

STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT PROGRAM SUMMARY FORM

Program Name: MA in History

Dept: History

College: CLAS

Submitted by: Lee Patterson

Part 1:

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| CGS Learning Goal #1 A depth of content knowledge | Program Learning Goal(s): Students will identify and describe the major historical events and significant interpretations and major terms of scholarly debate within their chosen concentrations of study (i.e., Modern World, Premodern World, US). |
| How are learners assessed? | 1) Course grades in introductory proseminars (HIS 5800, HIS 5810, and HIS 5820) 2) Comprehensive examination: comprehensive examination committees will complete a comprehensive examination assessment rubric for each student. (Exam rubric attached.) 3) Instructor assigned to HIS 5999 provides data from assessment rubric of capstone for teacher program (using comprehensive exam rubric, attached). |
| What are the expectations for the students? | 80% of students will demonstrate competency in this area by achieving a B or better in one of the Proseminars (HIS 5800, 5810, or 5820), and 90% will demonstrate competency in Factual Knowledge as defined in the comprehensive examination rubric in their first attempt at completing comprehensive examinations. |
| What are the expectations for the program? | Same as for students. |
| What were the results? | 1) In the period Fall 2022 to Spring 2024, in the traditional MA, a total of 8 grades were issued for HIS 5800, 7 for HIS 5810, 7 for HIS 5820. In the teacher MA, 4 for HIS 5800, 32 for HIS 5810, 15 for HIS 5820. All of these grades were B or higher. 2) In this period, 8 students completed their comp exams (i.e., MA Exams). Three were required to resubmit at least one written exam, for reasons not involving this learning goal but rather goal #5 because of an ethical issue involving AI, as discussed under Part 3 below. All passed their oral exam or thesis oral defense the first time (with one thesis defense still pending). 3) All 15 students in the capstone (HIS 5999) for the teacher program in this period successfully completed the course, earning a B or higher. |

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| How are the results shared? How will these results be used? | There is 1) an annual review of the curriculum by the Graduate Coordinator, in consultation with the department graduate committee; 2) student and coordinator consultation with the student's faculty mentor. Coordinator collects all results of examinations, research papers submitted by examinees, and exit interviews, along with grades from the proseminars, and shares with the graduate committee, department faculty, and chair. |
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| CGS Learning Goal #2: Critical thinking and problem-solving skills | Program Learning Goal(s): Students will describe, compare, and evaluate historical interpretations (historiography) based on an understanding of historical methodologies and disciplinary modes of writing. |
| How are learners assessed? | 1) Student historiography papers in HIS 5000, both traditional and teacher program, will be collected and assessed using a Historiography rubric (attached). 2) Comprehensive examination committees will complete a rubric for each student in traditional program upon completion of exams. (Exam rubric attached.) 3) Instructor assigned to HIS 5999 provides data from assessment rubric of capstone for teacher program (using comprehensive exam rubric, attached). |
| What are the expectations for the students? | 80% of students will demonstrate competency as defined in the Historiography rubric in HIS 5000 and 90% will demonstrate competency in Historiography and Synthesis and Analysis as defined in the comprehensive examination rubric in their first attempt at completing comprehensive examinations. |
| What are the expectations for the program? | Same as for students. |
| What were the results? | 1) The number of students in HIS 5000 were 15 (7 traditional, 8 teacher) in Fall 2022 and 12 (3 traditional, 9 teacher) in Fall 2023. The data shows that in both disciplinary modes of writing and methodology, all students, with one exception, achieved at least a "Competent" rating. 2) All 8 students passing written comp exams were judged to be at least "Competent" in historiography and analysis, with the exception of 2 students on historiography. 3) All 15 students completing the capstone in the teacher program were at least "Competent" in historiography and analysis. |
| How are the results shared? How will these results be used? | There is 1) an annual review of the curriculum by the Graduate Coordinator, in consultation with the graduate committee; 2) student and coordinator consultation with the student's faculty mentor. Coordinator collects all results and shares with the graduate |

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| | committee, department faculty and chair; committee headed by student's faculty mentor assess comprehensive exams; 3) instructor assigned to HIS 5000 provides data from assessment rubric. |
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| CGS Learning Goal #3: Effective oral and written communication skills | Program Learning Goal(s): Students will present their ideas clearly and effectively using the accepted conventions of historical writing, including accurate use of Chicago/Turabian citation system. |
| How are learners assessed? | 1) Students in traditional program submit a revised primary research paper or MA thesis that are collected by each examination committee. The paper or thesis is part of the students' examination dossiers and is used to complete the final section of the comprehensive examination rubric. 2) Students in teacher program write a reflective essay in HIS 5999: Capstone, which is assessed using the final section of the comprehensive examination rubric. |
| What are the expectations for the students? | 80% will demonstrate competency as defined in the comprehensive examination rubric; another 10% will demonstrate a high level of competency or better. |
| What are the expectations for the program? | Same as for students. |
| What were the results? | From Fall 2022 to Summer 2024, 1) 6 students submitted research papers of substantial quality prior to their comprehensive examinations; 1 submitted a thesis. One thesis remains unfinished at this time. All research papers and the one submitted thesis were judged at least "Competent" in clarity of expression and citation management. 2) In HIS 5999, all 15 students were judged at least "Competent." |
| How are the results shared? How will these results be used? | There is 1) an annual review of the curriculum by the Graduate Coordinator, in consultation with the department graduate committee; 2) student and coordinator consultation with the student's faculty mentor, a process documented in reports submitted to coordinator. The coordinator collects all results and shares with the graduate committee, department faculty, and chair. |
| CGS Learning Goal #4: Evidence of advanced scholarship through research and/or creative activity. | Program Learning Goal(s): Students will produce an original research project using advanced scholarship based on appropriate methodologies that include analysis of primary sources and that situates the research within significant and relevant historiography. |

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| How are learners assessed? | Students in the traditional program submit a revised primary research paper or MA thesis that is collected by each examination committee. The paper or thesis is part of the students' examination dossiers and is used to complete the final section of the comprehensive examination rubric. |
| What are the expectations for the students? | 80% will demonstrate competency in Originality and Knowledge Creation as defined in the assessment rubric; another 10% will demonstrate a high level of competency or better. |
| What are the expectations for the program? | Same as for students. |
| What were the results? | All research papers were judged at least "Competent" in their ability to formulate a research question and analyze evidence. The completed thesis was considered "Competent" in factual knowledge/command of historical narratives, historiography, and analysis, and "Highly Competent" in originality. One thesis remains unfinished. |
| How are the results shared? How will these results be used? | There is 1) an annual review of the curriculum by the Graduate Coordinator, in consultation with the graduate committee; 2) student and coordinator consultation with the student's faculty mentor, a process documented in reports submitted to coordinator. Coordinator collects all results and shares with the department graduate committee, faculty and department chair. |

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| CGS Learning Goal #5: Ethics and Professional Responsibility | Program Learning Goal(s): Students will make responsible use of evidence, avoid plagiarism, maintain respectful and honest engagement with other scholars, demonstrate self-awareness of biases, and show appreciation of the diverse nature of perspectives and experiences in historical accounts. |
| How are learners assessed? | Aside from anecdotal feedback in exit interviews conducted by the Graduate Coordinator, measured data is also provided through an ethics rubric filled out by the instructor of HIS 5810 and HIS 5820. |
| What are the expectations for the students? | 90% will demonstrate competency as defined in the Ethics Learning Goal Rubric (attached). 10% will rate as Exceptional. |
| What are the expectations for the program? | Same as for students. |
| What were the results? | We have data for HIS 5820 in Spring 2023 (when we began assessing this goal) and HIS 5810 in Spring 2024. The rubrics show the following for the 21 students in HIS 5810 and 22 students in HIS 5820: in HIS 5810 1 was deemed "Not Competent," 18 "Competent" |

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| | and 2 “Exceptional,” and in HIS 5820 19 were deemed “Competent” and 3 “Exceptional.” Exit interviews with students in both traditional and teacher MA indicate that our faculty routinely incorporate discussion of ethical responsibility of historians in our course curricula. Although this learning goal is not assessed in our MA Exams, I will mention incidents involving use of AI by three students, which is discussed in more detail in Part 3. |
| How are the results shared? How will these results be used? | There is 1) an annual review of the curriculum by the Graduate Coordinator, in consultation with the graduate committee. 2) Instructor assigned to HIS 5810 and HIS 5820 provides data from assessment rubric. 3) Coordinator collects all results and shares with the department graduate committee, faculty and department chair. |

Part 2

Describe what your program’s assessment accomplishments since your last report was submitted. Discuss ways in which you have responded to the Graduate Assessment Summary Response from last year’s report or simply describe what assessment work was initiated, continued, or completed.

Last year we were allowed an exception so that we could better assess the results of taking our traditional MA online in Fall 2022. The numbers overall, assessment and otherwise, have been encouraging. Changes in our assessment have also been the result of the implementation of the new Ethics and Professional Responsibility CGS Learning Goal, which addresses, in our view, a very important need and is especially important for the field of history.

Included in our assessments of both the traditional and the teacher program are the required courses of Historiography and the proseminars. The proseminars, one for each concentration in the program (US, Premodern, Modern), were designed to address the problem of spotty coverage in a student’s foundation when taking the comprehensive exams (i.e., the MA Exams in the traditional program) or HIS 5999: Capstone (in the teacher program). In conjunction with Historiography, they introduce students to major problems and themes in the discipline as well as how to “think historically” when tackling these problems. While these courses generally seem to achieve our stated goals, occasional gaps still occur in the MA Exams and capstone essays. The content of each proseminar is largely the same, but some small variation inevitably occurs due to an instructor’s own research interests. See further under Part 3.

Even while still a F2F program, we changed the format of our MA Exams, allowing take-home exams over a 72-hour period with answers emailed back to the Graduate Coordinator. We implemented this initially because of the pandemic, but of course it's necessary for the online format. One change we made to the exam requirements was the use of citations and demonstration of better awareness of historiography, which, aside from the necessity of the format, better replicates the historical process. For the most part, we've been pleased with the results, although please see my note in Part 3 on AI. Of course, the teacher program uses the capstone course (HIS 5999) for similar evaluation.

For both programs, in addition to assessment of work in the courses mentioned above, I, as Graduate Coordinator, conducted exit interviews with graduating students by Zoom. Each student conveyed an overwhelmingly positive experience with their program. Regarding the fifth learning goal, I made sure to ask about how it manifested in the courses, and students in both programs felt that their instructors took account of historians' need for ethical and professional responsibility. Since then, the Graduate Committee has developed an Ethics Learning Goal rubric that we began to use in Spring 2023 in HIS 5820: Proseminar in Modern History. This rubric is now employed by instructors of both the Modern and Premodern Proseminars, at least one of which will be taken by every student in both programs.

Part 3

Summarize changes and improvements in curriculum, instruction, and learning that have resulted from the implementation of your assessment program. How have you used the data? What have you learned? In light of what you have learned through your assessment efforts this year and in past years, what are your plans for the future?

The main structural changes we implemented were in response less to assessment needs and more to meeting our enrollment goals and responding to the market. Since taking our traditional MA online, we have seen a sharp upswing in enrollments. Overall, we feel confident in the efficacy of our assessment methods as described above. However, the Graduate Committee and the department are considering some structural changes, which will no doubt impact our assessment methods in the future. We are currently considering streamlining some requirements in both tracks (traditional and teacher), such as the proseminars, because of the challenge of staffing these courses with our current complement of faculty.

One more note concerning AI. As alluded to in my discussion of the fifth learning goal in Part 1, we did have three unfortunate incidents of students using AI in the completion of their MA exams. In each case we required the student to redo at least one written exam. Since then we have developed an AI policy that we will apply to theses, MA exams, and all other written assignments. This is

part of our overall effort to see the fifth learning goal applied vigorously to our program, which aligns with the professional standards of the American Historical Association.

More broadly, it is fair to say that the addition of the fifth learning goal has already impacted our course content as we encourage our students to always keep in mind responsible scholarship, including obvious things like avoiding plagiarism but also learning how to maintain professional courtesy toward colleagues and to be respectful of differences of interpretation and perspective among historians. Most importantly, we want our students to recognize various experiences that the historical record reveals, including those of traditionally under-represented groups and regions. This is fundamental to an ethical approach to history. So, in that regard, the introduction of CGS's newest learning goal was very timely indeed and has helped us with our own internal assessments.