

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS REPORT

Name of Program/Department: Department of History

Year: 2020-2021

Name of Preparer: Scott Kaufman

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, 6, 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). For 2020-2021, the department continued using all of these methods of assessment.

In examining the results of the History Department's 2020-2021 IE report, the following conclusions can be made:

- On the one hand, some of the findings were positive:
 - The portfolio committee discovered that in nearly every instance, the quality of students' performance on the final papers for HIST 499 was stronger than on comparable assignments in HIST 299; this suggests that students are recalling the skills they learned in HIST 299 and applying it to their work in HIST 499.
 - 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.
- On the other hand, there are reasons for concern:
 - 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 is not clear.
 - Those students in General Education classes who took a survey given each semester generally felt less confident about their abilities than in 2019-2020.
 - This lack of confidence was reflected in student performance in general, which witnessed a decline. 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. In 2020-2021, it reached its benchmark for only four of its eleven SLOs; even in those cases where it met its benchmark, the results were not as strong as in 2019-2020.
- It is possible that Covid offers a partial explanation for the decline in student performance, as a number of studies found students exhibited increased anxiety and stress as a result of the pandemic.¹ Additional data will provide some insight into whether Covid had an impact on student performance.

¹ Changwon Son, Sudeep Hegde, Alec Smith, Xiaomei Wang, and Farzan Sasangohar, "Effects of Covid-19 on College Students' Mental Health in the United States: Interview Study Survey," *Journal of Medical Internet Research* 22 (2020), [PLoS One 16 \(2021\), <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33667243/>; Sujata Gupta, "The Covid-19 Pandemic Made U.S. College Students' Mental Health Even Worse," *ScienceNews*, 22 January 2021,](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7473764/#:~:text=Of%20the%20195%20students%2C%20138,and%20depressive%20thoughts%20among%20students; Jane Cooley Fruehwirth, Siddhartha Biswas, and Krista M. Perreira,)

- The decline in student performance demonstrates that the History Department needs to redouble its efforts to “close the loop.” It must do more to help students understand the past, and to express their knowledge and skills in the work assigned them.

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 on-line 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 compose effectively with rhetorical awareness, integrate relevant research when appropriate, and produce developed, insightful arguments,” and Goal 6, “The ability to recognize historical processes, to identify historical periodization, and to explain historical connections among individuals, groups, and ideas around the world.”
- *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 diverse social and cultural practices and to articulate connections between individual behavior and sociocultural processes.”
- *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

<https://www.sciencenews.org/article/covid-19-coronavirus-pandemic-us-college-students-mental-health>.

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.
- 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 demands 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 surveys 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, these surveys ask 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. The surveys also assess how difficult students 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 2020-2021 school year continued a number of steps cited in its 2019-2020 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 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 Martha Ballard’s diary.
- It 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 developed the above-mentioned portfolios that tracks 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 incorporated a detailed assessment for the final paper for HIST 499. While these measure skills, they also provide key information on students’ knowledge.
- It 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 developed the above-mentioned portfolios that 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 2020-2021 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 2020-2021 school year.

The SLOs

The History Department measures eleven student learning outcomes. In 2016-2017, it established a benchmark of 80% on each; success in reaching those benchmarks in some cases led the department to increase them since. The baselines, which are the average of the results for the 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 reports, are provided following each SLO.

The department's Institutional Effectiveness Committee decided to raise the benchmarks and targets for SLOs 1.0, 1.1, 2.0, and 4.0 because of improvement in each. In every other case, it decided to keep the benchmarks and targets unchanged. There are two reasons for this. First, there was a decline in the final results for 2020-2021 as compared to the year before. Second, in the spring semester of 2021, only 90 students in General Education courses took the on-line survey, which is far below the number who usually do so. Why is not clear.² 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: 87.2%
- Benchmark: 83%
- Target: 89%
 - In 2019-2020, the benchmark was 82% and the target was 85%. Both were increased because of the achievement of an 89% benchmark in both 2019-2020 and 2020-2021.

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 Survey)

SLO 1.1: Would be able to identify secondary sources.

- Baseline: 88.1%
- Benchmark: 88%

² 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.

- Target: 89%
 - In 2019-2020, the benchmark was 83% and the target was 85%. Both were increased because of the achievement of a 92.1% benchmark 2019-2020 and an 88% benchmark in 2020-2021.

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 Survey)

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

- Baseline: 83.3%
- Benchmark: 80%
- Target: 82%
 - The benchmark and target remain unchanged because of a decline in the final results: 84.2% met the benchmark in 2019-2020, but only 78.3% did so in 2020-2021.

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: 84.9%
- Benchmark: 83%
- Target: 89%
 - In 2019-2020, the benchmark was 80% and the target was 85%. Both were increased because of the achievement of an 87.3% benchmark 2019-2020 and a 91.5% benchmark in 2020-2021.

The following measurements are used for this SLO:

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

- HIST 499 (Final Paper)

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

- Baseline: 81%
- Benchmark: 80%
- Target: 85%
 - The benchmark and target remain unchanged because of a decline in the final results: 83.6% met the benchmark in 2019-2020, but only 78.1% did so in 2020-2021.

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: 79.6%
- Benchmark: 82%
- Target: 85%
 - The benchmark and target remain unchanged because of a decline in the final results: 76.6% met the benchmark in 2019-2020, and this fell to 75% so in 2020-2021.

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: 81.5%
- Benchmark: 81%
- Target: 83%

- In 2019-2020, the benchmark was 80% and the target was 82%. Both were increased because of the achievement of an 83.5% benchmark 2019-2020 and an 82.8% benchmark in 2020-2021.

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: 81.2%
- Benchmark: 82%
- Target: 85%
 - The benchmark and target remain unchanged because of a decline in the final results: 79.8% met the benchmark in 2019-2020, but only 74% did so in 2020-2021.

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: 80%
- Benchmark: 80%
- Target: 82%
 - The benchmark and target remain unchanged because of a decline in the final results: 80.9% met the benchmark in 2019-2020, but only 74.6% did so in 2020-2021.

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: 82.8%
- Benchmark: 80%
- Target: 82%
 - The benchmark and target remain unchanged because of a substantial decline in the final results: 86.1% met the benchmark in 2019-2020, but only 76.7% did so in 2020-2021.

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: 89.1%
- Benchmark: 84%
- Target: 87%
 - The benchmark and target remain unchanged because of a substantial decline in the final results: 92.6% met the benchmark in 2019-2020, but only 77.35% did so in 2020-2021.

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 598 students in the fall semester and 470 in the spring.
- On-line surveys. A total of 604 students in lower-level (100-level) courses and 157 in upper-level (300-400 level) classes took these surveys during the 2020-2021 school year.³

³ For reasons that are unclear, only 92 and 40 students, respectively, took the lower- and upper-level course surveys in the spring. These numbers are quite small in comparison to other semesters.

- 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. Thirteen 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. Ten students took that class, which is taught annually each spring.
- Exit Exam. Given to graduating seniors, of which there were none in the fall and eight 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.

Lower-division (100-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 84%	Benchmark Attained
Upper-division (200- to 400-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 94.25%	Benchmark Attained
HIST 299 survey. Results: 89%	Benchmark Attained
HIST 499 draft paper. Results: 80%	Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained
HIST 499 final paper. Results: 90%	Benchmark Attained
HIST 499 end-of-semester survey. Results: 97%	Benchmark Attained
Average: 89%	<u>Benchmark Attained</u>

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

Lower-division (100-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 81%	Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained
Upper-division (200- to 400-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 88%	Benchmark Attained
HIST 299 survey. Results: 89%	Benchmark Attained
HIST 499 draft paper. Results: 80%	Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained
HIST 499 final paper. Results: 90%	Benchmark Attained
HIST 499 end-of-semester survey. Results: 100%	Benchmark Attained
Average: 88%	<u>Benchmark Attained</u>

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: 81%	Benchmark Attained
Upper-division (200- to 400-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 91.5%	Benchmark Attained
HIST 299 survey. Results: 87%	Benchmark Attained
HIST 299 web assignment. Results: 64%	Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained
HIST 499 draft paper. Results: 60%	Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained
HIST 499 final paper. Results: 75%	Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained
HIST 499 end-of-semester survey. Results: 100%	Benchmark Attained

HIST 299 portfolio. Results: 64%	Benchmark <u>Not Attained</u>
HIST 499 portfolio. Results: 82%	Benchmark Attained
Average: 78.3%	<u>Benchmark Not Attained</u>

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

Lower-division (100-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 85%	Benchmark Attained
Upper-division (200- to 400-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 92.5%	Benchmark Attained
HIST 499 end-of-semester survey. Results: 100%	Benchmark Attained
HIST 499 end-of-semester quiz. Results: 90%	Benchmark Attained
HIST 499 final paper. Results: 90%	Benchmark Attained
Average: 91.5%	<u>Benchmark Attained</u>

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

Lower-division (100-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 81%	Benchmark Attained
Upper-division (200- to 400-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 92%	Benchmark Attained
HIST 299 survey. Results: 87.5%	Benchmark Attained
Course-Level Assessments (Qualitative Analysis). Lower-division (100-level courses) Results: 77.5%	Benchmark <u>Not Attained</u>
Course-Level Assessments (Qualitative Analysis). Upper-division (200- to 400-level courses) Results: 80.1%	Benchmark Attained
HIST 499 draft paper. Results: 60%	Benchmark <u>Not Attained</u>
HIST 499 final paper. Results: 75%	Benchmark <u>Not Attained</u>
HIST 499 end-of-semester survey. Results: 100%	Benchmark Attained
HIST 299 portfolio. Results: 51%	Benchmark <u>Not Attained</u>
HIST 499 portfolio. Results: 76%	Benchmark <u>Not Attained</u>
Average: 78.1%	<u>Benchmark Not Attained</u>

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: 83%	Benchmark Attained
Upper-division (200- to 400-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 91.75%	Benchmark Attained
HIST 299 journal assignment. Results: 62%	Benchmark <u>Not Attained</u>
HIST 499 draft paper. Results: 60%	Benchmark <u>Not Attained</u>
HIST 499 final paper. Results: 75%	Benchmark <u>Not Attained</u>
Exit Exam. Results: 100%	Benchmark Attained
HIST 299 portfolio. Results: 53%	Benchmark <u>Not Attained</u>
HIST 499 portfolio. Results: 75.5%	Benchmark <u>Not Attained</u>
Average: 75%	<u>Benchmark Not Attained</u>

SLO 4.0 The student could effectively write an historical essay.

Lower-division (100-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 71%	Benchmark <u>Not Attained</u>
Upper-division (200- to 400-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 87%	Benchmark Attained
Course-Level Assessments (Writing). Lower-division (100-level courses) Results: 79.4%	Benchmark <u>Not Attained</u>
Course-Level Assessments (Writing). Upper-division (200 to 400-level courses) Results: 79.3%	Benchmark <u>Not Attained</u>
Exit Exam. Results: 97.5%	Benchmark Attained
Average: 82.8%	<u>Benchmark Attained</u>

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: 86.25%	Benchmark Attained
HIST 299 survey. Results: 96%	Benchmark Attained
HIST 299 citations exercise. Results: 70%	Benchmark <u>Not Attained</u>
HIST 499 draft paper. Results: 50%	Benchmark <u>Not Attained</u>
HIST 499 final paper. Results: 70%	Benchmark <u>Not Attained</u>
HIST 499 end-of-semester survey. Results: 97%	Benchmark Attained
Exit Exam. Results: 100%	Benchmark Attained
HIST 299 portfolio. Results: 40%	Benchmark <u>Not Attained</u>
HIST 499 portfolio. Results: 56%	Benchmark <u>Not Attained</u>
Average: 74%	<u>Benchmark Not Attained</u>

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: 81%	Benchmark Attained
Upper-division (200- to 400-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 90%	Benchmark Attained
Course-Level Assessments (Critical Thinking). Lower-division (100-level courses) Results: 76.7%	Benchmark <u>Not Attained</u>
Course-Level Assessments (Critical Thinking). Upper-division (200- to 400-level courses) Results: 91.4%	Benchmark Attained
HIST 299 historiographical assignment. Results: 41%	Benchmark <u>Not Attained</u>
HIST 499 draft paper. Results: 60%	Benchmark <u>Not Attained</u>
HIST 499 final paper. Results: 75%	Benchmark <u>Not Attained</u>
HIST 299 portfolio. Results: 64%	Benchmark <u>Not Attained</u>
HIST 499 portfolio. Results: 82%	Benchmark Attained
Average: 74.6%	<u>Benchmark Not Attained</u>

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: 81%	Benchmark Attained
Upper-division (200- to 400-level courses) on-line survey.	

Results: 90.5%	Benchmark Attained
Course-Level Assessments (Area Knowledge). Lower-division (100-level courses) Results: 78.6%	Benchmark <u>Not Attained</u>
Course-Level Assessments (Area Knowledge). (Upper-division (200- to 400-level courses) Results: 73%	Benchmark <u>Not Attained</u>
HIST 299 essay on human agency. Results: 63%	Benchmark <u>Not Attained</u>
HIST 499 draft paper. Results: 60%	Benchmark <u>Not Attained</u>
HIST 499 final paper. Results: 70%	Benchmark <u>Not Attained</u>
Exit Exam. Results: 97.5%	Benchmark Attained
Average: 76.7%	<u>Benchmark Not Attained</u>

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

Lower-division (100-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 85%	Benchmark Attained
Upper-division (200- to 400-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 91.75%	Benchmark Attained
HIST 499 draft paper. Results: 50%	Benchmark <u>Not Attained</u>
HIST 499 final paper. Results: 60%	Benchmark <u>Not Attained</u>
Exit Exam. Results: 100%	Benchmark Attained
Average: 77.35%	<u>Benchmark Not Attained</u>

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 used portfolios starting in the 2019-2020 school year. 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 less confident insofar as key skills and concepts as those taking upper-level History classes; Gen Ed students also demonstrated less confidence in those skills than they felt a year prior. The attitudinal outcome provided by the survey was confirmed in the Course-Level Assessments. Whether Covid played a part in this decline in confidence is not clear. Furthermore, 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)—were encouraging. In its 2019-2020 IE report, the department discovered mixed results insofar as students applying the skills they acquired in HIST 299 to the major paper they had to write for HIST 499. Looking at the portfolios, the data for 2020-2021 found marked improvement in performance in HIST 499 as compared to HIST 299. This is only the second year the department has used portfolios, so more data will be needed to confirm that students are successfully applying the knowledge they gained in HIST 299 to HIST 499.

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 for the second year in a row 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 some of 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 1.2 The student could demonstrate an awareness of the connections between sources and their historical context.

A comparison of the results of this SLO with the previous two years' IE reports show a gradual decline in the results, with 2020-2021 being the first year where the department did not meet its benchmark. The IE Committee has recommended the following measure to improve the department's outcome:

- Draw clearer connections for students, particularly in survey classes, to make sure that sources, whether assigned or alluded to, are clearly placed within the historical time period in which they appeared. Given that sources that address a particular subject can change in terms of content or tone over the years, making these connections clearer will allow students to see change over time.

- Give an exam or quiz based on primary sources so as to demonstrate how those sources fit within/reflect a particularly historical period.

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

For the first time in the past three years, the department failed to meet this benchmark. The IE Committee has recommended the following measure to improve the department's outcome:

- Encourage instructors to make clearer distinctions between what is narrative in their lectures and assignments, and what is analysis.
- Devote greater attention to essay- and paper-writing so that students understand a paper requires not only narrative but analysis to defend the argument they are trying to make.
- Require students to visit the Writing Center for all History courses.

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 for the second year in a row. 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.

The department barely missed meeting its benchmark for this SLO in 2019-2020 and witnessed a decline in student performance in 2020-2021. 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.
- Encourage instructors to give an assignment devoted partially or fully on footnoting.

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

The department witnessed a decline in student performance with regard to this SLO. To improve its performance on this SLO, the department will:

- Emphasize to students that History is the study of not simply groups or institutions, but of individuals whose decisions and actions many times have far-reaching consequences.
- Make sure students understand that a variety of forces lead to societal change over time, and that by looking at those particular historical periods one can more clearly discern why individuals at those points in time made the decisions and/or took the actions they did.
- Require students to visit the Writing Center for all 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.

The department witnessed a significant decline in student performance with regard to this SLO. In response, the department will:

- Redouble its efforts to make sure students understand the importance of historical chronology. In turn, they will better see that the actions taken by individuals or the events that have taken place have one or more precursors.
- Be clear to students that those precursors can change over time; hence, what may have caused an event to take place at one point in time may not necessarily lead to a similar outcome later, even though the variables themselves may seem analogous.
- Require students to visit the Writing Center for all History courses.

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

It was this SLO where the department witnessed the greatest drop in student performance; more disconcerting, the department had met its benchmark on SLO for the previous two school years. The IE Committee has recommended the following measures to improve the department's outcome:

- Devote additional emphasis to making direct connections between current and past events so that students can understand that what is happening today may have antecedents, the origins of which may trace back generations.
- Carefully make use of analogies so that students can see that the causes and impacts of historical events may provide a guide to understanding the causes and potential ramifications of what is happening today, whether in the United States or abroad.

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