

**General Education Assessment
Core Curriculum Assessment Report
Social Sciences
Department of History
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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.

In the Spring of 2016, the Department of History 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. This assessment, in compliance with the Academic Assessment Program presented on January 12, 2015, is based on such direct method to provide clear and compelling evidence that students are learning.

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 also 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. In addition, our department conducts regular assessment reports on an annual basis through exit surveys of our capstone seminars for our HIST majors.

Our learning objectives are also designed to assist our History majors more specifically. Exit polls from capstone seminars last year 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 will introduce 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

Adherence of our core offerings to the Learning Objectives in Social Sciences (SSLO)

Instructors, composed largely of graduate assistants, ABD lecturers, and including two faculty members teaching two of our core sections, were provided with our learning objectives guideline (Appendix A), and scoring rubric (Appendix B) for each of the SSLO category.

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 broad range of primary and secondary sources, and recognizing historical facts in context.
- 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.

Six learning objectives were provided as follows (these are our learning objectives after six hours of History courses – the assessment took into consideration that many of the students were completing 3 hours of History):

- (SSLO1) Engage in historical inquiry, contextualizing past events with precision and detail
- (SSLO2) Distinguish between primary and secondary materials and decide when to use each
- (SSLO3) Critically evaluate historical sources, and recognize their value, by exploring conflicting narratives, points of view, and evidence
- (SSLO4) 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
- (SSLO5) Demonstrate knowledge of historical research techniques, documentation, organization
- (SSLO6) Master the mechanics of academic writing, communicating with logic and style

The scoring rubric (Appendix B) measured the outcomes.

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.

Sample tests were provided to instructors for guidance in drafting their own assignments (Appendixes C, D, and E). Instructors were recommended to draft their assignments based on their individual area of research expertise to better assess the learning outcomes. The assignments were designed to be manageable by a class of freshmen with little or no knowledge of the historiographical debates or the archival sources. In most cases, the primary sources (as in

Sample Appendix E) were made available through web-links or through scanned pages provided by the instructors.

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

HIST 1113 sections were assessed by Prof. Charles Muntz
HIST 1123 sections were assessed by Prof. Freddy Dominguez
HIST 2003 sections were assessed by Prof. Jeannie Whayne
HIST 2013 sections were assessed by Prof. Alessandro Brogi
Overall assessment of the four core classes by Prof. Alessandro Brogi

Use of SSLO guidelines and rubrics

The instructors provided students with an opportunity to write papers that addressed the main criteria we were concerned with. This is a reflection of our continuous high quality of teaching and training of not just students in our major but of all students enrolled in our core curriculum offerings. Our teaching staff has consistently received higher than average evaluation ratings within the Fulbright College and the Campus at large.

Instructors required students to master the basics of historical inquiry, engage in research in historical texts, employ the use of sources appropriate to the topic, demonstrate ability in critical analysis, formulate a solid argument, and argue it effectively. They made it clear that they expected students to write clearly and edit carefully while demonstrating particular historical research and analytical skills.

Although the assessment was a new implementation, the assigned tests were not a new requirement in every case. Most of our instructors incorporate a short take-home paper assignment, in some cases involving a primary research component, or a comparative analysis of secondary sources. What was new in this assessment was that the SSLO guidelines and scoring rubrics introduced a grading method that allowed instructors to provide performance criteria, with a clear and sound method of assessment, and for students to better understand their learning targets, and upon submission of their papers, the strengths and weaknesses of their completed assignment.

All of our instructors adhered to the model rubric provided. Each of them was given discretion on

- 1) The length of the required paper. Almost all instructors required a 5-6 pp paper on average; a few of them required longer papers, up to ten pages; another minority required a 3 pp. paper. Given the scope of the paper inquiries, students performed best in the middle range of paper length (5-6 pp). The long papers resulted harder to manage; the shorter papers gave students little room to analyze the sources properly and provide an insightful original argument.
- 2) How to score each category and how to compute the paper assignment within the overall class grade. Most instructors weighed all categories roughly equally (e.g. highest scores of 18-16 pts for each SSLO, totaling 100 for the test score – or a simple max score of 5 points on a scale of 0 to 5 for each category). Some instructors weighed some categories

considerably higher than other categories. Our goal was rather to identify which of the six categories required improvement of the students' learning.

Since these classes were mostly composed of freshmen who are not History majors, category SSLO3, when the assignment required a rather specific knowledge of conflicting points of view among historians (the historiographical debate) – no matter how those points of view were clearly presented in the assignment instructions – was weighed considerably lower than the other five categories. The majority of instructors who gave **SSLO3** a smaller percentage of the paper's grade also lowered the overall weight of **SSLO6**, on writing techniques and style. It is no accident that these were also the **lowest scoring categories** across all of our learning outcomes, with the exception of the honors sections of HIST 1113 and HIST 1123.

Evaluation of Results:

The overall average for both HIST 1113 and HIST 1123 was a solid B, and A- for Honors sections

The overall average for HIST 2003 and 2013 was B -/C+

The consistency of relatively high grades in our World History sections perhaps had to do (in small part) with an inclination toward inflating grades, but more importantly, it was likely the result of the guidance offered by instructors. The higher results in our World History sections are also probably due to the fact that more History or Social Sciences/Humanities majors are enrolled in World History courses rather than in the US History classes. These overall results and guidance, however, should be qualified.

Because these exams were aimed at novices, 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.

This approach had mixed results: 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 on 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.

The weakest SSLO categories

HIST 1123 was the exception, as it showed no discernible consistency in major weaknesses. Instructors within each section did find a major weakness in one particular SSLO category, but with no common trend among the eight class sections. This could be due to the instructors' individual emphases on which category needed to be mastered the most.

Almost every section of the other three core groups of HIST 1113, and particularly 2003, 2013 consistently showed the major weaknesses, though in just by small variation from the other categories, to be

- a) the critical evaluation of historical sources, primary or secondary, and of their contrasting points of view (SSLO3)
- b) mastery of the mechanics of academic writing (including citation style) (SSLO6)

In general, this is not surprising for freshmen, many of whom are at their first experience in evaluating a historical or historiographical debate, and have had little training in mastering writing techniques. But in several cases, for the US survey courses in particular, the result were poorer than expected even for a freshmen class, as several students across both core offerings were placed as follows:

- roughly one third of them for SSLO3, in the third level of “some mastery” (Knowledge and accurate analysis of at least two interpretations. The personal interpretive analysis is weak though)
- a smaller number of them for SSLO3, in the fourth level of “minimal mastery” (Little and/or flawed analysis of sources. No interpretive point of view offered)
- roughly 30% of them for SSLO6, in the third level of “some mastery” (Thesis is poorly stated. Argument tends to jump around though some points are identifiable. Many paragraphs without topic sentences. Some mistakes in structure, syntax, grammar, and punctuation. Misuse of words. No elegance of style)
- ca. 15% of them for SSLO6, in the fourth level of “minimal mastery” (No discernible thesis. The writing is poor. The argument is fuzzy. Paragraphs lack topic sentences and fail to follow logically. Frequent mistakes in structure, syntax, grammar, and punctuation. Misuse of words. The essay is hard to follow)

These results confirm that, at this level of experience, students should expect to be graded more lightly on these two categories.

With regard to category SSLO3: Students at this level are not introduced to the subtle dance between interpretive traditions (in modern scholarship) and how primary documents can help critique or add nuance to those interpretive traditions. This seems central to the historical enterprise as practiced, but not central to these tests.

At the same time, measures should be taken to better train students in critical thinking, evaluation of sources, interpretive frameworks, and in basic writing skills.

Additional Guidelines Provided in Each Section

The best examples of instructors’ guidelines and preliminary assignments required students to provide drafts and/or outlines of their papers. To make this assignment easier to handle, we recommend instructors to give a brief assignment, as nine of them did in this case, asking students to submit the following at least three weeks before their papers were due:

- A “Report Historiography Form” stating the various authors’ subjects and theses

- A Report Outline in which students were required to provide a working title, a synopsis of their main argument, a list of their key passages, and, optional, their opening paragraphs
- A one paragraph prospectus stating the student's thesis and listing the student's choice of sources

Some instructors added another useful way to better interpret each paper's weakness: they underlined within each box of the rubric the specific requirements/skills missed by the students (e.g.: in box 6, on writing style: "argument tends to jump around, though some points are identifiable").

Some assignments exceeded in combining primary and secondary sources, and requiring students to analyze how the historical context of each author influenced his presentation of the event. As the assignments included primary source analysis, they made students struggle to deal with every theme cogently in a five page paper.

In all four sections, the assignments that seemed to work most effectively, with clearly defined targets of research and learning outcomes were those with a limited selection of secondary sources. When an instructor assigned numerous sources, the students still tended to look only at a few.

In these cases, the instructor could have better explained which of those sources were the most important, or how those sources could have been selected based on the focus the student decided to give his/her paper. For example, the sample prompt on the decision to use the atomic bomb in 1945 (Appendix E) gave students a choice to either concentrate on the decision-making process in Washington, or the specific conflicting opinions from various diplomats involved in the decision, or the diplomatic exchanges and ultimatums between Washington and Tokyo.

Another limitation to evaluating papers is the difficulty of seeing how they may or may not fit into the larger structure of the course. The best set of instructions complemented the technical aspects (drafts, thesis statement, historiography) indicated above, with thematic prompts on how to approach the topic, based on materials already discussed in class. This calls our attention to the importance of instructors building up to these final papers in their lectures and the need for increased professional development for our instructors.

HIST 1113 and HIST 1123

The major emphasis in these two classes' assignments was on primary sources; modern scholarship (more broadly, secondary sources) was not emphasized. To be sure, the exams surveyed did (to varying degrees) encourage the use of secondary sources, but these often seemed peripheral.

The paper assignments for HIST1113 were diverse, reflecting the wide range of topics and approaches permissible for that class. Some assignments asked students to only look at primary sources, while others required students to look at both ancient texts and selected pieces of modern scholarship.

These mainly-primary source-based paper assignments were good at allowing students to read a text closely, and to use a source that is not “historical” per se to reconstruct especially a pre-modern society. Some students though struggled to maintain a theme in their paper, which may be indicative of the difficulty for freshmen to rely almost exclusively on primary sources without the aid of secondary accounts that could help them better frame a theme.

Papers for Honors sections of HIST 1113 and 1123 challenged students to compare scholarly sources of a higher degree of complexity with a greater number of primary sources, compared to the regular sections of both classes: for ex. (for HIST 1113H) Bart D. Ehrman’s *Jesus: Apocalyptic Prophet of the New Millennium* was examined by students in conjunction with texts selections from the Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, and John; and (for HIST 1123H) another prompt asked student to embark in the debate on decolonization, selecting not only from the collection *Voices of Decolonization: A Brief History with Documents* but also with a number of primary sources provided by the instructor.

Students in all four sections of World History Honors displayed an understanding of the nuances of conflicting interpretations and placed them in long term perspective, and constructed arguments that followed a logical passages in arguments, often with original insights, if not novel theses. They also mastered writing techniques, in some cases with elegance of style, This confirms the high quality of our honors program and the support it receives from Fulbright College.

HIST 2003 and HIST 2013

While the selection of primary and secondary sources was more abundant and varied in US HIST classes than in World HIST classes – perhaps given the expertise of the majority of our instructors, or maybe due to the ready availability of sources for American topics – papers with a very limited selection of secondary sources tended to work better.

In both sections of HIST 2003 and 2013, most instructors did not make it clear how much the assignment would count toward the class grade. We suggest that in the future instructors add a line at the top of their rubrics indicating how much the paper will count toward the final grade. This will encourage students to take the assignment seriously at both the performance level and for the research and analytical skills they will acquire.

In HIST 2003, one excellent shorter assignment required students to read four scholarly essays and view an 85-minute documentary based on Laurel Thatcher Ulrich’s *A Midwife’s Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on her Diary, 1785-1912*. Students were required to

write a 4 to 5-page essay but it required citations, including using at least four examples from the diary taken either from the documentary or the essay on Ballard.

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 (19 sections) 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.

The best results were obtained when the assignment focused on a very particular aspect, while still allowing students to build their own analysis and argument. For example, one prompt required to focus on a collection of speeches and writings (with commentary in the book *The Civil Rights Struggle of the 1950s and 1960s*, ed. By David Howard Pitney) from two leading Civil Rights leaders, Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr., asking students, on that basis, and on the basis of other secondary sources, such as Mary Dudziak's *Cold War Civil Rights* and essays drawn from the collection *The Great Society And The High Tide Of Liberalism*, edited by Jerome M. Mileur and Sidney Milkis, to develop their own analysis from a selection that may have left little room for discretion, but still allowed them to build their own original argument.

Other prompts took a more eclectic route, including visual and audio sources, such as an assignment on the Kent State University massacre, which offered students a choice among media reports, grand jury investigations, photo images of the event, testimonies by students, faculty, and guardsmen, Neil Young's "Ohio" song. The assignment invited students to make an argument on who, between the national guardsmen and the students, was more responsible for the shootings, and, furthermore, to reflect (based on secondary sources) on how the events at Kent State differed from those at the University of Illinois and North Carolina. The comparative analysis was the main challenge for students, but most of them adequately identified the main differences, and the broad implications of anti-Vietnam protest, student activism, and even the emerging culture wars in US society at the end of the 1960s.

What is common among these two assignments for HIST 2013, as well as the assignments that adhered to the suggested prompts on US foreign policies (the Cuban Missile Crisis, the decision to use the Atomic Bomb on Japan) with a discretionary choice of thematic approaches, was that, as they focused on themes and events that are somewhat familiar to students, also invited them to reflect further on them, and address the variety of assessments historians have provided on those events. Prompting them to better contextualize events they had some knowledge of, students provided above average critical evaluations of primary and secondary sources (SSLO3), and argument and organization of their papers (SSLO4) – the two

categories, besides writing skills (SSLO6), in which most sections showed a slightly greater weakness compared to other learning targets.

Conclusion and Proposed Changes to Instructional Approaches, Core Content, Objectives, and Assessment

Test results confirm that students have adequate training throughout their History coursework. The History Department, thanks to the high quality of its instructors, is conducting an excellent work in improving students' learning and skills associated with the mastery of Humanities and Social Sciences. The interdisciplinary nature of our program further assists academic achievements beyond the strictly defined craft of historical analysis.

The most identifiable weaknesses were in the critical evaluation and writing skills categories of learning outcomes. In assessing these weaknesses, we should bear in mind that students were often confronted with the diverse nature of historical inquiry, including historiographical debates, for their first time.

Those weaknesses must, however, be addressed at this early stage of students' academic progress. In addition to other valuable initiatives and technologies – such as UASuccess, the Class+ initiative that includes tutoring, academic coaching, writing support, the Office of Graduation and Retention, the School of Journalism's Writing Center – the reformulation of our core classes with the introduction of a directed research assignment in their requirements, with proper guidance, will improve the students' learning outcomes.

The following are our recommendations on how to administer the tests and how to improve both the quality of our instructorship and the learning outcomes of students.

- The assignments should require a paper length of no more than 6 pages, to allow students to manage effectively the sources, while also not burdening them with a major writing task
- Paper assignments for each core class will incorporate learning objectives. This will train students to understand the general criteria for social sciences and humanities in not just the class they are currently taking but also in their subsequent curriculum.
- The number of sources should be manageable for a paper of this limited length and scope of inquiry.
- It is recommended that instructors, as some have done in this case, give a sequence of topical prompts throughout the semester, building up to this final assignment.
- While providing such prompts, and provide a set of questions to consider in preparation for the final test, students should not be forced to address only those questions; they should also be challenged to come up with a viable argument on their own. Through this calibration of guidance and independent interpretation, students will improve their

mastery of Historical Inquiry (SSLO1), argument and organization (SSLO4), and especially of “critical evaluation of sources” (SSLO3).

- The final papers should have preliminary assignments designed to encourage students to begin their papers early: a research paper proposal, and a thesis statement. To make this manageable for both students and instructors, particularly in large class sections, a preliminary draft should be assigned only in Honors sections of HIST 1113 and 1123.
- The paper assignments should make it clear how much the paper will count toward the final class grade. We suggest a range of 15-25% of the class grade for the paper.
- In classes with assigned graduate assistants, and particularly in large sections with multiple raters, a scoring rubric will allow consistency in the grading process.
- Rubrics should apply only to the most complex (final) assignment for the class. It should not apply to mid-term or final in class exams, or to single book reviews.
- Provide to students in each class a few examples, through shared anonymous documents, of excellent as well as poor written communication in papers, through writing style or organization and coherence.
- In designing their own rubrics, instructors should be careful to make clear what is valued in the performance levels, without either constraining or diminishing the product. Rubrics should not be either too broad or too narrow.
- In small class settings (the Honors Sections), introduce peer review of drafts by classmates. The feedback in this case will have to be formative, to help the learner to make improvements in the product; it will not give ratings that are factored in the student’s grade.
- How to go from performance level to motivation for learning? The guidelines provided by instructors should incorporate ways to encourage students to appreciate the value of the learning outcome. This was best done by most instructors who gave students opportunities to explore the assigned topic with learned opinion and critical evaluation of sources. Appendix E shows an example of such guidelines.
- Instructors should make students aware of the wide support system available on campus, especially through UASuccess, the Class+ initiative (this one includes tutoring, academic coaching, and writing support), the Office of Graduation and Retention, and the School of Journalism’s Writing Center.

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APPENDIX A

WHAT UNIVERSITY GENERAL EDUCATION OUTCOMES GUIDE STUDENT LEARNING IN COURSES THAT CARRY SOCIAL SCIENCES CREDIT?

Possible Learning Outcomes for History General Education Courses

HIST 1113, 1123, 2003, 2013

Major course objectives will be for students to develop skills for the critical evaluation of historical evidence and arguments. The students will learn how to frame historical questions, employing a broad range of primary and secondary sources, and recognizing historical facts in context. They will learn how interpretive analyses provide a variety of answers to similar questions. They will 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, this class is also intended to show how knowledge of history, whether in its global or local trends, helps us to understand the present.

Learning Outcomes (Upon completion of six hours of History courses)

- (SSLO1) Engage in historical inquiry, contextualizing past events with precision and detail
- (SSLO2) Distinguish between primary and secondary materials and decide when to use each
- (SSLO3) Critically evaluate historical sources, and recognize their value, by exploring conflicting narratives, points of view, and evidence
- (SSLO4) 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
- (SSLO5) Demonstrate knowledge of historical research techniques, documentation, organization
- (SSLO6) Master the mechanics of academic writing, communicating with logic and style

HOW DOES THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY INTEND TO ASSESS STUDENT LEARNING OF THESE OUTCOMES IN HIST 1113, 1123, 2003, and 2013?

The learning outcomes will be assessed through a critical writing assignment, administered toward the end of the semester, and consisting of an essay answering a relatively broad question

that will engage students in historical inquiry through both primary and secondary sources. Students will be evaluated based on their ability to make a coherent argument, displaying critical thinking, and supporting each point with evidence. Writing skills will be integral to the assessment. A standard rubric (next doc.) will provide guidelines to both instructors and students on the scoring of their competencies. The assignment will count toward their final class grade.

APPENDIX B

Department of History Learning Outcomes Scoring Rubric

Competency	Excellent Mastery	Good Mastery	Some Mastery	Minimal Mastery	No Mastery
Historical Inquiry Detail and Contextualization (SSLO1)	The essay frames a significant historical question that is properly and consciously contextualized, with clear knowledge of the material, mastery of detail and periodization, while also providing a well-learned original insight	The essay frames question and the student makes an effort to explain its significance, with accurate periodization, and minimal flaws in either contextualization or detail. It demonstrates learning adding limited personal insight	The question is not framed clearly, and the student shows limited understanding of context, periodization, or logic. Significant flaws in or neglect of detail. Very limited, or derivative insight backed up by some learning.	No discernible understanding of the historical question. Unclear context and/or periodization. Severe flaws in detail. No personal insight or insight not derived by learning	The essay avoids the question. No information or very scattered information retained
Sources (SSLO2)	Student uses a wide range of sources, from lecture notes to course readings, to other sources and literature, as assigned by the instructor (scholarly databases may be included). All major works on the topic are addressed. Primary sources are clearly referenced	Good use of sources online or on paper. Some of the major works on the topic are missing. Most material is from the reading assignments in class. The distinction between primary and secondary sources is almost consistently clear	Limited use of sources, and all those that are used are from the assigned readings for class. Major works on the topic are missing. The distinction between primary and secondary sources is unclear	Very little evidence that the student checked a sufficient number of sources, primary, secondary, or from databases. Main sources on the topic unknown	No use of sources, or highly inaccurate use of only one or two. No knowledge of the distinction between primary and secondary sources
Critical Evaluation of sources (SSLO3)	Student demonstrates careful reading and thorough assessment of assigned primary sources and secondary literature, placing ideas and conflicting interpretations into perspective. The essay offers an original point of view within the historiographical debate	Demonstrates knowledge and adequate analysis of the historiographical debate, from at least a selected number of sources. An interpretation is offered, though not thoroughly consistent with the analyzed sources	Knowledge and accurate analysis of at least two interpretations. The personal interpretive analysis is weak though.	Little and/or flawed analysis of sources. No interpretive point of view offered	No analysis of sources, or awareness of interpretive differences

<p>Argument and Organization (SSLO4)</p>	<p>The student develops and defends a clear argument, backed by evidence that engages research material, with primary sources also analyzed in an original and intentional way. The essay has a clear introduction, logical passages in argument, and supporting evidence. A conclusion brings everything together, also addressing broad implications</p>	<p>There's an argument, though not always clearly stated. All material is engaged, though the organization of the paper shows some flaws. It may show little evidence of an original interpretation of primary sources. The conclusion is adequate, though it misses some parts of the argument, and does not address broad implications</p>	<p>Little argument, even though the student attempts to make one, which is not followed up throughout the essay. Poor organization or engagement with research material. The conclusion is vague at best, absent at worst</p>	<p>No articulation of an argument. Poor or no knowledge of research material. No discernible organization or conclusion</p>	<p>No argument, no knowledge</p>
<p>Research Techniques (SSLO5)</p>	<p>Student consciously employs verification strategies as needed, demonstrates how research was conducted, and properly annotates all material. The organization is clear, showing how one source is logically followed by the next</p>	<p>Student employs some verification strategies. Demonstration of research and annotations is not always consistent. The organization of sources is adequate though not consistently logical</p>	<p>Little verification of sources. The essay shows little or no evidence of how research was conducted, or distinction among sources. The annotation is poor or missing. The ensuing argument is spotty</p>	<p>No verification of sources. Some sources are cited, but in random way. No annotations. No discernible argument</p>	<p>No sources, no annotations</p>
<p>Writing Style (SSLO6)</p>	<p>Clear thesis statement and argument. Points made in logic sequence. Paragraphs support solid topic sentences. Sentence structure, syntax, grammar and punctuation all excellent. No misuse of words, and correct interpretation of foreign terms. (Optional Plus): Elegance of style and original turns of phrase</p>	<p>Thesis statement may be slightly unclear. Logic flow of arguments. Paragraphs not consistently supporting topic sentences. Very occasional mistakes in structure, syntax, grammar and punctuation. Some words, in English or foreign languages may be misused. Little originality of prose</p>	<p>Thesis is poorly stated. Argument tends to jump around though some points are identifiable. Many paragraphs without topic sentences. Some mistakes in structure, syntax, grammar, and punctuation. Misuse of words. No elegance of style</p>	<p>No discernible thesis. The writing is poor. The argument is fuzzy. Paragraphs lack topic sentences and fail to follow logically. Frequent mistakes in structure, syntax, grammar, and punctuation. Misuse of words. The essay is hard to follow</p>	<p>Shows no thesis, or effort to make one. The essay is full of mistakes and shows little or no knowledge of the mechanics of writing. The essay is hard to follow due to the poor writing</p>

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE TEST FOR HIST 1113

One of the fundamental problems for a historian of ancient Rome is the usage of secondary historians; that is, ancient historians who are basing their own accounts on earlier historians. It is very rare that both the original source and the adaptation survive. One case is the single combat of Titus Manlius and a Gaul during a battle between the Romans and the Gauls over a bridge, and how Manlius received the cognomen of “Torquatus,” which means “adorned with a chain.” Livy tells this story in his seventh book, which is based on the history of Quintus Claudius Quadrigarius, who was writing about 70 years earlier than Livy. Quadrigarius’ account of Manlius is quoted directly by Aulus Gellius, a later writer interested in explaining odd family names. However, we do not know what Quadrigarius’ source for the incident was or how he may have reinterpreted it himself.

For this paper, you will compare Livy’s account to that of Quadrigarius. Explain what Livy has changed from his source. Drawing on your knowledge of Livy from Books 1, 2, & 3, and especially the preface to Book 1, explain why Livy makes the changes he does and how they fit into his concept of history and vision of the Romans. Does this have any effect on the basic factual account? How does this affect our understanding of Livy in general? What does this show about ancient historians? Avoid being judgmental about how Livy reworks his source! Your goal is to gain a better understanding of ancient historiography, which is very different from modern standards of history. Feel free to cite other examples from the Livy we have read to support your arguments or provide parallels.

You are to limit your analysis to the ancient texts themselves – do not look at modern scholarship. I want to read what you have to say, not what someone else has to say. Use direct quotes sparingly and when they will specifically illustrate the point you are trying to make. Otherwise, paraphrase. Whenever you are quoting, paraphrasing, or simply referring to something an author says cite the particular passage in you paper.

For the accounts of Torquatus, I have numbered the individual sentences for you to refer to in quotations or references, e.g (Quadrigarius 15). For other quotes and references to Livy, cite by book and chapter either in the sentence or parenthetically; e.g. “As Livy says at 1.23...” or “as explained by Livy (Preface)” Don’t forget to put a page number at the bottom of the page. Papers should be five pages long, double-spaced, with 1” margins all around. Use Times New Roman or a similar font.

APPENDIX D

SAMPLE TEST FOR HIST 1123

It's been said that the European Renaissance witnessed the birth of individualism. Based on the attached sources, please write an essay describing what historians have meant by this and whether or not the primary sources provided here support that thesis. To properly contextualize the primary sources you'll be using to build your argument, feel free to draw on information from lectures or class readings. I also strongly encourage you to consult reference works that will give you further insight on the Renaissance authors below. That said, your essay should focus primarily on the following :

Secondary Source: William Caferro, "Individualism: Who Was the Renaissance Man?" in Caferro, *Contesting the Renaissance* (Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011)

Primary Sources : Giovanni della Casa "The Perfect Gentleman"; Leon Battista Alberti, " Self-Portrait of a Universal Man"; Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, "The Dignity of Man." All excerpts from James Ross and Mary McLaughlin, *The Portable Renaissance Reader* (Penguin: New York, 1981).

APPENDIX E

How to frame the SSLO assignment for HIST 2013 – Tips for Instructors

Example 1

A question on the Cuban Missile Crisis, what caused it, how the worst scenario was averted, who won in this “eyeball to eyeball” stance, and why; how this crisis affected US-Soviet Relations, and the Cold War in general. Students may select a specific angle/argument, and focus on that aspect: e.g. the exchanges between Robert Kennedy and Ambassador Dobrynin; or the role of the president himself; consequences for Khrushchev; the role of McNamara and the other “doves” within the Ex-Com group, and so on.

Here are the samples for possible sources to assign for students to complete the test

Sources: Dennis Merrill and Thomas Paterson, *Major Problems in American Foreign Relations*, 7th Ed. Chap. 10 “Cuba and the Missile Crisis” (contains primary sources and two viewpoints by historians)

And this collection of primary sources from the National Security Archive

http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/nsa/cuba_mis_cri/docs.htm

Example 2

- 1) President Truman ordered the atomic bombing of Japan. Using historical evaluations and primary sources, analyze the main moments leading to this decision and their implications for US wartime and post-war strategies. How was the decision morally justified? What strategic considerations did the main decision-makers and advisers make? Did the US follow ulterior motives besides ending the war quickly?

While examining the main actors in this decision, you may decide to

- a) focus on one or two of them in particular and their role in advancing or resisting that option.
- b) You may also decide to focus on the diplomatic exchanges between Washington and Tokyo, and assess whether the Japanese regime gave sufficient clarity to avert the attack.

Your essay should be a min. of 4 and a max. of 6 double-spaced pages, and must contain a one page bibliography. Please refer to the guidelines on how to properly cite your sources.

Sources

Thomas G. Paterson and Robert J. McMahon, *The Origins of the Cold War*, 3d ed., essay by Barton J. Bernstein, *Saving American Lives and Pressing the Soviets: The Atomic Bomb Decision and the Cold War*,” pp. 121-137

Dennis Merrill and Thomas Paterson, *Major Problems in American Foreign Relations*, 7th Ed. ,
Chap. 6, Essay by Andrew J. Rotter, Atomic Bomb, Wartime Endgame and Cold War Catalyst,
pp. 206-215

<http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB162/index.htm>