

Undergraduate Degree Program Assessment Plan Cover Sheet (rev. 07):

UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AT LITTLE ROCK Plan No. 17

Degree Program: BA History

Department and College: History/AHSS

Degree type (AA, AS, BA, BS, BBA, BSE, BSW): BA

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Submitted to College Assessment Committee on _____ Approved on

Submitted to Provost Assessment Advisory Group on _____ Approved on _____

Respond to all four questions, following the Degree Program Assessment Plan Form Instructions.
Attach additional pages as needed.

1. What are your student learning goals for this degree program? Include which core competencies are addressed by these goals where applicable (see list at <http://www.uar.edu/provost/assessment/competencies.shtml>).

Student learning goals are as follows:

1. Students will develop a general knowledge of human history (Historical Consciousness, International Awareness, Social and Cultural Awareness, Ethical and Moral Consciousness);
2. Students will understand historical interpretation and analysis of primary and secondary sources (Historical Consciousness, Critical Thinking, International Awareness, Social and Cultural Awareness, Ethical and Moral Consciousness);
3. Students will develop historical research skills (Critical Thinking, Verbal Literacy);
4. Students will be able to communicate historical knowledge in written and oral forms (Critical Thinking, Verbal Literacy).

2. What are your learning objectives or outcomes associated with each student learning goal?

In pursuing an undergraduate degree in History students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a significant degree of knowledge about both United States and World history through completion of a broad selection of courses in history. (Goal 1)
2. Ask appropriate historical questions that demonstrate an understanding of the discipline of history and distinguish it from those of other disciplines. (Goals 1, 2)
3. Distinguish between primary sources and secondary sources used in the writing of history and know how to use and analyze each appropriately. Students will thus be able to:

1. Analyze a primary source as a product of a particular historical context; (Goals 1, 2)
2. Respond critically to a secondary source, taking into account the primary sources used by the historian, the historian's methodology, the logic of the argument, and other major interpretations in the field. (Goals 1, 2, 3)

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4. Present historical analysis and arguments in a clear written and oral form, including the ability to construct an argument by marshalling evidence in an appropriate and logical fashion. (Goals 1, 2, 4)
5. Write a research paper that asks a significant historical question, answers it with a clear thesis and a logical argument, supports it with both primary and secondary sources documented according to the standards of the *Chicago Manual of Style*, and written in clear and artful prose with the grammar and spelling associated with formal composition. (Goals 1, 2, 3, 4)

3. Where will the objectives be addressed in your program? In which courses and through which activities will they be assessed? (Attach Curriculum Assessment Map.)

Objectives 1 and 2 will be met and assessed in the core courses (HIST 1311, HIST 1312, HIST 2311, HIST 2312) that all History majors are required to take.

Objectives 1, 2, 3, and 4 will be met and assessed in the variety of upper-level courses that are offered each semester, and from which History majors choose. (NOTE: Not all upper-level

classes can expect to meet all objectives in a single semester. One instructor, for example, might give assignments that meet objectives 1 and 2, while another instructor might give assignments that meet objectives 3 and 4. If a student takes a broad spectrum of courses, from a variety of instructors, as s/he is expected to do, then by the end of her/his undergraduate career all objectives should have been met.)

Objectives 1-5 will be met and assessed in US or World History seminars that all History majors are required to take prior to graduation.

4. How will you assess each objective? (a) Methods; b) Design; c) Assessment cycle; d) Stakeholder involvement.)

A/B. Method/Design:

Our five objectives, and therefore our undergraduate program, will be assessed through portfolios and exit surveys. The portfolio will be collected on a course-by-course basis rather than on an individual student basis. This will allow us to take a holistic approach to assessment: we can assess our students at various points in their undergraduate careers rather than only at the starting point in the survey World Civilization and US History courses, or at the end point in the US or World History seminar. This approach also allows us to assess a randomly selected sampling of students at various stages in their undergraduate career, rather than a specific set of individuals only at the end of their undergraduate careers.

Each semester the Assessment Committee will gather items from a number of history courses, of varying levels, that demonstrate student achievement throughout the History Program. These items, taken together, will reflect our Learning Goals and Student Learning Objectives. These items will include:

1) Items from a random sampling of HIST 1311, HIST 1312, HIST 2311, or HIST 2312 that fulfill objectives 1 and 4. These items could include exams, papers, or in-class assignments. (NOTE: Even if we collect different types of assignments from different sections, we will be looking for specific skills and information from these assignments, and therefore it will not be difficult to evaluate the assignments according to a common rubric. Between 150 and 200 assignments will be collected each semester which is considered an adequate sampling based on typical enrollments.) (NOTE 2: The inclusion of these assignments in our assessment portfolio is separate from our Core Assessment exercise.)

2) Items from a random sampling of upper level-classes, such as a primary-source based essays, document-based exam questions, book reviews, or historiographical essays. These assignments would enable us to assess objectives 1, 2, 3, and 4. Again, because these assignments are

intended to assess specific skills, for example the ability to analyze a primary source or critique a secondary source, it will be

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possible to determine which assignments are appropriate for inclusion in the portfolio, and to formulate a common scoring rubric. (Roughly 50-100 of these assignments will be collected in a given semester, which is considered an adequate sampling based on typical enrollments.)

3) All capstone papers produced in the US and World History seminars in any given semester. All history majors must take a US or World History seminar, and write a capstone paper, as a requirement for graduation. This capstone paper, which fulfills objectives 1-5, represents the culmination of each student's experience as a UALR history major because it requires her/him to bring together all of the knowledge and skills s/he has accumulated over the course of her/his undergraduate career. Roughly 20-30 such papers will be collected each semester depending on enrollments.

4) In-class discussions, oral presentation, or other projects, scored according to a common rubric, from a random sampling of upper-level classes. This item would assess the oral communication component of objective 4.

The instruments used in the Assessment are valid because they are the kinds of instruments used in history departments throughout the country to assess and evaluate their majors. Students are expected to master skills and knowledge at various points in their undergraduate career, and not simply at the end in the Senior capstone experience. Our portfolio approach therefore draws on assignments that are the standards in the field, and that allow us to assess skills and knowledge-bases at various points in our program. We believe that this approach is as reliable and valid as it is possible to be in assessing a discipline as subjective as history.

At the end of each year all portfolios will be reviewed by the Department Assessment Committee and scored according to a rubric. (This rubric will be developed during a Departmental retreat in May of 2007.)

As soon as a student declares a History major s/he will be given a sheet that clearly outlines the department's Learning Goals and Student Learning Objectives, and how those goals and objectives will be met throughout the course of their studies. These goals and objectives will be reviewed with students periodically during advisement period.

Faculty will include the History Department's Learning Goals and Student Learning Objectives in all of their course syllabi, and they will construct assignments in their courses to achieve the goals

and objectives and that are appropriate for inclusion in the Assessment portfolio. Faculty teaching the senior seminar courses will be reminded, each semester, of the expectations and requirements for the capstone experience. This will ensure that all capstone papers are scored according to a common rubric.

The Exit Survey will consist of two parts. In Part I, a Student Self-Assessment, students will complete a series of questions that assess their own achievements in the History program. The purpose of the Student Self-Assessment is to see how effective students perceive our course offerings to be in preparing them to fulfill the Learning Goals and Student Learning Objectives.

Part II is a Student Assessment of the History Major. It asks the student to answer a series of questions related to his/her experience as a History major and to offer suggestions about how the program might more effectively and efficiently meet its stated Student Learning Objectives. The purpose of the Student Assessment of the Major is to provide the department with material for self-evaluation of the program and ideas for its improvement.

Additionally, a question will be added to course evaluation forms (which are used each semester to evaluate all History courses). The question will ask if students were made aware of the Learning Goals and Student Learning Objectives, and whether those goals and objectives were met throughout the course of the semester. Although this question will not be used in a formal way in our Program Assessment, it will give us a sense of how well we are conveying our goals and objectives to students.

C. Assessment Cycle

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Given the nature of our Learning Goals and Student Learning Objectives, it is impossible to isolate just one or two to assess in any given year. Therefore assessment of all Student Learning Objectives will take place every year. At the end of each year the Department Assessment Committee will evaluate portfolios according to a common rubric. After we have gathered data for three years we will review our approach to assessment and make whatever adjustments and corrections are deemed necessary. *D. Stakeholder Involvement*

The portfolio and exit survey approach to Program Assessment will involve both students and faculty more extensively than previous plans, and both will have a personal stake in Assessment. We are confident that faculty already adhere to the Department's Learning Goals and Student Learning Objectives, even if they do not always make that explicit on their syllabi. If faculty know that their assignments in any given course may be selected for inclusion in the Assessment Portfolio they are more likely to make explicit the links between their assignments and the

Department's Student Learning Objectives. They will also have a greater stake in the outcome of the Assessment process because the portfolio approach gives us a better measure than the previous approach of how well we are meeting our Learning Goals and Student Learning Objectives in any given year.

Our students have a stake in Program Assessment in that the Exit Survey (and in a less formal way the revised course evaluation form) gives them the opportunity to reflect on their achievements throughout their undergraduate career and also to evaluate the History Program as a whole.

History is not a "job-specific" field, and there is not a clearly defined stakeholder in the employment sector. We do not believe it would be possible to include external stakeholders in our Assessment Plan given the wide variety of jobs that History graduates eventually hold.

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Curriculum Assessment Map: BA History Degree Program Assessment

Emphasis: Extensive Somewhat Little None

| <p>Assessed: Exam Paper Project Other Not Assessed</p> <p>Courses and Activities</p> | <p>Outcome # 1</p> <p>Demonstrate a significant degree of knowledge about both United States and World history through completion of a broad selection of courses in history.</p> | <p>Outcome # 2</p> <p>Ask appropriate historical questions that demonstrate an understanding of the discipline of history and distinguish it from those of other disciplines.</p> | <p>Outcome # 3</p> <p>Distinguish between primary sources and secondary sources used in the writing of history and know how to use and analyze each appropriately.</p> | <p>Outcome #4</p> <p>Present historical analysis and arguments in a clear written form, including the ability to construct an argument by marshalling evidence in an appropriate and logical fashion.</p> | <p>Outcome# 5</p> <p>Write a research paper that asks a significant historical question, answers it with a clear thesis and a logical argument, supports it with both primary and secondary sources documented according to the standards of the <i>Chicago Manual of Style</i>, and written in clear and artful prose with the grammar and spelling associated with formal composition.</p> |
|--|---|--|---|--|---|
| <p>HIST 1311</p> | <p>Extensive</p> | <p>Somewhat</p> <p>Not</p> | <p>Somewhat</p> | <p>Somewhat</p> | <p>None</p> |

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | Paper/exam | assessed | Not assessed | Paper/exam | Not assessed |
| HIST 1312 | Extensive Paper/exam | Somewhat Not assessed | Somewhat Not assessed | Somewhat Paper/exam | None Not assessed |
| HIST 2311 | Extensive Paper/exam | Somewhat Not assessed | Somewhat Not assessed | Somewhat Paper/exam | None Not assessed |
| HIST 2312 | Extensive Paper/exam | Somewhat Not assessed | Somewhat Not assessed | Somewhat Paper/exam | None Not assessed |
| Various upper level courses | Extensive Paper/exam | Extensive Paper/exam | Extensive Paper/exam | Somewhat Paper/exam | Somewhat Not assessed |
| HIST 4393 | Extensive Capstone paper | Extensive Capstone paper | Extensive Capstone paper | Extensive Capstone paper | Extensive Capstone paper |