

## Assessment Report for Undergraduate Education for Academic Year 2018

The following assessment report is divided into four parts. The first consists of assessment reports by the instructors of History 2302, The Historians' Craft: Methodology. The second section assesses the work of students taking HIST 4484 Senior Seminar. The third section collects results from the four core survey assessments. The fourth section offers recommendations and identifies the improvement plan to be implemented next academic year.

### Part I: Methodology

Fall 2017      Dr. Lipp

#### I. Introduction:

Regarding assessment of HIST 2302: Methodology, the UWG Department of History Handbook states that:

During the first two weeks of the course, students will be required to complete a survey asking them how well they have met each of the Department's learning outcomes and soliciting suggestions for improvements....

One of the assignments in the Methodology course requires students to use a primary source or sources to understand the historical past. The instructor will assess that assignment to gauge students' ability to (1) analyze primary sources for their historical content and interpretations; (2) demonstrate ability to research according to historical methods; and (3) demonstrate writing skills that reflect persuasive historical arguments based on evidence and proper citation.

#### II. Assessment Survey Results:

I gave the students this indirect questionnaire during the first two weeks of class (August 14), as required. I added a second section to the questionnaire after consulting with Drs. Timothy Schroer and Daniel Williams.

### **HIST 2302: Methodology – Indirect Questionnaire Results (Fall 2017)**

- Note: 21 students completed the indirect Questionnaire

#### Section 1

*Please indicate a response for each the following questions according to the five-point scale indicated.*

1. I have content knowledge of history.
  - 5 (Strongly Agree):      08
  - 4 (Agree):                      12

- 3 (Uncertain): 01
  - 2 (Disagree): --
  - 1 (Strongly Disagree): --
2. I am able to analyze primary and secondary sources for their historical content and interpretations.
- 5 (Strongly Agree): 09
  - 4 (Agree): 07
  - 3 (Uncertain): 05
  - 2 (Disagree): --
  - 1 (Strongly Disagree): --
3. I am able to research according to historical methods.
- 5 (Strongly Agree): 05
  - 4 (Agree): 05
  - 3 (Uncertain): 11
  - 2 (Disagree): --
  - 1 (Strongly Disagree): --
4. I am able to demonstrate writing skills that reflect persuasive historical arguments based on evidence and proper citation.
- 5 (Strongly Agree): 09
  - 4 (Agree): 08
  - 3 (Uncertain): 03
  - 2 (Disagree): 01
  - 1 (Strongly Disagree): --
5. History professors at UWG advise students effectively.
- 5 (Strongly Agree): 12
  - 4 (Agree): 07
  - 3 (Uncertain): 02
  - 2 (Disagree): --
  - 1 (Strongly Disagree): --
6. History professors at UWG teach effectively.
- 5 (Strongly Agree): 11
  - 4 (Agree): 07
  - 3 (Uncertain): 03
  - 2 (Disagree): --
  - 1 (Strongly Disagree): --
7. History professors at UWG care about their students.
- 5 (Strongly Agree): 12
  - 4 (Agree): 07
  - 3 (Uncertain): 02

- 2 (Disagree): --
- 1 (Strongly Disagree): --

8. What improvements would you recommend in the History program at UWG?

- “It would be impossible to answer.” [However, also wrote at bottom of page:] “My advisors have been in different areas, but I’m still looking for a bad one and can’t seem to find.”

- “Since being at UWG, I have found the department to be highly organized. No improvements needed. I love how professors know students by name.”

- “More class options.”

- “I don’t know. I just got here.”

- “A broader range of class topics, especially for European history.”

- “Better focusing on options of courses offered. Informing of the kinds of available lectures and classes.”

- “I haven’t taken enough History classes to tell.”

- “Having professors teach course [sic] that fit their strong suit more.”

- “Cheaper books. Everything else is perfect.”

- “None. ☺”

- “More focus on current events that parallel the past.”

- “More study abroad opportunities!”

- “Just all the writing. There is a lot.”

- “Perhaps a more well known presence in an out of class setting.”

- “As I am just starting, I am uncertain at this time.”

- “None that I can think of at the moment.”

## Section 2

1. Please circle your class standing:

- Freshman: --

- Sophomore: 09
- Junior: 10
- Senior: 01

2. Do you work during the semester? (circle one)

- Yes: 14
- No: 07

If "yes," how many hours during the week do you work? (circle one)

- Less than 10: 01
- 10 to 20: 04
- 20 to 30: 05
- 30 to 40: 04
- Over 40: --

If "yes," how many jobs do you work? (circle one)

- 1: 11
- 2: 02
- More than 2: 01

3. Do you commute to campus? (circle)

- Yes: 16
- No: 05

If "yes," how long is your commute? (circle one)

- Within Carrollton: 09
- Less than 1 hour: 06
- More than 1 hour: 01

4. What year did you first begin college?

- a. 2013
- b. 2013
- c. 2012
- d. 2015
- e. 2015
- f. 2013
- g. 2015
- h. 2016
- i. 2016
- j. 2016
- k. 2015
- l. ----
- m. 2016
- n. 2015
- o. 2016
- p. 2013

- q. 2014
- r. 2011
- s. 1986
- t. 2015
- u. 2015

5. What college or university were you attending at the time?

- a. Dalton State
- b. West GA Tech
- c. GA Highlands College
- d. UWG
- e. UWG
- f. West Central Tech
- g. UWG
- h. UWG
- i. UWG
- j. UWG
- k. UWG
- l. ----
- m. Athen Tech
- n. GA Highlands
- o. ----
- p. LaGrange College
- q. UWG
- r. Albany State University
- s. USC Coastal Carolina
- t. Savannah State University
- u. UWG

6. Why did you decide to become a history major or minor?

- a. "Simply because I have a strong passion for history. I know this is what I want to do."
- b. "To teach middle school or high school history and to be positive role model to students like my teachers were for me."
- c. "History is not my major or minor. However, as a psychology major, I feel it is important to know about history."
- d. "My dad had a huge influence on me. I love the subject."
- e. "I love it."
- f. "I was already reading the books that were taught."
- g. "I decided to major in history in May 2017."
- h. "I love history. It's one of my passions."
- i. "To be able to teach and give back to my local community. And to branch off into politics."
- j. "Because I like the way history can change the way you think about things."
- k. "2016."
- l. "I love history and have always been good at it."

- m. "I love history and so I want to be able to teach others and nurture someone else's love of history."
- n. "To learn of European history + to travel to interesting places."
- o. "Summer 2016."
- p. "I have always enjoyed history, and I've always wanted to teach."
- q. "I fell in love with learning about the origins of cities and the influence of people."
- r. "The fascination I have with history itself and how things tie into together."
- s. "It appears to be broken."
- t. "History has always been the easiest subject to grasp, found myself falling in love with the subject."
- u. "I just love history, can't think of anything more interesting to study, and I'm really good at it."

7. Have you ever declared a major other than history (circle)?

- Yes: 15
- No: 06

If "yes," what major was it?

*RCOB (1):*

- Management Info Systems: 01

*COE (3):*

- Early Childhood Education: 01
- Secondary Education: 02

*Nursing (2):*

- Nursing: 02

*COSM (3):*

- Biology: 02
- Computer Science: 01

*COSS (4):*

- Criminology: 01
- Mass Communications: 01
- Psychology: 02

*COAH (2):*

- English: 01
- Philosophy: 01

7. What area/areas of history interest you most?

- "British monarchy, specifically the Plantagenets and Tudors."
- "U.S. history all of it."

- “Late 1800s – early 1900s in the USA and Germany.”
- “US history. Civil War mainly.”
- “French, Asian, and British.”
- “Politics of US past.”
- “US History (1865 → now); specifically: Roaring 20s, WW1, WW2, Cold War, Civil Rights Era, 60s-now political climate, music + pop culture.”
- “History Before 1500.”
- “The presidency and US History post WW2.”
- “Cold War; European History; Colonial [US, I assume] History.”
- “Roman History, Byzantine, Punic Wars.”
- “European.”
- “Southern Post-Civil War history/politics.”
- “Colonial American + European.”
- “Ancient history/ civilisations.”
- “US history and the post Civil War.”
- “US, Reconstruction period.”
- “Africana Studies, US History, Women’s Studies”
- “A better understanding of the real story.”
- “US History.”
- “Outside of US History but not European related exactly.”

8. What do you hope to gain most from studying history in college?

- “I hope to improve my writing skills and gain greater understanding of why these things happened.”
- “A better knowledge and understanding of history.”
- “It benefit my ability to apply psychology methods.”
- “More knowledge of the Civil War period.”
- “A job where I can continue studying history.”
- “Perspective.”
- “I want to know why people/societies think the way they do; understanding others is vital.”
- “Mastery skills of interpretation & knowledge of specific areas.”
- “The advanced knowledge to pass on to others.”
- “A greater understanding of History, preparing me for my career.”
- “Knowledge and cognitive enhancing techniques.”
- “A deeper understanding of history.”
- “I want to know the most I can to be able to teach others.”
- “Knowledge of the past + how it effects the future.”
- “Enough knowledge to show people how not to repeat history.”
- “A degree to be able to teach history.”
- “Understanding the motives behind things.”
- “The further knowledge and helping future students.”
- “Degree.”
- “More in-depth knowledge.”
- “A better understanding of the world.”

9. What career field do you intend to pursue after graduation from college?
- “Museum work (curating, researching, etc.).”
  - “Middle school or High School Education.”
  - “Mental Health Technician.”
  - “Teaching and coaching better.”
  - “Teaching or working in archives.”
  - “Non profit.”
  - “1 of 3 options: 1) go straight into secondary education, 2) receive my masters + doctorate in history + teach at the college level, 3) receive my masters in history + work at the Rock + Roll Hall of Fame.”
  - “Teaching, or museum work.”
  - “Education.”
  - “Currently, I’d like to pursue becoming a high school History teacher.”
  - “Acting or music.”
  - “Archivist.”
  - “Education.”
  - “College professor.”
  - “High school history teacher.”
  - “Teaching.”
  - “High school teacher.”
  - “Education, athletic director.”
  - “Government overseas.”
  - “Teacher in secondary education.”
  - “Not sure, don’t really wanna teach but want to work with kids.”

### **III. Primary Source Research Paper Assessment**

The assessment results for the primary source project are as follows:

| Student Number: | Raw Score: | Assessment Score: |
|-----------------|------------|-------------------|
| 01              | 88         | 3                 |
| 02              | 75         | 3                 |
| 03              | 75         | 3                 |
| 04              | 78         | 3                 |
| 05              | 88         | 3                 |
| 06              | 88         | 3                 |
| 07              | 88         | 3                 |
| 08              | 85         | 3                 |
| 09              | 78         | 3                 |
| 10              | 88         | 3                 |
| 11              | 82         | 3                 |
| 12              | 78         | 3                 |
| 13              | 90         | 4                 |

|    |    |   |
|----|----|---|
| 14 | 92 | 4 |
| 15 | 92 | 4 |
| 16 | 90 | 4 |
| 17 | 80 | 3 |
| 18 | 75 | 3 |

In short, no student earned a 1 or 2 Assessment Score. 14 students earned a 3 and 4 earned a 4.

I graded the assignment according to provisions (1) to (3) in the departmental assessment plan. The raw score reflects students' grade for the assignment which were translated into the Assessment Score following the departmental rubric:

- Below 60 = 1 (Unacceptable)
- 60-69 = 2 (Developing)
- 70-89 = 3 (Proficient)
- 90-100 = 4 (Exemplary)

The instructions for the assignment were as follows:

C. Primary Source Research Paper Project (35% of final course grade):

- The central written assignment in this course is a short 3 to 4 page historical research paper based on 3 primary sources you will select from the primary source databases accessible from Ingram Library.
- The project helps introduce you to the methods of being an historian – locating useful sources, developing a research question, analyzing your materials, and writing up your arguments and interpretations in a well-written and well-organized essay.
- You will craft this primary source research paper in a series of stages over the semester. You will receive a letter grade only on the final draft due in late November; your work for the prior stages will be evaluated on a check, check-minus, check-plus system and will receive comments from me to aid in the revisions process. However, failure to submit any required materials will result in a failing grade (F) for the entire project.
- As you work through the assignment, you may want to take a look at tips offered by Boston College's History Department:
  - <https://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/history/resources/tips.html>
- The steps for the Primary Source Research Paper Project are as follows:
  - 1. Selection of Sources (during our library day – Weds, Sept. 20)

- On Wednesday, September 20, we will meet in Ingram Library. There, Ms. Jessica Critten will introduce you to a number of the primary source databases accessible through the library's website. You will have time to search the databases yourself. You will need to find 3 sources from those databases that relate to each other in some way and that you can therefore use as the foundation for your research paper. Make sure to write down the sources' names and their location information (which database, etc.). Also, write down this information on a sheet of notebook paper and hand it in at the end of our session.

- 2. Draft Question and Bibliography (due on Course Den – Mon, Sept. 25)

- At home following our library session, type up your list of sources. Begin to read through them.

- For each source, provide a short 1 to 3 sentence summary of what it is and what it says. Again, remember all your sources must come from the various online primary source databases available through Ingram Library's website.

- After listing and summarizing the three sources, write out an historical question based on those three sources. I recommend looking at first pages of Turabian, chapter two, "Moving from a Topic to a Question to a Working Hypothesis," pages 12-18. In brief, an historical topic is by nature very broad, think of such things like World War Two, the Reformation, or the Great Depression. You will not have the time nor resources this semester to try to say everything about those topics or any other. A historical question, in contrast, is much more focused, setting up an argument concerning one small piece of the larger topic. The question also sets up your research agenda – what you will be looking for in your sources as you develop an answer to the question based completely on analysis of source evidence. That answer will provide your paper its thesis.

- Several points about developing your historical question:

- a. Please do NOT do ANY outside research. I want you to focus exclusively on the primary sources and on the challenge of listening to the sometimes alien voices of the past.

- b. Do not worry about making earthshattering or brand new arguments.

- c. I recommend strongly a straight-forward approach to developing your question along the lines of: "taken together, what do the sources reveal about the broader topic of [insert your broader topic here]?"

- d. Do not worry if your sources don't all agree with each other. You may discover debates and complexities you did not expect. Those debates and complexities can prove quite revealing.

- As well as submitting your draft question and bibliography to Course Den, make sure to send a copy via e-mail to your Peer Editing Group members.

- 3. Peer Editing of Draft Question and Bibliography (to be done in class – Weds, Sept. 27)

- The ability of give and receive useful critical feedback is crucial for scholarly success.

- You will find a PDF Peer Editing Feedback form on Course Den. After receiving your colleagues' drafts on Monday, read through them closely and then, before Wednesday morning, download and fill out the form, listing areas of strength and areas that could be strengthened. Save the form, upload it back to Course Den and send a copy to your colleague.

- When giving such feedback, in order to be a useful editor, you must always maintain a balanced yet critical tone. Overly positive comments (ie, "it's great!" "it's all good") do not help as they fail to identify areas that could be made stronger. There are always areas that could be made stronger. Overly negative and nitpicking comments will lead to a defensive reaction and your reader no longer listening to you.

- In your discussions with your colleagues about their drafts, make sure to help your colleagues focus their questions and ensure that the question remains firmly tied to source evidence.

- 4. Revised Question and Bibliography with Introductory Section (due on Course Den – Weds, Oct. 4)

- After receiving feedback and discussing your drafts with your colleagues, take the week to revise your draft question and bibliography.

- In addition, write the first draft of your paper's introductory section. Though there are multiple ways to do write this piece, your paper's introductory section must have:

- a. A clear thesis/argument stated in direct language.

- b. A clear statement of how that thesis/argument will be proved.

- c. An introduction to the source evidence as in the nature of your sources and how you will use them in proving the argument.

- 5. First Draft of Entire Paper (due on Course Den – Mon, Oct. 23)

- After receiving back your drafts with my comments, write the first draft of the entire 3 to 4 page paper and submit it to Course Den by the date indicated.

- 6. Revised Draft of Entire Paper (due on Course Den & e-mail to Peer Editing Group – Weds, Nov. 1)

- After receiving back comments, revise and submit the revised draft to Course Den and e-mail a copy to your Peer Editing Group colleagues.

- 7. Peer Editing of Revised Draft of Entire Paper (due on Course Den – Mon, Nov. 6)
  - We will follow the same format detailed in step 3, above.
- 8. Individual Meetings (week of Nov. 13 & Nov. 15)
  - The week before Thanksgiving, we will meet individually at my office to discuss your projects' status and your plans regarding finishing the final draft.
- 9. Final Draft (due on Course Den – Mon, Nov. 27)

#### **IV. Brief Analysis Of Results**

The Indirect Questionnaire results reflect the Methodology students' early standing in the major. They are still learning to think about learning skills critically. However, they indicated positive feelings towards our department. The demographic information from Part 2 conforms to the information Dan has been compiling.

As for the paper results, after many shorter assignments, the students proved capable of handling the brief primary source research paper project as the fact that all students scored either a 3 or 4 indicates. However, the lower scores reflected issues with analysis (a tendency towards summary) and advancing unsupported opinions.

#### **Recommendation**

Based on these results and my experiences, I recommend the department discuss creating a common rubric for grading the final paper in Methodology along the lines of what Michael, Tim, and I shared in Senior Seminar. This would help clarify and give consistency to the Assessment Scores over the medium and long term.

#### **Spring 2018 Dr. Ihor Pidhainy**

Hist 2302 – 24 students assessed (100% participation)

Students were assessed for their use of primary sources and general approach to historical thinking in their final paper.

The Scale:

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Exemplary 90-100      | 4 |
| Proficient 70-89      | 3 |
| Developing 60-69      | 2 |
| Unacceptable below 60 | 1 |

- 1) Assert a thesis making a historical claim
  - Exemplary            10/24 (41.7%)

|              |             |
|--------------|-------------|
| Proficient   | 12/24 (50%) |
| Developing   | 2/24 (8.3%) |
| Unacceptable | 0/24 (0%)   |

2) cite sources correctly

|              |              |
|--------------|--------------|
| Exemplary    | 12/24 (50%)  |
| Proficient   | 7/24 (29.2%) |
| Developing   | 5/24 (20.8%) |
| Unacceptable | 0/24 (0%)    |

3) evidence from the source

|              |              |
|--------------|--------------|
| Exemplary    | 8/24 (33.3%) |
| Proficient   | 12/24 (50%)  |
| Developing   | 4/24 (16.7%) |
| Unacceptable | 0/24         |

4) Write using standard English

|              |               |
|--------------|---------------|
| Exemplary    | 10/24 (41.7%) |
| Proficient   | 12/24 (50%)   |
| Developing   | 2/24 (8.3%)   |
| Unacceptable | 0             |

5) Think historically

|              |               |
|--------------|---------------|
| Exemplary    | 7/24 (29.2%)  |
| Proficient   | 13/24 (54.2%) |
| Developing   | 4/24 (16.7%)  |
| Unacceptable | 0             |

**Conclusion:**

The results from the final research paper show a varied set of results with up to 20% of students in certain categories receiving results that are considered developing. The vast majority (80+%) of students scored proficiently or in an exemplary manner in all of the categories, which bodes well for our future majors.

**Recommendations:**

Given that there is some indication on handling the full research paper, I would recommend that instructors pay close attention to the preliminary attempts in various exercises. I also suggest that it be stressed to students that this course allows them to recognize areas of weakness that they can work on in their later classes.

## **PART II: Senior Seminar**

Fall 2017      Dr. Tim Schroer

The twelve papers submitted in the course were assessed for all of the departmental learning outcomes. Two students enrolled in the course did not complete papers.

### **Learning Outcome 1: Demonstrate content knowledge of history.**

|                             |                         |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Exemplary (90-100 percent): | 50 percent (6 students) |
| Proficient (70-89 percent): | 50 percent (6 students) |
| Developing (60-69 percent): | 0 percent               |
| Unacceptable (below 60):    | 0 percent               |

The students showed good command of historical content in their papers.

Planned improvement:  
None. Results satisfactory.

### **Learning Outcome 2: Analyze primary and secondary sources for their historical content and interpretations.**

|               |                |
|---------------|----------------|
| Exemplary     | 33 percent (4) |
| Proficient:   | 50 percent (6) |
| Developing:   | 17 percent (2) |
| Unacceptable: | 0 percent      |

The students who struggled the most did better with secondary sources than primary sources. At the other end of the spectrum, the students doing exemplary work tended to do well with their primary sources, but struggled with more refined analysis of secondary sources. The best papers discussed historiography, but struggled to articulate what they added to the existing literature. To reach our standard of 85 percent of students reaching proficiency, we need to focus on helping students who are struggling the most.

### **Learning Outcome 3: Demonstrate ability to research according to historical methods.**

|               |                |
|---------------|----------------|
| Exemplary:    | 33 percent (4) |
| Proficient:   | 33 percent (4) |
| Developing:   | 33 percent (4) |
| Unacceptable: | 0 percent      |

The students who did not reach the level of proficiency failed to make use of sufficient sources. In most cases, the problem was finding and using primary sources. The students at the lowest level wrote papers that mainly summarized a few secondary sources, using a couple primary sources more as decoration than as evidence. The vast majority of students succeeded in locating and using leading secondary sources, often with the help of faculty. The students need help learning how to find useful primary sources. They need to learn

how to use bibliographies and the GIL catalog to find primary sources. These are skills that HIST 2302 Methodology should be helping them to build.

**Learning Outcome 4: Demonstrate writing skills that reflect persuasive historical arguments based on evidence and proper citation.**

|               |                |
|---------------|----------------|
| Exemplary:    | 33 percent (4) |
| Proficient:   | 50 percent (6) |
| Developing:   | 17 percent (2) |
| Unacceptable: | 0 percent      |

Every student stated a historical argument. The problems arose in sustaining those arguments clearly and persuasively over a lengthy paper and supporting the arguments with evidence. There was a considerable gap between those students doing exemplary work and those whose work was still developing. As noted above, to reach our standard of 85 percent of students reaching proficiency, we need to focus on helping students who are struggling the most.

**Indirect Assessment**

Students completed an indirect assessment through Google Forms. Nine students submitted responses.

1. I have content knowledge of history.

|                   |            |
|-------------------|------------|
| Strongly Agree    | 57 percent |
| Agree             | 29 percent |
| Uncertain         | 14 percent |
| Disagree          | 0          |
| Strongly Disagree | 0          |

2. I am able to analyze primary and secondary sources for their historical content and interpretations.

|                   |            |
|-------------------|------------|
| Strongly Agree    | 43 percent |
| Agree             | 57 percent |
| Uncertain         | 0 percent  |
| Disagree          | 0          |
| Strongly Disagree | 0          |

3. I am able to research according to historical methods.

|                   |            |
|-------------------|------------|
| Strongly Agree    | 43 percent |
| Agree             | 57 percent |
| Uncertain         | 0 percent  |
| Disagree          | 0          |
| Strongly Disagree | 0          |

4. I am able to demonstrate writing skills that reflect persuasive historical arguments based on evidence and proper citation.

|                   |             |
|-------------------|-------------|
| Strongly Agree    | 0 percent   |
| Agree             | 100 percent |
| Uncertain         | 0 percent   |
| Disagree          | 0           |
| Strongly Disagree | 0           |

5. History professors at UWG advise students effectively.

|                   |            |
|-------------------|------------|
| Strongly Agree    | 29 percent |
| Agree             | 57 percent |
| Uncertain         | 14 percent |
| Disagree          | 0          |
| Strongly Disagree | 0          |

6. History professors at UWG teach effectively.

|                   |            |
|-------------------|------------|
| Strongly Agree    | 43 percent |
| Agree             | 29 percent |
| Uncertain         | 29 percent |
| Disagree          | 0          |
| Strongly Disagree | 0          |

7. History professors at UWG care about their students.

|                   |            |
|-------------------|------------|
| Strongly Agree    | 57 percent |
| Agree             | 29 percent |
| Uncertain         | 14 percent |
| Disagree          | 0          |
| Strongly Disagree | 0          |

8. What improvements would you recommend in the History program at UWG?

I don't really have any suggestions for improving. The only slight disappointment that I experienced was that the classes in the catalog that I was most interesting in taking before coming to UWG were not offered during my time here. I think that is more about the timing on my part, than any failing of the department.

Continue the ultimate effort to maintain positive relationships with the students and inspire them to do great things.

I would encourage professors to concentrate their classes more on lectures. I know student involvement is important, however, in my experience, I learned much more in classes that were lecture based than discussion based. I also would recommend History professors to encourage their students to use special collections more. That is a tool of historical research that I still am not sure how to access.

The History Department has been very helpful in my college career. Everyone has been friendly and professors have went out of their way to better my education. As a future educator, i feel that I have taken many interesting classes in the History Department but many of them are not necessarily relevant to teaching high school students. I wish the department would offer classes that aligned with DOE standards since many of the students in the department are going to become educators.

I think it would be very important for all professors, when teaching methodology, to collaborate together so that all students are learning the same skills for their future classes. I know, just from talking with my friends, they learned completely different things in that class then I did. It seems like each professor teaches what they specifically want to focus on, which is good, but I think it would be better to also make sure to cover other subjects that are just as important to the understanding of vital information for history majors. Also I think a historiography class should be required for all history majors so that they are introduced to this concept before taking Senior Seminar.

More Online Classes, revisiting the 4 language classes that are mandatory. Pointless and time consuming. Would rather be forced to take histories that have to do with the places that those languages exist, rather than be stuck trying to fight my way into classes that I know I wont get a spot in.

I would also really look at trying to streamline the program more. Seems really clunky and it is a pain to try and get those fringe classes you need to fulfill requirements.

The minor component is also a huge pain. While I know it is good to develop skills in other disciplines, it just seems like more busy-work than building an understanding between the two areas.

Overall, Id give the program a 6/10. Degree plan is ridiculous and clunky. The 4 language classes are pointless and tedious. The lack of online classes for history, which should be primarily research based anyways, Class offerings and structure needs to work with working adults. Not all of us can leave work at noon to take a 2 hour class on Chinese history. It does not fly with employers and makes getting what you need impossible.

### **The Reflective Essay**

Students in the course were required to write a reflective essay of 2-3 pages in length addressing the following question: What have you learned during your time as a student at West Georgia? The papers were graded and counted for 5 percent of the course grade.

Students commented positively on faculty in the department, sometimes by name.

### **Focus Group**

In the last class meeting, Drs. Lipp and McCullers led a focus group discussion with the students in the course. Their full report has been distributed to all faculty in the department. Students' number one complaint was the foreign language requirement for the B.A. Dr. McCullers summarized students' priorities this way: "[S]tudents want more coherence

within the major and across courses, that they value the experience of the Senior Seminar research paper, and that they felt their degree was valuable and prepared them for a variety of career paths.”

### **Suggested improvements:**

- I. Instructors who have taught or plan to teach Methodology in the next three years should convene a brown-bag luncheon and identify five specific skills encompassed in the BA learning outcomes that will be taught in each section of Methodology offered. For example, in each section of Methodology students will be taught:
1. To distinguish primary sources from secondary sources;
  2. To format footnotes and bibliography entries for a book and an article according to the *Chicago Manual of Style*.
  3. To use bibliographies to find primary sources.
  4. To find and to order primary sources from GIL.
  5. To locate reliable historical information on the internet and distinguish it from unreliable material.

### **Spring 2018 Dr. Lipp**

The official HIST: Senior Seminar assessment plan is as follows:

“Students in the Senior Seminar course are required to write a research paper from 20 to 25 pages in length. The instructor will assess all Senior Seminar papers to determine the extent to which the papers reflect student achievement of the Learning Outcomes.

Students also are required to write a reflective essay describing what they have learned in their undergraduate education and evaluating what they perceive to be the strengths and weaknesses of the program.

Students also will be required to complete a survey asking them how well they have met each of the Department’s learning outcomes and soliciting suggestions for improvements.”

### Direct Assessment of the Senior Seminar Research Paper - Results

Out of 16 students originally enrolled in the course, 12 students submitted final 20 to 25 page papers. I evaluated those papers using a basic rubric I developed in consultation with Drs. Schroer and de Nie. The rubric appears below as Appendix 1.

The numbers follow on the second page:

A. Basic Numbers

| <b>Student:</b> | <b>LO 1</b> | <b>LO 2</b> | <b>LO 3</b> | <b>LO 4</b> |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 01              | 3           | 3           | 3           | 3           |
| 02              | 3           | 2           | 2           | 2           |
| 03              | 2           | 2           | 2           | 2           |
| 04              | 4           | 2           | 1           | 2           |
| 05              | 4           | 3           | 3           | 2           |
| 06              | 4           | 4           | 4           | 4           |
| 07              | 4           | 2           | 2           | 2           |
| 08              | 4           | 3           | 2           | 4           |
| 09              | 4           | 3           | 3           | 3           |
| 10              | 4           | 3           | 2           | 3           |
| 11              | 4           | 3           | 3           | 3           |
| 12              | 4           | 3           | 3           | 3           |

B. Results By Learning Outcome:

| <b>Learning Outcome 1 Score</b> | <b>Number of Results</b> | <b>Percentage:</b> |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| 4                               | 9                        | 75%                |
| 3                               | 2                        | 16.67%             |
| 2                               | 1                        | 8.33%              |
| 1                               | 0                        | 0%                 |

- The results indicate that the vast majority of students assessed achieved the objectives of Learning Outcome 1 and could display content knowledge.

| <b>Learning Outcome 2 Score</b> | <b>Number of Results</b> | <b>Percentage:</b> |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| 4                               | 1                        | 8.33%              |
| 3                               | 7                        | 58.33%             |
| 2                               | 4                        | 33.33%             |
| 1                               | 0                        | 0%                 |

- Although the results were not as emphatic as those above, the results for Learning Outcome 2 indicate that a majority of students could analyze effectively primary and secondary sources for their historical content and interpretations.

| <b>Learning Outcome 3 Score</b> | <b>Number of Results</b> | <b>Percentage:</b> |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| 4                               | 1                        | 8.33%              |
| 3                               | 5                        | 41.67%             |
| 2                               | 5                        | 41.67%             |
| 1                               | 1                        | 8.33%              |

- The results for Learning Outcome 3 (demonstrate ability to research according to historical methods) proved evenly distributed from Score 1 to Score 4. Half the students scored either a 2 or a 1, indicating a need to focus on this area.

| <b>Learning Outcome 4 Score</b> | <b>Number of Results</b> | <b>Percentage:</b> |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| 4                               | 2                        | 16.67%             |
| 3                               | 5                        | 41.67%             |
| 2                               | 5                        | 41.67%             |
| 1                               | 0                        | 0%                 |

- Although these results are slightly better than those for LO 3, they indicate that a significant number of students are demonstrating writing skills at a proficient or exemplary level. Again, these results indicate a need to focus on this area.

### C. Analysis

The numbers above show that our program has prepared students for the capstone challenge as regards Learning Outcomes 1 and 2: demonstrating content knowledge and analyzing primary and secondary sources. However, as noted above, students struggled when it came to Learning Outcomes 3 and 4: demonstrating ability to research according to historical methods and demonstrating writing skills that reflect persuasive historical arguments based on evidence and proper citation. Those results indicate a need to perhaps provide greater focus on research and writing skills in earlier classes. They also seem to support recent calls for greater emphasis on teaching Historiography and encouraging students to take HIST 3500: Junior Historiography.

#### Indirect Survey Results (see Appendix 2 for raw data)

Overall, the data from the survey indicates that students in this section of Senior Seminar felt strongly that they had gained sufficient content knowledge and analytic skills over their time in the major. Though still rather positive, they felt slightly less strongly about their research and writing skills. They had very strong positive feelings towards the professors in our department, and towards departmental advisement.

As regards their demographics, the vast majority worked and commuted. They had a broad variety of topical interests. They expressed a variety of career ambitions, including Public History, graduate study, and teaching.

Most students called for a greater variety of course offerings.

#### Reflective Essays Results

10 students composed a reflective essay. The essays revealed just how much our students do away from our classrooms, working and volunteering, among other things. The pieces also revealed the passion our students have for the subject of history, a passion that led

many of them into our major. Though some mentioned skills of analysis and interpretation as central to what they learned in our program, the majority spoke of other, related skills: time management, perseverance, independence, dealing with stress, how to speak up, how to forge working relationships with other students and with professors.

I am struck by how many students spoke of those other skills and I wonder if we can start in Methodology teaching them certain of them, like time management, for example.

### Indirect assessment results

#### Questionnaire

- Note: 12 students completed the indirect Questionnaire

#### Section 1

*Please indicate a response for each the following questions according to the five-point scale indicated.*

- I have content knowledge of history.
  - 5 (Strongly Agree): 10
  - 4 (Agree): 02
  - 3 (Uncertain): --
  - 2 (Disagree): --
  - 1 (Strongly Disagree): --
  
- I am able to analyze primary and secondary sources for their historical content and interpretations.
  - 5 (Strongly Agree): 09
  - 4 (Agree): 03
  - 3 (Uncertain): --
  - 2 (Disagree): --
  - 1 (Strongly Disagree): --
  
- I am able to research according to historical methods.
  - 5 (Strongly Agree): 07
  - 4 (Agree): 05
  - 3 (Uncertain): --
  - 2 (Disagree): --
  - 1 (Strongly Disagree): --
  
- I am able to demonstrate writing skills that reflect persuasive historical arguments based on evidence and proper citation.
  - 5 (Strongly Agree): 03
  - 4 (Agree): 09
  - 3 (Uncertain): --
  - 2 (Disagree): --
  - 1 (Strongly Disagree): --
  
- History professors at UWG advise students effectively.
  - 5 (Strongly Agree): 12
  - 4 (Agree): --

- 3 (Uncertain): --
- 2 (Disagree): --
- 1 (Strongly Disagree): --

6. History professors at UWG teach effectively.

- 5 (Strongly Agree): 10
- 4 (Agree): 02
- 3 (Uncertain): --
- 2 (Disagree): --
- 1 (Strongly Disagree): --

7. History professors at UWG care about their students.

- 5 (Strongly Agree): 10
- 4 (Agree): 02
- 3 (Uncertain): --
- 2 (Disagree): --
- 1 (Strongly Disagree): --

8. What improvements would you recommend in the History program at UWG?

- “I do not know; everything is good in my opinion.”
- “offer more history classes”
- “None”
- “offer a few more upper level classes per semester”
- “n/a”
- “n/a”
- “I don’t know. I love it.”
- “Involve the undergrads more, especially if you know they’re interested in the grad program. Very little seemed to be mentioned about grad program until Senior Sem, and options – I know there is a Public History Program but not much else.”
- “More diverse course offerings. More offerings.”
- “I feel that more course could be offered at Different times.”

Section 2

1. Do you work during the semester?(circle one)

- Yes: 11
- No: 01

If "yes," how many hours during the week do you work?(circle one)

- Less than 10: 01
- 10 to 20: 5
- 20 to 30: 4
- 30 to 40: --
- Over 40: 01

If "yes," how many jobs do you work?(circle one)

- 1: 07
- 2: 04
- More than 2: --

2. Do you commute to campus?(circle)

- Yes: 11
- No: 01

If "yes," how long is your commute?(circle one)

- Within Carrollton: 06
- Less than 1 hour: 05
- More than 1 hour: --

3. What year did you first begin college?

- a. 2014
- b. 2013
- c. 2014
- d. 2012
- e. 2010
- f. 2013
- g. 2014
- h. 2014
- i. 2013
- j. 2013
- k. 2013
- l. 2013

4. What college or university were you attending at the time?

- a. UWG
- b. UWG
- c. *none listed - suspect UWG*
- d. GA Perimeter
- e. Chattahoochee Tech
- f. UWG
- g. UWG
- h. UWG
- i. UWG
- j. UWG
- k. West Georgia Tech
- l. West Georgia Tech

5. Why did you decide to become a history major or minor?

- “history is my favorite and best subject; I chose it because it works for me.”
- “Because I want to be a high school teacher/coach.”
- “Because I have been interested in learning the past and learn from our mistakes.”
- “The subject I am most passionate about.”
- “I love learning about history.”
- “I did okay in my history courses in high school. I had a general interest in the subject.”
- “I always liked history growing up; made good grades in the courses.”
- “I have always enjoyed learning about history and it allowed me to take class about different aspects of history.”
- “History has always been my passion and I love that college level lets me explore further.”
- “History has always interested me; I enjoy research and the public history aspect of it.”
- “I have always had a love for history since I was young.”
- “I am very interested in the study of the past, and discussion about past events.”

6. Have you ever declared a major other than history (circle)?

- Yes: 07
- No: 05

If “yes,” what major was it?

*COE (1):*

- Sports Management: 01

*Nursing (2):*

- Nursing: 02

*COSM (1):*

- Biology: 01

*COSS (2):*

- Mass Communications: 01
- Psychology: 01

*COAH (1):*

- English: 01

7. What area/areas of history interest you most?

- “the world wars; Golden Age of Piracy; Public History; any era Assassin’s Creed goes to”
- “1700s”
- “Africa; China; Spain”
- “American History”
- “French Revolution; Gilded Age; Jacksonian Era America; American Revolutionary War”
- “Civil Rights Era”
- “European – England + Germany & France”
- “European; African; American; Middle East and Latin American”
- “European (France, Germany, Spain), Russia
- “Colonial/ Jacksonian Era – specifically Cherokee Removal”
- “Colonial America up until the Civil War”
- “American History”

8. Were there any classes you wished the department had offered while you were a major?

- “not really, all classes were good”
- “Pacholl taught a Revolution class which was perfect”
- “holocaust class about Germany”
- “no”
- “n/a”
- “LGBT+/Gay Liberation Movement – an area in history I’ve always been interested and not have covered at all”
- “n/a”
- “Holocaust class”
- “Most classes were offered, but were either full or conflicted with schedule”
- “classes on world wars/ civil war/ History classes on minorities (women/Indian/African American)”

- “The New Republic and Jacksonian America; I don’t think either of these were offered during the two years I was a history major”
- “I’m OK with the courses that were offered me; I wish the times were more available [sic] and classes were offered in a different semester.”

9. What career path do you intend to pursue after graduation from college?

- “Public History; I want to go into museum work”
- “Education”
- “teacher/professor/maybe work in government”
- “Public History”
- “don’t know yet”
- “not sure”
- “Currently going to pursue a graduate degree”
- “Becoming a middle school social studies teacher”
- “I cannot decide between government and graduate school”
- “Education/ Public History”
- “I intend on becoming a professor”
- “teaching”

### **Focus Group**

Drs. de Nie, Goodson, and Schroer conducted a focus group in the spring 2018 Senior Seminar Course. The full results were circulated earlier.

The students were generally upbeat and pleased with their experiences as with the Department of History.

The Department should explore the possibility of including additional information about course offerings in the Banweb/Wolf Watch that students can see as they register for classes. The Political Science Department makes that information available through the registration system evidently.

The students expressed a high degree of dissatisfaction with the requirement that they take four semesters of foreign languages. Otherwise, they generally expressed satisfaction with their experiences in the History program.

**Part III: Core Courses**

**A. HIST 1111**

For the Fall 2017 semester, the HIST 1111 Survey Assessment Committee (SAC) assessed Dr. Lipp’s HIST 1111 03 section on the basis of the following World Civilization core learning outcomes:

- Students will demonstrate the ability to understand the political, social, economic, or cultural dimensions of world history.

The assessment instrument consisted of the following essay question, which was administered as part of the second examination:

Each of the three books we read during this half of class reveal how different civilizations understood the connection between religious views and social attitudes and structures, such as the economy and politics. In a clearly organized essay, explore the connections between religion and society in each of the three assigned books and what those connections reveal about the larger cultures that produced those three works. In your essay’s conclusion, make sure to give consideration to points of comparison and contrast between the three larger cultures. Make sure in your essay to discuss directly at least one political, social, economic, or cultural example when looking at the larger cultures.

Out of the original 35 students in the section, 28 students took the assessment instrument. The others either failed to appear for the examination or withdrew from the class. Students who took the assessment instrument received a raw score of between 1 and 50 on the essay based on their ability to demonstrate an understanding of the political, social, economic, or cultural dimensions of world history. These raw scores were converted into a four-point assessment score where a 1 means “did not meet expectations; 2 means “developing;” 3 means “met expectations;” and, 4 means “exceeded expectations. The conversion was as follows:

- Raw score below 30 = 1 (Unacceptable)
- Raw score between 30 and 34.5 = 2 (Developing)
- Raw score between 35 and 44.5 = 3 (Proficient)
- Raw score between 45 and 50 = 4 (Exemplary)

| Assessment Score: | # of Results | % of Results: |
|-------------------|--------------|---------------|
| 4                 | 6            | 21.43         |
| 3                 | 19           | 67.86         |

|   |   |      |
|---|---|------|
| 2 | 2 | 7.14 |
| 1 | 1 | 3.57 |

## **Analysis**

On the whole, only 3 students assessed fell below the level of “proficient” and were not able to demonstrate effectively an understanding of political, economic, social, or cultural factors in world history, an understanding that the assessment instrument instructions guide students towards. The overwhelming majority of students, close to 90% of those who took the assessment instrument, were able, to varying degrees, to display that understanding, indicating that no drastic actions need to be taken at this time. The

However, in order to clarify connections between assessment scores and the assessment instrument, the development of a grading rubric may prove helpful.

### **B. HIST 1112**

#### Area E Learning Outcome

Students will demonstrate the ability to understand the political, social, economic, or cultural dimensions of world history.

68 students completed the assessment instruments in the course.

#### *Indirect assessment measure*

Exemplary: 22 percent  
 Proficient: 50 percent  
 Developing: 22 percent  
 Unacceptable: 6 percent

#### *Direct assessment measure*

Students were assessed directly using multiple choice questions based on assigned primary source readings. Cumulative student scores on these assignments were as follows:

Exemplary: 6 percent (4)  
 Proficient: 51 percent (35)  
 Developing: 19 percent (13)  
 Unacceptable: 24 percent (16)

In March 2018, the tenured and tenure-track faculty met to discuss the results of the fall 2017 assessment results. We found that the results did not meet our criteria for success. We decided that students might more effectively learn the material if they were quizzed on it before being assessed, in addition to the writing-to-learn exercise improvement that we previously adopted.

## **Improvement Plan**

In fall 2018, we will pilot a program in one section where, in addition to completing a writing-to-learn exercise on the assigned primary sources, the students will also be quizzed on the primary sources before we assess their learning of that material.

### **C. HIST 2111**

In the spring of 2017, the tenured members of the History Department who teach History 2111 met to discuss assessment tools and the measurement of student learning outcomes. We decided that the assessment quiz piloted in Keith Bohannon's Fall 2016 double section of 2111 would be administered by the tenured faculty teaching 2111 in the Fall of 2017.

The quiz was made available to students on Course Den at the beginning of the semester during the first week of class, and faculty emphasized to their students that they should not feel the need to study or prepare for this initial test, as we administered it to measure the amount of knowledge they had at the time they started the course. The same quiz was given at the end of the semester with the same disclaimer. A total of 116 students took both quizzes.

#### **Data**

##### **Pre-Assessment Quiz**

Exemplary = 3 (3%)

Proficient = 20 (17%)

Developing = 19 (16%)

Unacceptable = 74 (64%)

##### **Post-Assessment Quiz**

Exemplary = 19 (16%)

Proficient = 62 (53%)

Developing = 17 (15%)

Unacceptable = 18 (16%)

##### **Scale**

Exemplary = 20-18

Proficient = 17-14

Developing = 13-12

Unacceptable = 11-0

The 2111 assessment committee met several times over the Spring and Summer to discuss AY18 Assessment and plans for improvement. Data indicate that 84% of HIST 2111 students passed the assessment quiz at the end of the semester with a grade of A through D (D is considered "developing" based on the HIST 2112 model). One thing to note is the

substantial improvement in scores from the pre quiz to the post quiz. For the pre-quiz, 64% of all students ranked "unacceptable" based on scores of 11 or less (out of 20 questions). For the post quiz, however, that number dropped to 16%. Data also indicates that exemplary and proficient scores jumped significantly.

### **Interpretation and Analysis**

While the data does show that learning is taking place in our survey courses, we feel that our assessment tool needs revision, specifically with regards to how we measure the learning outcome for Core Area E: "Students will demonstrate the ability to understand the political, social, economic, or cultural dimensions of world and American history." Right now, we do not believe that our current pre- and post-assessment quiz adequately shows the success of our students with that LO in mind.

Furthermore, HIST 2111 itself is currently under revision under Georgia 2 Completion (G2C) Guidelines. As such, all instructors of 2111 sections have implemented the following:

- All sections now include Standard Learning Outcomes (SLOs) in their syllabi. Those are:
  - a) Identify and explain the political, social, economic, and cultural dimensions of US history
  - b) Interpret primary and/or secondary sources
  - c) Develop critical thinking skills
- All sections now include some sort of formative assessment during the first three weeks of class with early feedback for students. That formative assessment is chosen by the instructor.
- Each section lists all assessments for each class, which are aligned with HIST 2111's SLOs.
- Each instructor tracks improvement throughout the semester in order to assess the effectiveness of our frequent and detailed feedback. This is done through a variety of methods, such as opening the grade book to allow students to see their grades and overall class grade at all times, utilization of the SSC-Campus and First Alert systems as part of the university-wide initiative to identify students who need assistance early in the semester. Other methods include contacting students with D and F grades in order to discuss the issues they might be facing in class, and periodically meeting with "at risk" students.

While these initiatives are being implemented as part of the statewide G2C plan, they do have assessment of HIST 2111 in mind. Therefore, the indirect assessment pre- and post-quiz administered by tenured faculty in AY17 has been tabled while all sections work on making their 2111 sections G2C compliant. We will meet sometime in early September of 2018 to discuss the current assessment tool, its effectiveness in our sections, and whether we would like to continue with its implementation or whether we should implement

another tool in the Spring 2019. Also at that September meeting, we will choose an indirect assessment tool that will be administered across all sections beginning in Fall 2019 so that we may begin to adequately assess the Core Area E learning outcome.

### **Improvements**

All sections now include some sort of formative assessment during the first three weeks of class with early feedback for students. That formative assessment is chosen by the instructor.

## **D. HIST 2112**

Larry O. Rivers  
Assessment Report for HIST 2112  
Fall 2017

### **Learning Outcome**

In accordance with the specifications in the Department of History Handbook, the Learning Outcome for HIST 2112 Assessment was: "Students will demonstrate the ability to understand the political, social, economic, or cultural dimensions of American history."

### **Assessment Procedure and Success in Meeting 2017 Assessment Goals**

#### Continuity from Previous Years

1. For the fourth consecutive year, the HIST 2112 Assessment Committee utilized an essay-based assessment exercise. Each instructor participating in assessment selected one of the five questions from a "bank" of essay prompts developed by the committee and then administered the exercise during a 50-minute testing session in the final weeks of the Fall 2017 semester.
2. For the second consecutive year, each instructor participating in assessment required students to complete a preparatory graded writing assignment focused on analysis of primary sources. The committee did not develop a standardized format for this preparatory assignment; each instructor participating in assessment crafted this assignment on her or his own.

#### Differences from Previous Years

1. For Fall 2017, the committee only requested assessment participation from the tenured and tenure-track instructors who taught HIST 2112. In Fall 2016, all instructors teaching HIST 2112 were asked to participate in assessment.
2. On February 8, 2018, the committee convened a face-to-face meeting. All of the instructors participating in assessment were asked offer examples of essays they

thought represented each of the 4 possible scores. The purpose of the meeting was to help the instructors work more collaboratively and in sync as they scored the essays. Three of the four instructors were able to attend; the instructor who had a schedule conflict still fulfilled the request to submit 4 representative essays.

The standard for grading the essays was: “How well did the student demonstrate the ability to understand the political, social, economic, or cultural dimensions of American history?” The scale was:

Score of 4 “Exemplary”: (90-100)

Score of 3 “Proficient”: (70-89)

Score of 2 “Developing”: (60-69)

Score of 1 “Unacceptable”: (59-0)

### Assessment Result

The four instructors participating in assessment administered the exercise to 175 students in 5 sections (since one instructor assessed a double-section). The following table compares the Fall 2017 and Fall 2016 results.

| SCORE                   | FALL 2017                | FALL 2016                 |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| 4 “Exemplary” (90-100)  | 35 students (20 percent) | 89 students (29 percent)  |
| 3 “Proficient” (70-89)  | 91 students (52 percent) | 101 students (31 percent) |
| 2 “Developing” (60-69)  | 39 students (22 percent) | 96 students (31 percent)  |
| 1 “Unacceptable” (59-0) | 10 students (5 percent)  | 24 students (8 percent)   |

Last year, 310 essays were assessed. This year, 135 fewer essays were included in the assessment data.

The number of “exemplary” scores declined by 9 points. At the same time, there was a significant increase in the number of “proficient” scores, with the percentage rising 21 percent. The “needed improvement” scores declined by 9 percent and the “lack of understanding” scores declined by 3 percent.

To offer another point of comparison, the combined “exemplary”/“proficient” scores were 72 percent in Fall 2017, up from 60 percent in Fall 2016.

Overall, the instructors participating in HIST 2112 assessment said they were satisfied with the results of both the in-class essay exercise and the preparatory assignment.

One instructor said: “In general, I was pleased with the quality of the essays. Each student in this class was required to submit seven short primary source-based essays over the course of the semester, and I think that those assignments helped prepare them to do well on the assessment exercise.”

Another instructor stated: "I believe my students did very well on this assignment. Most were able to identify the differences in the eras in which each president served, at least one if not several policies or programs each president implemented, and some were able to note reasons for public skepticism of government. Their success stems from two things: the course focus on analyzing primary sources and the content/themes the course addresses."

Additionally, another instructor reported: "The primary source work we did in class throughout the semester (guided analysis workshops in class and assignments based around analysis) helped students, I believe, with the assessment question. The majority of students showed a capacity for analyzing different perspectives by placing those perspectives in historical context."

## **Conclusion**

The increase in "exemplary"/"proficient" scores from 60 percent in Fall 2016 to 72 percent in Fall 2017 is certainly good news. It shows that a larger percentage of students successfully demonstrated the objectives stressed by the desired learning outcome for HIST 2112.

Additionally, the meeting the HIST 2112 Assessment Committee convened on February 8, 2018 gave the instructors an opportunity to collectively discuss their respective experiences with the assessment-related preparatory assignment and in-class essay during the Fall 2017.

## **Plan for Fall 2018**

For Fall 2018, the HIST 2112 Assessment Committee will utilize the same assessment procedure. It has decided, again, not ask limited term faculty members to participate in the exercise due to the concern about adding to the already challenging workload that many of these instructors carry.

This semester, the committee will seek to enhance the assessment procedure by implementing the following two improvements:

1. Prior to the in-class essay assessment exercise, the instructors participating in assessment will give their students a handout produced by Patrick Rael, *Reading, Writing, and Researching for History: A Guide for College Students* (Brunswick, ME: Bowdoin College, 2004). It is entitled "How to Read a Primary Source." The objective is to use this handout to help enhance students' preparation for the in-class writing activity.
2. At the end of the semester, the instructors participating in assessment will administer an following indirect assessment tool based on a similar method utilized by HIST 1112.

The indirect assessment will consist of the following question:

“Upon completion of this course, how would you characterize your understanding of the political, social, economic, or cultural dimensions of the history of the United States since 1865?”

- A. Exemplary (expect to earn an A in the course)
- B. Proficient (expect to earn a B or C in the course)
- C. Developing (expect to earn a D in the course)
- D. Unacceptable (expect to fail the course)

#### **Part IV: Recommendations**

A. I recommend the department discuss creating a common rubric for grading the final paper in Methodology along the lines of what Michael, Tim, and I shared in Senior Seminar. This would help clarify and give consistency to the Assessment Scores over the medium and long term.

B. I would recommend that instructors pay close attention to the preliminary attempts in various exercises. I also suggest that it be stressed to students that this course allows them to recognize areas of weakness that they can work on in their later classes.

C. Instructors who have taught or plan to teach Methodology in the next three years should convene a brown-bag luncheon and identify five specific common skills encompassed in the BA learning outcomes that will be taught in each section of Methodology offered. For example, in each section of Methodology students will be taught:

1. To distinguish primary sources from secondary sources;
2. To format footnotes and bibliography entries for a book and an article according to the *Chicago Manual of Style*.
3. To use bibliographies to find primary sources.
4. To find and to order primary sources from GIL.
5. To locate reliable historical information on the internet and distinguish it from unreliable material.

D. The Department should explore the possibility of including additional information about course offerings in the Banweb/Wolf Watch that students can see as they register for classes. The Political Science Department makes that information available through the registration system evidently.

E. Conduct a focus group in a survey section to consider how to improve student learning. We could use more information from students on what is working and not working. What is motivating or discouraging students in the surveys? The focus group used in Senior Seminar could be adapted to apply with our survey students. This could also address recruitment questions.

F. Prepare a two-page document to be provided to all new faculty teaching a core course that sets out:

1. Required learning outcome for the course

2. Survey class guidelines adapted from Department Handbook on upper-level class guidelines.
  3. Required assignments or approaches in the course previously adopted By the SAC as improvements based on assessment evidence.
  4. Three recommended best practices in teaching the survey.
- G. HIST 1112 Plan: In fall 2018, we will pilot a program in one section where, in addition to completing a writing-to-learn exercise on the assigned primary sources, the students will also be quizzed on the primary sources before we assess their learning of that material.
- H. HIST 2111 Plan from G2C: Starting in fall 2018, all sections now include some sort of formative assessment during the first three weeks of class with early feedback for students. That formative assessment is chosen by the instructor.
- I. HIST 2112 Plan: This semester, the committee will seek to enhance the assessment procedure by distributing to their students a handout produced by Patrick Rael, *Reading, Writing, and Researching for History: A Guide for College Students* (Brunswick, ME: Bowdoin College, 2004). It is entitled "How to Read a Primary Source." The objective is to use this handout to help enhance students' preparation for the in-class writing activity.

### **Improvements adopted at department meeting on September 7, 2018.**

Upon consideration of the report, the department adopted the following improvements:

1. The department will create a rubric for grading the primary source paper in Methodology along the lines of what has been used in Senior Seminar. This would help clarify and give consistency over the medium and long term.
2. Instructors who have taught or plan to teach Methodology in the next three years will convene a brown-bag luncheon and identify five specific common skills encompassed in the BA learning outcomes that will be taught in each section of Methodology offered. For example, in each section of Methodology students will be taught:
  - To distinguish primary sources from secondary sources;
  - To format footnotes and bibliography entries for a book and an article according to the *Chicago Manual of Style*.
  - To use bibliographies to find primary sources.
  - To find and to order primary sources from GIL.
  - To locate reliable historical information on the internet and distinguish it from unreliable material.