Assessment Plan and Desired Learning Outcomes for the BA in History

Assessment Committee

The Department of History Assessment Committee shall be the Committee of Record for reviewing, implementing, and reporting assessment of the BA in History. The Assessment Committee shall consist of the full membership of the Undergraduate Committee (hereinafter references to the “Assessment Committee” shall refer to the Undergraduate Committee acting as the Assessment Committee).

Desired Learning Outcomes (DLOs)

Students earning the BA in History will:

(1) Display knowledge of fundamental themes and narratives in history. This implies the ability to:

- Discuss diverse time periods, peoples, situations, and societies;
- Perceive past events and issues in an appropriate historical context;
- Comprehend the interplay of change and continuity;
- Grasp the complexity of historical causation;
- Appreciate the nature of judgments about the past;
- Read critically to differentiate fact and conjecture, evidence and assertion, and thereby to frame useful questions.

(2) Conduct original historical research. This implies the ability to:

- (A) Design analytical and historiographically significant research questions;
- (B) Research and analyze historical evidence from both primary and secondary sources;
- (C) Construct an interpretation that answers the questions posed in the project; situate the interpretation in the historiography of the topic being analyzed.

(3) Communicate historical knowledge and explanations to others. This implies the ability to:

- (A) Present a historical interpretation in a well-organized, readable, and logical manner;
- (B) Present a historical interpretation with a thesis that is clear, well-argued, and supported by evidence

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1 This document was created by Prof. Sandy Peacock, Prof. Michelle Haberland, Prof. Jon Bryant, and Prof. Bill Allison. It draws from assessment concepts from various history programs, including Illinois State University, the University of Baltimore, Duke University, and others. The Department gratefully acknowledges the work of these programs in developing model assessment plans.
• (C) Follow proper rules of grammar, syntax, word choice;
• (D) Follow the accepted style of the profession (Turabian);
• (E) Address the appropriate audience with a consistent point of view

Assessment Points

The Assessment Points provide an opportunity for analysis of beginning majors, graduating majors, and majors across the program. Thus, the program is assessed via both individual courses (HIST 2630 and HIST 4635) and cumulatively through the portfolio.

• HIST 2630 Historical Methods

This course introduces the student to the methodologies and techniques of historical research and writing. It is required for all history majors. The student produces a written product, generally a research paper or historiographic paper. Instructors for each section of HIST 2630 will complete an assessment form (rubric) for their entire class.

• HIST 4635 Senior Seminar

This course serves as a capstone course in which students engage in extensive research in historical sources and literature relating to a specific problem or topic. It is required of all history majors. Emphasis is placed on the individual preparation of research papers. Instructors for each HIST 4635 section will complete an assessment form (rubric) for their entire class.

• Senior Portfolio

The purpose of the review is not to judge any individual student, nor is it to judge any individual faculty member’s teaching or grading methods or assignments. The purpose is to reexamine student work in history courses to determine if as a group they are developing desired skills and level of understanding.

The Assessment Committee will examine 25% of the portfolios of graduates for each academic year.

History majors must submit the following to be included in their advisement file in the History Department Office prior to graduation:

• HIST 2630 Historical Methods paper - Students are encouraged to take the methods course as soon as they declare the major, and the completed paper will become part of their file. This paper will provide a “base line” for judging future progress.
• Upper-Division History materials – Students are required to submit a sample of each of the following from an upper-division history course:
  ▪ Writing sample (book review, reaction paper, etc.)
  ▪ Research sample (research paper)
  ▪ Exam sample (essay exams)
- HIST 4635 Senior Seminar paper - The Senior Seminar paper affords useful comparison with the earlier methods paper. Ideally, students should show considerable progress in clarity, critical analysis, and sophistication of research.
- Senior Exit Survey (completed by students at the conclusion of their HIST 4635 Senior Seminar)

Assessment Map

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSESSMENT POINTS</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Research</th>
<th>Communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HIST 2630</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIST 4635</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Portfolio</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assessment Rubric

The Assessment Rubric will be used for HIST 2630, HIST 4635, and the Portfolio Review (see Appendix A).

The Citation and Bibliography Rubric will also be used for HIST 2630, HIST 4635, and the Portfolio Review (see Appendix B).

Indirect Assessments

- Senior Exit Survey (see Appendix C)

Seniors will be complete the Exit Survey as part of requirements for the HIST 4635 Senior Seminar and the survey will be included in the student portfolios (See Senior Portfolio under Assessment Points above).

Evidence of Changes or Improvements Made Based on Analysis of Results

At the conclusion of the academic year, the Department Assessment Committee will collate and review the results of that academic year’s assessment data: the summary of HIST 2630 and HIST 4635 data, the summary of the portfolio review, and the opinions expressed senior exit surveys. The Committee will reexamine outcomes and standards on any area that which in its judgment shows significant evidence of weakness or inadequacy and recommend changes to the Department. The Assessment Committee’s summaries of the previous year's results will be reviewed by the Assessment Committee every three years to examine emerging patterns of strength and weakness, satisfaction and dissatisfaction. The Department as a whole will have access to the Assessment Committee’s reports and will act on the Committee’s recommendations. The Assessment Committee must complete its report by October 15 of each year. The Chair of the Assessment Committee will be responsible for uploading appropriate data and reports to the University’s electronic assessment platform.

Annual Report to CLASS Dean

The Department Assessment Committee will submit a brief report to the CLASS Dean’s Office based upon the annual review mentioned above by October 15 of each year.
## Appendix A – Assessment Rubric for HIST 2630, HIST 4635, and Portfolio Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcome</th>
<th>Unacceptable</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SLO 1:</strong> Display Knowledge of Fundamental Themes and Narratives in History</td>
<td>Student work does not understand fundamental themes and narratives</td>
<td>Student work has only a poor or superficial understanding of fundamental themes and narratives</td>
<td>Student work adequately understands fundamental themes and narratives with some insight</td>
<td>Student work understands fundamental themes and narratives with clarity and significant insight</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: SLO 1 is evaluated holistically based on the entirety of the student artifact*

| SLO2(A): Design analytic and historiographically significant research questions (Pursuing a substantial or compelling inquiry) | Student’s paper does not include research questions | Student’s paper includes research questions that are simplistic, superficial, insignificant, and/or irrelevant to the historiography | Student’s paper includes analytic research questions that are relevant to the historiography; questions may demonstrate a lower level of analytical skill | Student’s paper includes analytic research question that are significant to the historiography and demonstrate a higher level of analytical skill |

<p>| SLO2(B): Research and analyze historical evidence from both primary and secondary sources. (Identifying, evaluating, and using credible evidence or relevant examples) | Student’s paper makes no use of appropriate primary and/or secondary sources | Student’s paper makes limited use of appropriate primary and secondary sources but does not analyze them | Student’s paper makes use of appropriate primary and secondary sources and makes some attempt to analyze them; analysis may not be fully developed | Student’s paper makes extensive use of appropriate primary and secondary sources and presents a well-developed analysis of those sources |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcome</th>
<th>Unacceptable</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SLO2(C):</strong> Construct an interpretation that answers the questions posed in the project; Situate the interpretation in the historiography of the topic being analyzed  <em>(Communicating a clearly defined purpose)</em></td>
<td>Student’s paper presents no interpretation and does not address appropriate historiography</td>
<td>Student’s paper presents a historical interpretation that is poorly and inadequately developed and/or does not address the research questions posed in the project; does not situate the interpretation in appropriate historiography</td>
<td>Student’s paper presents an interpretation that addresses the research questions and attempts to situate the interpretation in appropriate historiography; interpretation may not be fully developed</td>
<td>Student’s paper presents a well-developed interpretation that answers the research questions and situates the interpretation in appropriate historiography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SLO3(A):</strong> Presents a historical interpretation in a well-organized, readable, and logical manner. <em>(Organizing ideas and information consistent with the purpose)</em></td>
<td>Student’s paper is disorganized, unreadable, and illogical</td>
<td>Student’s paper is poorly organized and difficult to read</td>
<td>Student’s paper is readable and logical; may contain minor errors in organization</td>
<td>Student’s paper is well-organized, readable, and logical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SLO3(B):</strong> Thesis is clear, well-argued, and supported by evidence</td>
<td>Student has no thesis</td>
<td>The thesis is fragmentary, imprecise, or merely an opinion; thesis is not consistently advanced</td>
<td>The thesis is a clear assertion and most aspects of the argument advance it</td>
<td>The thesis is a clear assertion and the argument consistently advances it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Outcome</td>
<td>Unacceptable</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>Adequate</td>
<td>Target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>SLO3(C):</em> Follows proper rules of grammar, syntax, and word choice. <em>(Adhering to acceptable mechanical, structural, and format style guidelines appropriate to the discipline and purpose)</em></td>
<td>Student’s paper does not follow rules of grammar and syntax and/or has poor word choice</td>
<td>Student’s paper includes numerous errors in grammar, syntax or word choice</td>
<td>Student’s paper includes minor errors in grammar syntax, or word choice</td>
<td>Student’s paper includes few or no errors in grammar, syntax, or word choice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>SLO3(D):</em> Follows the accepted style of the profession <em>(Turabian)</em></td>
<td><em>EVALUATED BY SEPARATE RUBRIC</em> <em>(Appendix B)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>SLO3(E):</em> Addresses the appropriate audience with a consistent point of view <em>(Understanding of Audience)</em></td>
<td>Student’s paper is inappropriate for the audience or the point of view is unclear</td>
<td>Student’s paper addresses the audience on an inappropriate level or reveals some confusion about point of view</td>
<td>Student’s paper addresses the appropriate audience at the appropriate level and with a point of view, but has some lapses</td>
<td>Student’s paper addresses the appropriate audience at the appropriate level and with a point of view, with few or no lapses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B: Rubric for Citation and Bibliography

SLO 3(D): “Follows the accepted style of the profession (Turabian)”

**CITATION:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unacceptable</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student uses neither footnotes nor endnotes.</td>
<td>Student consistently employs incorrect placement of information, according to Turabian/Chicago Manual of Style.</td>
<td>Student uses mostly correct placement of information, according to Turabian/Chicago Manual of Style.</td>
<td>Student correctly places the information in footnotes or endnotes, including first vs. last names, title, publication information, and (where required) page numbers, according to Turabian/Chicago Manual of Style.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student uses neither footnotes nor endnotes.</td>
<td>Student consistently employs incorrect abbreviations in second and subsequent citations, according to Turabian/Chicago Manual of Style.</td>
<td>Student uses mostly correct abbreviations in second and subsequent citations, according to Turabian/Chicago Manual of Style.</td>
<td>Student knows how to create both first and subsequent citation foot-/endnotes, according to Turabian/Chicago Manual of Style.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student uses neither footnotes nor endnotes.</td>
<td>Student consistently employs incorrect punctuation of footnotes or endnotes, according to Turabian/Chicago Manual of Style.</td>
<td>Student uses mostly correct punctuation of footnotes or endnotes, according to Turabian/Chicago Manual of Style.</td>
<td>Student employs the correct punctuation of footnotes or endnotes, including parentheses, commas vs. periods, colons, underlining or italics, and quotation marks, according to Turabian/Chicago Manual of Style.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B (continued)

BIBLIOGRAPHY: for History 2630 (Historical Methods) and History 4635 (Senior Seminar)

No Bibliography _____ (Unacceptable Paper)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unacceptable</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student does not distinguish primary and secondary sources.</td>
<td>Student does not distinguish primary &amp; secondary sources and/or does not format according to Turabian/Chicago Manual of Style.</td>
<td>Student distinguishes primary &amp; secondary sources and mostly formats according to Turabian/Chicago Manual of Style.</td>
<td>Student distinguishes primary &amp; secondary sources and formats according to Turabian/Chicago Manual of Style.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix C: Senior Exit Survey

Senior Exit Questionnaire
Georgia Southern University Department of History

Please circle the number that best describes your experience as a history major at Georgia Southern University.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MY HISTORY DEGREE PROGRAM:</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No Comment</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Helped me to recognize and understand important historical concepts, issues, and events.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Improved my ability to communicate more clearly and persuasively.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Helped me to better understand major factors that have shaped the societal values and institutions of many cultures in the world.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Taught me to conduct basic historical research, evaluate the evidence, and synthesize the results.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Faculty and Facilities:
(5) My history advisor was helpful and available when needed. 5 4 3 2 1
(6) The history department’s facilities, including the building, quality and space, quantity and quality of maps audio-visual aids, etc, are in excellent condition.  
(7) The attitude of the History Faculty toward students is good. 
(8) The overall quality of the History Program is what I expected.

What do you think was the most valuable thing about your history major?

What could we have done to make your history major more valuable or useful to you?

Do you have specific plans for after graduation?

Employment
(What type, place)

Graduate study
(where, what field)

Professional school
(law, business, etc.; where?)

Travel
Department of History
Georgia Southern University
Alumnae Data Form
(to be completed separately from the Senior Exit Survey)

Name: ______________________________________________________

Date of Graduation:___________________________________________

Mailing Address:
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

Email address: ________________________________________________

Employment/Graduate School:_____________________________________

Would you be willing to talk with undergraduate history majors in the future? _____________