

University of Dayton History Department Assessment: AY 2006-07

Outcome #1: History students will demonstrate an understanding of history as a dynamic process involving a variety of interpretive approaches.

Measure A: Each semester, students enrolled in HST 301 (Research Methods Seminar) will average a 50 percent improvement in a pre/post historiography test, given on the first and last day of class.

Assessment: 70 percent of students enrolled in HST 301 achieved a greater than 50 percent improvement in the pre/post historiography test.

Measure B: Every year a focus group of senior History majors (hereafter focus group), evaluated by the Department Assessment Committee (hereafter DAC), will be able to explain what historiography is.

Assessment: This measure was satisfactorily fulfilled.

Measure C: Every year, at least 70% of students taking the close reading test administered to seniors will be able to identify central aspects of the school of historical interpretation represented by selected passages.

Assessment: 86 percent of the students were able to identify the interpretive school represented by the excerpts they read.

Outcome #2: History students will be able to recognize and articulate the ways in which human societies and cultures are contingent upon particular historical contexts.

Measure A: Every year, the focus group, evaluated by the DAC, will be able to identify historical thinking as including the awareness of “change over time.”

Assessment: “Change over time is what history is,” explained one student. This measure was fundamentally fulfilled, but it continues to puzzle majors on their first hearing. The DAC recommends that all department faculty explicitly introduce this concept in each class.

Measure B: Every year, 50% of the students taking the close reading test will be able to write a cogent answer to the following question: “What does it mean to say that ‘the past is a foreign country; they do things differently there.’”?

Assessment: 78 percent of the students were able to respond to this question satisfactorily.

Measure C: 75% of alumni responding to a triennial alumni survey will agree that they have employed a historical perspective in their lives as citizens. In a related question, 60% of the respondents will agree that they have employed a historical perspective in their professional lives.

Assessment: The next alumni survey will take place in 2007-08.

Outcome #3: Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the differences and similarities of historical development as it has unfolded in various regions of the world.

Measure A: Every year, the senior focus group, evaluated by the DAC, will be able to clearly describe the development of a single historical trend (e.g. industrialization, individual rights,

women's suffrage) as it occurred in at least three different regions of the world (North America, Europe, and at least one of the following: Asia, Africa, Latin America, Middle East).

Assessment: This measure was fulfilled.

Measure B: In responding to a triennial alumni survey, alumni will – with varying percentages – respond affirmatively that their advanced required History courses gave them a good to excellent understanding of the historical context for events in North America, Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America, Middle East.

Assessment: The next alumni survey will take place in 2007-08.

Outcome #4: Students completing the baccalaureate program in History will be able to use information technology to locate and utilize a variety of primary and secondary source material.

Measure A: As verified by the HST 301 instructor, all history majors will use at least two electronic databases to locate secondary sources on opposing sides of a historical debate in writing a historiography paper in HST 301.

Assessment: Measure verified.

Measure B: In a triennial alumni survey, 70% of the respondents will agree with the following statement: “The research skills gained from my advanced required History courses are relevant to my professional life.” In a related question, 90% of the respondents will agree that their advanced required History courses provided them with the ability to use relevant technology to find the information they need in their professional and personal lives.

Assessment: The next alumni survey will take place in 2007-08.

Outcome #5: Students completing the baccalaureate degree in History will be able to critically evaluate a variety of primary and secondary source material.

Measure A: In a triennial alumni survey, 70% of the respondents will agree that their advanced required History courses provided them with the ability to evaluate critically the information they read. In a related question, 50% of the respondents will agree with the following statement: “The research skills gained from my advanced required History courses are relevant to my life as a citizen.”

Assessment: The next alumni survey will take place in 2007-08.

Measure B: Every year the focus group, evaluated by the DAC, will be able to provide examples of how their History courses enabled them to critically evaluate primary and secondary source material.

Assessment: All students in the focus group could explain the distinction between primary and secondary sources. They gave a variety of examples of how to critically evaluate both kinds of sources.

Outcome #6: Students completing the baccalaureate program in History will be able to write clearly and analytically.

Measure A: In the annual senior close reading test, 60% of History majors will write with precision and insight in identifying the arguments used in various secondary sources.

Assessment: 86 percent of the students were able to meet this criterion.

Note that last year's report recommended a discussion of some means of addressing our students' problems in writing precise and insightful essays. The result of this discussion was a proposal for a new proseminar for history majors, HST 253.

Measure B: In a triennial alumni survey, 75% of the respondents will agree that their advanced required History courses provided them with writing skills that they find useful and relevant in their professional lives.

Assessment: The next alumni survey will take place in 2007-08.