

# **INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS REPORT**

**Name of Program/Department: Department of History**

**Year: 2019-2020**

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## **PROGRAM MISSION**

The mission of the History Department is to train the intellect of and to prepare students for lives of personal enrichment and constructive achievement. The study of History comprises the elements of a liberal education: the acquisition of knowledge, the nurturing of understanding, and the development of perspective of oneself and one's society. The reconstruction of the human past conveys an appreciation of cultural contexts and traditions, and it enhances critical thinking and communication skills. The major in History provides a broad understanding of the development of various cultures throughout the world. Through their History courses, Francis Marion University (FMU) students gain a better understanding of contemporary events, a knowledge of people in various times and places, critical thinking skills, and the ability to express themselves effectively in oral and written communication. In so doing, the Department of History assists the university in meeting a number of its General Education Goals, particularly goals 1, 3, and 7.

## **PROGRAM GOALS**

The History Program at Francis Marion University offers coursework in United States, European, and non-Western fields. Through the variety of classes available to them, students will meet nine program goals:

1. Learn to differentiate between primary and secondary sources, and the value as well as challenges in using both.
2. Engage in independent research.
3. Develop basic formatting skills such as footnoting.
4. Express an understanding of the past through effective communication.
5. Learn the historiography of different historical fields.
6. Identify the broad contours of the past, including the people, ideas, and events that have shaped our world.
7. Think critically and logically.
8. Express an understanding of the past via cogent, analytical papers that include both primary and secondary material.
9. Complete the program with a greater appreciation for History.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In light of past performance, the History Department felt confident that for the 2019-2020 school year it could raise the benchmarks for five of its eleven Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) from the original objective of 80%. Moreover, while the department had in the past offered a significant number of indirect assessments for each SLO, it needed to do a better job of addressing direct assessments for them and, accordingly, it added several measurements during the 2018-2019 school year. For 2019-2020, it added another direct assessment, that of a portfolio for students who had completed the two courses required of all History majors: HIST 299 (The Historian's Craft) and HIST 499 (Senior Thesis).

In examining the results of the History Department's 2019-2020 IE report, the following conclusions can be made:

- There is an obvious disconnect among students who took General Education-level History classes, and those who were in upper-level courses (and, therefore, likely History majors and minors). Whether this suggests an improvement in skills and concepts, however, is not clear.
- Those students in General Education classes who took a survey given each semester felt far more confident about their abilities than last year. On the one hand, this could be because only forty students taking General Education History courses took the survey in the spring, and the overwhelming majority of those forty registered a "4" or "5" on a 1-5 scale. On the other hand, it could indeed reflect that students feel more prepared for these courses than in the past. More data-gathering is needed to confirm what is the case.
- There is a disconnect between, on the one hand, the individual assignments given in HIST 299 and the final paper in HIST 499, and, on the other hand, what the committee evaluating the portfolios found. While in most every case the students' performance on individual assignments in HIST 499 was stronger than on comparable assignments in HIST 299, the portfolio committee in most instances found performance remained about the same. Whether this is because the portfolio committee assessed a smaller number of students or it is due to the quality of work turned in by those students whose portfolios were examined is not clear. More data is necessary.
- There remain areas for improvement. In 2018-2019, the department reached its benchmark for eight of its eleven SLOs; in 2019-2020, it did so for nine, and of the remaining two, one barely missed the benchmark. Yet the portfolios showed a decline in the students' ability to offer analysis that supported the thesis statement (SLO 2.1). And in comparing their draft and final papers in HIST 499, students showed a marked decline in their ability to demonstrate an understanding of connections between historical events, ideas, and values over time (SLO 3.0), and their ability to demonstrate an

understanding of cause and effect with a broad knowledge of the general chronology of historical development in a variety of civilizations (SLO 5.1).

- In a continuing effort to “close the loop,” the History Department will look for opportunities to adopt additional measurements, particularly insofar as gauging knowledge and skills outcomes. The adoption of portfolios will be particularly important on this score.
- History majors leave the program with a greater appreciation of the past. They are confident in their abilities to conduct research, to write essays and papers, and to analyze a wide array of material.

## STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

The History Department seeks to achieve its goals through a variety of SLOs, which can be divided into those that are skill-related, knowledge-related, attitudinal, and behavioral in nature. These can be summarized as follows:

- *Skills outcomes* are those that are fundamental concepts in History. These skills fall into two areas: research and writing. The former includes an understanding of how to use technology in the library, among them computers and microfilm/microfiche machines; to access the online card catalog and various databases; to make interlibrary loan requests; and to examine materials on microfilm and microfiche. In turn, the students acquire the ability to locate the source material required for their assignments. The latter refers to expressing ideas via proper spelling, grammar, and footnoting; distinguishing between primary and secondary sources; and recognizing that coherent essays and papers have component parts—among them an introduction, a thesis statement, a main body that includes narrative and analysis, and a conclusion. Such skills meet Program Goals 1, 2, 3, and 4. They also contribute to achievement of FMU’s General Education Goal 1, “The ability to write and speak English clearly, logically, creatively, and effectively,” and Goal 3, “The ability to use technology to locate, organize, document, present, and analyze information and ideas.”
- *Knowledge outcomes* build on the foundation developed through the skills outcomes. Knowledge outcomes encourage historical inquiry through an appraisal of sources, an understanding of historiography—that is, the history of historical writing—making connections between cause and effect, and evaluating what impact the past has on the present. Knowledge outcomes, in short, require a higher level of analysis and a stronger ability to communicate ideas than do skills outcomes. These outcomes have a hand in accomplishing Program Goals 5, 6, 7, and 8. Furthermore, they contribute to achievement of FMU’s General Education Goal 7, “The ability to recognize the diverse cultural heritages

and other influences which have shaped civilization and how they affect individual and collective human behavior.”

- *Attitudinal outcomes* reflect students’ perceptions of their courses. These outcomes measure whether the students believe they have developed the skills and knowledge asked of them in their coursework.
- Whereas attitudinal outcomes are course-specific, *behavioral outcomes* relate what impact the students believe the History curriculum has had on their understanding and appreciation of the past. These outcomes, in conjunction with those that are attitudinal, are essential in meeting Program Goal 9.

### ***Methods of Measurement***

To measure its SLOs, the History Department has used a variety of direct and indirect assessments.

#### **Direct Measurements**

##### Skills Outcomes

Skills outcomes are measured through Course-Level Assessments (CLAs) that are filled out by department faculty for all History classes, through assignments in the two classes required of all History majors (HIST 299 and HIST 499), and through portfolios. Specifically:

- The CLA is a form filled out twice for each History course, first at midterm and then again at the end of the semester. This form assesses students’ writing and analytical skills, with the professor indicating the number of students who exceeded, met, or did not meet expectations. This is very similar to Lawshe’s Content Validity Ratio that is used by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation. Lawshe’s Ratio relies on a judging panel to determine if the content of a particular assignment is “essential,” “useful but not essential,” or “not necessary.”
- Homework from HIST 499. Students must complete a number of homework assignments, among them an exercise on proper citation.
- Draft and Final Paper in HIST 499. Students in Senior Thesis write a major paper that uses at least five primary and five secondary sources. (“Source” here means not individual documents or articles but published sources. Hence, two articles from the *New York Times* constitute two articles from a single source.) Moreover, the students have to set up a committee of at least two professors, one of whom must be an expert in the field, to read and grade their papers. The draft, which has to be a minimum of 10 pages in length, provides the committee an opportunity to check whether the students are correctly

applying the skills they have learned in their classes, including proper grammar and style, a thesis statement, and *Chicago Manual of Style* citations. The final paper is 18-20 pages; it expands on the draft, using both the student's own research and the commentary provided by the two-professor committee.

- End-of-Semester Quiz in HIST 499 (Senior Thesis). This quiz tests students on differentiating between primary and secondary sources, and on locating thesis statements from book and article excerpts.
- Portfolios. A committee of three professors evaluates student performance on a historiography paper from HIST 299 with the final draft from HIST 499. The reason for doing this is that both papers require similar skills to complete. Additionally, it is not uncommon for students to use the historiography assignment as a foundation for the paper they write in HIST 499.

### Knowledge Outcomes

Knowledge outcomes are measured through the following:

- Course-Level Assessments (CLAs) for all History classes. As noted above, CLAs assess not just the ability to write an essay but to offer a piece of work that includes a high level of analysis.
- Essay on human agency for HIST 299 (The Historian's Craft). Graded by the professor of the class, this essay asks students to "weigh human agency against the larger social and material forces in history."
- Draft and Final Paper in HIST 499 (Senior Thesis). This paper requires students not only to indicate that they have mastered the skills asked of them but that they can use those skills to create a paper that offers a high level of analysis. This includes, but is not limited to, demonstrating a knowledge of the historiography, delineating change over time, and connecting cause and effect.
- Portfolios. The reason for using portfolios to assess not just skills but knowledge outcomes is that HIST 499 requires both using the skills acquired in HIST 299 and applying them a lengthier paper that requires a higher level of analysis. Additionally, it is not uncommon for students to use the historiography paper as a foundation for the paper they write in HIST 499.

### **Indirect Measurements**

#### Attitudinal Outcomes

Attitudinal outcomes are measured through surveys:

- On-line survey given to students in all History classes. There are two such surveys each semester, one for lower-level courses and an expanded survey for upper-level classes. Consisting of 23 and 35 questions, respectively, this survey asks students a variety of questions, including whether: 1) they can identify primary and secondary sources; 2) their classes have led them to think more critically; 3) they can discern cause and effect, and continuity and change. They also assess how difficult they believe their courses are compared to others they have taken at FMU.
- Survey given to students in HIST 299 (The Historian’s Craft). This survey includes questions that ask students about their expectations going into the class, whether the course met those expectations, whether the class met a variety of intended goals, and if the course prepared them to research and write a major research paper.
- End-of-Semester Survey in HIST 499 (Senior Thesis). This survey asks students to provide feedback on key skills taught in the course as well as the broader pedagogy.

### Behavioral Outcomes

- History Department exit exam. This exam, given to all majors who are graduating seniors, has questions on it to assess how students felt about the History Department curriculum and what they learned from their History courses.

## ***Closing the Loop***

While relying on the above-mentioned measurements, the History Department during the 2019-2020 school year took a number of steps cited in its 2018-2019 report to “close the loop,” that is, to identify areas where students are struggling so as to improve student learning:

### **Direct Measurements**

#### Skills Outcomes

- It has included assessments of all major assignments in HIST 299. One of these assignments requires student to use a web site to understand the process of historical research behind the book *A Midwife’s Tale*, authored by the historian Laurel Thatcher Ulrich.
- It has incorporated a detailed assessment of the final paper for HIST 499, which helps in seeing how students’ abilities improved as compared to the draft paper for that course.
- It has developed the above-mentioned portfolios that will track the progress of its majors through an assessment of the historiography paper in HIST 299 and the paper they produce for HIST 499. A rubric is used to assess these papers on key elements, among them inclusion of a thesis statement, proper citation, and analysis.

### Knowledge Outcomes

- The department has incorporated a detailed assessment for the final paper for HIST 499. While these measure skills, they also provide key information on students' knowledge.
- It has included assessments of all the major assignments in HIST 299. While one was mentioned above, the other two are knowledge-related: 1) Students examine the methods, approaches, and interpretations of a major journal over the past 5-10 years. 2) Building on assignment (1), students consider how historiographical debates have changed over time, how they might further explore a particular subject that includes primary and secondary sources, and where they see their future scholarship fitting within the field in question.
- It has developed the above-mentioned portfolios that will track the progress of its majors through an assessment of the historiography paper in HIST 299 and the paper they produce for HIST 499. A rubric is used to assess these papers on key elements, among them inclusion of a thesis statement, proper citation, and analysis.

### **Indirect Measurements**

#### Attitudinal Outcomes

- The department each year reviews the on-line survey given to students in all History classes to determine if revisions are necessary. For the 2019-2020 school year, no revisions were deemed necessary.

#### Behavioral Outcomes

- The exit exam has questions on it to assess how students felt about the History Department curriculum and what they learned from their History courses. No changes to these questions were deemed necessary during the 2019-2020 school year.

### ***The SLOs***

The History Department measures eleven student learning outcomes. In 2016-2017 and 2017-2018, it established a benchmark of 80% on each; success in reaching that benchmark in some cases led the department to increase it. The baselines, which are the average of the results for the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019 reports, are provided following each SLO.

The department's Institutional Effectiveness Committee decided not to set new benchmarks for the 2020-2021 school year or new targets. In a couple of cases, this was because of a decline in the final results for 2019-2020 as compared to the year before. In the other instances, it is because in the spring semester of 2020, only 40 students in General Education courses took the

on-line survey, which less than one-tenth the number who usually do so. Why is not clear.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, on each question, the overwhelming majority of those students gave the History Department a “4” or “5” ranking on a 1-5 scale. While it is nice to see such a response, the fact that so few students took the survey and gave the department such high numbers could have skewed the final results for each SLO.

**SLO 1.0: Would be able to identify primary sources.**

- Baseline: 80.7%
- Benchmark: 82%. This is based on the achievement of an 82% benchmark for 2017-18.
- Target: 85%

*The following measurements are used for this SLO:*

- On-line surveys
- HIST 299 Survey, Question 3e
- HIST 499 (Draft Paper)
- HIST 499 (Final Paper)
- HIST 499 (End-of Semester Quiz)
- HIST 499 (End-of-Semester Survey)

**SLO 1.1: Would be able to identify secondary sources.**

- Baseline: 82.3%
- Benchmark: 83%. This is based on the achievement of an 83.25% benchmark for 2017-18, which was substantially higher than in 2016-17.
- Target: 85%

*The following measurements are used for this SLO:*

- On-line surveys
- HIST 299 Survey, Question 3e
- HIST 499 (Draft Paper)
- HIST 499 (Final Paper)
- HIST 499 (End-of Semester Quiz)
- HIST 499 (End-of-Semester Survey)

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<sup>1</sup> It is unclear if this was the result of student disinterest, a failure of faculty members to announce the survey, or an issue involving Blackboard. No such discrepancy was found with the survey given to students in upper-level courses.



**SLO 1.2: Could demonstrate an awareness of the connections between sources and their historical context.**

- Baseline: 81.8%
- Benchmark: 80%
- Target: 82%

*The following measurements are used for this SLO:*

- On-line surveys
- HIST 299 Survey, Question 3f
- HIST 299 (Web Assignment)
- HIST 499 (Draft Paper)
- HIST 499 (Final Paper)
- HIST 499 (End-of-Semester Survey)
- HIST 299 Portfolio
- HIST 499 Portfolio

**SLO 2.0: Would be able to identify a thesis statement or sentence.**

- Baseline: 82.3%
- Benchmark: 80%.
- Target: 85%

*The following measurements are used for this SLO:*

- On-line surveys
- HIST 499 (End-of Semester Quiz)
- HIST 499 (End-of-Semester Survey)
- HIST 499 (Final Paper)

**SLO 2.1: Could effectively offer analysis that supported the thesis statement.**

- Baseline: 80.1%
- Benchmark: 80%
- Target: 85%

*The following measurements are used for this SLO:*

- On-line surveys
- HIST 299 Survey, Question 3c
- Course-Level Assessments (Qualitative Analysis)
- HIST 499 (Draft Paper)

- HIST 499 (Final Paper)
- HIST 499 (End-of-Semester Survey)
- HIST 299 Portfolio
- HIST 499 Portfolio

**SLO 3.0: Would be able to demonstrate an understanding of connections between historical events, ideas, and values over time.**

- Baseline: 81.6%
- Benchmark: 82%. In this case, the benchmark remains unchanged because of a decline in the final results for 2019-2020 as compared to the year before.
- Target: 85%

*The following measurements are used for this SLO:*

- On-line surveys
- HIST 299 (Journal Assignment)
- HIST 499 (Draft Paper)
- HIST 499 (Final Paper)
- Exit Exam
- HIST 299 Portfolio
- HIST 499 Portfolio

**SLO 4.0: Could effectively write an historical essay.**

- Baseline: 73.8%
- Benchmark: 80%.
- Target: 82%

*The following measurements are used for this SLO:*

- On-line survey
- Course-Level Assessments (Writing)
- Exit Exam

**SLO 4.1: Could properly use footnotes and correct formatting for an historical essay.**

- Baseline: 80.2%
- Benchmark: 82%. In this case, the benchmark remains unchanged because of a decline in the final results for 2019-2020 as compared to the year before.
- Target: 85%

*The following measurements are used for this SLO:*

- On-line survey (Upper-level courses only)
- HIST 299 Survey, Question 3g
- HIST 299 Citations Exercise
- HIST 499 (Draft Paper)
- HIST 499 (Final Paper)
- Exam Exam
- HIST 299 Portfolio
- HIST 499 Portfolio

**SLO 5.0: Could accurately explain how people have existed, acted, and thought in particular historical periods.**

- Baseline: 78.8%
- Benchmark: 80%.
- Target: 82%

*The following measurements are used for this SLO:*

- On-line surveys
- Course-Level Assessments (Critical Thinking)
- HIST 299 (Historiographical Project)
- HIST 499 (Draft Paper)
- HIST 499 (Final Paper)
- HIST 299 Portfolio
- HIST 499 Portfolio

**SLO 5.1: Would be able to demonstrate an understanding of cause and effect with a broad knowledge of the general chronology of historical developments in a variety of civilizations.**

- Baseline: 78.15%
- Benchmark: 80%
- Target: 82%

*The following measurements are used for this SLO:*

- On-line surveys
- Course-Level Assessments (Area Knowledge)
- HIST 299 (Essay on Human Agency)
- HIST 499 (Draft Paper)
- HIST 499 (Final Paper)

- Exit Exam

**SLO 6.0: Could explain what influence the past has on the present.**

- Baseline: 85.8%
- Benchmark: 84%.
- Target: 87%

*The following measurements are used for this SLO:*

- On-line surveys
- HIST 499 (Draft Paper)
- HIST 499 (Final Paper)
- Exit Exam

### ***Results***

These results are based on the following:

- Course-Level Assessment Forms. Professors in the department filled these out for each of their classes, assessing 447 students in the fall semester and 490 in the spring.
- On-line surveys. A total of 581 students in lower-level (100-level) courses and 211 in upper-level (300-400 level) classes took these surveys during the 2019-20 school year.<sup>2</sup>
- Assignments in HIST 299, Historical Methods. This is one of the two courses required of all History majors and is taught each year in the fall. Seventeen students were enrolled in that course.
- The draft and final paper in HIST 499, Senior Thesis. This capstone class is required of all History majors. Twelve students took that class, which is taught annually each spring.
- Exit Exam. Given to graduating seniors, of which there was one in the fall and four in the spring.
- Student portfolios. A committee of three professors evaluated the historiography assignment from HIST 299 and the final paper from HIST 499 for those students who had completed both courses. These two classes are required of all History majors, and it is not uncommon for a student to use the historiography assignment in HIST 299 as a foundation for the major paper required in HIST 499.

**SLO 1.0 The student would be able to identify primary sources.**

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<sup>2</sup> It is important to note again that only 40 students in the department's lower-level courses took the survey in the spring, which is very small compared to previous semesters.

Lower-division (100-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 86.5%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
Upper-division (200- to 400-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 91.5%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 299 survey. Results: 93.8%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 499 draft paper. Results: 77.3%	<b>Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained</b>
HIST 499 final paper. Results: 74%	<b>Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained</b>
HIST 499 end-of-semester quiz. Results: 100%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 499 end-of-semester survey. Results: 100%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
<b>Average: 89%</b>	<b><u>Benchmark Attained</u></b>

**SLO 1.1 The student would be able to identify secondary sources.**

Lower-division (100-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 82.3%	<b>Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained</b>
Upper-division (300 and 400-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 92%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 299 survey. Results: 93.8%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 499 draft paper. Results: 93%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 499 final paper. Results: 96%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 499 end-of-semester quiz. Results: 87.6%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 499 end-of-semester survey. Results: 100%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
<b>Average: 92.1%</b>	<b><u>Benchmark Attained</u></b>

**SLO 1.2 The student could demonstrate an awareness of the connections between sources and their historical context.**

Lower-division (100-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 82.3%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
Upper-division (200- to 400-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 92.5%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 299 survey. Results: 81.5%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 299 web assignment. Results: 92.3%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 499 draft paper. Results: 93.6%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 499 final paper. Results: 90%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 499 end-of-semester survey. Results: 100%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 299 portfolio. Results: 64%	<b>Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained</b>
HIST 499 portfolio. Results: 62%	<b>Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained</b>
<b>Average: 84.2%</b>	<b><u>Benchmark Attained</u></b>

**SLO 2.0 The student would be able to identify a thesis statement or sentence.**

Lower-division (100-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 88%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
Upper-division (200- to 400-level courses) on-line survey.	

Results: 93.5%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 499 end-of-semester quiz. Results: 70%	<b>Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained</b>
HIST 499 end-of-semester survey. Results: 95%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 499 final paper. Results: 90%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
<b>Average: 87.3%</b>	<b><u>Benchmark Attained</u></b>

**SLO 2.1 The student could effectively offer analysis that supported the thesis statement.**

Lower-division (100-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 85.8%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
Upper-division (200- to 400-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 95.5%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 299 survey. Results: 89.2%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
Course-Level Assessments (Qualitative Analysis). Lower-division (100-level courses) Results: 78.4%	<b>Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained</b>
Course-Level Assessments (Qualitative Analysis). Upper-division (200- to 400-level courses) Results: 84.9%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 499 draft paper. Results: 85.5%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 499 final paper. Results: 90%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 499 end-of-semester survey. Results: 100%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 299 portfolio. Results: 69%	<b>Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained</b>
HIST 499 portfolio. Results: 58%	<b>Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained</b>
<b>Average: 83.6%</b>	<b><u>Benchmark Attained</u></b>

**SLO 3.0 The student would be able to demonstrate an understanding of connections between historical events, ideas, and values over time.**

Lower-division (100-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 85.5%	<b>Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained</b>
Upper-division (300 and 400-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 96.5%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 299 journal assignment. Results: 40.7%	<b>Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained</b>
HIST 499 draft paper. Results: 89.1%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 499 final paper. Results: 80%	<b>Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained</b>
Exit Exam. Results: 92%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 299 portfolio. Results: 67%	<b>Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained</b>
HIST 499 portfolio. Results: 62%	<b>Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained</b>
<b>Average: 76.6%</b>	<b><u>Benchmark Not Attained</u></b>

**SLO 4.0 The student could effectively write an historical essay.**

Lower-division (100-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 74.3%	<b>Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained</b>
Upper-division (200- to 400-level courses) on-line survey.	

Results: 87.5%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
Course-Level Assessments (Writing). Lower-division (100-level courses) Results: 79.25%	<b>Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained</b>
Course-Level Assessments (Writing). Upper-division (200 to 400-level courses) Results: 88.2%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
Exit Exam. Results: 88%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
<b>Average: 83.5%</b>	<b><u>Benchmark Attained</u></b>

**SLO 4.1 The student could properly use footnotes and correct formatting for an historical essay.**

Upper-division (200- to 400-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 88%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 299 survey. Results: 90.8%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 299 citations exercise. Results: 86.3%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 499 draft paper. Results: 76.4%	<b>Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained</b>
HIST 499 final paper. Results: 84.5%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
Exit Exam. Results: 96%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 299 portfolio. Results: 49%	<b>Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained</b>
HIST 499 portfolio. Results: 67%	<b>Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained</b>
<b>Average: 79.8%</b>	<b><u>Benchmark Not Attained</u></b>

**SLO 5.0 The student could accurately explain how people have existed, acted, and thought in particular historical periods.**

Lower-division (100-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 85.3%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
Upper-division (200- to 400-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 94%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
Course-Level Assessments (Critical Thinking). Lower-division (100-level courses) Results: 79.6%	<b>Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained</b>
Course-Level Assessments (Critical Thinking). Upper-division (200- to 400-level courses) Results: 88.4%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 299 historiographical assignment. Results: 53.5%	<b>Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained</b>
HIST 499 draft paper. Results: 96.4%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 499 final paper. Results: 100%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 299 portfolio. Results: 62%	<b>Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained</b>
HIST 499 portfolio. Results: 69%	<b>Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained</b>
<b>Average: 80.9%</b>	<b><u>Benchmark Attained</u></b>

**SLO 5.1 Would be able to demonstrate an understanding of cause and effect with a broad knowledge of the general chronology of historical developments in a variety of civilizations.**

Lower-division (100-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 85.8%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
Upper-division (300 and 400-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 91.5%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
Course-Level Assessments (Area Knowledge). Lower-division (100-level courses) Results: 75.6%	<b>Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained</b>
Course-Level Assessments (Area Knowledge). (Upper-division (200- to 400-level courses) Results: 85.5%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 299 essay on human agency. Results: 82%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 499 draft paper. Results: 92.7%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 499 final paper. Results: 80%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
Exit Exam. Results: 96%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
<b>Average: 86.1%</b>	<b><u>Benchmark Attained</u></b>

**SLO 6.0 Could explain what influence the past has on the present.**

Lower-division (100-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 87.8%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
Upper-division (200- to 400-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 95.5%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 499 draft paper. Results: 91.8%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 499 final paper. Results: 100%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
Exit Exam. Results: 88%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
<b>Average: 92.6%</b>	<b><u>Benchmark Attained</u></b>

***History Department Action Items***

The History Department's institutional Effectiveness Committee continues to monitor and seek new methods of enhancing its data collection process. As in past years, it obtained some of its data from on-line surveys conducted each semester, with one survey designated for students in lower-level courses and the other for those in upper-level classes. The Course-Level Assessment form, which the department began using in the 2017-2018 school year, initially was filled out strictly for lower-level (General Education) classes. At the end of the fall semester of 2018, these forms were required of all classes. The department also made fuller use of the assignments in HIST 299 and HIST 499, and the exit exam, and it has begun using portfolios. The indirect and direct data obtained has provided the department with a fuller understanding of its performance and where it can improve.

The data provided a clear distinction between students in survey classes, many of whom are not History majors, and those who are seeking a History degree. The on-line survey demonstrated



that many students in General Education courses felt unable to do as well with regard to key skills and concepts as those taking upper-level History classes (although the numbers also showed greater confidence among those students in General Education classes than in the past). The attitudinal outcome provided by the survey was confirmed in the Course-Level Assessments. Because it is impossible to determine how many people who were or might be History majors or minors took the surveys—particularly that for General Education courses—it is not clear if the results prove that History students' abilities improved as they moved from their freshmen to their senior years.

The findings for the two classes required of all History majors—HIST 299 (The Historian's Craft) and HIST 499 (Senior Thesis)—revealed some curious data. On the one hand, when taking the class as a whole and comparing individual assignments in HIST 299 with comparable ones in HIST 499, there appeared a refinement of skills in HIST 499 in virtually every case. This was even true for SLO 4.1 (proper use of footnotes and formatting) and SLO 5.0 (explaining how people existed, acted, and thought in particular historical periods), where there had been a marked decline in 2018-2019. This finding suggests that students worked to improve on what they learned in HIST 299 and applied that knowledge to their paper in HIST 499. On the other hand, the portfolios showed marked improvement only in the case of SLO 4.1; of the other four SLOs assessed, the performance of students in HIST 299 was about the same as in HIST 499 or, in the case of SLO 2.1, declined significantly. This suggests that students were in fact having difficulty applying what they had learned in HIST 299 to HIST 499. This is the first year using portfolios, and the acquisition of additional data is necessary to achieve a better understanding of student performance over time.

### ***Action Items for 2020-2021***

Action items are divided into two categories: those that are broader in nature and those that are specific to the SLOs where the department failed to attain its benchmarks

#### **Broader Actions**

It is vital that as many students as possible take the survey given each semester. The low number of students who did so in the spring semester is disconcerting, for it risks skewing the data not only for that specific measurement but for each SLO. This concern was a reason why the department deemed it prudent not to change its current benchmarks or targets for its SLOs.

Professors in all History classes need to emphasize to students the importance of the skills and knowledge required of them to perform well on their writing assignments. This applies not only to in-class essays, but take-home assignments. Such emphasis (and re-emphasis) will help majors as they enter HIST 299, will keep those skills and that knowledge fresh in their minds as they

progress through their upper-level coursework, and will help them turn in a strong final draft in HIST 499.

#### SLO-Specific Actions

#### **SLO 3.0 Would be able to demonstrate an understanding of connections between historical events, ideas, and values over time.**

The department failed to attain its benchmark. The IE Committee has recommended the following measures to improve the department's outcome:

- Draw clearer connections for students in survey classes by making sure to provide brief reviews of information from earlier lectures to help students see the connections described.
- Devote additional time to the journal assignment (or, if changed, a similar assignment) in HIST 299.
- Encourage instructors to spend more time on comparative history either by making comparisons alone or by inviting colleagues to deliver guest lectures.
- Use the above-mentioned student portfolios to better assess students' abilities to meet this SLO.

#### **SLO 4.1 The student could properly use footnotes and correct formatting for an historical essay.**

To improve its performance on this SLO, the department will:

- Emphasize the importance of proper footnoting not only to avoid plagiarism but to help the reader locate source material.
- Devote additional attention to proper footnoting in all courses.

#### ***Supporting Documentation***

- Course-Level Assessment form for midterm
- Course-Level Assessment form for final
- Survey given to all students in History courses
- Scan of History Department survey for upper-level courses, Spring 2020
- HIST 299 syllabus
- HIST 299 survey
- HIST 499 syllabus
- HIST 499 quiz
- HIST 499 survey
- Rubric for assessing portfolios

- Exit exam