

Annual Assessment Report

Department: History
Academic Year: 2019-2020
Date of Submission: August 13, 2020
Department Chair: Richard Pointer

I. Response to the previous year PRC’s recommendations

Item:	Response:
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Notes: In August 2019, the department submitted its Action Plan and Multi-Year Assessment Plan to the Program Review Committee. Our assessment work during 2019-2020 proceeded according to the schedules laid out in those documents.	

II A. Program Learning Outcome (PLO) assessment

If your department participated in the ILO assessment you may use this section to report on your student learning in relation to the assessed ILO. The assessment data can be requested from the Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness.

Program Learning Outcome	During the 2019-2020 year, the history department assessed the following program learning outcome: Students will be able to use primary sources effectively.
Who is in Charge /Involved?	All full-time members of the history department were involved: Alister Chapman, Marianne Robins, Heather Keaney, Chandra Mallampalli, and Richard Pointer. Professor Pointer coordinated the assessment, compiled the results, and wrote this report.
<u>Direct Assessment Methods</u>	The department carried out its assessment through evaluation of all the major research papers produced in HIS 198 Senior Research Seminar (fall 2019) and one additional senior paper written in the spring of 2020 in HIS 194 (used as an equivalent to 198 due to the student’s participation on an off campus program in the fall. A total of 13 papers, all written by history senior majors, were assessed using a newly developed department Primary Source Assessment Rubric (a

	<p>revised version of a rubric originally developed in 2013). Each paper was read and scored by two department faculty members. Papers were evaluated/scored in the categories of primary source selection, critical analysis of primary sources used, and primary source integration. For each category, a 4-point scale was used corresponding to the following levels of competence: 1=Initial; 2=Emerging; 3=Developed; 4=Highly Developed. The two faculty scores were then averaged for each student to calculate overall results. The rubric is provided at the end of this report.</p>
<p>Indirect Assessment Methods</p>	
<p>Major Findings</p>	<p>1.The overall averages for student proficiency in the three categories of primary source use were: Source Selection = 3.29; Critical Analysis = 3.25; Source Integration = 3.67. All 13 students scored in the Developed or Highly Developed levels for Source Integration; 12 of 13 students scored in the Developed or Highly Developed levels for Critical Analysis; and 10 of 13 students scored in the Developed or Highly Developed levels for Source Selection. In our Multi-Year Assessment plan, we had set a benchmark of 80% of our majors achieving scores in the Developed or Highly Developed levels. We surpassed that benchmark in two of the three skills evaluated and fell just slightly short of it in the third (77%).</p> <p>2. Department members are unanimous in seeing these results as very positive. The results may reflect the fact that all 13 of these students were senior history majors. With no juniors in the group, nor art history or social science majors, the level of preparation for HIS 198 was perhaps stronger than with some other past cohorts. It also likely indicates that intensified department efforts in recent years in other courses (especially HIS 099 Foundations of History) and within HIS 198 itself to train students in the use of primary sources are paying dividends.</p> <p>3. The slightly weaker performance in Source Selection mostly reflects the department’s setting the bar increasingly high for the range and diversity of primary sources we are expecting students to use in their HIS 198 research papers. Based on comparisons made with what other undergraduate history programs in California are expecting of their majors, we are setting the bar head and shoulders above the norm. That observation is based upon interaction with history faculty at other public and private colleges in California as well as student papers from various schools presented at the spring 2019 regional conference of Phi Alpha Theta, the national history honor society. It is likely that only academically elite or rigorous schools (e.g. Claremont colleges, Occidental, UCLA, CAL, etc.) require their majors to produce the type of major research paper/project that HIS 198 demands. Producing such a paper continues to give our majors a strategic edge in their efforts to be admitted to graduate programs in history, international affairs, law, and archival and museum studies. This coming fall alone we will have recent history graduates beginning graduate work in history at Rutgers, in international affairs at American University, in law at USC and Chapman, and in archival and museum studies at Johns Hopkins and the University of British Columbia.</p>
<p>Closing the</p>	<p>1.In follow-up discussion of these results, department members raised the possibility of slightly revising one element of</p>

Loop Activities	<p>the rubric: sub-dividing the Source Integration category into two parts – the first dealing with how well students discussed the significance and relevance of their sources and the second addressing how well students relied on their sources for their content arguments. If and when the rubric is employed again in the future, this will be re-visited.</p> <p>2. Dr. Mallampalli will plan to introduce a new exercise in HIS 198 in the fall of 2020 to give students additional practice in source selection and critical analysis of sources.</p>
<p>Collaboration and Communication: Given this spring and summer’s restraints on in-person meetings, the whole department discussed the results of our assessment via email exchanges. However, prior to the pandemic shutdown, a department meeting in early March had been devoted to discussing the quality of about half the HIS 198 papers as part of our determining our annual best paper prize. That occasion afforded an opportunity to begin chatting about student competencies in working with primary sources.</p>	

or/and

II B. Key Questions

Key Question	1. How can we prepare students to work more effectively with primary sources prior to their enrollment in HIS 198? 2. How could we enhance student understanding of and sensibilities about race and racism, and environmental change within history and the contemporary world?
Who is in Charge/Involved?	All full-time department members.
Direct Assessment Methods	
Indirect Assessment Methods	
Major Findings	
Recommendations	
<p>Collaboration and Communication: 1. In the course of carrying out our assessment project this year, some discussion of this key question naturally arose. As noted above, the very strong results among our students indicates that what we are currently doing in lower division courses and other majors courses in teaching students how to use primary sources seems quite effective already. The</p>	

task, then, in HIS 198 may be more a matter of faculty reiterating lessons already learned by students prior to their enrollment rather than presenting methods or approaches to source material that are entirely new. 2. The department sponsored and/or participated in a variety of activities during the year aimed at enhancing faculty and student understanding of the history of race and racism in America. These activities included sponsoring an Erasmus lecture on the relationship of Christianity and slavery in early America, participation in a Gaede Institute reading group on the topic, a Faculty Forum presentation, and participation in the annual Liberal Arts Conference of the Gaede Institute which was dedicated to the theme of Race, Ethnicity, and Liberal Arts Education.

III. Follow-ups

Program Learning Outcome or Key Question	
Who was involved in implementation?	
What was decided or addressed?	
How were the recommendations implemented?	
Collaboration and Communication	

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IV. Other assessment or Key Questions related projects

Project	
Who is in Charge /Involved?	
Major Findings	
Action	
Collaboration and Communication	

V. Adjustments to the Multi-year Assessment Plan (optional)

Proposed adjustment	Rationale	Timing

VI. Appendices

- A. Prompts or instruments used to collect the data
- B. Rubrics used to evaluate the data
- C. Relevant assessment-related documents (optional)

History Department Primary Source Assessment Rubric 2020

	Highly Developed	Developed	Emerging	Initial
Source	Incorporates a	Uses	Uses sources	Clearly relies on

Selection	wide variety of sources, demonstrating critical exploration of sources on the topic. Uses sources that are relevant, authoritative and credible	appropriate sources, but some sources lack variety or depth. The majority of sources are relevant to the topic and are authoritative and credible.	that lack variety or depth, and has not sufficiently explored sources on the topic. Many sources don't appear relevant and/or are of questionable authority and credibility.	poor sources and has evidently not explored the breadth of sources on the topic. Sources lack relevance to the topic and are not authoritative or credible.
Critical Analysis*	All sources are analyzed according to one or more of the categories (whichever are relevant) and the implications for the argument are clear.	Some of the sources are analyzed and the implications for the argument are clear.	Some of the sources are analyzed occasionally, but the implications of this analysis for the argument are not clear.	There is little or no evidence of critical engagement with the sources.
Source Integration	Sources are skillfully integrated into the paper. They play an essential role in the paper's intervention in the historiography	The paper explicitly discusses the significance and relevance of the sources in the text, but actual reliance on the sources to advance the	The sources are related to the overall topic of the paper, but their role in supporting the paper's argument is unclear.	Sources used are not relevant to the argument of the paper.

	and in the overall argument of the paper.	argument is minimal.		
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*Critical Analysis definition: Sources are analyzed according to the relevant categories (not all categories need to be used) for historical interpretation (authorship, audience, genre), either explicitly or implicitly, and the implications for the argument are clear.