(1) Student learning goal(s) addressed this year:

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) Learning outcomes/objectives for those goals addressed this year:

On completion of an undergraduate degree in History, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a significant degree of knowledge about both American 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:
   a. Analyze a primary source as a product of a particular historical context; (Goals 1, 2)
   b. 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)
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, documents it appropriately, and is written in clear and artful prose with the grammar and spelling associated with formal composition. (Goals 1, 2, 3, 4)

All learning outcomes/objectives were assessed this year.

(3) Courses & activities where assessed:

The assessment of the BA History program is done by the Department’s Curriculum Committee, formed in 2010 to oversee assessment and all matters relating to program and curricular development. This year the Committee consisted of four members – two tenured and two tenure-track. Each member of the committee reviewed three sets of portfolios.

Assessment was conducted in four upper level history classes as well as one section of a seminar (one of the upper level classes also could be used to satisfy the seminar requirement). The seminar course is a capstone course, and the research papers written in this course bring together all of the department’s goals, outcomes, and objectives. The following upper level courses were assessed in the Fall 2014 semester:
HIST 4309 - Historian’s Craft
HIST 4352 – American West
HIST 4358 – Civil Rights (also can count as seminar)
HIST 4390 – Special Topic: Pirates
HIST 4391, Seminar in US History

(4) Methods used:

Portfolios, consisting of all assignments completed over the course of the Fall 2014 semester, were collected from five randomly selected students in each of the above classes (the classes themselves were selected to ensure that a balance of US and non-US courses, and of classroom and online classes, were included in assessment). Additionally, all capstone papers were collected from the seminars (14 papers total). Assignments included analyses and comparisons of primary and secondary sources, book reviews, media reviews, research proposals, and senior capstone research papers. These assignments are standard in the discipline of History. The portfolio approach, adopted by the department in 2007, allows us to assess skills and knowledge-bases at various points in our program (and not only at the end of the program, as was the case previously). It also allows us to see how well we are preparing students in our various upper-level classes for the capstone seminar course.

Two members of the History department Curriculum Committee evaluated each portfolio according to four criteria that correspond to the student learning objectives/outcomes outlined above:

Information (assesses Outcomes/Objectives 1 and 2)
- Accurate information
- Proper knowledge of chronology
- Accurate identification of major events, people
- Accurate knowledge of geography
- Accurate summarization of primary source documents and historical arguments

Interpretation/Analysis (assesses Outcomes/Objectives 3 and 4)
- Considers point of view and historical context of primary/secondary texts
- Addresses logic and methodology of scholars’ arguments
- Addresses use of evidence to prove thesis, draw conclusions
- Offers interpretation based on evaluation of evidence, marshals evidence to support argument

Research (assesses Outcomes/Objectives 4 and 5)
- Asks appropriate historical question
- Frames research with reference to other scholarship on a topic
- Distinguishes between and uses both primary & secondary sources
- Uses footnotes/bibliography in Chicago Manual of Style format
- Uses a wide variety of appropriate scholarly sources, including online sources

Literacy (assesses Outcomes/Objectives 4 and 5)
- Demonstrates reading comprehension of primary and secondary texts
- Writes in grammatically correct, varied sentences
- Employs logical written organization (introduction, conclusion, paragraphs with clear topic sentences)
- Devotes attention to the craft of writing (revisions, outlines, etc.)

The scores used to evaluate assignments in the portfolio ranged from 1 to 5, according to the following scale:

5 = Excellent/Greatly exceeds expectations
4 = Good/Exceeds expectations
3 = Adequate/Meets expectations
2 = Poor/Does not meet expectations
1 = Not evident
Since 2011, we have assessed the History BA Program with exit surveys of majors. We analyzed the qualitative responses for data in each of the categories in which we assessed the upper level courses. (See Appendices 2, 3 for survey questions).

(5) What are the assessment findings? How did you analyze them?

The scores in the following tables are based on the evaluations described above; the numbers represent an average of the scores assigned to each student’s portfolio in the respective category by the faculty evaluator.

### Class A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Evaluator A</th>
<th>Evaluator B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpretation/Analysis</td>
<td>3.5</td>
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<td>Research</td>
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<td>Interpretation/Analysis</td>
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### Class C

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### Class E

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NOTE: All assignments in upper-level classes are not expected to meet all of our student learning objectives. For example, an examination might require a student to demonstrate specific knowledge and written literacy but not necessarily research or interpretative/analytical abilities. The portfolio method of assessment helps us to be more reflective about the kinds of assignments we give, and the extent to which we give assignments that specifically aspire to meet our student learning outcomes/objectives.

Four faculty members evaluated portfolios this year, with each portfolio read by two evaluators. There were slight discrepancies in the evaluations between the two evaluators, which is to be expected even when faculty are on the same page about standards. There are two cases where the discrepancies are significant: the discrepancy could not be resolved, which suggests that as a department we may need to have some conversations in future about our standards in upper level classes. Overall, our findings suggest that our History majors meet expectations in our upper-level classes, with an overall score of 3.8 in information gathering, 3.5 in interpretation and analysis, 3.3 in research, and 3.5 in written literacy. Our curriculum agrees that the Historian’s Craft course has improved the quality of work in upper level history classes. Those students who have taken HIST 4309, including the online sections, are more successful in their research, writing, and analysis in upper level courses. Last year we noted that students are most successful in their seminar papers when they have more choice in their research fields and topics. This has led us to prepare paperwork to increase the number of courses, which students can take for their senior capstone seminar. In the future, collecting writing samples from students in the start of the Historian’s Craft class, and comparing these samples to their seminar papers would also be a good way of assessing individuals’ growth over their coursework in the History Department.

(6) What conclusions were drawn and what decisions were made as a result? How were stakeholder groups involved?

Overall, the History Department’s upper-level history courses are meeting expectations with regard to our student learning outcomes/objectives. Faculty use a wide range of assignments to meet our outcomes/objectives and to help build the kinds of skills, such as writing and verbal literacy, critical thinking, and research, that are valued by the employers of our graduates.

Based on the results of the past two years’ assessment reports, and the external program evaluation, we prepared paperwork to increase seminar options, which involve more research and discussion, for students. We have also worked with the community to offer more undergraduate internships with museums, archives, and local oral history initiatives.

Stakeholder Involvement

Faculty, current students, and alumni were all involved in this year’s assessment plan. The portfolio approach to assessing upper level courses, as well as the scoring of assignments by a rotating committee, ensures that a broad range students and faculty are involved in the process.

NOTE: Normally we conduct a survey of recent graduates as part of our assessment process. This year, because of administrative staffing shortages and shortages in faculty we were unable to conduct that survey. We will continue to use this assessment tool in future.

BA History/Social Studies Education

The History Major with a social studies education minor (HISTS) is assessed according to the guidelines of the NCSS and NCATE, in a separate report submitted to the NCSS and NCATE assessment teams.
Appendix 1

Rubric for analysis of assessment portfolios

(score from 1-5)

5 = Excellent/Greatly exceeds expectations
4 = Good/Exceeds expectations
3 = Adequate/Meets expectations
2 = Poor/Does not meet expectations
1 = Not evident
0 = Not required

Below are the expectations for each of the four categories of analysis

Information
No inaccuracies present
Shows proper knowledge of chronology
Can identify major events and persons accurately
Demonstrates proper knowledge of geographical locations of events discussed
Can accurately summarize documents or historical/philosophical arguments discussed

Interpretation/Analysis
Moves beyond mere paraphrase to look at an author’s point of view and historical context
Addresses the logic and methodology of scholars’ arguments
Addresses scholars’ use of evidence to prove a thesis

Research
Asks an appropriate historical question
Frames research with reference to other scholarship on the topic
Distinguishes between and appropriately utilizes both primary and secondary sources
 Appropriately uses footnotes and bibliography in University of Chicago style
Effectively uses evidence to support an argument

Literacy
Demonstrates understanding of primary and secondary texts read
Writes in grammatically correct sentences
Employs a logical structure (introduction and conclusion, paragraphs headed with clear topic sentences) to prove a thesis
Devotes attention to the craft of writing (through revisions, outlines, free-writing, or other techniques)
Appendix 2

Survey of Graduating Students

1. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the UALR History BA Program?
2. What skills did you need to get a job after graduation? Did the UALR History BA program do a good job of providing you with these skills?
3. How can we improve the History BA program?
4. What career(s) have you pursued since graduation?
5. How do you think your history courses prepared you in the following areas:
   a. Content Information
   b. Ability to interpret/analyze information
   c. Research Skills
   d. Written and oral literacy