

## 2011-12 Program Assessment Update

Department & Program: \_\_\_\_\_ History BA

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_

As one part of ongoing program assessment at Eastern Washington University, each department is asked to report on assessment results for *each* program for *at least one* Student Learning Outcome this year. Use this electronic file to report on your program assessment for AY 2011-12, and please submit it to both your Dean and to Undergraduate Studies by Nov. 1, 2012. The following definitions explain the assessment information you'll enter in the table below:

1. **Student Learning Outcome:** The student performance or learning objective as published either in the catalog or elsewhere in your department literature.
  2. **Strategy or method of measurement:** Mode and process through which student performance data was gathered. Examples: embedded test questions in a course or courses, portfolios, in-class activities, standardized test scores, case studies, analysis of written projects, etc. Additional detailed description could describe the use of rubrics, etc. as part of the assessment process.
  3. **Observations gathered from data:** The findings and analysis of those findings from the above strategies.
  4. **Actions recommended based on observations:** Course (activities or content) or program changes recommended.
  5. **Plan and timeline for taking action:** How the recommended actions will be implemented, and in what timeframe.
  6. **Overall evaluation of progress on objective:** The extent to which the student learning outcome is still valid and the assessment of it is producing important and meaningful data.
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1. Student learning outcome:  
Display an ability to do original research in library, archival and electronic resources
  2. Strategy or method of measurement:  
Research paper requiring that students thoroughly understand factual material of research, consider how facts have been treated by other historians/ scholars, analyze material critically, develop perspective/argument based on the process, and produce a written essay, in the appropriate style, synthesizing their work. Essays were graded on a 30-point rubric that assessed their critical analysis and factual data, their ability to state it well, their use of proper style, and their ability to assess and utilize valid source material.

3. Observations gathered from data:

Class average was 22/30 (73%) and several students did extremely well, with 15% of the class achieving a score of 90% or above. Several students did poorly, but it seemed that a majority of the lower scores were due to a lack of effort and/or lack of attendance. In fact, several of them indicated as much in their essays, e.g. "I'm sorry this essay is so bad. Even though I really liked the topic, I didn't make the time to work on it." Of the 9 students who scored lower than a 60%, 4 of them had poor attendance and equally poor scores on other class assignments, i.e. quizzes and class discussion days. Taking this into account, leads me to believe that the majority of the students were well equipped to meet the requirements of the assignment by showing up to class and doing the required reading. 33 out of the 47 students (roughly 70%), who turned in a final research essay, received a 70% or above.

4. Actions recommended based on observations:

Two specific criticisms: 1. Students selected their topics, so long as they fit our time-frame and geographical/ historical framework and was approved by the professor. The reason for this was to allow them to pick a topic they felt passionate about or were interested in, which I believe leads to better work. However, a few of the students selected topics that were beyond their abilities. Even though students were warned of possible pitfalls and urged to consider different topics, they were not restricted from choosing topics because of their difficulty. Nevertheless some students were considerably crippled by their selection. Others chose topics far below their abilities and below the scope of the assignment. Students were warned of this pitfall, but those who chose to stick with these topics were obviously unable to turn them into the type of essay that the assignment required. 2. This instrument isn't objective. However, the course includes an objective-grading component, i.e. weekly quizzes, which demonstrate whether or not students are grasping the regurgitate-type of material. This type of evaluation was not included in the instrument. Even so, the grades correspond quite similarly to the grades of the essays.

5. Plan and timetable for taking action:

For the next round of this assignment, we will construct an extensive list, from which students may choose their topics. This would ensure the topics are workable and help students be more successful in their research and writing.

6. Overall evaluation of progress on objective:

This summary shows that the course was relatively successful at educating the students in relation to general factual information concerning Western Heritage, as well as, how to critically analyze both source material and the perspectives of historians/scholars who present historical arguments, and to be able produce a personal perspective/argument in a clear and appropriately stated method.