

**General Education Assessment  
Core Curriculum Assessment Report  
Social Sciences  
Department of History  
Prepared by Alessandro Brogi, UGSD**

The purpose of this assessment is to measure the learning outcomes of students in the core curriculum classes administered by our Department. The results will help us to evaluate the competencies of students in the Social Sciences/Humanities disciplines, and to plan curricular and pedagogical changes in order to improve students learning skills, and assist retention in our college.

This is our third consecutive assessment. While each assessment has yielded useful data, there has been a gradual improvement in our assessing technique, following standard practices as well as experimental approaches. Assessment and grading are two different, albeit similar, activities. The current best practice calls for assessment to be done independently of grading, in order to gain a more objective perspective.

**In History's 2016 trial**, the assessment was done by the instructors themselves, with some examination by faculty members of the Curriculum Committee. The department selected all of its 48 core curriculum course sections of HIST 1113, 1123, 2003, 2013, ranging from 22 seats (honors sections of HIST 1113 and 1123) to 70 seats, for a total of 1,844 students enrolled, to administer a test toward the end of the semester, consisting of an essay answering a relatively broad question that engaged students in historical inquiry through both primary and secondary sources. The Department of History Undergraduate Curriculum Committee then tracked the scores and learning outcomes of the first 10 students on the alphabet list for each section, totaling 480 representative samples.

The assessment, while using the data emerging from most of the samples, suffered from some inconsistencies in the ways instructors applied or scored the rubric assigned for all 48 classes. Questions were also raised the following year on the potential utility or lack thereof of an assessment based on a rubric that applied skills required of a History degree candidate. In other words, students in the core classes come from all majors in all colleges at the university, and so assessment of these courses provides little information about History majors.

However, since the History Gen Ed classes participated in the general assessment for Social Sciences Learning Outcomes, the project still yielded important data that can be utilized generally in both Humanities and Social Sciences offerings (and indeed, History, while

officially listed among the Humanities, is a discipline that overlaps the skills and learning outcomes of both the Humanities and the Social Sciences). So, for example, in this 2016 assessment, it was found that the two major weaknesses occurred in:

a) the critical evaluation of historical sources, primary or secondary, and of their contrasting points of view

AND

b) the mastery of the mechanics of academic writing (including citation style)

Also, in several cases, for the US survey courses in particular, the results were poorer than expected even for a freshmen class. (The details of that report can be made available).

The Gen Ed report was combined with an **Academic Assessment Report**, focused on the Learning Outcomes and Exit Polls of our **Senior Capstone seminars**. This combination of assessments of both entry level and added values toward the end of the student career is also in compliance with the proposed guidelines by The University General Education Curriculum Committee of 2018 (in fact, anticipating and guiding some of its findings), to evaluate Learning Outcomes, and Learning Indicators that combine "core goals" (in Gen Ed classes) and "value-added goals" (in upper level courses), and thus also assist students in mapping their academic careers with better ways of self-assessment and portfolios created for their career opportunities. This innovative combined evaluation was done also on the advice of some consultants from the American Association of Colleges and Universities.

**In 2017, the assessment** was conducted exclusively by two faculty members of the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, but it focused exclusively on the Academic Assessment Report of the Capstone Seminars, noting that the evaluation of the General Education core classes had been too rigorous, and not entirely reliable, given the inconsistent ways in which each instructor applied the rubrics. Most of all, the 2017 report argued, while not a writing intensive experience, the core courses require students to begin to develop their analytical and writing skills in their assessment of historical documents and secondary sources; the capstone seminars indeed represent the expected culmination of those analytical and writing skills, and the assessment thus provided the most useful information on the learning outcomes of History majors. The trial project conducted by Prof. Jeannie Whayne assessing capstone seminars based on both the paper samples and the exit polls (questionnaire answered by students) was exemplary. We also learned, though, that the rubrics developed for assessment of the capstone seminar could be easily adaptable for core classes. The core courses in U.S. and World history provide an introduction to History and familiarizes students with primary documents and secondary sources.

**In 2018**, the History Department is thus providing both assessments of Gen Ed and Capstone classes, this time turning the evaluation of the papers or artifacts for the Gen Ed classes to the faculty of the Undergraduate Curriculum, thus securing better

consistency in the evaluation process. The capstone seminar papers can be evaluated, under the provided rubric, by each instructor, given the relatively advanced level of each research project, and the familiarity each instructor has with the that project. The overall report (provided separately from this one) based on those results is then drafted by the Undergraduate Studies director.

**Blackboard Outcomes Tools and Assessment.** The History Department this year is the first in the Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences to adopt Blackboard Program and its Assessment tools, first piloted in 2017, but not individually adopted by any department yet. We predict, based on our results, that the program will be successfully adopted by all college departments. The use of the Blackboard platform allows an expedited and coordinated process of assessment among the evaluators. It also provides tools to establish the distribution of scores, averages, standard deviance of each score, and helps generate a report that aggregates the outcomes of all four General Education classes offered by History.

Four instructors, one each for the Gen Ed classes (HIST 1113, 1123, 2003, and 2013) added alignments to their assignments, to be included to the Blackboard Outcomes, returning 115 artifacts, which is the combined total for the 4 courses. The committee then randomly sampled 48 artifacts, or papers, 12 for each class, and compared the results based on the following rubric, uniformly applied, and corresponding to the Social Science Learning Outcomes that were measured.

**SSLO:**

- **(SSLO1) Thesis** - State a clear thesis, contextualizing past events with precision and detail
- **(SSLO2) Sources** - Fully utilize assigned sources, distinguishing, where appropriate, between primary and secondary materials and decide when to use each
- **(SSLO3) Analysis and Argument** - Develop and defend an argument backed by evidence that engages research material with a clear introduction, supporting evidence, and a conclusion that addresses broad implications maintain a coherent argument, supported by evidence and analysis, critically evaluating historical sources, understanding their problems and limitations.
- **(SSLO4) Connections** - Engage and discuss the broad issues, demonstrating the ability to identify and examine the three diversity issues defined as added values in the subject.
- **(SSLO5) Mechanics** - Master the mechanics of academic writing, communicating with logic and style

**RUBRIC:**

<b>Thesis</b>	There is clearly stated thesis, which is followed for the entirety of the paper	Paper has a thesis, which is generally followed for the entirety of the paper	Paper has a thesis, which may be weak or poorly stated, and is only rarely followed	Paper does not have a thesis
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<b>Source usage</b>	All the assigned sources are fully employed and the paper shows full understanding of the problems and limitations of them	Most of the assigned sources are employed, with good understanding of the problems and limitations of them	Most of the assigned sources are employed, with some understanding of the problems and limitations of them	Few or none of the assigned sources are employed, with little or no understanding of the problems and limitations of them
<b>Analysis &amp; Argument</b>	The arguments of the paper are clearly made and all supported by analysis and reference to the sources	The arguments of the paper are mostly clearly made and supported by some analysis and reference to the sources	The arguments of the paper are not always clearly made, with limited analysis and support from the sources	The paper does not make arguments clearly, or properly support them with analysis
<b>Connections</b>	The paper makes clear and convincing connections to broader issues, themes, concepts, and problems in the study of world history (HIST 1013 or 1023)/ US history (HIST 2003 or 2013)	The paper makes some connections to broader issues, themes, concepts, and problems in the study of world history (HIST 1013 or 1023)/ US history (HIST 2003 or 2013)	The paper makes limited connections to broader issues, themes, concepts, and problems in the study of world history (HIST 1013 or 1023)/ US history (HIST 2003 or 2013)	The paper does not make connections to broader issues, themes, concepts, and problems in the study of world history (HIST 1013 or 1023)/ US history (HIST 2003 or 2013)
<b>Mechanics</b>	Correct grammar and vocabulary are used. The writing style is elegant and compelling.	Correct grammar and vocabulary are mostly used. Only rare elements of writing style.	Correct grammar and vocabulary are sometimes used. The writing style is tedious or non-existent.	Correct grammar and vocabulary are rarely used

Major course objectives for each of our core offerings are to assist students to develop skills for the critical evaluation of historical evidence and arguments. While the essay tests administered in our core curriculum classes focused on the students' learning ability to frame historical questions, the purpose of this assessment has been to evaluate the students' developments of research and analytical skills that assist them in a variety of social science disciplines, thus reinforcing the interdisciplinary nature of our core offerings as much as of our upper level courses. The assessment is also designed with the goal of improving the students' learning, without limiting their achievement aspirations to just performance levels.

Our assignments for this assessment, beyond measuring results through rubrics and grading scores, encouraged student motivation toward improvement and progress, fostering understanding, healthy motivation, and, with the expert assistance of their instructors, independent, critical inquiry. Through broad questions and selection of primary and secondary sources, students were invited to formulate their own arguments, confronting themselves with a variety of points of view.

By helping them to hone their research skills and by nurturing their understanding of critical inquiry, we are aiming at their continuous improvement, in compliance with our program goals of education achievement.

Measuring the results of the assigned tests, as with previous assessments, allows us to find possible weaknesses in our current practice, develop teaching strategies that may better serve at-risk students, and further assist all students in their academic and career goals.

Since all our four course offerings are foundational courses for HIST majors, as well as core requirements for our Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Sciences students, the solicitation of the broader departmental review of the results and the proposed changes is deemed necessary. This also helps us better understand the added values learning goals achieved by our own majors when they reach the capstone levels of specialization (see our **second document**, assessing the History department's learning outcomes).

Our learning objectives for Gen Ed classes are also designed to assist our History majors more specifically. Exit polls from capstone seminars in the past years showed that some of our students, not necessarily at risk, but performing at average or below average levels, lacked sufficient training with basic research skills. The issue is now partly addressed by the introduction of a **3 credit hour University Perspectives in History**. Meeting both a major elective requirement and the perspectives requirement, this course introduces students to the basic research and analytical skills of the historian's craft.

Based on the same capstone seminar exit polls, however, we believe that our survey courses can complement the Perspectives class, at this starting level, teaching basic research skills, proficiency with critical thinking, and writing skills, including citation styles.

**Stated learning outcomes for the B.A. in History are the following:**

- Develop knowledge and skills necessary for careers requiring knowledge of history, critical analysis, and research, including teaching, law, and government
- Being able to pursue your interest in a particular region, time, period, or culture
- Enhance your understanding of the role played by diversity in the shaping of human experience
- Communicate effectively in writing
- Communicate effectively in oral discussion
- Understand the basic mechanics of historical research, including location and retrieval of information, correct usage of primary and secondary materials, and proper citation techniques
- Acquire the training necessary to continue the pursuit of the above goals

**Our stated course objectives for these freshmen classes are for students to**

- Develop skills for the critical evaluation of historical evidence and arguments.
- Learn how to frame historical questions, employing a range of primary and secondary sources (in this case limited, perhaps even just a primary source review properly contextualized).
- Learn how interpretive analyses provide a variety of answers to similar questions.
- Acquire a deliberative stance to explain elements of continuity and change throughout the period under examination, and learn to do so developing communication skills that makes the past accessible to multiple audiences.

By developing these research and analytical skills, students will find them applicable to the exploration of the historical record as well as to other professional endeavors. Finally, our core curriculum classes are also intended to show how knowledge of history, whether in its global or local trends, helps us to understand the present.

**Assignments (For the full text of each assignment, see APPENDIXES A through D):**

Four class sections were selected (one for each Gen Ed course offering). Given the different nature of historical inquiry and primary sources across the various time periods, assignments varied between, on one hand, those of World Civilization I and II (HIST 1113 and 1123), which generally required a comparison of two or more primary texts, and, on the other, those of US History I and II (HIST 2003 and 2013), which provided a broader choice of primary and secondary sources. The goal of helping students develop research skills, critical evaluation, and argument presentation, however, was the same for all four core classes.

**The World Civ I assignment** required students to use material from class and the readings covering roughly the years 800 BCE and 700 BCE, and to write a 4-6 page essay answering the following question:

What is religion's overall effect on/ relationship with complex civilization? To answer this overarching question, students were invited to consider the following factors:

- how does religion change based on its particular circumstances? What outside factors shape religion and lead to its spread?
- how does religion shape the morals/ values of a civilization?
- how does religion shape the lives of people in a civilization? Are they better off with religion?

**The World Civ II assignment** was the most focused on primary sources. This was an online course. Students analyzed and compared three primary sources on the colonization of the Americas. The sources were written by Christopher Columbus, Bartholeme de las Casas, and Juan Gines de Sepulveda.

The students were to answer the following prompt questions, addressing elements of analysis, context, bias.

Agenda: What are the authors' agendas with the primary sources? How did you discover their agendas? Were they hidden, or did you have to infer it from an outside source or previous knowledge?

Analysis: What are the main ideas or arguments presented in these primary sources?

Context: What was happening in the world or in the authors' homeland when the documents were created? This question is closely related to the question of agenda. Consulting reliable outside sources is a good way to find information that will help you in both areas.

Opinion: What is your personal opinion concerning the importance and/or persuasiveness of the primary sources? What can we learn from these sources on a non-historical level?

**The US I assignment** required students to analyze and contextualize the primary source-based account by John Hope Franklin and Loren Schweninger, *In Search of the Promised Land: A Slave Family in the Old South*

Students were required to specifically address questions re. the peculiar situation of the story's protagonist Sally Thomas; the various experiences of her now liberated children, based on their geographic relocation, including the international experiences of some of the family members, and how the experience in the American Civil War influence some members of the Thomas-Rapier family.

All these questions were clearly intended to allow students to contextualize a source based on a micro-historical account, and thus draw major conclusions on issues of slavery, emancipation, social and cultural dislocation, and even international perceptions, in a cross-section of American history during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

**The US II assignment** required students to write a 5-7page essay based on three primary sources from the “Selling the Computer Revolution” exhibit of the Computer History Museum. Students were allowed to select which three and what sub-theme they represented. Proper contextualization from course lectures and readings was required, thus combining the primary sources with knowledge of the secondary literature.

The core argument of their papers was supposed to express why the students chose those documents, correctly identify them and their purpose, and what we can learn about culture and technology from it.

#### **Further observations:**

For HIST 2013 the choice of sources, both primary and secondary is vast. One has also to consider that the majority of students, within both the Fulbright College and Campus wide, choose HIST 2013 as one of their Social Sciences or US Government core requirement fulfillment. This also explains our larger offering of HIST 2013 compared to the other three classes.

Given the choice of sources, and the potential for opinionated answers on 20th Century US History, the assignments were calibrated to provide a good balance between contextualization of the topic, historiographical analysis, and argument that includes broad implications of the event or topic.

#### **EVALUATIONS AND ASSESSMENT**

The Undergraduate Studies Committee evaluated the results, dividing the assessment based on the expertise of each of its members:

**HIST 1113 and 1123 sections were assessed by Professors Freddy Dominguez and Todd Cleveland**

**HIST 2003 and 2013 sections were assessed by Professors Jeannie Whyne and Alessandro Brogi**

**Overall assessment of the four core classes by Prof. Alessandro Brogi**



(\*Professor Charles Muntz, also a member of the UGS Committee had previously conducted the pilot project for the outcomes assessment in the humanities in 2017).

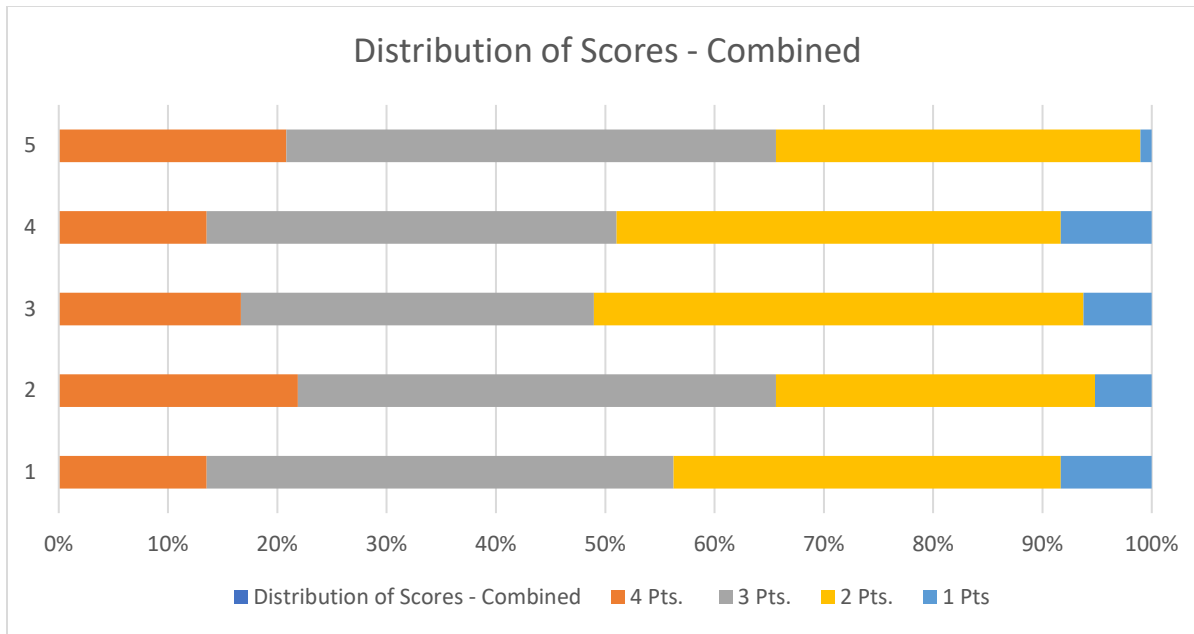
The assessment showed only a handful of large discrepancies or variance (2 points or more), between each of the two pairs of faculty. Those differences were averaged to the closest point, to ensure fairness and consistency. So overall, the evaluators fully agreed on the results of about 80% of the papers; disagreed on about 10%; and strongly disagreed on only 10% of them (and only on individual learning outcomes, not all five of them).

## RESULTS

The combined results of the 96 artifacts assessed from the four sections of HIST 1113, 1123, 2003, and 2013 is as follows. The max score **per category** was **4 points = 20 points for max score of five categories combined.**

<b>Mean</b>	<b>2.615</b>	<b>2.823</b>	<b>2.594</b>	<b>2.563</b>	<b>2.854</b>	<b>13.448</b>
<b>Std. Dev.</b>	<b>0.826</b>	<b>0.833</b>	<b>0.841</b>	<b>0.831</b>	<b>0.754</b>	<b>3.228</b>

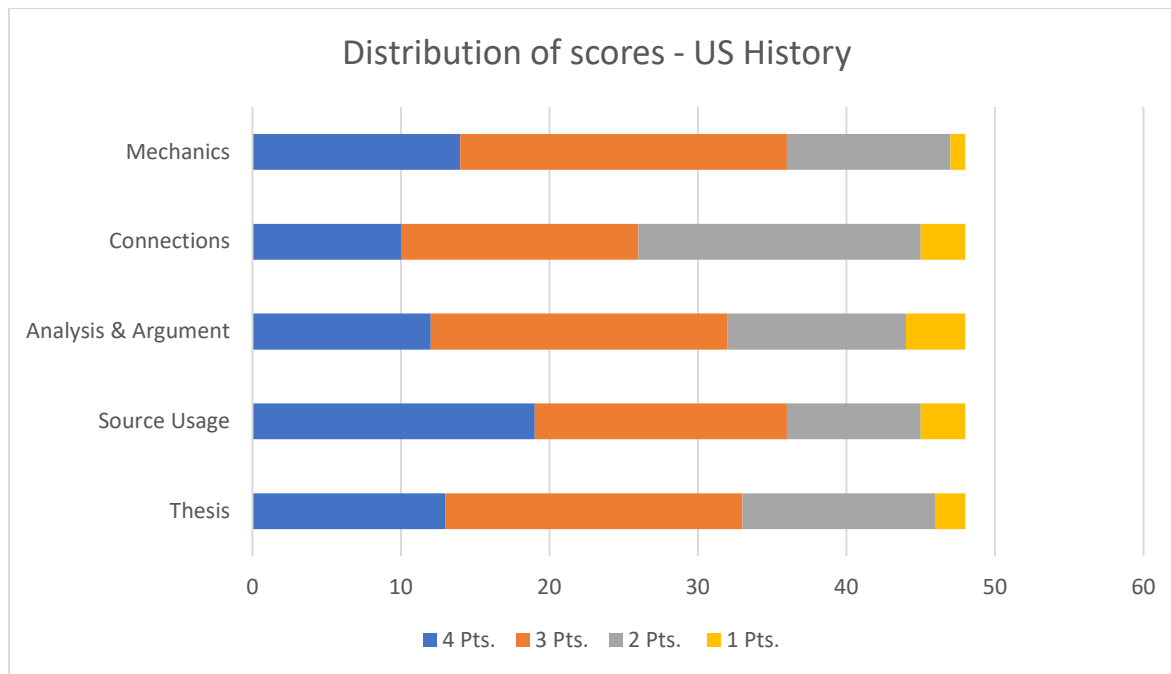
<b>Distribution of scores – Combined</b>						
	<b>Thesis</b>	<b>Source Usage</b>	<b>Analysis &amp; Argument</b>	<b>Connections</b>	<b>Mechanics</b>	
<b>4 Pts.</b>	13	21	16	13	20	
<b>3 Pts.</b>	41	42	31	36	43	
<b>2 Pts.</b>	34	28	43	39	32	
<b>1 Pts.</b>	8	5	6	8	1	
<b>N =</b>	96	96	96	96	96	



**For the two US History sections the results were as follows:**

Mean	2.917	3.083	2.833	2.688	3.021	14.542
Std. Dev.	0.846	0.919	0.907	0.879	0.785	3.537
Distribution of scores						
	Thesis	Source Usage	Analysis & Argument	Connections	Mechanics	
<b>4 Pts.</b>	13	19	12	10	14	
<b>3 Pts.</b>	20	17	20	16	22	
<b>2 Pts.</b>	13	9	12	19	11	

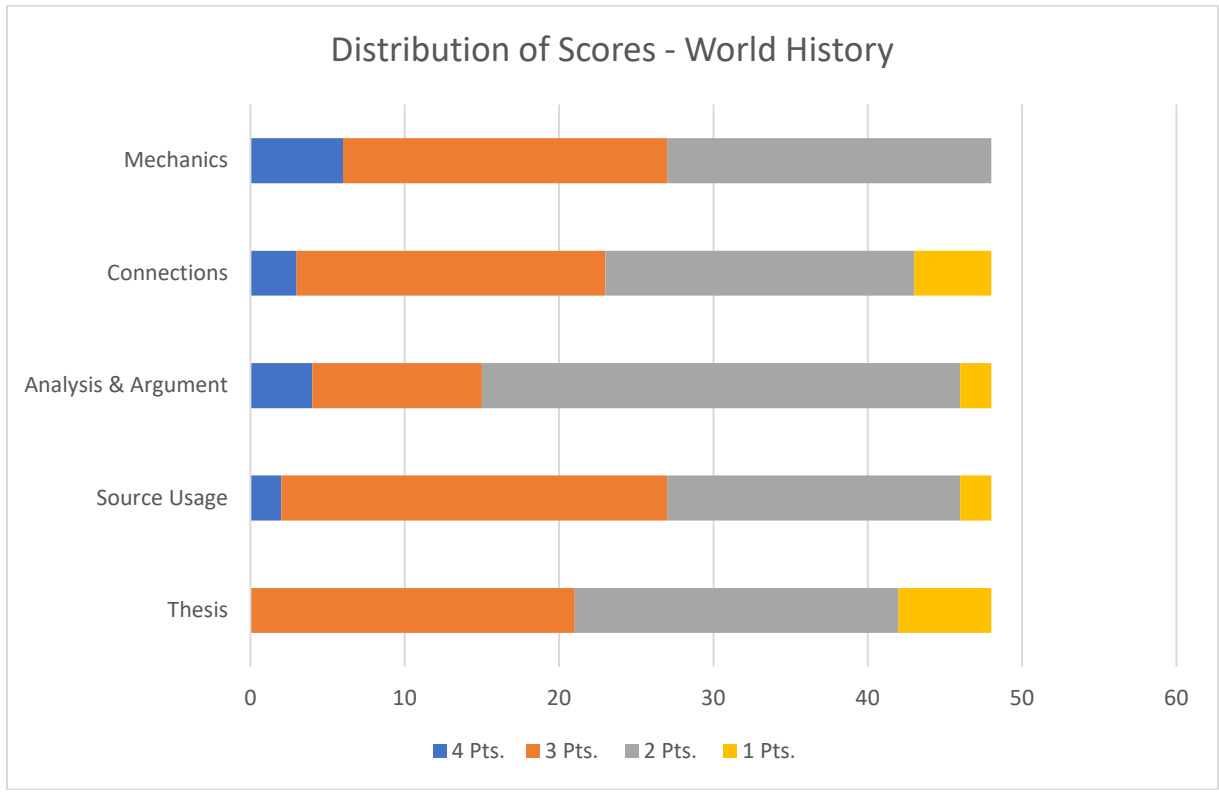
<b>1 Pts.</b>	2	3	4	3	1
<b>N =</b>	48	48	48	48	48



**For the two World History courses, the results were as follows:**

<b>Mean</b>	<b>2.313</b>	<b>2.563</b>	<b>2.354</b>	<b>2.438</b>	<b>2.688</b>	<b>12.354</b>
<b>Std. Dev.</b>	<b>0.689</b>	<b>0.649</b>	<b>0.699</b>	<b>0.769</b>	<b>0.689</b>	<b>2.471</b>

Distribution of Scores					
	Thesis	Source Usage	Analysis & Argument	Connections	Mechanics
<b>4 Pts.</b>	0	2	4	3	6
<b>3 Pts.</b>	21	25	11	20	21
<b>2 Pts.</b>	21	19	31	20	21
<b>1 Pts.</b>	6	2	2	5	0
<b>N =</b>	48	48	48	48	48



- A) Overall, this is the average (comparable to a C+ in letter grades) that was to be expected. What is most encouraging is the fact that there were very few papers scoring “1” on any of the categories, particularly in the US History sections. More troublesome is the discrepancy in the scores on the LO “Thesis,” which had 13 students ranking at the “4” level in the US History Sections, and 0 (zero) students scoring “4” in the World History sections. This may be due in part to familiarity with the subject in US History, with students being more deliberative on issues of race or gender (the US II papers had a strong emphasis on the impact of the computer revolution on gender relations). When opinionated, students also tend to veer toward clearly stated thesis statements. However, the lack of strong returns in that LO for World History should be taken into account.
- B) Looking at the aggregate scores, it is clear that the learning outcome “Source Usage” was the strongest one, across all four sections. This, however, may be due in part to the fact that 1) the sources were provided by the instructors, and 2) since these Gen Ed classes are aimed at novices in History, all instructors tried to guide and support students as much as possible; they offered reminders of what topics students should cover in response to any given prompt, or they provided a series of questions to consider in their responses.
- C) This approach may have favored the Category of “Analysis” in part, but had mixed results with regard to the Categories of “Thesis” and “Connections,” which were overall the weakest.  
The weakness in establishing **connections** with the broad issues or debates in History is rather predictable, given the lack of expertise in History of most of these students.
- D) In the World History sections, the “Connections” outcome was slightly stronger than the “Analysis & Argument” outcome. In the US History sections, the “Analysis & Argument” outcome was slightly stronger than the “Connections” outcome. This may have something to do with either one of these factors:
- 1) The students’ inclination to view events in US history in isolation from the internal or global context
  - 2) The way US History might be taught, with more thematic compartmentalization than World History perhaps affects the results in part.
- E) In the organization of the papers a good number of students showed confusion, misunderstanding, or lassitude in distinguishing an introduction and a conclusion. In these cases, the conclusions merely reiterated the main argument presented in the introduction, sometimes verbatim, instead of expanding the introductory matter in light of the evidence, analysis, and arguments developed through the paper.

- F) While the papers showed only a few instances of “atrocities” in grammar, syntax, and style, the overall quality of the writing, with a few exceptions, ranged from average to mediocre. This is a clear sign that much still needs to be done for students, during their freshman year, to hone their writing skills.
- G) In general, the discrepancy in US-World Civ results may be due, in small part perhaps, to the lack of appropriate training of our instructors on the subject - though this is quite common in most US institutions.

### **Suggested improvements:**

The overall results show that the department is performing very well when it comes to imparting the basic skills associated with the craft of writing history, combining rigor with the ability to engage students. The guidelines for each assignment were examples of clarity, and appeared to contain all the elements that, in the course of a semester, had contributed to the students’ learning objectives.

We cannot, however, discard the low quality of some of the artifacts by simply concluding that students come to us poorly prepared, or were unwilling or unable to perform to their best potential. Some marginal improvements in our pedagogical approach may be suggested as follows (by items A through @ shown above):

A) A topic selection in World History could address the students’ interest and involvement, encouraging them to have clear thesis statements.

B and C) Guidance is recommended, but when taking students “by the hand,” instructors may limit the extent to which students are challenged to come up with a viable argument of their own. They also make it somewhat more difficult for students to arrive at a point, or a thesis, that can demonstrate an ability to provide synthesis.

D) Expand the notions and thematic approaches in US History, taking into account the current trends in teaching history in the global era (see Lynn Hunt, *Writing History in the Global Era* – 2015)

E) Providing examples of what constitutes a good introduction – addressing some basic hypotheses and questions – and a conclusion – elaborating analytically on the initial questions and findings can assist students make the needed distinction between the two, and, probably, to better organize their papers as well.

F) In cooperation with other departments (English, Political Sciences, Communications, Journalism, and the Writing Center with Class +) we can promote frequency of practice in essay writing.

G) We are discussing the possibility of having a one credit hour class for doctoral students, taught by faculty with expertise in teaching World Civilization classes. Students with concentration areas in Europe, Asia, Africa would be mandated to take this training class, for a CR grade, toward their future teaching of World Civ sections. Among the sources used for this class we would include books like Antoinette Burton's *A Primer for Teaching World History: Ten Design Principles*.

Faculty teaching this one hour per week class would either have a course-reduction that semester, or receive extra compensation, similar to what they would receive for a summer or intersession class. This is pending the approval of the Dean's Office, and the finding of appropriate funds, but we do believe that it would benefit both our graduate instructors (and their future careers) and the students taking World Civilization classes.

A through G) The "placebo/incentive" effect:

Some assignments weighed certain learning outcomes far more heavily than others (see example of HIST 2003 in Appendix C below). Students who are made aware that their analysis will count 75% while their thesis statement (contained in the Intro and Conclusion) or their writing style and grammar count 10-15% each, will put much less effort in their originality or critical thinking (though some critical thinking is usually contained in the analysis) and their syntax or writing style. While it is true that the scores are rather consistent for each student (if scoring low on writing style, the student is likely to score low on analysis, or thesis, too), in some cases the student's effort may be incentivized by a better distributed weight of each learning outcome category. The percentages don't have to be the same for each LO: for example, Analysis and Argument should indeed be weighed more heavily than writing style, or Thesis, or Connections (this last one because of the expected low training of non-History majors in this particular category). But a major differential should be avoided.

### **Further observations (on the limits of this assessment)**

The assignments, while easily fitting the rubric, were not as uniform as they should be for a fully reliable/comparable assessment. In the future, we need to ensure certain standard criteria for assignments - criteria that should not be confused with strict formulas or requirements on the instructors/faculty. For example, an evaluation of research-related skills - whether you call it Analysis or Connections - cannot be done for a paper that is an extended book review (even of an account containing primary sources) with the same accuracy as the evaluation done on a paper giving some initiative to students on the selection of sources.

The next point is about not committing the experimental fallacy of relying on just a few results to draw broad conclusions. This assessment is only the beginning of a long-term process of evaluation of our Gen Ed classes. We have to take into account the

possibility that these four sections thus selected might not be entirely representative of the performance of students in all our World Civ and US I and II classes. The samples chosen could be outliers. We therefore need to perform the same assessment multiple times to insure its accuracy. Only a repeat of similar samples through a span of three-four years can give us a reliable idea of areas that needs strengthening and ways to retain students and lead them to academic success.

### **Conclusions:**

These caveats notwithstanding, we do believe that we can draw some preliminary conclusions from this assessment.

Overall, students performed as expected, with a standard grade curve peaking at the C+/B- levels. Still, we should strive to improve their analytical and writing learning outcomes. Each assessment was evaluated not with the grade level but rather with the learning outcome in mind, with plenty of latitude and flexibility in understanding the limitations of students in their first approach to History writing. The learning goals must be understood as articulating the goals and objectives of our General Education program and those of academic disciplines, and so they are commensurate with the level of these classes.

Our assessment and learning outcomes have been modeled along the general input and feedback provided by the American Historical Association *Tuning Project*, drafted in 2013 and revised in 2016. The goal of that project has been to articulate the ways history supports an educated workforce and citizenry and demonstrate that its value goes far beyond narrow professional training. Its set of core competencies and examples of specific ways students might demonstrate their competence has been geared to match BOTH the expectations of capstone courses for seniors AND the General Education courses offered by History Departments nationwide.

While the AHA's experiment and rubrics clarified the expectations we set for students, the organization, in 2016, also recognized that it needed to "thoughtfully integrate our specific disciplinary goals with the statements of learning outcomes frequently encountered in general education programs, institutional missions, and state mandates." In this 2018 assessment we have tried to match those disciplinary goals, adapting and simplifying the learning outcomes, and consequent grade expectations compared to our model for the 2016 assessment.

Our main suggestion therefore consists of improving the interdisciplinary aspects of the humanities and social sciences, with assignments in all related disciplines (e.g. English composition, American National Government, Communications, Philosophy) that



will make it easier for students to develop their analytical and writing skills, and thus meet the expectations of our core courses, achieving those learning outcomes at as much a consistent level as possible, improving their individual capacities and motivation.

## APPENDIX A

### TEST for HIST 1113

Using the material from class and the readings covering roughly the years 800 BCE and 700 BCE, please write a 4-6 page essay that answers the following questions:

What is religion's overall effect on/ relationship with complex civilization? To answer this overarching question, consider issues such as:

how does religion change based on its particular circumstances? What outside factors shape religion and lead to its spread?

how does religion shape the morals/ values of a civilization?

how does religion shape the lives of people in a civilization? Are they better off with religion?

Excellent essays should include:

an introduction that provides a general summary/ historical ideas of the topic and a clear thesis statement.

at least four clear examples with support from at least four of the sources (with a mixture of primary and secondary sources)

a conclusion that does more than simply summarize the previously stated points but considers questions such as:

what is the overall role of religion in history? In modern life?

are there certain circumstances that lead to the greater success of a religion/ civilization?

are people happier/ better off living in a society with religion? if so, what kind of religion?

proper formatting (standard font, font size, margins; double spaced, title)

evidence of careful organization, proof reading, and editing.

an appropriate number of direct quotations (I find one per body paragraph is a good number, but it can vary) with parenthetical citations - (Harari, 62) for example.

## APPENDIX B

### TEST for HIST 1123

#### Instructions:

Please refer to this document for both Reaction Papers required by HIST 1123. If you have any questions about these assignments, please contact the Instructor.

#### Assignment:

Reaction papers will introduce students to the art of historical analysis through primary source readings. Students will be tasked with reading, analyzing and commenting on primary sources from a range of historical and cultural periods. Students will be responsible for 2 reaction papers throughout the semester. Each reaction paper should focus on the primary sources included in Sources of World History (PDF- on Blackboard) as indicated on the syllabus.

#### Style:

Reaction papers should be at least 3 full pages long (double-spaced). It is okay to exceed that minimum page length, but three or four well done pages should be enough to get an A on the assignment. In other words, you will not receive extra credit for exceeding the page requirement. You should use 1 inch margins and 12 point Times New Roman font. Reaction papers that are not double-spaced with one inch margins, written in 12 point Times New Roman font, and at least three full pages long will receive a zero.

You should also pull a few quotations from the documents and work them into your writing. Quoting huge chunks of another author's work is lazy writing, so stick to small quotes that get to the heart of the matter.

Include footnotes for direct quotations from the documents. If you consult a reliable outside source (which I encourage you to do) and include direct quotations or ideas taken from that source, then include a footnote citation for that source. The first module includes a sample paper and a guide to the Chicago-style (aka Turabian) footnotes which are the standard for historical writing.

#### Reaction Prompts:

These prompts will form the bulk of your reaction– answer each question thoughtfully. Broad opinions without historical basis will hurt your grade.

**Agenda:** What are the authors' agendas with the primary sources? How did you discover their agendas? Were they hidden, or did you have to infer it from an outside source or previous knowledge?

**Analysis:** What are the main ideas or arguments presented in these primary sources?

**Context:** What was happening in the world or in the authors' homeland when the documents were created? This question is closely related to the question of agenda. Consulting reliable outside sources is a good way to find information that will help you in both areas. The university library website offers access to online encyclopedias that should be very useful for this purpose. <http://libraries.uark.edu/eresources/listing.asp?Category=Reference&Listing=Dictionaries+and+Encyclopedias>

**Opinion:** What is your personal opinion concerning the importance and/or persuasiveness of the primary sources? What can we learn from these sources on a non-historical level?

## APPENDIX C

### Assignment for HIST 2003

#### Pax Americana Paper

Due: electronically by the start of class November 17th, 2017

#### Assignment Criteria:

Your analysis must specifically address each of the following questions: - Clearly Sally Thomas was a remarkable woman; how was she able to free her sons from slavery? Did her work/position give her an advantage over others who were enslaved? Why or why not? - What experiences did members of the Thomas-Rapier family have as free African-Americans in the United States? How did their treatment vary by location? - Please discuss the international experiences of members of the Thomas-Rapier family. Why did they travel internationally? Where did they go? How were their experiences vary by place? - Many members of the Thomas-Rapier family lived through the Civil War. What were their wartime experiences? How did the war impact their lives?

Your paper should have an introduction, which ends with a thesis statement that coherently and succinctly covers your answers to the above questions that you will later elaborate on in your body paragraphs.

Your answers to the above questions in your body paragraphs must include examples from the book. You are welcome to make broad statements (e.g., “Race was very complicated in the antebellum U.S...”), but you must cite specific examples from the book to support your arguments. You are encouraged to include information from class lectures when it intersects with events of the time or experiences members of the Thomas-Rapier family may have had. Finally, write a conclusion paragraph that coherently reiterates your argument and brings your analysis full circle.

Do not use or consult any sources other than the book, class lectures, and the American Yawp

#### Important note:

As you work on this assignment, please review the document included in the folder regarding appropriate ways to write about race.

#### Length & Formatting:

750-1000 words, list your word count at the bottom of the essay. Double-spaced, 12 point font with your name, date and class time at the top of the first page. Late papers – turned in after the beginning of class – will be docked one letter grade each day late.

**Citations:**

Citations should be used for direct quotes and large ideas/arguments. Class lectures do not need citations. Because this is a shorter paper with a much more limited source base, you do not have to use Chicago style citations.

**For *In Search of the Promised Land*:**

Parenthetical citations that include the author's last name followed by a comma and then the page number before the period of each sentence where a citation is needed. Example: (Franklin and Schweninger, 42). For the American Yawp: Parenthetical citations that include "The American Yawp," the chapter number, and the title of section used within the chapter. Example: Current thought could have contributed to this as "In the 1740s, two seemingly conflicting bodies of thought—the Enlightenment and the Great Awakening—began to combine in the colonies and challenge older ideas about authority" (The American Yawp, Chapter 5, The Origins of the American Revolution).

**Submission:**

Electronically submit on Blackboard by the start of class November 17th.

**Grading Rubric**

10 points – Introduction & conclusion

75 points – Body (answering required questions with evidence)

15 points – Grammar & clarity

Total of 100 points possible

**Essay Checklist**

Is my name on the paper?

Is my class time on the paper?

Is the date on my essay?

Have I doubled spaced my essay?

Have I included a thesis statement in my essay?

Have I used citations correctly and when needed?

Have I proofread my essay for grammatical errors & clarity?

This includes

1) No first or second person writing like "I think the British..." or "when you read the book..."

2) No contractions like "didn't"

3) No writing conversationally.

Have I turned a copy of my essay into Blackboard? Have I included a word count at the bottom of my essay?

## APPENDIX D

### Assignment for HIST 2013

Prompt: Your final exam will be an essay on three primary sources from the “Selling the Computer Revolution” exhibit of the Computer History Museum of your choosing and contextualize them using what you know of American history from the course lectures and readings. For each document, you need to use both texts to contextualize what we can learn about America from them.

Length: 5-7 pages

Instructions: You will write a 5-7 page paper that answers the prompt in its entirety. You must create a thesis statement that coherently argues the main point of your essay (10 points). Your thesis is the crux of the paper, and everything else must either support or expand upon it. What should follow is the organization of the paper, which is the roadmap for the rest of the essay that follows (10 points). Your introduction should amount to a one paragraph summary of the entire book.

The paragraphs that follow should follow your organization. This is where you will contextualize each primary source. Be sure to mention why you chose it, to correctly identify what it is, the item’s purpose, and what we can learn about culture and technology from it. (55 points).

Your conclusion must restate your thesis and the organization of your paper. This should roughly mimic your introduction (10 points).

You must follow the proper spelling, grammar, and citation rules for Chicago Style papers. Please see the Guide on Writing Papers on blackboard for more information (15 points).

Academic Honesty:

From the Provost’s Office:

“As a core part of its mission, the University of Arkansas provides students with the opportunity to further their educational goals through programs of study and research in an environment that promotes freedom of inquiry and academic responsibility. Accomplishing this mission is only possible when intellectual honesty and individual integrity prevail.

Each University of Arkansas student is required to be familiar with and abide by the University’s ‘Academic Integrity Policy’ which may be found at [honesty.uark.edu/policy](http://honesty.uark.edu/policy). Students with questions about how these policies apply to a particular course or assignment should immediately contact their instructor.”

This is not a group project. Your paper must be your original work and yours alone. This paper does not require using sources outside of the assigned readings; use of any outside source,

including Wikipedia, is strictly prohibited. Students must properly cite all quotations and paraphrasing of approved course materials.

Thesis:	10 points
Organization:	10 points
Body Paragraphs:	55 points

Conclusion:	10 points
Spelling, grammar, citations:	15 points
TOTAL POINTS:	100 points