

History, M.A.

College of Social Sciences

Student Outcomes Assessment Plan (Soap)

I. Mission Statement

The Department of History has offered a Master of Arts degree since 1958. The M.A. program in History offers graduate student seminars on a wide range of historical periods and approaches. The program also provides the conscientious student with the requisite research skills to ensure success in future academic or related pursuits. An energetic community of graduate students has developed with our department, and our graduates have become successful teachers at the high school and community college level. Many have also moved on to pursue their career at the doctoral level.

Since its inception in 1958, the M.A. program has served the University and the community by concentrating on three tasks: 1.) Providing post-baccalaureate professional training for teaching in secondary schools and community colleges; 2) preparing students for graduate work at the doctoral level; and 3) meeting the needs of interested students for further intellectual development and personal enrichment in the field of History. In order to accomplish this goal, the department has developed a rigorous and well-rounded program that enables students to obtain a broad-based education at the master's level.

II. Goals and Student Learning Outcomes

- A. Expand upon undergraduate foundations while enhancing professional competencies in historical content and methods, historiography, and demonstrate information literacy.
 - 1. Students will demonstrate advanced content knowledge in specified areas of concentration and also demonstrate mastery of historiographical debates related to the specified areas of concentration.
 - 2. Students will identify relevant sources and use data or information from sources appropriately to support evidence based arguments.

- B.** Acquire or enhance the skills necessary to think critically and conduct advanced research. Students must have an advanced proficiency in writing and the ability to write sophisticated evidence based arguments.
3. Students will demonstrate an advanced aptitude in the critical analysis of primary and secondary sources.
 4. Students will demonstrate research and writing skills by either completing M.A. Exams, developing and completing a project, or by completing a thesis that has valid evidence based argument, an effective methodology, and is well organized and written.
- C.** Students will directly apply their knowledge of historical method and professional standards of conduct.
5. Students will give a presentation at either a conference or an HGSA (History Graduate Students Association) event OR will work with a professor on research OR complete an internship.

III. Curriculum Map (Matrix of Courses X Learning Outcomes)					
Courses:	Outcome 1	Outcome 2	Outcome 3	Outcome 4	Outcome 5
HIST 200A		I	I	I	I
HIST 200B		I	I	I	I
HIST 210T	I/R	R	R	R	R
HIST 220T	I/R	R	R	R	R
HIST 230T	I/R	R	R	R	R
HIST 296	E	E	E	E	E
HIST 297	E	E	E	E	E
HIST 298	M	M	M	M	M
HIST 299 A/B	M	M	M	M	M

I – Introduced R-Reinforced E-Emphasized M-Mastered

IV. Assessment Methods

A. Direct Measures

1. **Oral Presentation** – Faculty will use a rubric to assess the oral presentations that students give as part of the requirements for a specific course or will use the rubric to assess a presentation given at a conference or HGSA meeting. The ability of students to effectively identify key points and analyze sources will be evaluated. Student presentations at the Graduate Student Symposium may also be used to evaluate both effective oral communication and adherence to professional standards of conduct.

Benchmark: At least two-thirds of students are expected to receive a 3 out of 4 or 4 out of 5 (depending on the rubric) on the oral presentation:

2. **Paper/Thesis/or Exam Proposal** – Graduate faculty will evaluate a written assignment turned in by each student according to a rubric that focuses on the content knowledge, research methods, and level of writing. Students will write a 15 page paper in 200B and this will be kept by the graduate coordinator and compared to the culminating experience or project. This assignment will be compared to the students culminating work (either a comprehensive exam, project, or thesis) in order to judge the extent to which their skills have improved between their entering the program and their graduating.

Benchmark: Students are expected to receive an A or B on the assignment in 200B and to have a committee of three individuals approve their proposal.

3. **Bibliography** – The discussion of sources and/or bibliography from one research paper or their M.A. Exams or Thesis will be evaluated using a rubric to determine how proficient the students are in information literacy.

Benchmark: Students are expected to receive a 3 out of 4 on the rubric used to assess this assignment.

4. **Comprehensive Exam/Final Project/Thesis** – The culminating exams or project of a student will be evaluated according to the standards of the discipline and evaluated to determine the extent to which they demonstrate a mastery of historical methodology.

Benchmark: Students must meet all department and University criteria and receive a 3 out of 4 on the critical thinking or writing proficiency rubric used to assess their culminating work.

B. Indirect Measures

1. Exit Survey – each student will complete a survey regarding the graduate program during the semester they have applied for graduation.
2. Alumni Survey – graduates will complete a survey that asks them to indicate and evaluate the ways in which the program prepared them for further education or a career in a field

related to the discipline.

V. Student Learning Outcomes X Assessment Methods Matrix

Measures:	Outcome 1	Outcome 2	Outcome 3	Outcome 4	Outcome 5
Oral Presentations	X	X	X		X
Essay/Paper	X	X	X		
Exam/Project/Thesis	X	X	X	X	
Annotated Bibliography		X			
Exit Survey	X	X	X	X	
Alumni Survey	X	X	X	X	

VI. Timeline for Implementation of Assessment Methods and Summary Evaluations

Year 2011 to 2012

Collected and assessed History 200B papers (These papers will be compared to student's culminating work in order to measure improvement while in the program)

Created an Alumni Survey

Year 2012 to 2013

Collect History 200B papers to assess

Assess Culminating works for students who completed a thesis in 2012 and 2013

Administer Alumni Survey

Year 2013 to 2014

Assess Oral Presentations

Collect History 200B Papers

Assess Bibliographies and one page assessments

Year 2014-2015

Collect History 200B Papers

Compare 200B Papers to culminating projects

Administer Senior Exit Survey

Year 2015-2016

Collect History 200B Papers

Assess Oral Presentations

Administer Alumni Survey

Year 2016-2017

Assess Papers from topics course for critical thinking

Assess Bibliographies for information literacy

VII. Closing the Loop - Summary Evaluation, Curriculum Adjustment, and Reporting

The Department of History has changed its assessment plan in order to more clearly state key outcomes and to adjust assessment measures in order to be able to measure aspects of the program that have a direct impact on students in terms of the knowledge, skills, and professional development that they acquire while in the M.A. program. The program has reduced its outcomes and has introduced a new outcome that will measure the extent to which students in the M.A. program are informed of professional standards and the specific assignments in which they demonstrate that they can give presentations that adhere to these standards. The department has introduced a measure focused solely on oral presentations and has altered its assessment of the culminating work that students complete (M.A. Exams, a project, or a thesis) in order to be able to more thoroughly assess these works and to compare results between students who complete the same kind of culminating work as well as to look at all works collectively to be sure that they meet a minimum standard in regard to content knowledge and writing and communication skills.

During the last academic year, 2011-2012, the department collected and assessed History 200B papers for the first time. These papers were assessed in much the same way they are graded, according to the level of research, presentation of arguments and evidence, sources used, and the level of writing. However, these papers will be retained by the graduate advisor and will be compared to students culminating work in order to measure the degree to which students have gained knowledge and improved their writing. The Department also created an Alumni Survey for graduate students. During the current Spring 2013 Semester, the department is carrying out several assessment activities. The

Department will give a Senior Exit survey to students who will graduate in Spring or Summer and is currently acquiring current addresses for about a dozen alumni who will be asked to complete the Alumni Survey. At the end of the semester, four members of the graduate faculty will assess the M.A. theses submitted by graduating students in both 2012 and 2013.

The department will review all data during the Fall 2013 semester and decide if further adjustments to the Graduate SOAP are necessary. The department will also carry out several assessment measures including at least one of the direct measures and the senior exit survey each year. The department will conduct an alumni survey every three to four years depending on the number of graduates during each academic year. The department is especially interested in assessing the degree to which students are able to understand and demonstrate knowledge of and ability to complete work that meets the standards of professional historians. The department analyzed data from 2012-2013 which is summarized in a supplemental report and will analyze data from the current 2013-2014 year before deciding on what if any further changes to make to the M.A. program.

The department is considering requiring students to submit work to an e-portfolio platform so they can better showcase themselves to employers after graduation.