural, intellectual and personal enrichment for the University and the communities it serves.	The School fosters a community of scholars among the faculty and students of the institution.	Attract and retain high quality traditional and nontraditional students.	

PART 2
Revisit Proposed Changes Made in Previous Assessment Cycle

Revisit each instructional/assessment change proposed in Part 5 of the degree program SLR for the preceding year. Indicate whether the proposed change was implemented and comment accordingly. Any changes the department implemented for this academic year, but which were not specifically proposed in the preceding report, should also be reported and discussed here. Please note if no changes were either proposed or implemented or this academic year.

Proposed Change	Implemented? (Y/N)	Comments
<p>SLO 1: Students appear to need more support on their writing. To try to provide more opportunity to improve papers, professors will include a requirement that the students take at least one draft of the paper to the university writing center for advice and improvement.</p> <p>SLO 2: In this course, only 10% of students earned an average of 90% or better while 60% earned less than an average of 80%. The course is a methodological course, with information usually taught at the graduate student level. The department will review expectations of the course to</p>	Y	<p>Although not all professors required students to take their papers to the Writing Center, those who did reported significant improvement in the papers that were reviewed.</p> <p>After reviewing course requirements and goals, the department faculty determined that History 3223 Interpreting History is more appropriately taught at the graduate level. Therefore, we are removing it as a requirement for the undergraduate history degree and will be evaluating this SLO with a new performance standard.</p>

--	--

PART 3
Response to University Assessment Committee Peer Review

The University Assessment Committee provides written feedback on departmental assessment plans through a regular peer review process. This faculty-led oversight is integral to RSU’s commitment to the continuous improvement of student learning and institutional effectiveness. UAC recommendations are not compulsory and departments may implement them at their discretion. Nevertheless, respond below to each UAC recommendations from last year’s peer review report. Indicate whether the recommendation was implemented and comment accordingly. Please indicate either if the UAC had no recommendations or if the program was not subject to review in the previous cycle.

Peer Review Feedback	Implemented (Y/N)	Comments
SLO #1. Recommendation to add evidence of critical thinking through oral communication as well as written, if it is mentioned in the SLO.	Y	Opportunities for students to show their ability to reveal critical thinking orally are being added to both SLO #1 and SLO #4.
SLO #4. Define “conference ready papers” and how students can show improvement.	Y	A rubric will better define “conference ready papers” and the improvements will be revealed by comparing the final paper to the paper selected from a previous class to improve.
The previous document had no faculty comments in the conclusions.	Y	Every SLO now has conclusions based on the data provided.
Parts six and seven were not completed.	Y	Parts six and seven are now completed

PART 4
Evidence of Student Learning

Evidence and analyze student progress for each of the student learning outcomes (same as listed in Part I B above) for the degree program. See the *Appendix* for a detailed description of each component. Note: The table below is for the first program learning outcome. Copy the table and insert it below for each additional outcome. SLO numbers should be updated accordingly.

A.
Student Learning Outcome

<p>SLO #1: Students will demonstrate analytical and critical thinking skills through oral presentations and papers dealing with U.S./global history.</p>					
B. Assessment Measure	C. Performance Standard	D. Sampling Method	E. Sample Size (n)	F. Results	G. Standard Met (Y/N)
Students will demonstrate analytical and critical thinking skills through oral presentations and papers dealing with historiography.	At least 80% of History majors will demonstrate their understanding of appropriate sources and analysis/critical thinking skills through a paper in HIST 3243 <i>Writing and Research for Historians</i> .	All majors in the class are included.	13	Nine of thirteen majors (69%) demonstrated an understanding of sources and critical thinking through a paper. However, there is some thought that the university's response to the coronavirus threat made completing the course more difficult and one of the students failed to finish the coursework, even though she did not drop the course. Rubric: 1. Directly addresses main questions or issues and adds new insight to the subject not covered in lectures, readings, or class discussions. Synthesizes new information with material covered in the course. 2. Clearly states argument. 3. Provides compelling and accurate evidence that supports the thesis. 4. Considers alternate interpretations that could weaken the argument and thoughtfully responds to them. 5. Uses a wide range of academic sources. 6. Properly cites evidence in footnotes or endnotes.	N

A. Student Learning Outcome						
SLO #1: Students will demonstrate analytical and critical thinking skills through oral presentations and papers dealing with U.S./global history.						
B. Assessment Measure	C. Performance Standard	D. Sampling Method	E. Sample Size (n)	F. Results	G. Standard Met (Y/N)	
H. Conclusions						
The low percentage of majors completing the requirements for this course is concerning, although there were much higher success rates from the military history majors who will have been part of the history cohort after the degrees are combined. The department will review the standards of this course to ensure that we are providing the students with the skills they need for success.						

A. Student Learning Outcome						
SLO #2: Students will demonstrate a solid understanding of historiography to provide the background for lifelong learning and service in a diverse society.						
B. Assessment Measure	C. Performance Standard	D. Sampling Method	E. Sample Size (n)	F. Results	G. Standard Met (Y/N)	
H. Conclusions						
Students will demonstrate a solid understanding of historiography to provide the background for lifelong learning and service in a diverse society.	80% of majors will earn an average of 80% or above on all exams in HIST 3223 <i>Interpreting History</i> .	All majors in the class are included.	0	N/A. No students took HIST 3223 <i>Interpreting History</i> .	N/A	

**A.
Student Learning Outcome**

SLO #2: Students will demonstrate a solid understanding of historiography to provide the background for lifelong learning and service in a diverse society.					
B. Assessment Measure	C. Performance Standard	D. Sampling Method	E. Sample Size (n)	F. Results	G. Standard Met (Y/N)
Although no majors took the class this year, based on the previous iterations of the course, the History faculty decided that HIST 3223 <i>Interpreting History</i> is not the best course to establish a background for lifelong learning and service in a diverse society as taught. This course is normally taught at the graduate level so the department decided that it would be more effective to evaluate student learning for undergraduates using different courses or by significantly altering the content of the course.					

**A.
Student Learning Outcome**

SLO #3: Students will demonstrate a solid understanding world geography to provide the background for lifelong learning and service in a diverse society.					
B. Assessment Measure	C. Performance Standard	D. Sampling Method	E. Sample Size (n)	F. Results	G. Standard Met (Y/N)
Students will demonstrate their understanding through exams in GEOG 2123 <i>World Regional Geography</i> .	At least 80% of History majors will earn at least an 80% on exams in GEOG 2123 <i>World Regional Geography</i> .	All majors in the class are included.	8	Five of eight (62.5%) of students earned at least an 80% on exams in GEOG 2123 <i>World Regional Geography</i> . However, seven of eight majors earned a B in the class and the low performance on the exams was likely impacted by the university's response to the coronavirus as 25% of students performed poorly on the second exam, which was proctored two weeks after the school moved to distance learning.	N

H.

A. Student Learning Outcome						
SLO #3: Students will demonstrate a solid understanding world geography to provide the background for lifelong learning and service in a diverse society.						
B. Assessment Measure	C. Performance Standard	D. Sampling Method	E. Sample Size (n)	F. Results	G. Standard Met (Y/N)	
Conclusions						
The instructor stated that many students did poorly on the second test, following the move to distance learning because of fears of the coronavirus. He believes that the students would have done better on the test had they not been affected by the university's response to the virus since most did better on the previous and following tests. In addition, the instructor believes that the current exam structure is not the best measure for the SLO. For this reason, he is changing the exam structure to better assess overall student learning.						

A. Student Learning Outcome						
SLO #4: Students will demonstrate competency in expressing ideas through oral and written communications.						
B. Assessment Measure	C. Performance Standard	D. Sampling Method	E. Sample Size (n)	F. Results	G. Standard Met (Y/N)	
H. Conclusions						
Students will show improved oral and written communications through a capstone paper and presentation.	At least 80% of History majors will reveal improved communications skills by preparing a conference-ready capstone paper in HIST 4511 <i>Senior Capstone</i> .	All majors in the class are included.	3	None of the three (0%) History majors produced a conference-ready history paper.	N	
H. Conclusions						

**A.
Student Learning Outcome**

SLO #4: Students will demonstrate competency in expressing ideas through oral and written communications.				
B. Assessment Measure	C. Performance Standard	D. Sampling Method	E. Sample Size (n)	F. Results
				G. Standard Met (Y/N)
<p>Many students come to the university with poor writing skills. Although there are courses to improve student writing skills, they do not appear to bring all students to an appropriate standard. While we recognize that most of our students will not be continuing on for graduate education, there is an expectation that students will be able to communicate effectively in writing. For this reason, every upper level history course will begin incorporating a writing assignment and students will be expected to work with the Writing Center to complete the papers. The goal will be to ensure a clear, strong thesis delineating the subject; a logical argument flowing from sources and using sources appropriately; the use of credible academic sources aligned with the topic; appropriate grammar and spelling; and complete, consistent footnotes using a standard reference tool. While the department cannot guarantee that every student will produce outstanding papers, the goal will be to improve the students' writing to at least an effective level using the above criteria.</p>				

PART 5

Proposed Instructional or Assessment Changes

Learning outcomes assessment can generate actionable evidence of student performance that can be used to improve student success and institutional effectiveness. Knowledge of student strengths and weakness gained through assessment can inform faculty efforts to improve course instruction and program curriculum. Below discuss potential changes the department is considering which are aimed at improving student learning or the assessment process. Indicate which student learning outcome(s) will be affected and provide a rationale for each proposed change. These proposals will be revisited in next assessment cycle.

Proposed Change	Applicable Learning Outcomes	Rationale and Impact
SLO #1: Based on the peer review recommendation, add an oral presentation to the HIST 3243 <i>Writing and Research for Historians</i> course.	At least 80% of History majors will demonstrate their understanding of appropriate sources and analysis/critical thinking skills through a paper and an oral presentation in HIST 3243 <i>Writing and Research for Historians</i> .	By adding an oral presentation to the course, students are able to show critical thinking through both written and oral communications.
SLO #2: Although no majors took the class this year, based on the previous iterations of	SLO #2: Students will demonstrate a solid understanding of historiography to provide	This course is normally taught at the graduate level so the department decided that it would

Proposed Change	Applicable Learning Outcomes	Rationale and Impact
<p>the course, the History faculty decided that HIST 3223 <i>Interpreting History</i> is not the best course to establish a background for lifelong learning and service in a diverse society. Department faculty decided that it would be more effective to evaluate student learning for undergraduates by determining the retention and graduation rates of history majors instead.</p>	<p>the background for lifelong learning and service in a diverse society.</p>	<p>be more effective to evaluate student learning for undergraduates using the retention and graduation rates of history majors instead.</p>
<p>SLO #3: While there is no change to the performance standard listed, the exams will be changed to assess student knowledge and application of concepts as well as their writing skills. The exams will be a mixture of multiple choice, short answers, and take home exam essays.</p>	<p>SLO #3: Students will demonstrate a solid understanding world geography to provide the background for lifelong learning and service in a diverse society.</p>	<p>Faculty felt that the current exam structure can better assess student learning.</p>
<p>SLO #4: The performance standard is being clarified by the addition of a rubric, which more clearly defines goals for the SLO. In addition, based on peer review feedback, the students will be asked to present their papers before a faculty panel. The improvement will be clarified as being based on changes to a paper previously written.</p>	<p>SLO #4: Students will demonstrate competency in expressing ideas through oral and written communications.</p>	<p>Although the faculty believe that the performance standard is appropriate, it is not clear what a “conference ready capstone paper” means. The addition of the rubric will help define the standard. In addition, the addition of the oral presentation will ensure students can communicate both in writing and orally.</p>

PART 6








Summary of Assessment Measures

A. How many different assessment measures were used? Three different assessment measures were used.

- B. List the direct measures (see appendix): Writing assignments, exams, and senior capstone projects.
- C. List the indirect measures (see appendix): No indirect measures were used.

PART 7
Faculty Participation and Signatures

A. Provide the names and signatures of all full time and adjunct faculty who contributed to this report.

Faculty Name	Assessment Role	Signature
David Bath	Department representative/primary author	
Michael Beauchamp	Department Review Board	
Paul Hatley	Department Review Board	
Steve Housel	Department Review Board	
Jane Johansson	Department Review Board	
Carolyn Taylor	Department Review Board	
Quentin Taylor	Department Review Board	
Sigismund Wilson	Department Review Board	

B. Reviewed by:

Titles	Name	Signature	Date
Department Head	Dr. Kenneth Hicks		5-28-20
Dean	Dr. Keith Martin		6/2/20

Appendix

Student Learning Outcome

Student learning outcomes are the observable or measurable results that are expected of a student following a learning experience. Learning outcomes may address knowledge, skills, attitudes, or values that provide evidence that learning has occurred. They can apply to a specific course, a program of study, or an institution. Outcomes should be worded in language that clearly implies a measurable behavior or quality of student work. Outcomes should also include Bloom's action verbs appropriate to the skill level of learning expected of students.

Examples:

Students will be able to apply principles of evidence-based medicine to determine clinical diagnoses and implement acceptable treatment modalities.

Students will be able to articulate cultural and socioeconomic differences and the significance of these differences for instructional planning.

Assessment Measure

An assessment measure is a tool or instrument used to gather evidence of student progress toward an established learning outcome. Every program learning outcome should have at least one appropriate assessment measure. Learning outcomes are frequently complex, however, and may require multiple measures to accurately assess student performance. Assessment plans should try to incorporate a combination of direct and indirect assessment measures. Direct provide concrete evidence of whether a student has command of a specific subject or content area, can perform a certain task, exhibits a particular skill, demonstrates a certain quality in their work, or holds a particular value. Because direct measures tap into actual student learning, it is often viewed as the preferred measure type. Indirect measures assess opinions or thoughts about the extent of a student's knowledge, skills, or attitudes. They reveal characteristics associated with learning, but they only imply that learning has occurred. Both types of measures can provide useful insight into student learning and experiences in a program. Each also has unique advantages and disadvantages in terms of the type of data and information it can provide. Examples of common direct and indirect measures are listed below.

Direct Measures

- Comprehensive exams
- Class assignments
- Juried review of performances and exhibitions
- Internship or clinical evaluations
- Portfolio evaluation
- Pre/post exams
- Third-party exams such as field tests, certification exams, or licensure exams
- Senior thesis or capstone projects

Indirect Measures

- Graduate exit interviews
- Focus group responses
- Job placement statistics
- Graduate school placement statistics
- Graduation and retention rates
- Student and alumni surveys that assess perceptions of the program
- Employer surveys that assess perceptions of graduates
- Honors and awards earned by students and alumni.

Performance Standard

A performance standard is a clearly-defined benchmark that establishes the minimally-acceptable level of performance expected of students for a particular measure.

Examples:

At least 70% of students will score 70% or higher on a comprehensive final exam.

At least 75% of students will earn score a "Proficient" or higher rating on the Communicate Effectively rubric.

Sampling Method

Sampling method describes the methodology used for selecting the students that were assessed for a given measure. In some cases, such as most course-embedded measures, it is possible to assess all active enrolled students. In other cases, however, it is not feasible to measure the population of all potential students. In these cases, it is important that a well-designed sampling scheme be used to ensure the sample of students measured is an unbiased representation of the overall population. Where multiple instructors teach a particular course, care should be taken to assess students across all instructors, including adjuncts.

Examples:

All students enrolled in BIOL 4801 Biology Research Methods II

All majors graduating in the 2016-17 academic year.

Sample Size

Sample size is the number of students from which evidence of student learning was obtained for a given assessment measure.

Results

Results are an analytical summary of the findings arising from the assessment of student performance for a particular assessment measure. Typical presentation includes descriptive statistics (mean, median, range) and score frequency distributions.

Standard Met?

This is a simple yes/no response that indicates whether the observed level of student performance for a particular measure meets or exceeds the established standard. An N/A may be used where circumstances prevented the department from accurately assessing a measure.

Conclusion

The conclusion is a reflective summary and determination of the assessment results obtained for a specific learning outcome. Questions to consider in this section include the following:

- Does the assessment evidence indicate the learning outcome is being satisfactorily met?
- Where multiple measures are used for a single outcome, do the results present a consistent or contradictory pattern?
- What are the most valuable insights gained from the assessment results?
- What strengths and weaknesses in student learning do the results indicate?
- What implications are there for enhancing teaching and learning?
- How can the assessment process be improved?

