Georgia Southern University
Department of History
ASSESSMENT PLAN for the BA in HISTORY
Adopted March 2010, Revised August 2010, Revised October 2010

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:

- 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.

- Conduct original historical research. This implies the ability to:
  - Design analytical and historiographically significant research questions;
  - Research and analyze historical evidence from both primary and secondary sources;
  - Construct an interpretation that answers the questions posed in the project;
  - Situate the interpretation in the historiography of the topic being analyzed.

- Communicate historical knowledge and explanations to others. This implies the ability to:
  - Present a historical interpretation in a well-organized, readable, and logical manner;
  - Follow proper rules of grammar and syntax, and accepted style of the profession (Turabian).

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.
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).

Indirect Assessments

- Senior Exit Survey (see Appendix B)

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>Unsatisfactory</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Display knowledge of fundamental themes and narratives in history</strong></td>
<td>Few relevant themes, narratives, information, and details identified, described, and used. Shows little awareness of where subject matter fits among time periods, peoples, situations, and societies. Information largely inaccurate or irrelevant.</td>
<td>Relevant themes, narratives, information, and details adequately identified, described, and used. Shows adequate awareness of where subject matter fits among time periods, peoples, situations, and societies. Minor factual inaccuracies.</td>
<td>Relevant themes, narratives, information, and details commendably identified, described, and used. Shows commendable awareness of where subject matter fits among time periods, peoples, situations, and societies. No factual inaccuracies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Conduct original research</strong></td>
<td>Research design and methodology poses problems for subject. Less than adequate use of sources. Little use of historical methods to analyze evidence and arguments and draw conclusions. Little analysis appropriate to time period, people, situation, or society under consideration.</td>
<td>Research design and methodology acceptable for subject. Acceptable use of sources. Acceptable use of historical method to analyze evidence and arguments and draw conclusions. Analysis acceptably appropriate to time period, people, situation, or society under consideration.</td>
<td>Research design and methodology highly appropriate for subject. Strong use of sources. Strong use of historical method to analyze evidence and arguments and draw conclusions. Analysis highly appropriate to time period, people, situation, or society under consideration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Communicate historical knowledge and explanations to others</strong></td>
<td>Little knowledge and few explanations presented in a way that logically introduces and develops the student's research and analysis. Presentation insufficiently organized, lacking clarity and focus. Notable lapses in grammar, syntax, sentence structure, or use of Turabian.</td>
<td>Most knowledge and explanations adequately presented in a way that logically introduces and develops the student's research and analysis. Presentation sufficiently organized, clear, and focused. Adequate grammar, syntax, and use of Turabian.</td>
<td>Most knowledge and explanations presented in a commendable way that logically introduces and develops the student's research and analysis. Presentation well-organized and commendably clear and focused. Skillful grammar and syntax, and proper use of Turabian.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B: 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. 5 4 3 2 1
(7) The attitude of the History Faculty toward students is good. 5 4 3 2 1
(8) The overall quality of the History Program is what I expected. 5 4 3 2 1
Senior Exit Questionnaire Page 2

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 ___________________________________________________________________

Other ____________________________________________________________________
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? _____________