

# **Institutional Effectiveness Report**

Name of Program/Department: Department of History

Year: 2015-2016

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## **PROGRAM MISSION**

The mission of the Department of History at Francis Marion University is to train the intellect 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 on 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:

- to enable “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.”
- to provide “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 course work 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 Department at Francis Marion University offers course work in United States, European, and non-Western fields which will lead to either a BA in History or a BS in History. The Department does have a limited number of history majors and minors, but it serves the University in offering the history general education requirement courses which are compulsory for all undergraduates. The history program developed and stressed eight Program Learning Outcomes (PIOs) 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. Overall average across all eleven SLO sub-categories was 80.30% with a high of 83.5% for students' ability to explain *what influence the past had on the present* and a low of 73.66% for the students' ability to *effectively write an historical essay*. We clearly outline our strategies to improve outcomes in all listed SLOs in the Action Item sections of this report.

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 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 an on-line survey for all students enrolled in both lower and upper-division courses as well as specific, directly measurable knowledge and skills from History 499, the Senior Thesis class, via a student progress report form and an in-class evaluation from History 299, the Historical Methods class.

During faculty deliberations in 2015-2016, we agreed that our evaluation of student Outcomes must be ongoing and not a singular assessment of senior year exit performance. We believe that History majors and minors must receive regular and frequent feedback on their progress. We will develop and then deploy a new process in 2016-2017 that relies heavily on rubrics and portfolios.

Together our assessment procedures have yielded data and results that indicate the department in the majority of SLOs have reached the 80% benchmark for success as set by the faculty. However, work is needed to bring up the 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 Department at Francis Marion University offers course work in United States, European, and non-Western fields. From its mission statement and 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 goals can be directly and indirectly measured.

The student taking History courses:

**SLO 1.0** Would be able to identify Primary sources. **The benchmark was that 80% or more of students would meet or exceed expectations in the survey results, the student report evaluation for 499, and the in-class evaluation for 299.**

**SLO 1.1** Would be able to identify Secondary sources. **The benchmark was that 80% or more of students would meet or exceed expectations in the survey results, the student report evaluation for 499, and the in-class evaluation for 299.**

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

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

**SLO 2.1** Could effectively offer analysis that supported the thesis statement. **The benchmark was that 80% or more of students would meet or exceed expectations in the survey results and the in-class evaluation for 299.**

**SLO 3.0** Would be able to demonstrate an understanding of connections between historical events, ideas, and values over time. **The benchmark was that 80% or more of students would meet or exceed expectations in the survey results and the in-class evaluation for 299.**

**SLO 4.0** Could effectively write an historical essay. **The benchmark was that 80% or more of students would meet or exceed expectations in the survey results.**

**SLO 4.1** Could properly use footnotes and correct formatting for an historical essay. **The benchmark was that 80% or more of students would meet or exceed expectations in the survey results and the in-class evaluation for 299.**

**SLO 5.0** Could accurately explain how people have existed, acted and thought in particular historical periods. **The benchmark was that 80% or more of students would meet or exceed expectations in the survey results and the in-class evaluation for 299.**

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

## **Assessment Methods**

The student taking History courses:

**SLO 1.0 Would be able to identify Primary sources.** An online survey was used for all students enrolled in both lower and upper- division History courses. Additionally, for History 499, the Senior Thesis class, a student progress report form was completed by faculty members working with senior History majors on their theses. In the Historical Methods class, the students completed an in-class evaluation of their knowledge and accurate application of sources.

**SLO 1.1 Would be able to identify Secondary sources.** An online survey was used for all students enrolled in both lower and upper- division History courses. Additionally, for History 499, the Senior Thesis class, a student progress report form was completed by faculty members working with senior History majors on their theses. In the Historical Methods class, the students completed an in-class evaluation of their knowledge and accurate application of sources.

**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 History 299, The Historical Methods class, the students provided an in-class evaluation of their ability to think critically about the processes of source selection and interpretation.

**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 History 499, the Senior Thesis class a student progress report form was completed by faculty members working with senior History majors on their theses. For History 299, The Historical Methods class, the students completed an in-class evaluation of their ability to identify historical arguments (theses).

**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 History 499, the Senior Thesis class a student progress report form was completed by faculty members working with senior History majors on their theses.. For History 299, The Historical Methods class, the students completed an in-class evaluation of their development of the analytical skills required for historical study and their knowledge of how historians practice the arts of research and analysis.

**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..

**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 History 499, the Senior Thesis class, a student progress report form was completed by faculty members working with senior History majors on their thesis. For History 299, The Historical Methods class, the students completed an in-class evaluation of their development of the skills required for writing a major research paper.

**SLO 4.1 Could properly use footnotes and correct formatting for an historical essay.** . An online survey was used for all students enrolled in both lower and upper- division History courses. Additionally, for History 499, the Senior Thesis class, a student progress report form was completed by faculty members working with senior History majors on their thesis.

**SLO 5.0 Could accurately explain how people have existed, acted and thought in particular historical periods.** An online survey was used for all students enrolled in both lower and upper- division History courses.

**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. The survey went live on *Blackboard* to the students during a targeted

## Assessment Results

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

In spring 2016 an on-line survey for all students enrolled in both lower and upper-division History courses was developed.

Lower-division (200 level survey courses) results 80%	The target was attained
Upper-division (major and minor specific courses) results 83%	The target was attained
History 499 student progress report (SPR) results 88%	The target was attained
History 299 in-class evaluation results 78%	The target was <u>Not</u> attained

### **SLO 1.1 The student would be able to identify Secondary sources**

In spring 2016 an on-line survey for all students enrolled in both lower and upper-division History courses was developed.

Lower-division (200 level survey courses) results 78%	The target was <u>Not</u> attained
Upper-division (major and minor specific courses) results 82%	The target was attained
History 499 student progress report (SPR) results 84%	The target was attained
History 299 in-class evaluation results 79%	The target was <u>Not</u> attained

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

In spring 2016 an on-line survey for all students enrolled in both lower and upper-division History courses was developed.

Lower-division (200 level survey courses) results 78%	The target was <u>Not</u> attained
Upper-division (major and minor specific courses) results 81%	The target was attained
History 299 in-class evaluation results 79%	The target was <u>Not</u> attained

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

In spring 2016 an on-line survey for all students enrolled in both lower and upper-division History courses was developed.

Lower-division (200 level survey courses) results 81%	The target was attained
Upper-division (major and minor specific courses) results 82%	The target was attained
History 499 student progress report (SPR) results 88%	The target was attained
History 299 in-class evaluation results 77%	The target was <u>Not</u> attained

### **SLO 2.1 The student could effectively offer analysis that supports the thesis statement**

In spring 2016 an on-line expanded survey was developed for students enrolled in upper-division History courses.

Upper-division (major and minor specific courses) results 78%	The target was <u>Not</u> attained
History 499 student progress report (SPR) results 68%	The target was <u>Not</u> attained
History 299 in-class evaluation results Q1 76%	The target was <u>Not</u> attained
History 299 in-class evaluation results Q2 90%	The target was attained

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

In spring 2016 an on-line survey for all students enrolled in both lower and upper-division History courses was developed.

Lower-division (200 level survey courses) results 81%                      The target was attained

Upper-division (major and minor specific courses) results 85%                      The target was attained

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

In spring 2016 an on-line survey for all students enrolled in both lower and upper-division History courses was developed.

Lower-division (200 level survey courses) results 70%                      The target was Not attained

Upper-division (major and minor specific courses) results 72%                      The target was Not attained

History 499 student progress report (SPR) results Q1 68%                      The target was Not attained

History 499 student progress report (SPR) results Q2 75%                      The target was Not attained

History 499 student progress report (SPR) results Q3 77%                      The target was Not attained

History 299 in-class evaluation results 80%                      The target was attained

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

In spring 2016 an on-line expanded survey was developed for students enrolled in upper-division History courses.

Upper-division (major and minor specific courses) results 74%                      The target was Not attained

History 499 student progress report (SPR) results 87%                      The target was attained

History 299 in-class evaluation results 83%                      The target was attained

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

In spring 2016 an on-line survey for all students enrolled in both lower and upper-division History courses was developed.

Lower-division (200 level survey courses) results 81%                      The target was attained

Upper-division (major and minor specific courses) results 82%                      The target was attained

**SLO 5.1 The student could demonstrate an understanding of cause and effect with a broad knowledge of the general chronology of historical developments in a variety of civilizations**

In spring 2016 an on-line survey for all students enrolled in both lower and upper-division History courses was developed.

Lower-division (200 level survey courses) results 76%                      The target was Not attained

Upper-division (major and minor specific courses) results 80%                      The target was attained

**SLO 6.0 The student could explain what influence the past has on the present**

In spring 2016 an on-line survey for all students enrolled in both lower and upper-division History courses was developed.

Lower-division (200 level survey courses) results 83%                      The target was attained

Upper-division (major and minor specific courses) results 84%                      The target was attained

## History Department Action Items

For 2015-2016, the Department of History developed and implemented new assessment tools to measure program efficacy. During the fall 2015 semester, the FMU Department of History faculty held a number of departmental meetings to develop and implement new data collection practices for our Institutional Effectiveness Report. In spring 2016 an on-line survey for all students enrolled in both lower and upper-division History courses was finalized. That survey went live on *Blackboard* to the students during a targeted period in the spring 2016 semester (week of April 4 - 8). Previous to that, in spring 2015 we instituted a History Department I.E. Committee consisting of Drs. Bolt, Campbell, Kaufman, and Kennedy. This group attended an I.E. workshop last spring and later met with Dr. Rusty Ward, Professor of Sociology and SACSCOC faculty coordinator here at FMU to get his input on our methods, practices, and procedures.

On April 26, 2016 the History Department I.E. Committee met and evaluated the on-line survey results. They were particularly concerned where the benchmark was not achieved. From those results and the History 499 student progress reports and the History 299 in-class evaluations 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 to include:

- 1) More coverage of composition skills in HIST 299
- 2) More coverage of formatting and footnoting in HIST 299
- 3) The development of an in-class survey for HIST 499 students to evaluate at the start of that class what research, writing and formatting skills they retained from HIST 299.
- 4) Stress more the process to transform a Topic into a Thesis in both upper-division history classes as well as HIST 299 to better prepare the students for the capstone HIST 499, the senior thesis.
- 5) Stress much more in all history classes the need to develop and encourage in our students' analytical skills and not just rote memorization of facts. To that end, the faculty need to refashion their course assignments and syllabi in some classes.
- 6) Instill in all our students, in all of our classes the need for historical mindedness, to make them more aware of how the past affects the present and the cause and effect element of historical understanding and scholarship.
- 7) Increase the benchmark to 85% on some knowledge based SLOs and keep stressing those skills, methods, facts, and ideas in all of our classes for the betterment of our students.
- 8) Develop some new survey questions for the lower-division and upper-division surveys that access more in-depth the students' knowledge and attitudes towards historiography, specifically in the area of non-western civilization.
- 9) Insist on regular meetings of the history department I.E. Committee to further examine and evaluate these action items and to report back to the Department on the I.E. process going forward.

## **Specific Actions Items for 2016-2017**

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

Based on these findings, the History Department will develop and then deploy a new Pre/Posttest process in AY 2016-2017. Even though we achieved our target on three of four assessments for SLO 1.0 (overall average, 82.25%), the History Department will develop more objective “direct measures” of the student’s ability to identify Primary sources in 2016-2017. The new process will have a Knowledge-based focus, a Critical Thinking Component, and requirement that each student produce an artifact that will demonstrate what she or he can do with the information.

During faculty deliberations in 2015-2016, we agreed that our evaluation of student outcomes must be ongoing and not a singular assessment of senior year exit performance. We believe that History majors and minors must receive regular and frequent feedback on their progress. We will deploy a new process in 2016-2017 that relies heavily on rubrics and portfolios.

We will develop rubrics that are validated and objective with the assistance of the Institutional Effectiveness Office at Francis Marion University. Our portfolios will consist of collections of student work assembled over a period of time, accompanied by their reflective commentary on the artifacts. Properly structured and monitored, portfolio assessment will help us incorporate consistency and ongoing feedback into our program’s assessment and evaluation systems (<https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/february-2002/portfolio-assessment-for-history-majors-one-departments-journey>).

### **SLO 1.1 The student would be able to identify Secondary sources**

During faculty deliberations in 2015-2016, we agreed that our evaluation of student outcomes relied too heavily on indirect measures from one survey. Even though we found this data to be helpful, it did not provide the clarity necessary to make cogent long term adjustments to the History program. We achieved our target on two of four assessments for SLO 1.1 (overall average, 80.75%), so, the History Department will develop more objective “direct measures” of the student’s ability to identify Secondary sources in 2016-2017. Please see our comments for SLO 1.0 for details on our move toward rubrics, portfolios, and more objective assessments of student outcomes in 2016-2017.

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

We achieved our target on one of three assessments for SLO 1.2 (overall average, 79.33%), so, the History Department will develop more objective “direct measures” of the student’s ability to demonstrate an awareness of the connections between sources and their historical context in 2016-2017. Please see our comments for SLO 1.0 for details on our move toward rubrics, portfolios, and more objective assessments of student outcomes in 2016-2017.

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

We achieved our target on three of four assessments for SLO 2.0 (overall average, 80.00%), so, the History Department will develop more objective “direct measures” of the student’s ability to identify a thesis statement or sentence in 2016-2017. Please see our comments for SLO 1.0 for details on our move toward rubrics, portfolios, and more objective assessments of student outcomes in 2016-2017.

### **SLO 2.1 The student could effectively offer analysis that supports the thesis statement**

We achieved our target on three of four assessments for SLO 2.1 (overall average, 78.00%), so, the History Department will develop more objective “direct measures” of the student’s ability to offer analysis that supports the thesis statement in 2016-2017. Please see our comments for SLO 1.0 for details on our move toward rubrics, portfolios, and more objective assessments of student outcomes in 2016-2017.

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

Even though we achieved our target on two of two assessments for SLO 3.0 (overall average, 83.00%), so, the History Department will still develop more objective “direct measures” of the student’s ability to demonstrate an understanding of connections between historical events, ideas, and values over time in 2016-2017. Please see our comments for SLO 1.0 for details on our move toward rubrics, portfolios, and more objective assessments of student outcomes in 2016-2017.

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

We achieved our target on only one of six assessments for SLO 4.0 (overall average, 73.66%). The overall average of 73% was the lowest of all assessment categories making this an area of concern for the department of History. The History Department will, in addition to developing more objective “direct measures” of the student’s ability to write an historical essay, will also work more closely with the Francis Marion Writing Center to enhance students overall writing abilities in 2016-2017. Please see our comments for SLO 1.0 for details on our move toward rubrics, portfolios, and more objective assessments of student outcomes in 2016-2017.

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

We achieved our target on two of three assessments for SLO 4.1 (overall average, 81.33%). The History Department will develop more objective “direct measures” of the student’s ability to properly use footnotes and correct formatting for an historical essay in 2016-2017. Please see our comments for SLO 1.0 for details on our move toward rubrics, portfolios, and more objective assessments of student outcomes in 2016-2017. We will also work more closely with the Francis Marion Writing Center to enhance students overall writing abilities in 2016-2017.

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

Even though we achieved our target on two of two assessments for SLO 5.0 (overall average, 81.50%), so, the History Department will still develop more objective “direct measures” of the student’s ability to accurately explain how people have existed, acted and thought in particular historical periods in 2016-2017. Please see our comments for SLO 1.0 for details on our move toward rubrics, portfolios, and more objective assessments of student outcomes in 2016-2017.

**SLO 5.1 The student could demonstrate an understanding of cause and effect with a broad knowledge of the general chronology of historical developments in a variety of civilizations**

We achieved our target on one of two assessments for SLO 5.1 (overall average, 78.00%), so, the History Department will still develop more objective “direct measures” of the student’s ability to understanding of cause and effect with a broad knowledge of the general chronology of historical developments in a variety of civilizations in 2016-2017. Please see our comments for SLO 1.0 for details on our move toward rubrics, portfolios, and more objective assessments of student outcomes in 2016-2017.

**SLO 6.0 The student could explain what influence the past has on the present**

Even though we achieved our target on two of two assessments for SLO 6.0 (overall average, 83.50%), so, the History Department will still develop more objective “direct measures” of the student’s ability to explain what influence the past has on the present in 2016-2017. Please see our comments for SLO 1.0 for details on our move toward rubrics, portfolios, and more objective assessments of student outcomes in 2016-2017.

**NOTE\***

To “Close the Loop” all methods of assessment, exams, and questionnaires will be subject to semi-annual review, reevaluation, and revision by the I.E. Committee of the Department of History, the Francis Marion IE Committee, and the Francis Marion IE Office.