

**History Department  
Program Assessment Plan for History and Social Studies Majors\***

I. Goals for student learning:

1. Development of historical consciousness:
  - a. Expand the student's knowledge of important historical developments and understanding of their significance.
  - b. Movement from a presentist to an historical point of view, and from an ethnocentric to a global world view.
2. Develop historical research and analytical skills, including:
  - a. Ability to locate historical sources (primary and secondary) for student research
  - b. Ability to understand and incorporate historians' interpretations (historiography) into student research papers
  - c. Ability to develop and support/sustain a thesis based on primary sources

II. Description of Assessment Methods

1. Historical Awareness Test (HAT): goal 1

Pre-test will be given to students in 100-level survey courses. Post-test will be given in HIST 495 & 499, and EDU 419. This test assesses goal 1 by asking students to list historically important developments and their significance, and by ascertaining students' knowledge of global/non-Western history. (See attached copy of HAT and scoring rubric.)

2. Research Papers: goal 2

Research papers will be collected from students in HIST 201 (sophomore methods class) and HIST 495 & 499 (capstone seminars). These papers will be used to assess goal 2 by ascertaining students' progress in their ability to do historical research and writing. Instructors in these courses will prepare a report assessing students' strengths and weaknesses in locating historical sources; understanding historians' interpretations (historiography); and developing and supporting a thesis based on primary sources.

III. Time lines for assessment: The History Department will assess one goal each year. During the third year, the results from the two assessments will be compiled into an overall report.

IV. Responsibility for carrying out assessment plan: Rests with the History Department's assessment committee, with assistance from faculty teaching 100-level surveys, HIST 201, HIST 495, HIST 499, and EDU 419.

V. Record-keeping: In addition to distributing assessment reports to relevant parties, they will be kept on file in the History Department office.

VI. Processes for using assessment results to improve learning, and evidence of change:

The history major requires courses in U.S., European, and global/non-Western history. Over the past decade, the history department has focused particularly on globalizing its curriculum by creating an introductory world history survey sequence (HIST 101-102), 200-level world regional civilizations courses, and upper-level courses in global/non-Western history. In

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addition to developing students' knowledge base of key historical developments and an understanding of their historical significance, the department seeks to broaden students' world view from an ethnocentric focus on American history. The department also seeks to instill in its majors a historical consciousness that enables them to understand that the past was qualitatively different from the present, to contextualize historical developments, and to understand historical causation and consequences. All courses designed for history and social studies majors require students to read and analyze the works of historians as well as the primary source documents of history. The two seminars for majors require that students conduct historical research and analysis, using both primary and secondary sources.

The Department of History department expects that student outcomes will improve between taking the Historical Awareness pre- and post-tests and between writing the research papers in HIST 201 and HIST 495/499. Specifically, the department expects that the Historical Awareness test will demonstrate that senior history and social studies majors have increased their knowledge of important historical developments and be better able to explain their significance. In addition, the results of the post-test should show significant movement away from an ethnocentric and toward a more global world view. The department expects that the assessment of research papers will indicate an improvement in students' historical research and analytical skills, as delimited above.

Scores on the Historical Awareness test will indicate to the Department of History how well it is accomplishing its first goal of increasing historical consciousness, and will pinpoint the program's strengths and weaknesses in this area. For instance, if senior majors still have difficulty coming up with historical developments in each major geographic region, the department may reassess the way its global/non-Western courses are taught or consider revising the major's global/non-Western course requirements. The seminar papers, with the instructors' assessments, will provide evidence of the success of HIST 201 and HIST 495/499 in developing students' research and analytical skills, as delimited above. Should significant shortcomings be found, the department may reevaluate these courses. For instance, recent performance of the department's graduate students has indicated a weakness in the area of historiography (understanding and incorporating historians' interpretations). This has led not only to revisions in the graduate curriculum, but to a revision of the undergraduate curriculum for HIST 201, 495, and 499 to place a stronger emphasis on historiography, with the goal of increasing students' proficiency in understanding and incorporating historical interpretations into their research papers.

**\*Note:** This assessment plan is intended for periodic assessment of the department's history curriculum for its two majors. The Department of History also has an NCATE assessment program for its Social Studies Adolescence Education Majors. The assessment plan above constitutes a portion of this NCATE assessment, "Quality and Availability of Curricula." See Department of History, Social Studies Adolescence Education Program Assessment Plan.

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## HISTORICAL AWARENESS TEST

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Entry \_\_\_\_\_ Exit \_\_\_\_\_

List **ten (10)** of the most important events and developments throughout all of human existence, including *at least one* that originated in *each of the geographic areas* noted below. Be as specific as possible; avoid vague references such as 'technology' or 'wars.' After each event/development, briefly explain your rationale for including it (i.e., its historical significance). (Continue on the other side as necessary.)

### **Geographic Areas:**

Europe

The Middle East

Asia

Africa

Latin America

U.S. and/or Canada

Global (a multi-area event)

### Scoring the Historical Awareness Test

1. *Knowledge of important historical developments:* Are the events and developments significant historically? Eliminate events and developments that are (a) mythological; (b) of questionable or negligible historical importance; (c) sub-events of larger events also listed (e.g. Pearl Harbor and World War II); (d) too vague or generic (e.g. ‘technology’ or ‘wars’); and (e) too recent to determine historical significance.

Assign 1 point for each historically important event/development (10 points possible).

2. *Understanding of historical significance:* Does the student understand the significance of each event? Is the rationale listed for each historically reasonable?

Assign 1 point for each reasonable explanation of historical significance (10 points possible).

3. *Movement away from presentism:* Is the list free from presentism? Are there events from periods before the modern era? (10 points possible)

9-10 points	events/developments from ancient, medieval, early modern, & modern eras
7-8 points	events/developments from 3 of the 4 eras above
5-6 points	events/developments from 2 of the 4 eras above
3-4 points	events/developments from only 1 of the 4 eras above
1-2 points	list incomplete, mostly modern events

4. *Movement away from ethnocentrism:* Does the list include historically significant event/developments from each geographic area specified? Does the list include true non-Western events (defined as events in non-Western cultures that did not involve Europeans or Americans as primary participants)? (10 points possible)

9-10 points	events/developments from each area specified; true non-Western events
7-8 points	events/developments from 5 or 6 areas; some true non-Western events
5-6 points	events/developments from 3 or 4 areas; at least one true non-Western event
3-4 points	events/developments from 2 areas; no true non-Western events
1-2 points	events/developments from 1 area; no true non-Western events

Total Points Possible: 40

32-40 points	Exceeds standard
23-31 points	Meets standard
15-22 points	Approaches standard
0-14 points	Does not meet standard