

2010 Assessment Report

History Department

May 17, 2010

Covering Fall 2009 and Spring 2010

Arts and Humanities Division

History Department

Professors Leiby and Moravec

Prepared by R. Leiby

Profile

Number of Majors: 13 (Graduating two this year)

Number of Faculty: Full-time 2 part time 1

Courses Offered in the Assessment Period: Origins of our culture, Nazi Germany, US History to 1877, US History Since 1877, 19th Century Social Movements, 20th Century Social Movements, Special Topics History and the City.

Departmental Factors that Affect Assessment:

1. *We are still in the midst of assessing the assessment plan we put together, and so this year's data collection effort will be important not only as an indicator of whether our majors are learning what we want them to, but also whether we are testing what we think we are testing.*
2. *The ETS has dropped the History major field exam. This will be the last year we can use that exam data from our seniors as an indication of content knowledge gained*

Learning Outcomes for Majors

Our assessment grid is readily available to students on the iWay, and rubrics used to evaluate their work are handed out and explained in class.

Assessment of Majors

This year we will be reporting on two assessment measures.

1. *Goal 1—which tests our students' ability to analyze the purpose, usefulness, significance, and objectivity of primary and secondary sources of information.*

In the beginning of the school year the department faculty agreed to work on this goal in the present academic year. Upon discussion of outcomes, it was discovered that there was a disparity in the two faculty member's expectations. Therefore, we reached a compromise over the course of the year that will necessitate a change in our assessment plan. Our data reflects this new reality.

The original rubric we used to assess student document analysis is attached as appendix A. It tests the analysis and interpretation of documentary evidence, and also the application of the information to classroom work. Further, there is a field which assesses the writing too. The expectation was that History majors would achieve at least a 12 out of 16 on the rubrics. Here is the raw data:

Case #1 Nazi Germany (three analysis assignments):

Major A:	13	12	11	ave	12.0	pass
Major B:	13	12	15	ave	13.3	pass
Major C:	16	16	15	ave	15.7	pass
Major D:	11	9	12	ave	10.6	insufficient
Major E:	9	7	9	ave	8.3	insufficient
Major F:	10	9	10	ave	9.7	insufficient

Case #2 U.S. History II (2 analysis assignments)						
Major C:	16	16	ave	16	pass	
Case #3 Social Movements						
Major B:	16	16	ave	16	pass	
Major D:	16	16	ave	16	pass	
Major G:	13	8	ave	10.5	insufficient	
Major H:	16	10.4	ave	13.2	pass	
Major I:	16	16	ave	16	pass	

2. *Goal III, Obj. 3:* This year's ETS results place one student in the 80th percentile nationally and the other in the 23rd percentile nationally. Thus, one scored above the departmental average of 144 and the other below. The data from ETS results over the last three years (2008, 09, 10) reveal that our median score for eleven graduating seniors is 150, or well above the Rosemont (twelve-year) median. This result is unchanged from last year. Six out of eleven majors accomplished the goal of achieving the national 50th percentile. (54.5%, down from 66% last year).

Conclusions and suggested changes

Goal #1 Overall conclusions: In general the results are positive overall, but there is always cause to consider improvements. The generally poorer scores of underclassmen may indicate that document analysis is a skill learned over time, and therefore future assessment reports will be gathering longitudinal data over the course of a student's entire career to provide data whether value-added learning is taking place.

Specific changes:

Case #1: Despite taking time in two class sessions to discuss the evaluation of primary documents, the results are disappointing and indicate that more instruction on document analysis may be needed in the European History classes.

Goal 3 We must close the book on this body of data, as the ETS has stopped offering this test. We will be switching to the ACAT exam.

Recommendations for Improving the Assessment Process

1. *The results of our assessment efforts in document analysis have revealed that we needed to rework our rubrics in order to have them truly assess what we want them to.* To this end, we have reevaluated and rewritten our document analysis rubric to conform more closely to the intended outcomes. The new rubric is attached as appendix B.

2. *The reevaluation of the mechanics behind Goal 1 has necessitated a revamping and simplification of the entire assessment plan.* The new plan is still tentative pending another read, but is included in this document as appendix 3. It is simpler and more direct, an improvement upon the original.

3. *The cancellation of the ETS exam in history necessitates a switch to the ACAT history field exams.* (Not to mention fifteen years of data going down the drain.) Although this will provide a more nuanced look at our student's intellectual achievement in areas we teach, the downside is that we will need to accumulate a few years' worth of data before we can establish departmental averages and norms.

	4	3	2	
--	---	---	---	--

Appendix A
History Department Document Analysis Rubric--Initial

ANALYSIS	Answers all questions on document worksheet completely and accurately	Answers almost all questions on document worksheet completely and accurately	Answers some questions on document worksheet completely and accurately	Ans on c seri
INTERPRETATION	Uses document effectively to support ideas	Uses document substantially to support ideas	Uses document to support ideas, but may be incorrect or poorly applied	Do effe idea
MECHANICS	Contains virtually no grammatical, spelling, or proofreading errors	Contains few grammatical, spelling, or proofreading errors	Contains substantial grammatical, spelling, or proofreading errors	Con spel proc imp
APPLICATION	Relates document well to the concepts of the course.	Relates document to the concepts of the course with some relevance.	Attempts to relate document to the concepts of the course but is insufficient or erroneous.	Do doc con

Appendix B

History Department Document Analysis Rubric--Revised

	4	3	2
COMPREHENSION	Shows a thorough understanding of the provenance, target audience, and underlying assumptions of the document	Shows adequate understanding of the provenance, target audience, and underlying assumptions of the document	Shows incomplete understanding of provenance, target audience, and underlying assumptions of the document
ANALYSIS	Answers all questions on viewpoint and tone of document worksheet completely and accurately	Answers almost all questions on viewpoint and tone document worksheet completely and accurately	Answers some questions on viewpoint and tone document worksheet completely and accurately
INTERPRETATION	Understands the significance of the document and uses its content effectively to support their ideas about the significance of the document	Recognizes some significance of the document and applies some content to support their ideas about its significance	Attempts to attribute significance and support their contentions, but document may be incorrectly or poorly applied
APPLICATION	Can relate the document well to the concepts of the	Can relate the document to the concepts of the course	Attempts to relate document to the concepts of the course
History Department Document Analysis Rubric 2011			

Definitions:

- Provenance: Who or what was responsible for creating the document?
 Target audience: To whom was the document directed?
 Underlying assumptions: What form did the document take? Is it credible? Is it authentic?
 Viewpoint: What was the author's attitude toward and involvement with the content? Involved? Detached? Objective? Biased? Positive? Negative?
 Tone: In what manner does the author convey attitude and content? Cynical? Parody? Factual?
 Significance: Why is the document important? What insight does it give on a particular subject?
 Application: How are the insights taken from this document useful for understanding the time period or course subject ?

Appendix 3

Revised history assessment plan fall 2010

Goal #1 *History majors will be able to use their knowledge of history to be better informed as citizens of their nation and the world while being mindful of the cultural differences of others. (knowledge base)*

Objective 1-1 History major graduates must demonstrate a sufficient factual knowledge base in History to inform their world view.

Outcome 1: On the ACAT history exam, majors must score above the target figure of

Objective 1-2 Students will be able to apply historical knowledge to an understanding of the contemporary ethnic and multicultural issues

Outcome 1: On final exam questions that specifically examine the student's ability to apply factual knowledge to contemporary issues, history majors will be able to score at least 80% or higher.

Goal #2 **Students will be skilled in the analysis of primary and secondary sources of information (skill base)**

Objective 1-1 History majors must be able to ascertain the purpose, usefulness, significance, and objectivity of historical evidence apply specific documents within a larger historical context.

Outcome 1: Value-added: All graduating history majors must show improvement in document analysis skills (value-added) over the course of their matriculation and achieve a score of 12 (out of 16) or higher on comprehensive exam question regarding document analysis.

Outcome 2: Proficiency: On worksheets and assignments, students will be able to answer factual questions about the content of sources and score at least a 12 (with no area under the score of "2") on departmental rubrics at least 80% of the time.

Goal #3 **Students will become more proficient in the assembly, organization, and presentation of information (skill base)**

Objective 3-1 History major graduates must be able to demonstrate mastery of information literacy skills

Outcome 1: On their senior theses, all history majors must achieve at least a 15 out of twenty on VALUE rubrics governing Information Literacy Skills. They may not achieve less than a two (2) on any of the five areas tested.

Objective 3-2 History major graduates must be able to demonstrate improvement in their ability to write essays effectively

Outcome 1: On course writing assignments assembled in portfolios, all majors must demonstrate significant improvement over time in their scores on departmental writing rubrics regarding their ability to craft a thesis, organize an exposition, and articulate conclusions.