

### **Assessment Plan Example: History (Undergraduate Major)**

The mission of the undergraduate history program is to provide rigorous training in the history of past events and societies and enable students to study the causes, contexts, and chronologies of individual events, explore how those events are connected to larger historical developments, and discover continuity and change throughout time.

#### **1. Discipline specific knowledge and skills**

- a. Program Goal 1: Graduates will be able to use historiographic methods and interpret the competing complex and nuanced narratives produced by scholars about the political, cultural, and intellectual histories of various societies and eras.
  - i. Program Learning Outcome (PLO) 1 for Goal 1: Students will evaluate the thread of historical understanding about a particular period of history or historical event, including relevant differing interpretations from various scholars.
    1. Assessment Method 1 for PLO 1 for Goal 1: The History program portfolio is used to assess this outcome, as described below. To assess this outcome, the department will use the criteria of the rubric that evaluate the depth of understanding of: (1) the intellectual path of understanding on the period or event of interest, (2) contemporary historical debates regarding the topic, (3) previous methods used to investigate the topic, and (4) how the topic of the pro-seminar is informed by and further informs the discipline of history, contemporary historical debates, and historical research methods. This scoring is focused on the reflective essay component of the portfolio. It is anticipated that 90% of the portfolios will score as “Satisfactory” on these criteria, with none falling below “Emerging.”
      - a. Portfolio Description: History majors are required to take a junior-level course in historical methods (HIST YYYY) and a senior-level history pro-seminar (HIST ZZZZ), for which HIST YYYY is a prerequisite. In HIST YYYY, students are required to develop a portfolio of the history papers they have written throughout their careers at USF and are encouraged to continuously update their portfolios because updated portfolios will be required as part of HIST ZZZZ. The portfolios are not evaluated in HIST YYYY, but in HIST ZZZZ, students are required to write an essay that reflects on their previous historical scholarship and synthesizes what they learned in other history courses based on a re-reading of their past work. This reflective essay serves as an introduction to their portfolio, which allows the students to situate the research they conduct in HIST ZZZZ into the broader scope of history and the key debates of the modern historical profession. This reflection and synthesis facilitate metacognition, which enables graduates to articulate to employers the skills they acquired as history majors. At the end of HIST ZZZZ, students submit copies of their portfolios to the pro-seminar instructors. The portfolios, inclusive of reflective essays, a series of papers from mid-level courses, and the final pro-seminar research paper, are subsequently assessed by two different History faculty members. The full portfolio assessment uses a rubric that evaluates many components of student learning with a four-point scale: Accomplished, Satisfactory, Emerging, and For Further Review. If a score of “For Further Review” is assigned by any reviewer on any criteria, the portfolio is scored by an additional departmental faculty member whose score is averaged with the

others to complete the scoring. If the two first reviewers score any criteria more than two points differently on the scale, they will discuss their score and come to a consensus, providing feedback to refine the rubric if necessary.

## 2. Communication skills

- a. Program Goal 2: Graduates will be able to use oral and written media to express arguments emerging from their interpretations of history and with sufficient supporting evidence, following recognized historiographic methods.
  - i. PLO 1 for Goal 2: Students will coherently argue for a particular interpretation of a historical period or event, correctly citing multiple pieces of primary and secondary source evidence.
    1. Assessment Method 1 for PLO 1 for Goal 2: Students in all sections of HIST XXXX will make a class presentation about an interpretation of a particular historical period or event in which they will present evidence and situate their argument in a broader historical context and school of historical thought. Because all history majors are required to take HIST XXXX, but many other students also take HIST XXXX, all students will be required to make a presentation, but only the presentations made by history majors will be assessed by faculty to determine whether the history program is achieving its goals. All presentations made by history majors will be recorded, and the recordings of those presentations will be evaluated by both the instructor of record for HIST XXXX and by all graduate students enrolled in a practicum about the teaching of history. The instructor and the graduate students will use a grading scale that evaluates (1) the organizational structure of the argument, (2) the way evidence was incorporated to support the argument, (3) the clarity of the supporting media (i.e., PowerPoint slides), and (4) the students' oral presentation skills. Each of these criteria will be evaluated using a three-point scale: Superior, Milestone, Benchmark. Because the discipline of history requires an excellent facility with language and only presentations made by history majors will be used to determine whether the program's expectations for majors are being met, the department expects 90% of history majors to reach the Milestone elaborated in the rubric for each of the four criteria.

## 3. Critical Thinking skills

- a. Program Goal: Graduates will be able to collect, process, and interpret evidence from primary and secondary historical sources to formulate and answer historical questions.
  - i. PLO 1 for Goal 3: Students will use an appropriate methodology and suite of evidence to situate their argument in support of a particular interpretation of historical development in the scholarly literature about that place and time.
    1. Assessment Method 1 for PLO 1 for Goal 3: The portfolio used to assess PLO 1 for Goal 1 is also used in this case, as described below. The components of the rubric used to assess PLO 1 for Goal 3 are (1) selection of appropriate research methods, and (2) interpretation and integration of evidence, and (3) strength of the argument considering the interpretation in the context of contemporary historical debate(s). Evidence in support of the scoring is found in the reflective essay and a combination of any of the papers included. It is anticipated that 80% of portfolios will be scored as "Satisfactory" on these criteria. This is lower than the discipline-specific knowledge goal because selecting and using research methods is more difficult to accomplish than other outcomes.

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A sample curriculum map based on the examples above is available at: <https://confluence.usf.edu/x/-Q2CHQ>