

Annual/Biennial Program Assessment Report

Academic Year Assessed: 2022-2023
College: CLS
Department: History-Philosophy (History)
Submitted by: Michael Reidy

Undergraduate Assessment reports are to be submitted annually. The report deadline is October 15th.

Graduate Assessment reports are to be submitted biennially. The report deadline is October 15th.

Program(s) Assessed

List all majors (including each option), minors, and certificates that are included in this assessment:

Majors: History-History, History-Teaching, History-SETS

Minors: History, Museum Studies

Have you reviewed the most recent Annual Program Assessment Report submitted and Assessment and Outcomes Committee feedback? (please contact Assistant Provost Deborah Blanchard if you need a copy of either one).

YES

The Assessment Report should contain the following elements, which are outlined in this template and includes additional instructions and information. [Additional instructions and information should be deleted from final reports.](#)

1. Past Assessment Summary.
2. Action Research Question.
3. Assessment Plan, Schedule, and Data Source(s).
4. What Was Done.
5. What Was Learned.
6. How We Responded.
7. Closing the Loop.

Sample reports and guidance can be found at:

https://www.montana.edu/provost/assessment/program_assessment.html



- 1. Past Assessment Summary.** Briefly summarize the findings from the last assessment report conducted related to the PLOs being assessed this year. Include any findings that influenced this cycle's assessment approach. Alternatively, reflect on the program assessment conducted last year, and explain how that impacted or informed any changes made to this cycle's assessment plan.

Our assessment of the 2021/22 academic year prompted a valuable discussion within our department's history faculty relating to how we incorporate the teaching of other perspectives into our writing. This dovetails well with efforts to get students to provide a more thorough review of the "historiography," i.e. the state of the field regarding a particular topic under review.

- 2. Action Research Question.** What question are you seeking to answer in this cycle's assessment? *Note: Research questions should be meaningful (focus on an area you need to know the answer to), relatable (tied to program goals), and measurable. Focus on: What will we be able to improve on if we answer this question? The question should be tied to the PLOs. Formulate the question so it is specific to an observable action – not on something that is difficult to measure. E.g., If you have a PLO related to students developing problem-solving skills. An actionable research question could be: Can students apply problem-solving steps?*

Our main action research question is: are our students learning how to write about history in a meaningful, organized, and coherent manner?

More specifically, these were the learning outcomes that we investigated for the 2022/2023 academic year:

MINOR LEARNING OUTCOME 1 – Our minors will have acquired an introductory knowledge of Western Civilization, U.S. History, and one area of World History

MAJOR LEARNING OUTCOME 1 - Our graduates will be able to present a clear thesis statement.

MAJOR LEARNING OUTCOME 2- Our graduates will be able to distinguish between primary and secondary sources

3. Assessment Plan, Schedule, and Data Source(s).

- a) Please provide a multi-year assessment schedule that will show when all program learning outcomes will be assessed, and by what criteria (data). *Note: This schedule can be adjusted as needed. Attempt to assess all PLOs every three years. You may use the table provided, or you may delete and use a different format.*

Please provide a multi-year assessment schedule that will show when all program learning outcomes will be assessed, and by what criteria (data). (You may use the table provided, or you may delete and use a different format).

		12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	24-25
History Major Los		1, 6	2, 3, 4, 5	1, 6	2, 3	1, 6	4, 5	2, 3	1, 2	3, 6	4, 5	1, 2	3, 6
History Minor Los			1, 2, 3	1	2	1	3		1	2	3	1	2

**Data sources can be items such as randomly selected student essays or projects, specifically designed exam questions, student presentations*

- b) What are the threshold values for which your program demonstrates student achievement? *Note: Example provided in the table should be deleted before submission.*

Threshold Values		
PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOME	Threshold Value	Data Source(s)*
<i>Example: 6) Communicate in written form about fundamental and modern microbiological concepts</i>	<i>The threshold value for this outcome is for 75% of assessed students to score</i>	<i>Randomly selected student essays</i>

	above 2 on a 1-4 scoring rubric.	
SEE ATTACHED: AT END OF DOCUMENT, pp. 10-14		

Data sources should be examples of **direct evidence of student learning: specifically designed exam questions, written work, performances, presentations, projects (using a program-specific rubric – not a course grading rubric); scores and pass rates on licensure exams that assess key learning goals; observations of student skill or behavior; summaries classroom response systems; student reflections.*

***Indirect evidence** of student learning includes course grades, grade distributions, assignment grades, retention and graduation rates, alumni perceptions, and questions on end-of-course evaluations forms related to the course rather than the instructor. These may provide information for identifying areas of learning that need more direct assessment but should NOT be used as primary sources for direct evidence of student learning.*

4. What Was Done.

- a) Was the completed assessment consistent with the program’s assessment plan? If not, please explain the adjustments that were made.

YES

- b) How were data collected and analyzed and by whom? Please include method of collection and sample size.

The chair of the history assessment committee contacted professors from the classes that were chosen to assist with assessment. The committee requested 10 papers from the Capstone, and 10 papers

from a 100-level class. Two learning outcomes (4 and 5) were assessed for the Capstone papers, one learning outcome (3) was assessed in the papers from the 100-level class. This is consistent with the data we have been collecting since 2013.

All three members of the history assessment committee read all twenty papers and scored them individually according to the following four categories: excellent, good, acceptable, and unacceptable (for definitions regarding what constitutes these grades for each category, see the document attached to the end of this one). The committee members then convened and reported to one another the total number of papers they found to fall under each category, with the committee chair keeping score. As there were 10 Capstone papers and 3 reviewers, for the Capstone there is a total of 30 scores. For the 100-level class, meanwhile, there is a total of 30 scores (10 papers x 3 reviewers). In cases in which the quality of assessed learning outcomes was found to be “borderline” between two categories, the score was split (0.5 per category) between the two categories.

See attached rubrics for major LOs 1 and 2, and minor LO 1 [at end of this document, pp. 10-14]

- c) Please provide a rubric that demonstrates how your data were evaluated. *Note: Rubrics are program-specific NOT course grading rubrics. Example provided below should be deleted before submission – your rubric may be very different; it just needs to explain the criteria used for evaluating the student artifacts as they relate to the PLOs being assessed.*

See attached (pp. 10-14) rubrics for major LOs 1 and 2, and minor LO

5. What Was Learned.

- a) Based on the analysis of the data, and compared to the threshold values established, what was learned from the assessment?

Our department assesses different learning outcomes each year, and—by going back and looking at previous years' assessments, we can see that some of these learning outcomes are taught more widely and systematically than others. The minor and major learning outcomes for this year happened to be drawn from more fundamental aspects of teaching history writing, which accounts in part for the quite high scores this year.

- b) What areas of strength in the program were identified from this assessment process?

This review teaches us that, with respect to providing an introductory knowledge in our 100-level classes, and teaching our majors to use a clear thesis and distinguish between primary and secondary sources, our instructors are doing a satisfactory job.

- c) What areas were identified that either need improvement or could be improved in a different way from this assessment process?

While our majors are doing a good to excellent job of providing a thesis statement in their writing, more development of their introductions—beyond the thesis statement—is still desirable.

Here are the scores for the 2022-2023 academic year:

MINOR

LEARNING OUTCOME 1 – Our minors will have acquired an introductory knowledge of Western Civilization, U.S. History, and one area of World History

Excellent 63% (19 out of 30 scores)

Good	37% (11/30)
Acceptable	0% (0/30)
Unacceptable	0% (0/30)

Total “Acceptable” and better: 100%. This result surpasses the goal of 75%.

MAJOR

MAJOR LEARNING OUTCOME 1: Our graduates will be able to present a clear thesis statement.

Excellent	53% (16 out of 30 scores)
Good	30% (9/30)
Acceptable	17% (5/30)
Unacceptable	0% (0/30)

Total “Acceptable” and better: 100%. This result surpasses the goal of 75%.

MAJOR LEARNING OUTCOME 2- Our graduates will be able to distinguish between primary and secondary sources

Excellent:	47% (14 out of 30 scores)
Good:	37% (11/30)
Acceptable:	16% (5/30)
Unacceptable:	0% (0/30)

Total “Acceptable” and better: 100%. This result surpasses the goal of 75%.

6. How We Responded.

- Describe how “What Was Learned” was communicated to the department, or program faculty. How did faculty discussions re-imagine new ways program assessment might

contribute to program growth/improvement/innovation beyond the bare minimum of achieving program learning objectives through assessment activities conducted at the course level?

On October 4, 2023, our department had a meeting where our assessment process, and in particular our department's assessment of writing, were discussed at length (approximately 40 minutes). At this meeting I emphasized that, beyond the bare minimum of achieving program learning objectives, we should be challenging ourselves to do better with respect to the teaching of writing. We have scheduled a future meeting to focus specifically upon writing, and have decided to hold a session in which we look at and discuss one another's syllabi. Another proposal, to be discussed at an upcoming meeting of our undergraduate program committee, involves specifying which writing skills will be emphasized in lower-division and upper-division courses, respectively.

- b) How are the results of this assessment informing changes to enhance student learning in the program?

As a department, we are committed to better clarifying what aspects of writing will be taught, something which has traditionally been left up to individual professors. However, one result of this practice has been a significant variation regarding the degree to which formal writing has been taught in our classes. Therefore, steps will be taken to identify certain aspects of formal writing that will be taught in all classes according to their level.

- c) If information outside of this assessment is informing programmatic change, please describe that.

NA

- d) What support and resources (e.g. workshops, training, etc.) might you need to make these adjustments?

We will be holding meetings, described above, and plan to hold a workshop to facilitate the comparison and discussion of our courses' syllabi.

7. Closing the Loop(s). Reflect on the program learning outcomes, how they were assessed in the previous cycle (refer to #1 of the report), and what was learned in this cycle. What action will be taken to improve student learning objectives going forward?

a) In reviewing the last report that assessed the PLO(s) in this assessment cycle, what changes proposed were implemented and will be measured in future assessment reports?

As our assessment plan stands, we are consistently meeting our threshold. Our review process this year will help us to identify more specificity where and how we can improve our program.

b) Have you seen a change in student learning based on other program adjustments made in the past? Please describe the adjustments made and subsequent changes in student learning.

The quality of the writing in our department remains high, yet we are not resting on our laurels. Despite the fact that 100% of both the lower-division and upper-division papers were scored as “acceptable” or better, we feel that these annual discussions about writing are making our department stronger. Our department syllabus workshop, the organization of which has resulted from the assessment process, will benefit the future teaching of writing in our classes.

Next Steps:

1) Submit report to programassessment@montana.edu

2) Upload report to Department website. Reach out to University Information Technology for support related to CMS or website management.

**** Threshold value: At least 75% of students will be rated “Acceptable” or higher on every category of the scoring rubrics for both major and minor.**

LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT RUBRICS

MAJOR LEARNING OUTCOMES (History/SETS)

- 2. be able to present a clear thesis statement
- 3. be able to distinguish between primary and secondary sources
- 4. be able to marshal evidence from both primary and secondary sources to support an argument
- 5. be able to communicate effectively
- 6. be able to recognize that historical events are subject to multiple interpretations
- 7. be able to cite sources according to the conventions of the discipline.

MAJOR LEARNING OUTCOME 1 - Our graduates will be able to present a clear thesis statement.

	<p>Unacceptable</p> <p>There is no recognizable thesis or it is unintelligible due to grammatical errors.</p> <p>Unacceptable</p>	<p>Acceptable</p> <p>There is a thesis statement that takes a position on an arguable point, but it may not be fully developed. It is largely free of grammatical errors.</p> <p>Acceptable</p>	<p>Good</p> <p>There is a thesis statement that takes a clear position on an arguable point. It is written in grammatically correct language. It demonstrates an effort to interpret a historical phenomenon.</p> <p>Good</p>	<p>Excellent</p> <p>There is a thesis statement that is original and/or creative in its presentation of an argument about a historical phenomenon. It is forcefully or persuasively presented in well-written language. It previews the argumentative line of the essay and the evidence that will be used.</p> <p>Excellent</p>
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MAJOR LEARNING OUTCOME 2 - Our graduates will be able to distinguish between primary and secondary sources

	<p>Unacceptable</p> <p>the paper used only secondary sources with no sense that original research requires primary materials</p> <p>Unacceptable</p>	<p>Acceptable</p> <p>the paper demonstrated the use of primary and secondary sources but without notable distinction</p> <p>Acceptable</p>	<p>Good</p> <p>there is an embedded understanding of the difference between types of sources</p> <p>Good</p>	<p>Excellent</p> <p>there is an explicit discussion of the nature of sources used in the paper</p> <p>Excellent</p>
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MAJOR LEARNING OUTCOME 3 - Our graduates will be able to marshal evidence from both primary and secondary sources to support an argument

	<p>Unacceptable</p> <p>makes a claim but doesn't have convincing evidence</p> <p>Unacceptable</p>	<p>Acceptable</p> <p>makes a connection between a claim and a source, but uses limited sources, is overly dependent on a single source without explanation</p> <p>Acceptable</p>	<p>Good</p> <p>makes a connection between a claim and source materials, but does not contextualize the source</p> <p>Good</p>	<p>Excellent</p> <p>makes a clear connection between a claim and source material and uses more than one kind of material to support that claim, sometimes with a comment on the nature of the evidence</p> <p>Excellent</p>
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MAJOR LEARNING OUTCOME 4 – Our graduates will be able to communicate effectively

	<p>Unacceptable</p> <p>has no argument; is poorly organized; is riddled with grammatical errors</p> <p>Unacceptable</p>	<p>Acceptable</p> <p>organizes essay with introduction, explanatory body and conclusion; paragraph are not always clear; and argument wanders about</p> <p>Acceptable</p>	<p>Good</p> <p>organizes essay with introduction, explanatory body and conclusion; has paragraphs with clear topic sentences, is grammatically correct and virtually error free</p> <p>Good</p>	<p>Excellent</p> <p>organizes essay with introduction, explanatory body and conclusion; has paragraphs with clear topic sentences, is grammatically correct and virtually error free, and shows evidence of a “voice” of their own and some stylistic flair</p> <p>Excellent</p>
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MAJOR LEARNING OUTCOME 5 – Our graduates will be able to recognize that historical events are subject to multiple interpretations

	<p>Unacceptable</p> <p>does not show any understanding that the past may be subject to interpretation</p> <p>Unacceptable</p>	<p>Acceptable</p> <p>acknowledges that the event under study is subject to multiple interpretations but adheres to only one interpretation without serious consideration of other points of view</p> <p>Acceptable</p>	<p>Good</p> <p>acknowledges that the event under study is subject to multiple interpretations and attempts to use evidence from sources to demonstrate those interpretations</p> <p>Good</p>	<p>Excellent</p> <p>recognizes that the event/theory/phenomenon under study is subject to multiple interpretations and suggest the lines of competing interpretations, referring to a variety of texts or contradictory sources</p> <p>Excellent</p>
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MAJOR LEARNING OUTCOME 6 - Our graduates will be able to cite sources according to the conventions of the discipline.

<p>Unacceptable</p> <p>Incomplete bibliographic information that does not permit traceability; so many errors in style and punctuation as to make information unusable.</p> <p>Unacceptable</p>	<p>Acceptable</p> <p>Citations have full bibliographic information that permits traceability; there may be inconsistency in style and errors of punctuation.</p> <p>Acceptable</p>	<p>Good</p> <p>Citations are consistent, with full bibliographic information that permits traceability; there may be errors of punctuation.</p> <p>Good</p>	<p>Excellent</p> <p>Citations meet journal standards of accuracy, consistency and punctuation.</p> <p>Excellent</p>
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MINOR LEARNING OUTCOMES (History/ History Teaching)

1. have acquired an introductory knowledge of Western Civilization, U.S. History, and one area of World History
2. be able to marshal historical evidence from assigned texts, which may include primary and secondary sources, to support an argument
3. be able to communicate historical ideas effectively

MINOR LEARNING OUTCOME 1 – Our minors will have acquired an introductory knowledge of Western Civilization, U.S. History, and one area of World History

<p>Unacceptable</p> <p>Demonstrates no or very limited knowledge and understanding of the subject matter (Western Civilization, U.S. History, or World History, per selected class)</p> <p>Unacceptable</p>	<p>Acceptable</p> <p>Demonstrates a basic, rudimentary knowledge and understanding of the subject matter (Western Civilization, U.S. History, or World History, per selected class)</p> <p>Acceptable</p>	<p>Good</p> <p>Demonstrates more than a basic knowledge and understanding of the subject matter (Western Civilization, U.S. History, or World History, per selected class)</p> <p>Good</p>	<p>Excellent</p> <p>Demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the subject matter (Western Civilization, U.S. History, or World History, per selected class)</p> <p>Excellent</p>
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MINOR LEARNING OUTCOME 2 – Our minors will be able to marshal historical evidence from assigned texts, which may include primary and secondary sources, to support an argument

	<p>Unacceptable</p> <p>makes a claim but doesn't have convincing evidence</p> <p>Unacceptable</p>	<p>Acceptable</p> <p>makes a connection between a claim and a source, but uses limited sources, is overly dependent on a single source without explanation</p> <p>Acceptable</p>	<p>Good</p> <p>makes a connection between a claim and source materials, but does not contextualize the source</p> <p>Good</p>	<p>Excellent</p> <p>makes a clear connection between a claim and source material and uses more than one kind of material to support that claim, sometimes with a comment on the nature of the evidence</p> <p>Excellent</p>
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MINOR LEARNING OUTCOME 3 - Our minors will be able to communicate historical ideas effectively

	<p>Unacceptable</p> <p>Demonstrates no or very limited ability to communicate historical ideas</p> <p>Unacceptable</p>	<p>Acceptable</p> <p>Demonstrates a basic, rudimentary ability to communicate historical ideas</p> <p>Acceptable</p>	<p>Good</p> <p>Demonstrates more than a basic ability to communicate historical ideas</p> <p>Good</p>	<p>Excellent</p> <p>Clearly and effectively communicates historical ideas</p> <p>Excellent</p>
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