

History Student Learning Assessment Plan

1. Mission Statement.

An understanding of the past and recognition of its influence on the present and future plays an essential role in a liberal education. The History Department offers courses in which students from all disciplines may develop an appreciation for and understanding of both their own heritage and the heritage of others. History courses seek to develop the students' analytical and communication skills. The department in particular serves those students who concentrate their studies in history. It offers a coherent curriculum that provides the breadth and depth of knowledge necessary for careers in history-related fields.

2. Student Learning Outcomes.

Graduates demonstrate the ability to:

Document Analysis

- Distinguish between a primary and secondary source
- Place a document in historical context
- Examine imaginatively the historical record by taking into account the historical context in which records were created and by comparing the multiple points of view of those on the scene
- Identify the central point(s) of a document

Research Skills

- Utilize Web Cat, Juniata's databases, and WorldCAT in the construction of a bibliography
- Manage notes in preparation of a research paper
- Prepare an annotated bibliography
- Show knowledge of the purpose and importance of citations; to know where and when citations are required
- Use the Chicago Manual of Style footnoting and reference guidelines
- Assess the value of a web source
- State the difference between scholarly and non-scholarly sources
- Identify the central argument of a secondary source

Writing

- Write an argumentative research paper of any required length up to 20 pages
- Marshal solid evidence in support of their theses
- Write a thesis statement
- Use a topic sentence
- Edit a first draft for grammar and style
- Prepare an outline

- Critique and edit the writing of a fellow student
- Write in different genres (historiographic, biographic, etc.)

Research Presentations

- Make a ten-twenty minute oral presentation without reading a prepared text
- Prepare and discuss a power-point presentation

Thinking Historically

- Look closely at historical explanations and identify the assumptions (stated and unstated) of the author(s) and assess the strength and completeness of the evidence presented
- Identify and analyze a scholarly debate in the secondary literature
- Identify different genres of historical writing
- Adhere to ethical standards of the historical community

Professional Preparedness

- Prepare a resume for different situations
- Show knowledge of which standardized tests are appropriate for which careers
- Prepare for a standardized test
- Research graduate and professional programs and prepare a personal statement

3. **Assessment Tools and Methods.**

Rubric for evaluating theses (available upon request)

Senior Exit Interviews

Secondary Education majors take the Praxis

Minutes from department meetings documenting the use of assessment results in making improvements to the curriculum

Future plans

Work with IR to gather Alumni data

Outside evaluation of theses

4. **Time line for Implementation.**

Much of the assessment plan is already standard practice for the department. The department is currently working with the Institutional Research Office to obtain results of History graduates from the most recent Alumni surveys. The department hopes to implement the outside evaluation of theses in the 2011-12 academic year.

The skills outlined above are included in the syllabi of relevant courses. Only skills for upper-level students are listed above but it should be noted that sophomores also have a list of skills to be evaluated.

The department is currently participating in a campus-wide initiative to revise all writing intensive (CW) courses. These courses are being evaluated and resubmitted to the Curriculum committee. Several rubrics are being used in this process.

5. Analysis of Results.

Belle Tuten currently conducts the senior exit interviews yearly and shares the results with the rest of her department.

Theses---

The faculty will devote time at one of their regular department meetings to examine and discuss the results of the Alumni data provided by the IR office. If additional analysis is required, the department will appoint someone to follow up.

6. Program for Improvement.

The faculty meet regularly to discuss the results of the various assessments and methods to improve their teaching and curriculum. The minutes of their meetings reflect and document these discussions. The overall results seem to indicate that the quality of the theses has greatly improved since implementing the assessment process described above. Further verification of this will occur once outside evaluation is implemented.