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Degree/Certificate: Bachelor of Arts  
Major/Option: History  
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### Part I – Program SLO Assessment Report for 2015-2016

**Part I – for the 2015-2016 academic year:** Because Deans have been asked to create College-Level Synthesis Reports annually, the template has been slightly modified for a) clarity for Chairs and Directors, and b) a closer fit with what the Deans and Associate Deans are being asked to report.

**Student Learning Outcomes:** The student performance or learning objective as published either in the catalog or elsewhere in your department literature: *We evaluated 3 related SLOs this year:*

“1. display an ability to do original research in library, archival and electronic resources”

**Overall evaluation of progress on outcome:** Indicate whether or not the SLO has been met, and if met, to what level.

SLO is met after changes resulting from ongoing assessments, referencing assessment results from the previous year to highlight revisions;  
 SLO is met, but with changes forthcoming;  
 SLO is met without change required

“2. develop writing proficiency on historical topics”

**Overall evaluation of progress on outcome:** Indicate whether or not the SLO has been met, and if met, to what level.

SLO is met after changes resulting from ongoing assessments, referencing assessment results from the previous year to highlight revisions;  
 SLO is met, but with changes forthcoming;  
 SLO is met without change required

“3. analyze and interpret a wide spectrum of historical source materials”

SLO is met after changes resulting from ongoing assessments, referencing assessment results from the previous year to highlight revisions;  
 SLO is met, but with changes forthcoming;  
 SLO is met without change required

**Strategies and methods:** Description of assessment method and choices, why they were used and how they were implemented.

The History department chose to assess Senior-level majors in our Capstone course over the 3 quarters of academic year 2015-16. The purpose of this assessment was to determine if changes in our required research methods course (Hist. 390) over the past few years have improved the research, analysis, and writing abilities of our majors. The department will use these assessment results to inform our on-going curriculum revision and the up-dating of our Student Learning Objectives.

Though instructor and topic of the History Capstone vary from quarter to quarter, Capstone students are always required to complete original primary and secondary-source research on a topic new to them, including analyzing and interpreting their sources in order to address an important historiographical issue with a sophisticated thesis/argument. They present this research in a 15-page paper with appropriate apparatus: footnotes, bibliography, tables, illustrations, etc. The instructors in the 3 capstone classes (Fall – Hodgman; Winter -- Le Bar; Spring – Collins) evaluated their students' final papers using the standard "Research Paper Evaluation Rubric" that the department adopted several years ago (**rubric attached**). 5 elements of each paper were separately evaluated and scored on a 1-5 scale with 5 being excellent. The 5 elements are: 1) thesis; 2) structure; 3) use of evidence; 4) logic and argumentation; 5) mechanics.

**Observations gathered from data:** Include findings and analyses based on the strategies and methods identified.

a. Findings:

A total of 18 students were assessed over 3 quarters: 4 in Fall; 9 in Winter; 5 in Spring.

On average, the students in all three of the Capstone classes demonstrated very good (4) to excellent (5) mastery of the 5 elements in the rubric. Individually, a few students (2 in winter, 1 in spring) demonstrated only satisfactory (3) ability in most or all of the criteria. There were no unsatisfactory (2) or poor (1) performances by any of the students on any of the 5 elements. (**assessment reports from the 3 Capstone classes attached**).

Across all 3 classes, the 18 students assessed demonstrated highest attainments on SLO #1 "an ability to do original research . . .", where the average score was 4.48; and on SLO #3 "analyze and interpret a wide spectrum of historical sources", where the average score was 4.5. On SLO #2 "writing proficiency on historical topics", the average score for writing mechanics was 4.2 and for structure the average was 4.37.

b. Analysis of findings:

Our assessment finds that History majors are satisfactorily meeting the Department's learning objectives in the crucial areas of research, analysis, writing. Therefore, in the upcoming curriculum revisions on which we are currently working, we will preserve the central course design and pedagogical features of Hist. 390, our research methods course.

**What program changes will be made based on the assessment results?**

- a) Describe plans to improve student learning based on assessment findings (e.g., course content, course sequencing, curriculum revision, learning environment or student advising).

No specific program changes are recommended at this time. However, the History Department is currently in the process of updating our curriculum and our student learning outcomes to reflect the standards outlined by the American Historical Association in a recent multi-year research project. Therefore, there are likely to be some changes in our expectations for student learning in the next few years.

- b) Provide a broad timeline of how and when identified changes will be addressed in the upcoming year.

NA

2. Description of revisions to the assessment process the results suggest are needed and an evaluation of the assessment plan/process itself.

NA

## PART II – CLOSING THE LOOP FOLLOW-UP FROM THE 2014-15 PROGRAM ASSESSMENT REPORT

**PLEASE NOTE:** The College-Level Synthesis report now includes a section asking Deans to summarize which programs/certificates have demonstrated “closing-the-loop” assessments and findings based on the previous year’s assessment report.

**Working definition for closing the loop:** *Using assessment results to improve student learning as well as pedagogical practices. This is an essential step in the continuous cycle of assessing student learning. It is the collaborative process through which programs use evidence of student learning to gauge the efficacy of collective educational practices, and to identify and implement strategies for improving student learning.” Adapted 8.21.13 from <http://www.hamline.edu/learning-outcomes/closing-loop.html>.*

1. **Student Learning Outcome(s)** assessed for 2014-15:

“5. articulate how historical training can be applied in various careers.”

2. **Strategies implemented** during 2014-15 to improve student learning, based on findings of the 2014-15 assessment activities.

We concluded that the instructors in Hist. 290 need to coordinate their assignments and approach to teaching about the use of historical training in various careers, but that coordination has not yet occurred.

3. **Summary of results** (may include comparative data or narrative; description of changes made to curriculum, pedagogy, mode of delivery, etc.): Describe the effect of the changes towards improving student learning and/or the learning environment.

**NA**

4. What **further changes to curriculum, pedagogy, mode of delivery**, etc. are projected based on closing-the-loop data, findings and analysis?

**The History Department is currently in the process of updating our curriculum and our student learning outcomes to reflect the standards outlined by the American Historical Association in a recent multi-year research project. Teaching career preparation will continue to be a central learning objective.**