

## **Institutional Effectiveness Report**

Name of Program/Department: Department of History

Year: 2016-2017

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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 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. History faculty members engage in scholarship and research, and serve in various ways the university and the local community. Furthermore, the History Department supports the Mission of Francis Marion University by:

- enabling “students to develop their ability to think and communicate, to gain the knowledge and skills to pursue a career or further study, to appreciate the creativeness of the human mind, to be aware of the human and natural environment of the world, and to have the capacity to pursue a life of learning and understanding.”
- providing “outstanding faculty members distinguished by high achievement and diverse academic background” who engage in “research for presentation and publication as well as the classroom,” and “participate in and contribute to a great variety of community activities.”

Through the study of History, our 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.

### **Program Learning Outcomes**

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:

- Identify the broad contours of the past, including the people, ideas, and events that have shaped our world.
- Develop basic research skills and formatting skills such as footnoting.
- Think critically and logically.

- Learn to differentiate between primary and secondary sources, and the value as well as challenges in using both.
- Learn the historiography of different historical fields.
- Engage in independent research.
- Express their understanding of the past via cogent, analytical papers that include both primary and secondary material.
- Express their understanding of the past through effective communication.

### **Executive Summary of Report**

The History Program at Francis Marion University offers coursework in United States, European, and non-Western fields, which will lead to either a B.A. or a B.S. in History. The Department has a limited number of History majors, but it serves the University in offering the History general education requirement courses that are compulsory for all undergraduates. The History program developed and stressed eight Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) which were duly reflected in six Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). These SLOs stressed the need for students taking History courses to become aware not only of the historical facts and knowledge of past events and civilizations, but also of the various types of historical sources that one encounters.

Additionally, the program seeks to develop critical reading, thinking, and analytical skills, as well as cultivate composition and formatting skills that will aid students in historical research and scholarship. From its mission statement and the projected program outcomes, there are several primary learning outcomes that can be delineated for students taking History courses at Francis Marion University. These goals are comprised of Knowledge, Skills, and Attitude outcomes. These outcomes are directly and indirectly measured through assessment methods that include graded in-class or take-home essay exams and papers; an on-line survey for all students enrolled in both lower- and upper-division courses; and specific, directly-measurable knowledge and skills from an in-class evaluation in History 299 (The Historian's Craft), and a student in-class progress report in History 499 (Senior Thesis).

Based on discussions held during the 2015-2016 school year, the department agreed that its evaluation of student outcomes must be ongoing and not a singular assessment of senior-year exit performance. The department's members believe that History majors and minors must receive regular and frequent feedback on their progress. The department has developed and begun to deploy a new process that relies heavily on rubrics and portfolios.

The department set an 80% target for each of its SLOs. The data and results from the department's assessment procedures indicate that it has reached that target for seven of its eleven SLOs. The department is currently enhancing its procedures to bring up its results in a number of areas, and those specific areas have been targeted in the Action Items as stated in the report.

## Student Learning Outcomes

The History Program at Francis Marion University offers coursework in United States, European, and non-Western fields. From its mission statement and project program outcomes, there are several primary learning outcomes that can be delineated for students taking History courses at Francis Marion University. These goals are comprised of Knowledge, Skills, and Attitude outcomes. Seven of these goals are highlighted in this report, which address Knowledge (SLOs 1.2, 3.0, 5.1), Skills (SLOs 2.0, 2.1, 3.0, 4.0), and Attitude (SLOs 5.1, 6.0). (As noted, in a couple of cases, these goals fit into more than one category.) These goals can be directly and indirectly measured.

The student taking History courses:

**SLO 1.2** Could demonstrate an awareness of the connections between sources and their historical context. **The target was that 80% or more of students would meet or exceed expectations in the survey results and the in-class assignments for 299.**

**SLO 2.0** Would be able to identify a thesis statement or sentence. **The target was that 80% or more of students would meet or exceed expectations in the survey results, the in-class assignments for 299, and a progress report for 499.**

**SLO 2.1** Could effectively offer analysis that supported the thesis statement. **The target was that 80% or more of students would meet or exceed expectations in the survey results, the in-class assignments for 299, and a progress report for 499.**

**SLO 3.0** Would be able to demonstrate an understanding of connections between historical events, ideas, and values over time. **The target was that 80% or more of students would meet or exceed expectations in the survey results, and in essay and paper assignments in the department's general education courses.**

**SLO 4.0** Could effectively write an historical essay. **The target was that 80% or more of students would meet or exceed expectations in the survey results, the in-class essay for 299, and a progress report for 499.**

**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. **The target was that 80% or more of students would meet or exceed expectations in the survey results.**

**SLO 6.0** Could explain what influence the past has on the present. **The target was that 80% or more of students would meet or exceed expectations in the survey results.**

## Assessment Methods

**SLO 1.2 Could demonstrate an awareness of the connections between sources and their historical context.** An online survey was used for all students enrolled in both lower- and upper-division History courses. Additionally, for HIST 299, The Historian's Craft, the students completed several in-class assignments using both primary and secondary sources that placed those sources within historical context: 1) a web-based assignment worth 15% of the class grade that helps students understand the challenges of using primary sources when writing history; 2) an essay worth 20% of the class grade that requires students to weigh the impact of human agency against larger social and material forces in history; and 3) a major paper worth 30% of the class grade that requires students to look at 5-10 years' worth of issues of a historical journal, and determine not only the subjects discussed, but the trends in interpretation and how primary sources have affected those interpretations. This last HIST 299 assignment can provide a lead-in to the major paper required of students in the Department's capstone course, HIST 499, Senior Thesis.

**SLO 2.0 Would be able to identify a thesis statement or sentence.** An online survey was used for all students enrolled in both lower- and upper-division History courses. Additionally, for HIST 499, Senior Thesis, a student progress report form was completed by faculty members working with senior History majors on their theses. In HIST 299, The Historian's Craft, the students completed a series of assignments that, by their nature, required them to have a thesis statement and offer analysis to support that statement: 1) a web-based assignment worth 15% of the class grade that helps students understand the challenges of using primary sources when writing history; 2) an essay worth 20% of the class grade that requires students to weigh the impact of human agency against larger social and material forces in history; and 3) a major paper worth 30% of the class grade that requires students to look at 5-10 years' worth of issues of a historical journal, and determine not only the subjects discussed, but the trends in interpretation and how primary sources have affected those interpretations. The attainment of SLO 2.0 and 2.1 are based on the overall results of the progress report and the assignments.

**SLO 2.1 Could effectively offer analysis that supported the thesis statement.** An online survey was used for all students enrolled in both lower- and upper-division History courses. Additionally, for HIST 499, Senior Thesis, a student progress report form was completed by faculty members working with senior History majors on their theses. In HIST 299, The Historian's Craft, the students completed a series of assignments that, by their nature, required them to have a thesis statement and offer analysis to support that statement: 1) a web-based assignment worth 15% of the class grade that helps students understand the challenges of using primary sources when writing history; 2) an essay worth 20% of the class grade that

requires students to weigh the impact of human agency against larger social and material forces in history; and 3) a major paper worth 30% of the class grade that requires students to look at 5-10 years' worth of issues of a historical journal, and determine not only the subjects discussed, but the trends in interpretation and how primary sources have affected those interpretations. The attainment of SLO 2.0 and 2.1 are based on the overall results of the progress report and the assignments.

**SLO 3.0 Would be able to demonstrate an understanding of connections between historical events, ideas, and values over time.** An online survey was used for all students enrolled in both lower- and upper-division History courses. Because the department's general education courses tend to cover the largest swaths of time, data from essay exams and papers given in those courses also was used.

**SLO 4.0 Could effectively write an historical essay.** An online survey was used for all students enrolled in both lower- and upper-division History courses. Additionally, for HIST 499, Senior Thesis, a student progress report form was completed by faculty members working with senior History majors on their theses. In HIST 299, The Historian's Craft, the students completed a final paper that used both primary and secondary sources.

**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.** An online survey was used for all students enrolled in both lower- and upper-division History courses.

**SLO 6.0 Could explain what influence the past has on the present.** An online survey was used for all students enrolled in both lower- and upper-division History courses.

## **Assessment Results**

**SLO 1.2 The student could demonstrate an awareness of the connections between sources and their historical context.** In both the fall of 2016 and spring of 2017, an on-line survey for all students enrolled in both lower- and upper-level division History courses was presented via Blackboard. Additionally, students were graded in a series of assignments in History 299, The Historian's Craft

Lower-division (200-level survey courses). Results: 78%

Upper-division (major- and minor-specific courses). Results: 87.5%

HIST 299 in-class assignments. Results: 73%

**Overall average: 79.5%**

**Target Not attained**

**Target attained**

**Target Not attained**

**Target Not attained**

**SLO 2.0 The student would be able to identify a thesis statement or sentence.** In both the fall of 2016 and spring of 2017, an on-line survey for all students enrolled in both lower- and upper-level division History courses was presented via Blackboard. Additionally, faculty filled out a progress report for students in History 499 (Senior Thesis) and graded a series of student assignments in History 299 (The Historian's Craft).

Lower-division (200-level survey courses). Results: 81%	<b>Target attained</b>
Upper-division (major- and minor-specific courses). Results: 84.5%	<b>Target attained</b>
History 499 student progress report (SPR). Results: 83%	<b>Target attained</b>
HIST 299 in-class assignments. Results: 82%	<b>Target attained</b>
<b>Overall average: 82.6%</b>	<b>Target Attained</b>

**SLO 2.1 The student could effectively offer analysis that supported the thesis statement.** In both the fall of 2016 and spring of 2017, an on-line survey for all students enrolled in both lower- and upper-level division History courses was presented via Blackboard. Additionally, faculty filled out a progress report for students in History 499 (Senior Thesis) and graded a series of student assignments in History 299 (The Historian's Craft).

Lower-division (200-level survey courses). Results: 73.5%	<b>Target <u>Not</u> attained</b>
Upper-division (major- and minor-specific courses). Results: 81.5%	<b>Target attained</b>
History 499 student progress report (SPR). Results: 85%	<b>Target attained</b>
HIST 299 in-class assignments. Results: 91%	<b>Target attained</b>
<b>Overall average: 82.75%</b>	<b>Target Attained</b>

**SLO 3.0 The student would be able to demonstrate an understanding of connections between historical events, ideas, and values over time.** In both the fall of 2016 and spring of 2017, an on-line survey for all students enrolled in both lower- and upper-level division History courses was presented via Blackboard. Additionally, faculty graded in-class and take-home essay and paper assignments in their general education courses.

Lower-division (200-level survey courses). Results: 77.5%	<b>Target <u>Not</u> attained</b>
Upper-division (major- and minor-specific courses). Results: 88%	<b>Target attained</b>
Lower-division (200-level) course assignments. Results: 77.8%	<b>Target <u>Not</u> attained</b>
<b>Overall average: 81.1%</b>	<b>Target Attained</b>

**SLO 4.0 The student could effectively write an historical essay.** In both the fall of 2016 and spring of 2017, an on-line survey for all students enrolled in both lower- and upper-level division History courses was presented via Blackboard. Additionally, faculty filled out a progress report for students in History 499 (Senior Thesis) and graded an essay in History 299 (The Historian's Craft).

Lower-division (200-level survey courses). Results: 62.5%	<b>Target <u>Not</u> attained</b>
Upper-division (major- and minor-specific courses). Results: 78%	<b>Target <u>Not</u> attained</b>
History 499 student progress report (SPR). Q1: Results: 100%	<b>Target attained</b>
History 499 student progress report (SPR). Q2: Results: 90%	<b>Target attained</b>
History 499 student progress report (SPR). Q3: Results: 82%	<b>Target attained</b>
History 499 student progress report (SPR). Q4: Results: 85%	<b>Target attained</b>
HIST 299 essay. Results: 79%	<b>Target <u>Not</u> attained</b>
<b>Overall average: 83%</b>	<b>Target Attained</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.**

In both the fall of 2016 and spring of 2017, an on-line survey for all students enrolled in both lower- and upper-level division History courses was presented via Blackboard.

Lower-division (200-level survey courses). Results: 73.5%	<b>Target <u>Not</u> attained</b>
Upper-division (major- and minor-specific courses). Results: 84.5%	<b>Target attained</b>
<b>Overall average: 79%</b>	<b>Target <u>Not</u> attained</b>

**SLO 6.0 Could explain what influence the past has on the present.** In both the fall of 2016 and spring of 2017, an on-line survey for all students enrolled in both lower- and upper-level division History courses was presented via Blackboard.

Lower-division (200-level survey courses). Results: 77%	<b>Target <u>Not</u> attained</b>
Upper-division (major- and minor-specific courses). Results: 88%	<b>Target attained</b>
<b>Overall average: 82.5%</b>	<b>Target attained</b>

## **History Department Action Items**

In the spring semester of 2016, the department's Institutional Effectiveness Committee met to revise its data collection processes to improve the data collected. A substantial portion of that data came from an anonymous survey posted on Blackboard. That survey went live in the fall semester from October 24 to 31 and in the spring from February 21 to 28. In the fall semester, 211 students took the survey for 200-level (General Education) courses, while 59 did so for those at the 300- and 400-level. In the spring, 545 students took the 200-level survey, while 188 did for those at the 300- and 400-level. From these results, as well as those from the HIST 299 in-class evaluations and the HIST 499 student progress reports, a number of recommendations can be put forward.

The faculty agreed that those areas that stress critical thinking, analytical, and composition skills need to be better addressed. Actions include:

- 1) Continue our efforts in all History classes to develop and encourage our students' analytical skills, and not just rote memorization of facts. On this score, all faculty are encouraged to give assignments that test the ability to students to combine narrative and analysis, including paper assignments, in-class and take-home essay exams, and primary-document-based questions.
- 2) Instill in all our students and in all our classes the need for historical-mindedness, to make students more aware of how the past affects the present, and the cause-and-effect element of historical understanding and scholarship. These skills are applied with particular emphasis through the essays and papers assigned in History 299 and 499, but similar assignments are also an essential component of all general education and upper-level courses.
- 3) Develop some new survey questions and reintroduce old ones, especially for lower-division surveys, to better assess the students' knowledge and attitudes toward historiography, particularly in the area of non-Western civilization.
- 4) Devote greater emphasis to culture so that students can better understand and appreciate the history of cultures unlike their own. Faculty will be encouraged to devote greater attention to culture through their lectures, and in-class reading, paper, and essay assignments. Additionally, the Department has hired a new European historian and an archaeologist, both of whom devote particular attention to culture in their research and teaching.
- 5) Hold meetings each semester or school year with tutors from the Writing Center on writing History papers and how such papers differ from other fields of study.
- 6) Have at least one dedicated History tutor in the university Tutoring Center.
- 7) Prepare two to three short (25-30 minute) videos on paper- and essay-writing that will be posted on Blackboard, and be required of all students taking History classes to watch and take a quiz.



## **Specific Actions Items for 2017-2018**

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

The History Department achieved its target on one of three assessments for SLO 1.2. Accordingly, the Department will continue to proceed with focusing greater attention on “direct measures” of the student’s ability to demonstrate an awareness of the connections between sources and their historical context. On this score, the Department’s members agreed that they must continue to provide both History majors and minors with regular and frequent feedback on their progress. Additionally, the Department in 2016-17 began to develop a rubric based on portfolios of student work, thereby allowing it to better monitor its success/failure in meeting SLO 1.2.

**SLO 2.0 Would be able to identify a thesis statement or sentence.** The Department achieved its target all four assessments for SLO 2.0. However, the department will continue to develop more objective “direct measures” of students’ ability to identify a thesis statement or sentence. Please see our comments for SLO 1.2 for details on our move toward rubrics, portfolios, and more objective assessments of student outcomes.

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

The Department achieved its target on three of four assessments for SLO 2.1. However, it will continue to develop more objective “direct measures” of student’s ability to offer analysis that supports the thesis statement. Additionally, the Department will work more closely with the Francis Marion University Writing Center to enhance the student’s overall writing abilities. Please see our comments for SLO 1.2 for details on our move toward rubrics, portfolios, and more objective assessments of student outcomes.

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

Although the History Department’s overall average on SLO 3.0 was 82.75%, it will continue developing more objective “direct measures” of the student’s ability to demonstrate an understanding of connections between historical events, ideas, and values over time. Please see our comments for SLO 1.2 for details on our move toward rubrics, portfolios, and more objective assessments of student outcomes.

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

The History Department achieved its target for four of the seven assessments for SLO 4.0. The Department, though, will continue to develop more objective “direct measures” of the

student's ability to write an historical essay. Additionally, the Department will work more closely with the Francis Marion University Writing Center to enhance students' overall writing abilities. Please see our comments for SLO 1.2 for details on our move toward rubrics, portfolios, and more objective assessments of student outcomes.

**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.**

The Department achieved its target for SLO 5.1 on one of two assessments, and therefore it will develop more objective "direct measures" of the student's ability to see cause and effect by using a broad knowledge of the general chronology of historical developments in a variety of civilizations. Please see our comments for SLO 1.2 for details on our move toward rubrics, portfolios, and more objective assessments of student outcomes.

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

Although the History Department's overall average on SLO 6.0 was 82.5%, the History Department will continue developing more objective "direct measures" of the student's ability to demonstrate an understanding of the influence the past has on the present. Please see our comments for SLO 1.2 for details on our move toward rubrics, portfolios, and more objective assessments of student outcomes.