**History BA Program**

**Educational Effectiveness**

# Assessment Plan

**Version IV**

**Adopted by**

**The History Faculty: October 2004, Revised October 2009**

# Submitted to

**Dean James Liszka of the CAS: 6/15/10**

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**Table of Contents**

Mission Statement\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_2

Program Introduction\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 2

Assessment Process Introduction\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 2

Program Outcomes\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 3

Assessment Measures\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 3

Table 1: Association of Assessment Measure to Program Outcomes\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 3

Table 2: Program Outcomes Assessment Measurement And Administration\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 4

Assessment Implementation & Analysis for Program Improvement\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 4

General Implementation Strategy\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 4

Method of Data Analysis and Formulation of Recommendations for Program Improvement\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 5

Modification of Assessment Plan\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 6

Appendix A: Senior Seminar Research Paper\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 7

Appendix B: HIST A377 Major Research Project\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 11

Appendix C: Upper Division Elective Major Research Project\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 14

**Mission Statement**

History is a discipline; a series of practices that are historical in their basic approach and object that links our contemporary world to the past. Its practitioners subject evidence to rigorous analysis and synthesize sources to formulate coherent, logical narratives. Historians use evidence to understand the historical process and develop arguments over the meaning of the past. The historical discipline is concerned with the questions of change and continuity, the complexities of causality and contingency, and the critical role of social context and individual motivation. Our discipline requires its practitioners to meet accepted standards of professionalism over and above the technical and to adhere to stringent expectations for academic integrity and honesty.

The habits of analysis and critical thinking provided by the discipline will make graduating History Majors more competent, conscientious and effective in whatever professional activities they may pursue. Students of history may utilize these skills to pursue employment and advancement within the historical profession as well as in advanced degrees in fields such as education and law. The story of the past encompasses all of human activity: understanding its significance encourages us to be active and engaged citizens. Ultimately, history matters because it shows that the choices that we make help shape the world we create.

**Program Introduction**

This document defines the educational objectives and expected outcomes for the History BA program and outlines a plan for assessing the achievement of the stated outcomes. The outcomes of the History BA program, while broadly shaped by the requirements of the profession, are entirely self-generated and assessed.

**Assessment Process Introduction**

Since the fall 2004, when annual assessment reports were required, the department updated the History BA outcomes and the Senior Seminar assessment tool to fit into the new assessment report format. A thoroughgoing overhaul of the major was implemented in the fall of 2005. This resulted in a new required junior capstone course HIST A377 Historiography. The major research project for HIST A377 was adopted as an additional outcomes assessment tool for the History BA program.

Standing procedure requires the Assessment coordinator, the Chair and the Department as a whole to review current assessment tools and consider other potential tools each fall. Through this process in September of 2007 the History Department Assessment Plan was revised requiring the instructor of record for one upper division elective to report the results of the major research project for their course. Additionally, a cover sheet was provided for instructors providing senior seminar papers for assessment to advise assessors of particular areas of emphasis within the broad requirements of the seminar paper for their particular sections.

Since that date numerous new requirements have been imposed by the university for the generation of metrics for assessment. However, these metrics have not actually produced data we consider meaningful for assessment of the History major. In particular the department is dissatisfied with the necessity of artificially convert our assessment of the Senior Seminar paper into numbers to be reported on the annual assessment report spreadsheet. In order to make the Senior Seminar paper a meaningful tool for encouraging program improvement – the avowed goal of assessment - the department has determined to significantly revise the method of selecting papers for assessment and reporting those results.

Program Outcomes

The specific educational outcomes that support the program objectives remain to produce graduates who are able to:

1. Write clear and precise English.

2. Demonstrate advanced undergraduate historical research skills, including the proper use of the historical citation style, the critical use of primary and secondary sources, constructing an adequate research base, and framing a good historical question.

3. Demonstrate advanced historical skills, including recognition of significance, understanding of cause and effect, awareness of continuity v. discontinuity, conversancy with historiographical debate and perspective, and critical and integrative thinking.

Assessment Tools

A description of assessment tools and their implementation are summarized in Table 1. The tools and their relationships to the program outcomes are listed in Table 2.

A separate appendix for each tool describes factors that affect the results and give examples of the tools and how they will be implemented.

**Table 1**

#### Program Outcomes Assessment Tools and Administration

| **Tool** | **Description** | **Frequency/ Start Date** | **Collection Method** | **Administered by** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| HIST 477 Senior Seminar Paper | An A, B and C Paper are collected from the Department’s Capstone Senior Seminar Course (2 sections each semester). Faculty Seminar Assessment Committee reads and reviews the sample papers according to the Assessment Review Form. | May of each Academic Year/1999 | Seminar instructor of record selects an A, B, and C papers for review. | Assessment Coordinator and the Seminar Assessment Committee |
| HIST 377 Major Research Project | Proportion of students who achieve an A or B on their major research project for HIST 377—Historiography. Instructor and Assessment coordinator will also factor in an analysis of student outcomes for the course as whole based on additional assignments and final grades. | Annually/May 2006 | Obtain % of students achieving A or B on major research project from the instructor of record | Assessment Coordinator in conjunction with instructor of record |
| Upper Division Elective  Major Research  Project | Proportion of students who achieve an A or B on their major research project for one upper division history elective in the fall and spring | Annually/May 2008 | Obtain % of students achieving an A or B on their major research project from the instructor of record | Assessment Coordinator, in conjunction with instructor of record |

**Table 2**

#### Association of Assessment Tools to Program Outcomes

|  | Senior Seminar Paper | HIST 377 Major Research Project | Upper Division Elective Project |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Objective 1: Write clear and precise English | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Objective 2: Demonstrate advanced undergraduate historical research skills | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Objective 3: Demonstrate advanced historical skills | 1 | 1 | 1 |

0 = Tool is not used to measure the associated objective.

1 = Tool is used to measure the associated objective.

**Assessment Implementation & Analysis for Program Improvement**

General Implementation Strategy

The Seminar Assessment Committee performs assessment in May of each academic year. The Committee generally consists of 3 faculty members who assess at least 3 seminar papers selected from each seminar section offered the previous academic year. The Seminar Assessment Committee utilizes a review sheet (see Appendix A) to assess the student’s writing skills, research skills and historical skills. The Committee reports its findings and recommendations the following September to the Department. Review sheets and assessment findings are filed in the Department’s archives. The selected seminar papers are kept on file for one year to serve as review for both faculty and new senior seminar students.

The faculty instructor(s) of record for HIST A377 Historiography submit to the Assessment coordinator the percentage of students who achieved an A or B on their major research project for the Historiography class. The faculty instructor also submits to the Assessment coordinator an analysis of student outcomes for the Historiography course as a whole based on additional assignments and final grades. This information is factored into the scores reported on the outcomes assessment.

The faculty instructor of record for one History Department upper division elective in the fall and spring semester submit to the Assessment coordinator the percentage of students who achieved an A or B on their major research project for those classes.

The faculty instructors for each year’s Senior Seminar and Historiography courses report to the Senior Seminar and Historiography Instructors Working Group (SSHIWG) on their overall analysis of the course content, delivery, assessment tools and student outcomes. The Working Group meets at the end of the Spring Semester and/or at the beginning of the Fall Semester to consider recommendations and possible changes for both the Historiography and the Senior Seminar courses or modification of assessment tools. These recommendations are forwarded to the Department as whole.

The Assessment Coordinator submits to the CAS Dean’s Office a provisional assessment report by June 15 of each year. The Department as a whole meets to discuss, review and approve a final yearly assessment report by October 15.

Method of Data Analysis and Formulation of Recommendations for Program Improvement

The faculty meet at least once a year to review the data collected using the assessment tools. This meeting may result in recommendations for program changes that are designed to enhance performance relative to the program’s objectives and outcomes. The results of the data collection, an interpretation of the results, and the recommended programmatic changes are forwarded to the office of Academic Affairs (in the required format) by the June 15 each year. A plan for implementing the recommended changes, including advertising the changes to all the program’s stakeholders, is also completed at this meeting.

The proposed programmatic changes may be any action or change in policy that the faculty deem necessary to improve performance relative to program objectives and outcomes. Recommended changes should also consider workload (faculty, staff, and students), budgetary, facilities, and other relevant constraints. A few examples of changes made by programs at UAA include:

* changes in course content, scheduling, sequencing, prerequisites, delivery methods, etc.
* changes in faculty/staff assignments
* changes in advising methods and requirements
* addition and/or replacement of equipment
* changes to facilities

Modification of the Assessment Plan

The faculty, after reviewing the collected data and the processes used to collect it, may decide to alter the assessment plan. Changes may be made to any component of the plan, including the objectives, outcomes, assessment tools, or any other aspect of the plan. The changes are to be approved by the faculty of the program. The modified assessment plan is to be forwarded to the dean/director’s office and the Office of Academic Affairs.

**Appendix A: Senior Seminar Paper**

Tool Description:

The Senior Seminar Course serves as the History BA program’s capstone course. Each History major is required to successfully complete this course. Each seminar course is focused on an historical theme or area of the respective seminar faculty’s choosing. Each student must write a 20-25 page research paper utilizing full scholarly apparatus native to the discipline of history. All seminar faculty demand that the final paper submitted demonstrate a history major’s ability to write clearly and precisely, to engage in senior level historical research and to demonstrate advanced historical skills.

The Seminar Assessment tool is built around a seminar paper review form and a brief written report. Each spring a Seminar Committee meets to select and assess 3 papers receiving a final grade of A, B and C selected from each of the seminar courses offered that academic year. Each faculty on the Seminar committee reviews the selected papers in the areas of writing, research and historical skills using a 3-part review sheet. The committee collates and compares their findings for the assessment report to be submitted to the department. At the beginning of the Fall Semester the Senior Seminar and Historiography Instructor Working Group reviews the Seminar assessment report and considers possible changes and improvements for both delivery and assessment of the Seminar Course. Recommendations are forwarded to the Department as a whole.

Factors that affect the collected data:

1) The selection process: up to this point the selection of seminar papers for review was theoretically a random process which theoretically gave a fairly accurate depiction of overall student performance. However, concern that stronger or weaker papers might skew the results has interfered with the selection process. The selection of an A, B, and C paper generated by the seminar, along with reports of final grades, permit us a much better chance to understand how our good, middling and poor students are performing and what we can do to assist them..

2) Qualitative assessment: Attempts to quantify assessment and the continuous effort to objectify grading, especially in the case of Senior Seminar papers, has not been able to generate data of particular value or assistance to the department. We have therefore decided to eschew the pursuit of quantitative date in favor of an emphasis on qualitative assessment.

3) Accounting for individual instructor methodologies: The way faculty conduct HIST A477 is not, nor should it be, uniform. While they are all dedicated to pursuing the same broad departmental goals, by training, area of specialization, and inclination faculty have subtle differences in emphasis and approach to teaching and assignments. In order to properly account for this a Senior Seminar Assessment Cover Sheet has been prepared wherein instructors advise assessors what particular factors they emphasize (analysis of primary sources, broad synthesis of secondary material) in grading student papers.

How to interpret the data:

The Senior Seminar paper is an excellent device by which the History faculty is able to assess its majors’ writing, research and historical skills. A seminar paper clearly demonstrates whether a student has developed satisfactory skills in writing, researching and historical understanding and perspective. By assessing an entire year’s worth of seminar papers, the department is able to gain a valuable overview of the skill sets of its graduating majors.

Attachments: (See below)

Sample Senior Seminar Paper Ratings Sheet

Senior Seminar Assessment Cover Sheet**OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT SENIOR SEMINAR PAPER**

**SEMINAR COMMITTEE ASSESSMENT SHEET**

**Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Paper Title: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Semester/ Year Completed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Final Grade\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Instructor of Record: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Assess the performance of the author of this paper in light of the desired department goals. How well do our best, our middling, and our inferior students meet these goals? Provide any recommendations you might have about how we might serve such students better.

**First Goal:** Write Clear and Precise English**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Second Goal:** Demonstrate advanced undergraduate historical research skills, including the proper use of the historical citation style, the critical use of primary and secondary sources, constructing an adequate research base, and framing a good historical question: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Third Goal:** Demonstrate advanced historical skills, including recognition of significance, understanding of cause and effect, awareness of continuity v. discontinuity, conversancy with historiographical debate and perspective, and critical and integrative thinking: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Recommendations for improvement can be written on the back.**

**Senior Seminar Assessment Cover Sheet**

**Seminar Leaders**: In order to take into account the fact that individual seminar leaders have slightly different emphases when overseeing the work of seminar students please give some guidance to the assessment coordinator on how to weigh the various measures used for assessment.

**Writing Skills**: Presuming seminar leaders have equal expectations for student command of grammar, spelling, punctuation, use of active voice, proper sentence and paragraph structure, and vocabulary; how much emphasis do you place on clarity of theme or argument, analytical coherency, stylistic persuasiveness and overall presentation?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Historical Research Skills:** Presuming seminar leaders have equal expectations for student understanding of proper usage and forms for citations, how much emphasis do you place on the critical use of sources (primary or secondary); the demonstration of an adequate research base, or the ability to frame a good historical question?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Advanced Historical Skills:** How much emphasis do you place on student seminar papers demonstrating student recognition of the historical significance of their topic, recognition of cause and effect linkages, awareness of issues of continuity v. discontinuity, historiographical conversancy and perspective, and critical and integrative thinking?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix B: HIST A377 RESEARCH PROJECT**

Tool Description:

HIST A377 Historiography is a required component of the revised History BA. It acts as a Junior Capstone course. The intent is to teach majors the evolution of the discipline (the history of history); the various methodologies of history (from political to cultural); the necessary skills and techniques for historical investigation and writing (how to “do” history); and the epistemology of history (what is history and why study it). Each instructor will use a number of different assignments to assess how well students are learning these outcomes in the course. A major research project is assigned in all Historiography sections. This research project demonstrates the history major’s ability to write clearly and precisely, to engage in advanced undergraduate historical research and to demonstrate advanced historical skills.

The faculty instructor(s) of record for HIST A377—Historiography submits to the Assessment coordinator the percentage of students who achieved an A or B on their major research project for the Historiography class. The faculty instructor also submits to the Assessment coordinator an analysis of student outcomes for the Historiography course as a whole based on additional assignments and final grades. All of this information is factored into the scores reported on the outcomes assessment.

Factors that affect the collected data:

Different instructors for HIST A377 will necessarily have different approaches to the course and assessment tools. This difference could affect data collection and assessment. Nonetheless, the Department welcomes this diversity in search of common goals and outcomes. Some non-majors might take the course. Finally several below average or failing students could affect overall course averages.

How to interpret the data:

The HIST A377 research project is an excellent device by which the History faculty can assess its majors’ writing, research and historical skills. The project clearly demonstrates whether a student has developed satisfactory skills in writing, researching, critical thinking, and historical understanding and perspective. Also HIST A377 instructors can give a summary assessment of their class and assessment tools as a whole.

Attachments: (See below)

HIST A377 Fall 2007 Historiography Review Sheet (Major Project)

HIST A377 Spring 2008 Student Source Presentations and Research Paper (Major Project)

**Historiography Review**

Fall 2007 Professor Dunscomb

**Definition**: History is the description of an event or process which took place in the past. Historiography, in part, is the body of work that has been written about a particular historical event or process. Since all good history seeks to add to our knowledge of an event or require us to think about that event anew exactly what is “known” about any particular historical event is subject to a process of evolution. While there is no dispute Christopher Columbus made landfall on a previously unknown Caribbean island on October 12, 1492 the “meaning” of that event and whether it should be celebrated or condemned is a matter of often heated and bitter debate. This is reflected in the wide ranging and extremely varied historiography on the topic.

**The Assignment**: Write a narrative essay of no less than 1250 and no more than 1500 words examining the historiography of a particular research topic. A bibliography must also be provided at the end. I do not expect you to summarize in five pages ALL that has been written on your topic, but I do require that you locate and discuss the most significant secondary literature on your topic. Give me an appreciation of the most important and influential historians working on the topic; which works are the most recent; which have the broadest selection of sources; which works continue to be cited even though they are no longer the most current; and which are definitive, that is, which are the works you simply must read to say you’ve done your research thoroughly. Finally, I require from you some assessment of what these historians argue about in relation to your topic and how the content of that argument has changed over time.

BEWARE! If the bulk of your essay describes the events of your topic and not what historians say about those events you are doing the assignment wrong. I am happy to consult with you if you find yourself in difficulties. If you suspect that you will be unable to meet the deadline you must speak to me at least ONE WEEK in advance. Late papers will receive significantly lower grades, provided I decide to accept them at all.

**The paper is due 5:30 PM December 4 in class or submitted electronically.**

**The Format**: Submit a typed or printed manuscript, double spaced and printed on only one side of the paper. Include your name, class for which the paper is submitted, date and an approximate word count on the first page. Number all pages, except the first page. Do not include a title page or submit the work in a binder or folder.

The paper must be adequately referenced. If you quote from a text or lift an idea or piece of information from a text, cite it. Citations and bibliography must follow the Chicago Manual of Style format. For a quick reference on proper formats consult “The Happy Footnoter,” posted on Blackboard in the Course Information section. For further information relevant to this assignment, check out “A Note On Sources,” “To What Are You Referring?” “How to Write For Me,” or “Basic Assignment Types” also posted in the Course Information Section.

**Failure to follow the prescribed format will result in a lower grade.**

HIST 377: Historiography (Spring 2008)

Student Source Presentations and Research Paper

This project (oral presentation and paper) is worth 25% of your total grade.

Students will choose a significant historical event, preferably in the twentieth century, to use as the focal point for their class presentation and for their 10 page analytical paper. Students need to receive the approval of the instructor (that would be me) for their topic. The ten page analytical paper is due BY April 18. Proper citation of all sources is expected (refer to Turabian). Plagiarism will not be tolerated. No late papers will be accepted. Students will sign up for a time slot for their oral presentation. You are responsible to be prepared and here! Students who are not presenting are expected to be here and ready to discuss the presentations.

Your task: Find five different primary sources that deal with your chosen historical event. Be creative, go beyond the conventional sources of traditional history and try to find sources that depict the event in other intriguing ways. For example, besides a newspaper account, a government document, and a written memoir of an event, why not use media sources (TV shows, films, commercials), popular images (advertisements, clothing, food) or physical artifacts. Next, place these artifacts into their proper historical context and explain their significance. How do these sources tell us the story (or one aspect of the story) of the event that you are exploring? What do these sources "represent" or depict about this event? How do these sources create a narrative of this event and what is the narrative based on these sources? How do the choices of your sources create a certain interpretation of the event? What has this assignment taught you about the representation of the past and how we use evidence? The focus of this assignment is how you use primary sources to explore the meaning of an event and how primary sources contain within them their own biases and significance.

Your class presentation and you paper is based on the above questions.

**Appendix C: Upper Division Research Project**

Tool Description:

Most upper division courses in history (300, 400 level) require some type of major research project. This research project demonstrates the history major’s ability to write clearly and precisely, to engage in advanced undergraduate historical research and to demonstrate advanced historical skills.

The faculty instructor of record for one upper division course per semester submits to the Assessment coordinator the percentage of students who achieved an A or B on their major research project for the class selected.

Factors that affect the collected data:

Different instructors will necessarily have different approaches to pursuit of a major research project. This difference could affect data collection and assessment. Nonetheless, the Department welcomes this diversity in search of common goals and outcomes. Many non-majors take upper division courses in history. Finally several below average or failing students could affect overall course averages.

How to interpret the data:

Upper division elective research projects are an excellent device by which the History faculty can assess its majors’ writing, research and historical skills. Even if the class contains a significant portion of non-majors any major research project should clearly demonstrate whether a student has developed satisfactory skills in writing, researching, critical thinking, and historical understanding and perspective. These skills are clearly of value to any of our students and our ability to track our success in this regard can only benefit the department.

Attachments: (See below)

HIST A314 (19th Century Europe) Spring 2008 Research Paper Grading Rubric

**GRADING GUIDELINES FOR THE RESEARCH PAPER**

The following areas will be assessed during the grading of upper division History research papers:

1) **Thesis statement, organization and development:** This includes:

--a **clear,** concise and meaningful **thesis** statement—your thesis should be an argument

**--**all subsequent paragraphs are **organized** around and **developed** towards proving your **thesis**

**--**the thesis addresses a **key historic problem**, question or interpretation

2) **Research Base and skills:** This includes

-- the quantity and especially **quality of your bibliography** (does it include key secondary works by respected historians, academic journal articles, and good primary sources, does it avoid problem sources like wikipedia, encyclopedias and general textbooks)

--**citation form** (do you properly quote, paraphrase and cite your sources and do you use the correct footnote/endnote and bibliographic form)

--**quality and range of research brought into the body of your paper** (do you support key assertions, key arguments, statements of fact and statistics with reference to authoritative primary and secondary sources—by direct quote, paraphrasing and citation)

--**critique of sources** (can you demonstrate the ability to recognize good and bad sources—both primary and secondary; can you independently engage with those sources, that is argue both with and against sources from your research)

3) **Analysis:**

**--**do you demonstrate **knowledge of historical content**--the key events, developments and dynamics-- involved with your topic

--do you demonstrate the ability to be **conversant with** and to **synthesize** the findings and **interpretations** of other historians writing on your topic

--do you demonstrate the ability to offer **your own insights** into the **meaning** and **significance** of historical individuals, actions or forces at work in your topic

--do you demonstrate an understanding of the issues of **causes** and **consequences**, of **continuity** and **discontinuity**, of **context**, **contingency**, and **complexity** as they might factor into your topic**.**

4) **Writing Skills:** Is your writing **grammatically** correct, **coherent** and logical, and **stylistically** persuasive and engaging