Five-Year Program Assessment Report
Department of History
June 2006

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INTRODUCTION

Summer 2000 Self-Study

In our **Summer 2000 Self Study**, we identified possible areas of growth for our department related to the six Student Learning Outcomes.

**Standard I: Christian Orientation Standard**
1. In terms of content, additional emphasis on the role of religion in the modern and post-modern periods of world History (covered in IS 17 – World Civilization II) might help to dispel the impression that secularization has made religion an insignificant factor in human cultures and societies.
2. Within the classroom environment, we believe that we need to encourage students more overtly to practice Christian virtues in relation to one another. These would include peace, integrity, hospitality, encouragement, forbearance, and patience. The reward will be the building of intellectual friendships and the formation of more authentically Christian learning communities.
3. We also are considering a possible role for service projects as components in our courses so as to make more concrete the necessary connections we need to make between what we know and how we live.

**Standard II: Critical Interdisciplinary Standard**
1. We would like to be more intentional about cultivating gracious discussion in the classroom. For example, we might deliberately affirm students who practice humility and openness to opinions other than their own. We want to identify appropriate behavior rather than simply be hard on inappropriate behavior.
2. We want to be more deliberate in helping students to understand what is happening to them in the course of working on various assignments. Instead of merely explaining assignments, we will seek to explain the purpose and objectives that are to be accomplished in the assignments.
3. In both World Civilization and our upper-division classes, we could do much more to emphasize a wide range of interdisciplinary connections within History. We have tended to do more with art and religious studies, philosophy and literature than with the natural, behavioral and social sciences. This might happen through additional readings and through doing more with lecture exchanges.

**Standard III: Diversity**
1. While most students seem generally interested in the problems of diversity, the particular issue of gender is often difficult to approach, and may provide a defensive response on the part of some students. Overall, students tend to arrive at Westmont with a great deal of
suspicion regarding feminism, and may remain blind to many important gender-related issues. Explicit assignments drawing on students’ campus experience might prove profitable. The department hopes to find ongoing creative ways to approach the topic.
2. The department would like to require all of its majors to take a foreign language, and to continue to support opportunities for study abroad.
3. The department will develop its courses in women’s History in conjunction with the effort to bring about a women’s studies minor, possibly in a cross-disciplinary context.
4. The department will attempt to develop more creative assignments to cultivate empathy, such as writing that requires students to embody particular individuals.
5. The curriculum urgently needs to be solidified by the presence of a fourth faculty member whose area of specialty is non-western History. The department is in the process of filling this position.
6. The department will increase the number of courses taught in a global perspective, and will seek to offer the non-Western History courses more frequently.

Standard IV: Written and Oral Communication
1. We could be doing more to explicitly frame questions that invite students to thing more creatively about their faith in relation to their development as Historians.
2. We could make much more use of peer assessment and self assessment in the classroom.

Standard V: Active Societal and Intellectual Engagement
Various strategies might help to enhance the History department’s effectiveness in the area of active societal and intellectual engagement.
1. One recommendation is to continue to increase the percentage of our students who participate in internships and off-campus programs. Both generally provide experiential learning opportunities that assist students in seeing learning as their own responsibility and as a lifelong process.
2. Another idea under consideration is developing some sort of service component to one or more courses.
3. The department might also try to become more systematic in following up with alumni. This may be enabled through the completion of a department web page.

Standard VI: Technology
1. We will continue to develop our own expertise as faculty in the use of technology in the classroom. Some members of the department will participate in the Spring technology workshop.
2. We want to put great emphasis on the Historical content for the development of technology. It could Historytoricize technological changes, explain the social and cultural functions of technology, and stress the ways in which technology is still a privilege of rich nations;

As is clear from this summary, the department focused on possible inputs, and did not articulate clear assessment strategies at this point. Furthermore, the composition of the department changed considerably between 2000 and 2004. One member of the department, Shirley Mullen, became the College’s Provost, and two junior faculty were hired, Chandra Mallampalli (with an area of expertise in South Asia) and Alister Chapman (with an area of expertise in Modern Europe). As a result, the department’s needs and priorities changed. Finally, the College adopted a new General Education program effective in 2003. This and the challenge of teaching classes in methodology (HISTORY 001 and HISTORY 198) led the department to formulate new goals.
January 2004 Assessment Plan

In our January 2004 Assessment Plan, the History Department identified two principal goals to concentrate on for the current review cycle (2004-06):

1. We want our majors to demonstrate a stronger competency in their theoretical understanding and practical application of Historical methodology
2. We want our General Education students in world History to gain a general literacy in early modern and modern world History, an ability to locate themselves in time and place, an awareness of their own limited understanding of other cultures, a stronger set of analytical and critical skills in reading and writing, and a desire to grow further into mature Christians.

The first goal grew out of two departmental considerations:

1. first, a departmental sense (arrived at through informal and formal departmental conversations) that recent majors, individually and collectively, had demonstrated an inconsistent grasp of Historical method; and
2. second, our need to revise our senior-level methods course to make it meet the expectations of an “integrating the major discipline” course within the new general education program.

We attributed the student weakness in Historical method to two factors relating to the department’s two courses in Historical method:

1. first, for the past five years or so, HISTORY 198 Historical Method, Bibliography, and Research was not required of all majors, as it had been in the past; and
2. second, insufficient coordination or sequencing has occurred between our introductory methods class, HISTORY 1 Introduction to History, and HISTORY 198.

This led us to implement a first change in our curriculum: as of 2003-2004, HISTORY 198 was once again required of all History majors. We wished for that course to be an effective “integrating the major discipline” class for our majors, a substantial part of which will mean seeing students develop stronger competency in Historical methods at the senior level. We intended to take the next couple of years to revise and refine the content of this course, alongside a similar revision and refinement of HISTORY 1. Re-defining what each of these courses should include and how they can better supplement each other is our main task. Amid this revision process, we also hope to identify how and when we can use these courses to provide our majors with clearer and more substantial vocational guidance.

Assessment of student progress toward the goal of greater competency in Historical methodology was facilitated by the fact that the teaching of these courses is rotated and shared throughout the department. In the case of HISTORY 198, all members of the department attended the weekly seminar meetings, with one faculty person receiving teaching credit for it as part of History/her load. In the case of HISTORY 1, the goal of the department is to rotate who teaches that course from year to year, although recent practice has often seen the same person teach it for two to three
History Report, p. 5

years in a row due to scheduling constraints. By virtue of these shared responsibilities, department members are in a good position to evaluate student competencies as evidenced in their oral and written work. Particularly through HISTORY 198, all department members are able to witness student abilities to lead discussion, read primary and secondary sources critically, explain their research process, and present their research findings.

We initially planned on several assessment strategies:
1. reading the final drafts of their research projects in History 198 (the main student work of the course), and devoting at least one departmental meeting per semester to discussion of student performance in these courses
2. focusing both on comparisons of the present year’s crop of students with prior years, and on each individual student’s level of growth.
3. administering a written survey to History 198 students at the end of the course consisting of three to four open-ended questions having to do with their own assessment of their understanding and practice of sound Historical methods as a result of taking HISTORY 1 and HISTORY 198, as well as other courses in the major.

In HISTORY 198 we also wanted to assess how well our students were integrating their History major with the broader liberal arts mission of the college. To that end, we anticipated asking students to keep a portfolio or scrapbook of assignments, activities, events, etc. throughout their time as a History major that illustrate points of connection between their Historical study and their wider liberal arts education. This project was to be submitted as part of the course work for HISTORY 198.

**Adjustments to the Proposal**

We have made some adjustments to our original proposal. Upon the recommendation of the Program Review Committee (PRC), we decided to focus on one or two of the goals rather than attempting to accomplish all the goals that were laid out. We chose to focus on the first goal - although ongoing conversations have continued on the topic of World History. We also realized that the changes we wanted to implement in HISTORY 198 and the students’ goals we had for the course (how well our students are integrating their History major with the broader liberal arts mission of the college) implicitly added a third area of assessment. In our August 2005 progress report, we distinguished between these two goals:

1. History majors will “demonstrate a stronger competency in their theoretical understanding and practical application of Historical methodology”.
2. History majors should be able to articulate the relationship between their major and their vocation as well as with the “broader liberal arts mission of the college”.

In the end, the bulk of our efforts—and this report—focuses on Goal #1 (Historical Methodology). Nevertheless, because this is considered a Five-Year Report, we have also documented preliminary progress on other assessment work we have begun (departmental data on HISTORY 10, World History, and assessment of integrating the major discipline).

In this report we will present the work of the department in
• Articulating clearer and more easily assessable goals implicit under the broad topic of “Historical methodology”;
• Choosing and modifying assessment methods and collecting data: The department used a wide variety of assessment tools for this goal:
  o Individual and collective analysis of real student work (in 7 different classes, altogether 176 assignments)
  o HISTORY 198 survey in the Fall of 2005
  o Senior Survey in the Spring of 2006
• Reflecting on the results; and
• Implementing changes to courses as a result

In this process, we discovered that our goals were far too broad and needed to be further defined both for the purposes of assessment, and for the sake of our students. We experimented with different methods of assessment, some relying on individual faculty, some requiring a collective assessment of student work. We met consistently as a department to discuss methodological issues, consulted with individual History faculty in other colleges for advice and guidance, and produced a methodological handbook for our students. We realize that the changes we made to our program and classes will need to be assessed, and that the assessment is always a work in progress—so we’ll also describe the steps we wish to take in the next five years.
DEFINING LEARNING GOALS

The department devoted much time to discussing, clarifying and articulating the goals implicit under the broad topic of Historical methodology. As a result, the department subdivided these goals into four different areas:

1. **Skills in Reading Primary Sources**
   To read a primary source Historically and critically, students must be able to:
   - Contextualize the source
   - Critically assess the source
   - Demonstrate their ability to recognize the ways in which their own background impacts their interpretation

2. **Skills in Reading Secondary Sources**
   To read a secondary source effectively, students must be able to:
   - understand the main thesis or argument of a secondary source
   - engage in informed criticism
   - assess its truth value

3. **Skills in Writing**
   To write a good History paper, students must be able to:
   - Develop an argument.
   - Make use of different forms of Historical writing.
   - Write in an appropriate manner.
   - Provide the requisite scholarly apparatus.

4. **Skills in Historical Research**
   To be effective Historical researchers, students must be able to:
   - Select an appropriate research topic
   - Locate relevant primary and secondary sources
   - Determine the character of the existing Historiography on their topic

For each of the four stated goals, the department composed a detailed and developed list of expectations for its students—see attachment 1. This document will help the department, not only in its assessment work, but in its ability to communicate consistently with students. The booklet will be handed out to students during their first History class and referred to in the rest of their History curriculum.

While the goals stated are clearly discipline specific, they are connected to several institutional learning goals.
• **Critical-Interdisciplinary Standard:** « general skills », « Complex problem solving », « Limits »
• **Diversity Standard:** « Self-reflection », « Discussion and Analysis of issues », « Formulation of knowledge »
• **Written and Oral Communication Standard:** all apply to our goals.
• **Research and Technology Standard:** « research and documentation »

## COMPETENCY IN HISTORICAL METHODOLOGY: PRIMARY SOURCES

The department used six different assignments to assess students’ performance in this area. We will present the data and the interpretation of results chronologically as each semester’s evaluation affected the next semester’s assessment strategies.

### Spring and Fall 2005: data

#### 1. Spring 2005- History 1

Each week, students were required to make written comments on a given primary document. The professor provided them with instruction on how to read primary documents in the second week of class. To see whether they had learnt how to read such documents competently, he made them respond to one particular document on two occasions: first, early in the semester before he had given them any suggestions on how to do this; and second, at the end of the semester after they had had both instruction and practice. Comparing the students’ two responses to the document allowed him to measure how their approach to primary source material had changed.

He assessed the students’ responses on four criteria:
1. Does it contain the details of who is writing this document and when?
2. Does it raise the possibility of bias either in the source or in the reader?
3. Does it contain evidence that the document raised questions for the student?
4. Does it provide some depth or breadth of analysis, or is it merely superficial?

#### Numbers of responses

There were 26 students in the class. There were 14 initial responses (many had mislaid them by the time I collected them at the end of the semester) and 22 second responses.

#### Results by category: raw numbers

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<td>Response 2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Results by category: as a percentage of the number of responses

|---------------|------------|----------------------------|--------------|-------------|
2. Spring 2005 - History 121

Students were asked to analyze a selection of “Miracles of Saint Foy” (in Patrick Geary, Readings in Medieval History, (Sydney: Broadview, 2003, 1-8). Geary provided a short biographical sketch for the author. The professor gave students a study guide organized according to three broad categories:

- The text’s argument
- The Historical conclusions
- The text’s reliability

11 students turned in the analysis. One student turned it in after class, and the information listed was most likely a set of class notes, rather than an independent reading of the text.

**Text’s argument:**
- One student did not understand the text
- Four students summarized the text – mentioned main topics such as miracles and pilgrimages.
- Four students identified clearly the aims of the text – to provide support for Ste Foy’s cult.
- One student exceeded expectations by arguing that the text presented the concept of witness as validation.

**Historical Findings:**
- One student was unable to establish a connection between the text and the History studied in class
- Four students found it difficult to move beyond very broad categories of analysis (such as “this tells us about religious History”) or lacked proper vocabulary to draw conclusions effectively (for instance talk about “mysticism”).
- Three students identified more than one area of History for which this text was relevant (such as religious and cultural or social History) yet their analysis lacked significant detail.
- Two students provided a wide range of conclusions (on social, gender, literary, artistic History) and illustrated their points with specific examples.

**Reliability:**

In this area, there was a wider gap between students.

- Five students were unable to link the author’s background to the text – either because they did not read or understand the introduction provided by the editor (“I don’t know anything about the author”, or because they did not understand the question “if it is in our reader, it must be reliable”).
- Three students performed adequately on this task (they identified the author as an educated clergyman), but found it difficult to say why it was relevant for the interpretation of the text.
- Two students identified key elements of the author’s background (a man, a member of the elite) and of the audience (the clergy, the educated) and explained why this was of significance.
At the end of the semester, students were asked to perform the same exercise on a different primary source as part of their final exam. They were provided with a copy of Fulbert de Chartres’ letter to William of Aquitaine’s on feudal obligations. The professor’s hope was that, by the end of the semester, students would have improved their skills—that they would know what questions to ask and how to answer those questions at a B level on average (identify argument and Historical conclusions).

### Summary of the Findings

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<th>(A)</th>
<th>(B)</th>
<th>(C)</th>
<th>(D)</th>
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</thead>
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<td>Argument</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
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</table>

12 students took the final exam. Their grade average exceeded the professor’s expectations—the average for the assignment was B+. The distribution of skills was revealing: the students’ ability to discuss the reliability of the text (particularly as it pertained to the author and the audience) improved considerably more than their ability to identify the argument or to draw Historical conclusions from the document. The professor understand the results to speak of the emphasis that the class placed on critical skills.

### 3. Fall 2005 -History 185

Students were given a choice of writing three short essays, 1000 words each, or one longer essay, 3000 words. The essays were to analyze primary sources contained in the Course Reader. Each cluster of readings addressed a key debate within modern Indian History: the educational controversy, the problem of untouchability, and the Partition of India. Students were to

1. identify the main arguments of each side and
2. ‘take a side’ and argue for its merits.

A portion of a class session was devoted to identifying the key elements of a successful essay. These included:

- A clear thesis in the introduction and develops that thesis throughout the essay. In this particular assignment, the thesis was to explain which thinker presented the strongest arguments and why.
- A keen grasp of the arguments of each side of a debate.
- The essay concluded by describing the larger significance of the debate for Indian History.
• 13 student submitted their essays on time. One submitted late for extreme circumstances, the other out of negligence. Two of them opted for the long essay, the rest for the three short ones.

A. Statement of argument:
• Only 3 out of fifteen students developed a reasonably clear thesis in their paper (s).
• Of the 3 that presented a thesis, only one of them presented it in a way that reflected their own insights, as opposed to simply restating the views of their preferred author.
• 8 students did little more than identify the passages they intended to analyze.
• 3 students did not bother to state or develop a thesis in their papers.

B. Grasp of arguments of each side:
• Three students misunderstood or misrepresented the viewpoints of authors in their essays.
• Five students represented views accurately, but not thoroughly. They picked and chose which points would be their focus, but neglected other important points in the process.
• One student who wrote a long essay clearly did not grasp the main ideas contained in the readings.

C. Significance
• Only three students concluded their essays by stating the wider significance of the debate for Indian History.
• The remainder of the students simply stated who they thought “won” the debate and why.

Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>Grasp</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Significance</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
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Spring and Fall 2005: interpretation

Contextualizing the source: The data collected over the course of a year (Spring and Fall 05) suggests that, with proper guidance and repetition, students do improve in their skills. In History 1, student responses showed improvement in all four categories. Most recognized the importance of noting down details such as date and author, though 7/22 still did not. The great majority were able to provide some good analysis of the source and specify questions which it raised for them. Yet, it is also noteworthy that over 30% of students still did not write down the basic details of the source. This lack of « Historical reflexes » seems to be confirmed by the other tools the department used.

Critical Analysis: In History 1, most striking was the fact that most students did not raise the question of possible bias either in the sources or in themselves as readers. In the History 121 assessment, about half of the students found it difficult to move beyond a literal reading of the text, and to identify the goals and functions of the source. Students also found it difficult to move beyond one area of History, and to consider a source as valid for a multiplicity of investigations and
interpretations. In some cases, they lacked the specific vocabulary that would have helped them analyze the text. Overall, they seem to pay little attention to detail. In History 185, students were able to identify the main arguments of the sources, but they often were unable to go beyond a mere statement of the views of an author (using quotes or a citation) and provide their own, original insights about those views using their own words. They also found it difficult to draw comparisons between the authors.

Spring 2006: data

1. History 1

Significant changes were made to the class’ structure; the professor evaluated the impact of the changes on the class’s performance. Changes to the class affected the structure of the course: in order to make our departmental priorities as clear as possible to our students, the professor organized the semester in terms of these four areas (see appendix 1). They started with “Grappling with Secondary Sources,” and then moved through “Researching as a Historian,” “Investigating Primary Sources,” and “Writing Well, as a Historian.” There was one further section that aimed to introduce students to different types of Historiography.

Our January 2006 report clearly identified a need to improve our students’ ability to analyze primary sources effectively (p. 12). More particularly, it specified our need to foster improvement (p. 10) in the areas of:

- Noting down the details of sources.
- Identification of bias.
- Identifying the goals and functions of a source.
- Reflecting on how a source can serve different modes of Historical writing and different interpretations.
- Providing their own insights on the source.

The report also noted the need for modeling these skills several times in a given semester (p. 12).

The professor devoted three weeks to primary source analysis. He produced a handout modeled on the department’s document (see appendix 1) that provided generic questions for the students to ask of each primary source they encountered and they studied numerous sources in detail during those classes in an attempt to make the asking of those questions reflexive. Both this handout and the class discussions were shaped by the above conclusions in the following ways:

- One of the questions on the sheet related to the details of the source.
- The major interpretive questions focused on genre, author, audience, and reliability and usefulness. He did not include a separate question about bias because after further departmental discussion we decided that this was not the most helpful term for our students: if they determine that a source is “biased,” they quickly write it off. Instead, we agreed to focus on helping them identify the particular perspectives and situations that will shape an author’s writing, and on the ways in which different genres will portray the past in their own, partial light.
- Discussions of genre also aimed to get at the goals of the source.
• Questioning the usefulness of the source allowed students to discuss how the source could be used for different types of Historical investigation.
• He encouraged the students to provide their own insights on the source, and the question about their own prejudices was intended to help provide an appropriate position from which they could do that.

The professor also assigned a detailed primary source analysis to gauge the students’ abilities in this area. Students were required to analyze a primary source relating to the July Crisis of 1914. Twenty students completed the assignment.

Details
Twelve students recorded the details of the source exhaustively and accurately. Three more did so with minor inaccuracy or omission. Five had significant mistakes or omissions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Reliability and Usefulness</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>B: 11</td>
<td>B: 10</td>
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<td>C/D: 3</td>
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<td>C/D: 2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

2. History 121

Some changes were implemented as a result of the previous year’s assessment conclusions. The professor assigned multiple primary source responses and collected the responses early in the semester to provide students with feedback. She gave students a set specific questions to answer for each primary source in the syllabus:

Primary sources: It is expected that you will carefully read the primary sources assigned for each class. For each assigned reading, use a separate sheet of paper. Cards will be collected randomly at the beginning of class, and should include the following:
- central topic of the text: what main point does the source make?
- what can you infer from this source about the people and the culture that produced it? (Historical findings)
- how reliable is the text and what problems do you, as a Historian face when using it? (Historical methodology)
- what questions does the text allow us to ask about the subject?

She also reviewed multiple sources in class and spent a whole hour analyzing one source in particular in great detail, and provided students with a set of very detailed questions (author, On the final exams students were asked to analyze a short text, “The making of a Merchant: Saint Godric of Finchale”. She used the categories used in History 1 to assess student performance, and compared the students’ performance in 2006 to that of 2005. 13 students took the exam.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Reliability and Usefulness</th>
<th>Main points</th>
<th>Historical Conclusions</th>
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<td>yes: 4</td>
<td>yes: 11</td>
<td>Yes: 10</td>
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</tr>
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</table>
The average grade for this assignment was 84 (B); so students demonstrated proficiency at the end of the course. Yet surprisingly, they were more proficient in higher thinking skills (discussing the reliability of the source and drawing Historical conclusions) than in lower thinking skills (establishing the identity of the author and especially the intended audience). This may be due to the nature of the source (an obscure author, and an audience that might seem obvious to students).

**Overall Conclusions**

Students do improve their Historical skills in the analysis of primary sources in the course of their education.

In **History 1**, despite the professor’s efforts, seven students still did not get the details of the source down accurately. It is not clear what can be done about this! In the other four categories, most of the students demonstrated their ability to analyze primary sources competently. They asked the right questions and provided satisfactory answers most of the time. What most still struggled with was going the extra step to ask, “How do my answers to these questions about genre, author, and audience affect the way I interpret this source?” This was particularly true in their comments on the source’s possible audience. Overall, however, the results were broadly encouraging. Students demonstrated an ability to identify the particular perspective of the author, to discuss History purpose in writing, and to provide their own reflections on the source. They were less able to comment on how the source might be useful for different types of Historical writing or might serve divergent interpretations, but these seem to be the sorts of more advanced skills that we expect them to develop in our upper-division courses. At this stage, however, they know the sorts of questions they should be asking of primary sources, and it is this foundation-laying that is the principal goal of HISTORY1. This was particularly evident in their final exams, in which they had to respond to another primary document (this time without the sheet of questions in front of them) and did so with ease and confidence.

In **History 121**, students improved on their skills. They performed well on high thinking skills. Overall students’ skills are more developed in this upper-division level course than they are in History 1, and this is encouraging. Moreover, students who took History 1 in the Spring of 2005 performed slightly better on average (85 on average). The data provided us with a sense of which areas the students struggled with most, and which areas may therefore require greater attention from us in future semesters. We need to model how to read primary sources. This can be done in the course of a lecture, by putting put up a short text and using the very same questions they will have to respond to. Repeating this demonstration several times might also help.

**COMPETENCY IN HISTORICAL METHODOLOGY: SECONDARY SOURCES**

*Fall 2005*
The assessment conducted in History 185 was also used to conclude on our students’ ability to read secondary sources. Identifying the significance of the debate was perhaps the most disappointing result of the assignment. It reflects the difficulty students experience in drawing connections between concrete data, debates, and ideas and wider concerns relating to questions of justice, cultural pluralism or national unity (reflected in the course). The struggles they faced on this point resemble the problems encountered in developing and defending a thesis. Are they able to go beyond a mere restatement of someone else’s viewpoint and explain why that viewpoint carries merit in that particular context?

Consequently, after discussing the results as a department, our January 2006 report identified a need to improve our students’ skills in this area. In particular, it emphasized the need “to spend more time with the students on how to read secondary sources and synthesize arguments from different Historians” (p. 12).

**Spring 2006**

In *History 1*, three weeks of the semester were dedicated to this task. The professor provided the students with another handout based on the “Skills in Reading Secondary Sources” attachment of our January 2006 report. He devoted the first two-thirds of the semester to a discussion of the origins of the First World War, and spent a great deal of time during these weeks introducing students to different interpretations of these events. A course reader collected a variety of articles with differing positions on this question, and by exposing them to these sources he sought to introduce them to the spirited Historiographical discussion. The class talked repeatedly about the need to identify the conversations that Historians have about the past, and both examined explicit examples of such conversations and sought to construct the implicit conversations between authors who did not mention each other.

The professor assigned a secondary source analysis to measure the students’ ability to read secondary sources effectively. Students were required to analyze a scholarly article relating to the July Crisis of 1914. The professor did not retain detailed data for this assignment, but some of the skills that he sought to inculcate were tested in the final research project, in particular the ability not only to understand the work of Historians accurately but also to put Historians in conversation with each other.

**COMPETENCY IN HISTORICAL METHODOLOGY: WRITING A HISTORY PAPER**

*History 140 – Fall 2005*

In the Fall of 2005, Alister Chapman decided to assess the students’ ability to write good History papers. The semester was divided into three sections, with four topics in each. For each topic there was an essay question and a selection of between four and ten articles and books on reserve in the library. Students were asked to read several of these resources, synthesize the material, and then in eight to ten pages provide a careful, reasoned response to the question set. Each student had to write three papers, one from each section. This assessment exercise, therefore, was intended to measure our students’ abilities in two areas that we have identified as fundamental for our majors:
reading secondary literature and writing coherent papers. Alister decided on six criteria which would measure students’ abilities in these areas, and then graded each paper on these criteria. The six criteria were:

1. Writing a clear Introduction, complete with a statement of the paper’s argument
2. Carrying a clear Argument throughout the paper
3. Demonstrating a solid Grasp of the secondary sources on the subject (the articles and books on reserve at the library)
4. Using these Sources carefully, judiciously, and creatively in the paper
5. Writing a strong and thoughtful Conclusion
6. Clear and accurate Composition

Breaking the course into three section then allowed him to see whether the students’ performance improved over the course of the semester. Alister also made clear to the students how they had done on each of these criteria in each paper, so that they could see the areas they needed to work on. Most students in the class had taken the HISTORY1 Introduction to History course, in which our department focuses on the acquisition of the skills which we see as fundamental for our majors and minors, and one was therefore able to assume some level of prior training in the areas of reading and writing as History students. Alister did, however, provide instruction throughout the semester on how to approach the task of writing. The tables below show how the students did in each of the six areas being assessed and how their performance changed over the course of the semester.

The numerical scale used for the purposes of these calculations is as follows:
- A+ = 10
- A = 9
- A- = 8
- B+/B = 7
- B- = 6
- C+/C = 5
- C- = 4
- D = 2

The data below is based on all fourteen students in the class, except Section C for which he only had data for thirteen of the students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>INTRO</th>
<th>ARGU</th>
<th>GRASP</th>
<th>SOURCES</th>
<th>CONC</th>
<th>COMPO</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Averages for Section A</td>
<td>6.43</td>
<td>6.21</td>
<td>5.79</td>
<td>5.86</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>5.57</td>
<td>6.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Averages for Section C</td>
<td>7.69</td>
<td>7.31</td>
<td>7.08</td>
<td>7.46</td>
<td>6.85</td>
<td>7.08</td>
<td>7.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Change from A to B</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Change from B to C</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Change from A to C</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Line 6 provides a sense of how the students’ performance changed over the whole semester, and the results are broadly positive. The average score increased by an average of 1.18 points on the above scale between sections A and sections C, or approximately one third to one half of a letter grade. More illuminating is the data on how they did in particular areas, in terms of both which areas they
did best/worst in and which areas saw the greatest/least improvement over the course of the semester.

- The two areas in which the students did consistently well were writing a strong introduction and sustaining a clear Historical argument.
- The one area in which students consistently underperformed was the quality of their composition.
- The quality of conclusions was noticeably weak in sections B and C.
- By the end of the semester, the students’ work was strongest in their introductions, their arguments, and their use of sources.

Using lines 4, 5 and 6 to gauge improvement, the following conclusions emerge:

- There are no clear patterns of consistently strong or lackluster improvement in any one area. For example, improvement in composition was marked between sections B and C, but non-existent between sections A and B, while improvement in the ability to handle sources well showed the greatest improvement between sections A and B and yet by this measure ranked only fourth out of the six between sections B and C.
- For the semester as a whole, the greatest improvements were in the students’ ability to deal competently with their sources and in their composition.
- By far and away the least amount of improvement was seen in the conclusions to the students’ papers.

History 198 –Fall 2005

In the Spring of 2006, the department met to discuss four of the senior papers presented in the Fall. The four strongest papers were selected and reviewed closely by each of the department members, according to the criteria listed for competency in Historical methodology. Further conversation occurred on email as the department attempted to see how the assessment would impact our requirements for History 198.

Overall, the department was impressed by the quality of students’ writing (style, flow, organization, construction of a Historical argument). The weakest aspects of the papers was related to the students’ ability to interact with primary and secondary literature. One paper, though very well written, did not receive the Wilt Prize by the department because it failed to interact with both types of literature. Another one used a good set of primary sources both could not locate this topic in the Historiography. In conclusion, only our best students seem to be able to situate their own argument in the Historiography of the topic. Several changes to the format of History 198 were suggested as a consequence (see conclusions).

History 1 –Spring 2006
As noted above, students had to provide a detailed outline for a paper on the origins of the First World War and then an 8-12 page paper on a topic of their choosing. Here the focus will be on the data gathered from their papers, which was the culmination of their semester’s work. Nineteen papers were submitted.

Presentation: Was the paper well-presented, complete with bibliography and accurate footnotes in Chicago style?
A: 9
B: 6
C/D: 4

Argument: Did the paper have an explicit argument that was carried clearly throughout?
A: 12
B: 6
C/D: 1

Primary Sources: Did the paper use primary sources well, and analyze at least one source in detail?
A: 3
B: 11
C/D: 5

Secondary Sources: Did the paper use secondary sources well, and did the student demonstrate the ability to put different Historians in conversation with one another?
A: 8
B: 9
C/D: 2

Conclusion: Did the paper have an effective conclusion?
A: 7
B: 10
C/D: 2

Reflection
The professor was very pleased with the students’ performance in these papers: in most cases they had clearly grasped most of the things the class had been working on during the semester. More particularly, the students demonstrated competence in the writing skills that we identified as needing attention in our January 2006 report. Only one student failed to make and carry a clear argument. Only two wrote substandard conclusions. And most were able to analyze secondary sources competently and make effective comparisons between different authors. The area in which the students had the most difficulty was in integrating detailed primary source analysis into their papers, and this despite the fact that they had already demonstrated their ability to perform such analysis earlier in the semester. This may have been because they did not feel they had room for such; or because they found it difficult to incorporate extensive source analysis into their argument. But the fact that some students did not even attempt to do so (despite specific instruction to do so) strongly suggests that we need to provide more guidance on how to do this.
COMPETENCY IN HISTORICAL METHODOLOGY: RESEARCH

History 198 – Fall 2005, Spring 2006

On the student survey, assignment-wise, students found the annotated bibliography the most helpful task in enhancing their bibliographic research skills. They identified the resources at UCSB library as ones they wish they had been familiar with prior to entering the class.

In discussing the seminar papers, the department lamented over the lack of primary sources available to our students to research. This led the department to discuss the standards by which we assess the seminar papers. What seems to emerge from the discussion is a disagreement on how much the use of primary sources need to weigh in the assessment of student work. It seems that the differences between faculty lay in the variations in the availability of primary sources in their field. Namely, our specialist of South Asia, Chandra Mallampalli, expressed the following concern: “If we require this of students, we must enable them to find them for any topic they choose, or require them to choose only those topics for which they are readily available. I have strong resistance to the idea of limiting their choices to topics in Western textual History”. This is a legitimate concern, that can be addressed in several ways:

Chandra suggested that “if using primary sources is indeed a priority, we need to clearly identify primary source data bases (or provide bibliographies as mentioned below) from which they must formulate research topics. Each of us perhaps should identify several that we are aware of, create a website or a bibliography of some kind, and distribute it to 198 students the first day of classes. This will limit their range of topics considerably, but not completely. It gives them choices within designated "fields" for which they have primary sources. Again, this will not be easy for topics whose primary sources are not in English, French, German, Spanish, etc.. For topics in Asian, African or Middle Eastern History, we would need additional help”

“If students choose topics that lack primary sources in languages accessible to them, we perhaps should present another set of criteria/guidelines for producing an excellent paper. Among these I would suggest:

1. referencing primary sources used in secondary works or demonstrating awareness of how secondary sources have used them;
2. holding such students accountable to a more thorough mastery of secondary literature/Historiography;
3. stressing the merits of Historical argumentation over use of primary sources”

Alister Chapman suggested the following: “I agree that Historical argumentation is the larger task, but I would be reluctant to give some students a relative bye on primary sources when it comes to their projects. Even if they can find one or two things in translation relating to their subject, I’d be happy with a close reading of those. It does not seem to me that they need to find large quantities of primary sources; only that they use well what they have. I’d also be concerned about saying that some students need to do a better job with the Historiography than others: those who do have primary documents might read that in creative ways!”
It seems that the standard for the seminar papers will have to accommodate the fields students will work in—a student working on a non-western topic might not be expected to include many primary sources in History/her work. However, some primary sources will need to be part of their research. We need to keep in mind, then, that most of our students don’t master any language outside English well enough to conduct research on sources other than sources in translation, and that training them in a close analysis is essential. The department will talk further about this issue in the Fall of 2006.

Another question emerged that had to do with the use of the UCSB library. Here again, there are divergent opinions in the department. While some of us would want to require students to use the UCSB library as part of their research places, others are less convinced of this necessity. It is helpful to acknowledge those differences, and assessment can provide us with an excellent tool in this regard. Rick Pointer suggested that we have students document the research tools and places they have used during their research (ILL, UCSB) so that we can measure in some way how and where they are doing their research. This would enable us to connect students’ research habits and students’ performance, and to decide on the usefulness of the UCSB library to our students.

History 1–Spring 2006

Students were required to turn in an annotated bibliography for their chosen research project, including both primary and secondary sources. These were of an almost uniformly high quality: never before had the professor had to hand out so many A’s! All the students but two had found primary and secondary documents that were both appropriate and of high quality. All but four consistently recorded the details of their sources carefully. All but six provided insightful comments on the content and argument of their sources.

Reflection
The students’ performance on this assignment demonstrated that this is an area where, with clear and explicit direction, they are able to do very well indeed. This supports the conclusions in our January 2006 report, namely that our efforts need to be focused on improving skills in writing and in reading primary and secondary sources.

ALL SKILLS: STUDENT SURVEYS

In the Fall 2005, the department administered a student survey to students in HISTORY 198 at the completion of the course. On the survey, students were asked to self-assess their skill level when they began the course and when they finished the course in five areas—bibliographical research, analyzing primary sources, critically reading secondary sources, formulating Historical arguments, and writing History effectively. They rated themselves on a 5 point scale (1 being the lowest, 5 being the highest). The survey also included open-ended questions for each of the five skill areas, giving students opportunities to identify aspects of the course that either enhanced or failed to enhance their skill development.

Statistical Findings
All nine students in the course participated in the survey. The following data indicates the average score that students gave themselves in each of the five skills areas, as well as the raw number of
students who reported improvement in that skill area. No student reported a decline in History/her skill level for any of the areas.

A. Research
   Before course = 2.61
   After course = 3.44
   7 of 9 students reported improvement in this area.

B. Primary Sources
   Before course = 2.56
   After course = 3.22
   7 of 9 students reported improvement in this area.

C. Secondary Sources
   Before course = 2.83
   After course = 3.67
   8 of 9 students reported improvement in this area.

D. Historical Argumentation
   Before course = 2.56
   After course = 3.72
   9 of 9 students reported improvement in this area.

E. Historical Writing
   Before course = 2.44
   After course = 3.17
   7 of 9 students reported improvement in this area.

Open-ended Questions Findings
Most students included brief comments for most of the open-ended questions. What follows is a summation of the most prevalent comments regarding each of the five skill areas.

Research – Assignment-wise, students found the annotated bibliography the most helpful task in enhancing their bibliographic research skills. They identified the resources at UCSB library as ones they wish they had been familiar with prior to entering the class.

Primary Sources – Students who utilized a large quantity of primary sources in their research projects reported more substantial improvement in their skill development here.

Secondary Sources – Students reported that the course texts (collections of Historical essays on methodological and philosophical issues), the reading questions they had to write in response to text readings, and working with large quantities of secondary sources for their research projects all enhanced their ability to read secondary sources efficiently for key arguments and relevance.

Historical argumentation – Students noted three means through which they experienced improvement in this area: the sheer scope of their research project forced a constant refinement of their arguments through many revisions of their outlines; the examples of Historical arguments in
the course texts provided models of Historical argumentation; mentoring meetings with individual faculty provided opportunities to talk through the argument of their papers.

**Historical writing** – Students note improvement in this area coming as a result of the quantity of writing required in the course and the mentoring meetings with individual faculty who provided feedback on their drafts.

In History 198, students considered themselves weakest in Historical writing at both the beginning and end of the course. Conversely, students enter the course most confident about their ability to read secondary sources and leave the course with relatively high self-assessment scores in this area. Less clear are the reasons for student improvement, though their responses to the open-ended questions give some hints. Key factors here seem to include the sheer scope and demands of the research project which forces them to practice each of these skills at a level and to a degree unprecedented for all of them, and the individual mentoring provided by faculty members in the course of doing their projects.

In the **Spring 2006**, the department sent a survey to all majors asking them to report on their experience in the department and on the self-assessment of their skills as Historians (see appendix 7). Only one student returned the survey. The department needs to be more effective in generating a response from its majors. It seems like unless the survey is administered as part of a class, and preferably in the Fall semester, it won’t be filled out by students.

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**INTEGRATING THE MAJOR DISCIPLINE**

**Integrating the Major Discipline: Liberal Arts Education and Christian Faith**

History majors take HISTORY 198 to fulfill their general education requirement in Integrating the Major discipline. That requirement focuses upon students’ abilities to see their discipline (in this case, History) whole, to see History in relation to the broader liberal arts, and to see History in relation to Christian faith.

Various **new strategies** were employed in HISTORY 198 in the fall of 2005 to assess student development in this area. First, course texts included two anthologies of essays from leading Historians on key methodological, Historiographical, and philosophical/theological issues. These readings formed the basis of the seminar’s discussions each week and provided students with a regular opportunity to converse with peers and faculty on the nature of the discipline and its connections to liberal learning and Christian faith.

Rick Pointer reported that individually and collectively, the nine students in the course made significant progress over the semester in their grasp of the complexity of the discipline and the Historian’s task.

1. Such progress was evident both in the improving quality of the discussions themselves (in comparison both with prior weeks and with prior incarnations of the course) and
2. In a second strategy used to assess student development: each student prepared reading questions each week for each assigned chapter or essay. These questions were not only used to help stimulate discussion but were submitted to the instructor and graded on the basis of their insight, clarity, and usefulness. Rick Pointer reports that out of a possible 90 sets of reading questions, 84 were submitted by students and only 1 of those sets received a grade lower than a C. In general, student questions reflected reasonably careful completion and adequate to excellent comprehension of the assigned readings.

3. A third strategy employed to assess student development was a short final reflection paper in which students were asked to write 1-2 pages on either a) how doing their major research projects for the course affected their Christian faith and how their faith affected their doing of the project or b) how doing their major project affected their thinking about their future vocation. Rick Pointer reports that all 9 students completed this assignment, 6 answering question A, 3 answering question B. Though brief, the papers without exception testified to the students’ perception that the completion of the project had indeed enhanced either their understanding of the ways in which History and Christian faith relate or enlarged their vocational interest in a research-oriented field.

Integrating the Major Discipline: the issue of vocation

Departmental Work
In its May 2005 discussion of the possible models for History 198, the department opted for a model that allowed for the integration of vocational questions in the courses (see Appendix 3 and 4). In particular, it gave students the option if choosing from a range of different projects (paper, presentation, class plans…). In the Fall of 2005, one student chose to write a series of lesson plans, and the assignment allowed her to reflect on her vocation as a High School teacher (see Alison’s project, in our department portfolio).

In an effort to understand our students’ capacity to connect their education and their vocation, the department spent a lot of time in the Fall 2005 and the Spring 2006 discussing other possible tools of assessment:

• Portfolios: the department developed a list of requirements for the portfolio (see appendix 5). In the Fall of 2005, students were given a portfolio and a set of guidelines to keep it. However, in the following semester, there was little agreement as to who should be responsible for introducing the portfolio to students, how students were expected to keep it in the course of their education, and how the portfolios would be evaluated.

• Exit Interviews

Departmental Discussion
At this point there is no agreement in the department as to what would constitute the most effective way to assess the effect of teaching in this area. The main obstacles seem to be the following –most of them have to do with concerns over work load, either for students or for faculty:

• Adding to the senior seminar’s already heavy load
• Making sure students continue to collect work in their portfolios
• Adding to our end of the Spring semester load
• How do we give students the incentive to keep up with a portfolio or to go through an exit interview when there is no grade or credit assigned to this?

**NEXT STEPS**

**Ongoing Activities**

As we think about our next review cycle (2006-11), the History Department will engage in the following ongoing general activities:

• We will schedule at least two department meeting each semester to discuss student learning/assessment, and a final meeting during may term.

• We will continue monitoring student progress in their Historical skills in History 198

**History 198**

The department needs to finalize the changes it wants to make to the History 198 course on the basis of its assessment of student work. The department is reluctant to prescribe too strongly to whoever is teaching the course what he/she “has to” do. The faculty member responsible for the class needs to be able to weigh in on what revisions he/she is willing to implement this Fall. Rick Pointer suggested the following:

Probable changes:

• Our Library liaison, Mary Logue, would be asked to provide more direct reference assistance to our students with locating primary source options
• We would require students to identify primary sources in their initial bibliography
• We would have students document the research tools and places they have used during their research (ILL, UCSB) so that we can measure in some way how and where they are doing their research.

Possible changes:

• A class visit to UCSB
• A primary source analysis exercise early in the semester
• A short assessment of the Historiography of the student’s subject

For the sake of continuity in the assessment process, it would be helpful to:

• keep giving to students various options for their final projects
• include an essay that assesses “students’ abilities to see their discipline (in this case, History) whole, to see History in relation to the broader liberal arts, and to see History in relation to Christian faith.”

In an effort to establish benchmarks for our students, the department would like to see at least 75% of the students enrolled in History 198 this coming Fall (12 out of 16) use primary sources that are
“reasonably available” in their final project. The expression “reasonably available” leaves room for students to work in different fields. The department will need to have further discussion to clarify its expectations for students in this area.

**Integrating the Major Discipline: Directions for study**

Because *portfolios* would allow the department to assess a variety of student learning goals, they seem like a valuable tool. One option might be to restrict the assessment to a few graduates (5 perhaps, or one per adviser) who would be expected to keep a portfolio of their work in History. Individual advisors would be the point person for those portfolios, and student participation would be voluntary. Our benchmark for students turning in portfolios would be that 100% of our students improve their skills in the course of their studies in our department.

An outside faculty adviser could provide good feedback on this issue. For instance, a faculty member in the Art department or in the sociology department might give us new ideas or pragmatic ways to implement old ideas.

The department also needs to collectively share the results of the *senior interviews* it conducts every year. The first set of interviews is already available and has been gathered last Spring (2006). This analysis would enable us to assess how well our students are understanding the goals of the major, and what they understand the relationship between their major, their Liberal Arts education and their faith to be (the results of the senior interviews are kept in the department portfolio).

**History 10: Directions for Study**

The department might talk about the place of History 10 in its assessment plan. Our assessment coordinator encouraged us to limit our goals to the ones stated above, so there is a chance that this set of goals might belong to a later assessment cycle. Here is a tentative plan:

- 2006-2007: Discuss what we are currently doing in History 10, both in terms of the goals for the class and the ways in which we assess students’ performance
- May term 2007: devise an assessment strategy for one of the goals stated
- 2007-2008: administer the assessment
- 2008-2009: conclude on the results and revise the tool if necessary
Appendices

1. What we want for our graduates
2. List of the evidence collected and its location
3. May 2005 discussion of History 198
4. History 198 Syllabus -2005
5. History Department portfolio: a checklist
6. History department exit interviews: a template
7. Senior Survey
Introduction
History is an academic discipline with its own particular methods and mores. The History major at Westmont is an apprenticeship in competent Historical practice. To that end, the professors in the History department aim to teach you how to read, write, and research as Historians. The purpose of this document is to outline what we want you, our students, to learn in these areas by the time you graduate.

1. Reading as a Historian

There are two types of material that a History major needs to be able to read and analyze, namely primary and secondary sources. A primary source is typically one produced during the period under study, while the later reflections of Historians constitute secondary sources.

A. Reading Primary Sources

History graduates should know how to read a primary source Historically and critically. More particularly, they should be able to ask basic questions of the source; assess how their own background shapes their interpretation; and draw conclusions about the reliability and usefulness of the source.

Asking basic questions

When faced with a primary document, Historians ask a series of basic questions. These should be instinctive for our graduates.
They should know to ask about:
  o the genre of the source
  o the author
  o the date and circumstances of composition
  o the audience

Genre

Graduates should develop a precise vocabulary that allows them to identify the nature of the source. They should distinguish between written sources and other types of sources (visual, oral, material culture), and within written sources, they should draw distinctions between oral traditions, printed documents, and manuscripts. They should also be able to differentiate
between prescriptive and descriptive literature. They should pay close attention to the ways in which conventions affect the content and usefulness of the source (for instance, literary, epistolary, or photographic conventions).

They should be able to classify primary documents into categories such as the following:
- Visual Sources: photographs, sculpture, painting, maps
- Material culture: clothing, relics, furniture, tools
- Written Sources: government documents, newspapers, political treatises, statistical tables, letters (official versus private correspondence), memoirs, literary sources (novels, poems, epics, myths, romances etc.), sermons.

**Authorship**

It should be instinctive for graduates to ask a range of questions about the author of any source. In particular, they should reflect on:
- the author’s lifetime (did the author live at the time of the events? Was he/she a witness to the events?)
- the author’s class or social function
- the author’s gender
- the author’s ethnicity
- the author’s religious background
- the author’s national identity
- the author’s political affiliation

Wherever it is relevant, graduates should consider the effect this information has on the interpretation of the text. When a source is anonymous, they should consider carefully the ways in which the text might give some clues as to the background of its author.

**Date, circumstances and context of composition**

Graduates should be able to discuss the relevance of the date of composition for the interpretation of the text. They should pay close attention to the time-span elapsed between the events or movements considered by the primary source and the date of composition. What happened between the events and the date of composition?

Graduates should consider carefully the broad context in which the text is written. Contextualization implies that graduates can connect the text to other relevant information they have acquired about the time-period (in their textbooks, in lectures or class-discussions). This includes familiarity with the language used at the time (or simply the recognition that the language used by the author is different from our own), and with the relevant aspects of the cultural setting. In short, graduates need to be able to place sources in appropriate contemporary and Historiographical conversations.

**Audience**

Graduates should pay close attention to the ways in which the intended audience for the source affected what was said, what was not said, and how it was said. This should impact their interpretation of the source. For instance, Luther’s sermons in the vernacular were directed at a larger and more popular audience than History theological treatises. This affects
the style as well as the content of the source.

When it is relevant, graduates should draw distinctions between the intended audience and actual audience of the source. For instance, *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas a Kempis was not initially intended for a lay audience, yet as it was translated into vernacular languages, it became a standard text for lay devotion. Graduates should be able to ask questions about the reception of the source and the History of this reception.

**Assessing how their own background shapes their interpretation**
Graduates should be self-critical in their analysis of primary sources. They should be aware of the assumptions they bring to their analysis of the source, and ask themselves how these influence the way they interpret their sources. By their senior year, students should be capable of a high degree of comprehension and empathy when confronted with cultures that are unfamiliar or behavior that they disprove of.

**Drawing conclusions about the reliability and usefulness of a primary source**
Graduates should be able to draw conclusions about the reliability and usefulness of primary sources. Considering all the information gathered about the author, the circumstances of composition and the audience, what questions does the source allow you to answer? What questions can’t it answer? What areas of History does the source speak to (social, political, economic…)? How do you assess its claims?

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**Reading Secondary Sources**
Graduates should be able to read books and articles by Historians with confidence and competence. More specifically, they should be able to classify a secondary source; summarize it; identify its main thesis or argument; engage in informed criticism; and make a final assessment of its value. These skills are important not only for written assignments, but also for class discussions.

**Classifying secondary sources**
Graduates should be able to categorize secondary sources. They should be familiar with categories such as:

- A Historical monograph
- An edited volume around a particular topic (e.g. Mushirul Hasan (ed.), *India’s Partition* (New Delhi: OUP, 1993))
- A textbook (e.g. Duiker and Spielvogel, *World Civilizations*)
- A memoir
- A government study

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1 The structure and some of the content of this section have been adapted from Mortimer Adler, *How to Read a Book* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1940).
Graduates should then be able to decide how the category of the source will influence their reading of it. What kinds of information do they expect to obtain from this kind of source?

**Summarizing the source**
Graduates should be able to conduct an inspectional reading to discover the nature and purpose of the book or article in question. In a research project, a major reason for such an inspectional reading is to determine the extent to which the source is useful for their purposes. This may involve a pre-reading of the source that pays particular attention to the title, any back-cover summary or blurbs, the publisher (an academic press or one for non-specialists? Who is the intended audience?), the table of contents, the introduction and conclusion, and the index. Graduates should then be able to conduct a swift, first reading of the source, and identify its principal divisions, themes, etc.

**Determining the author’s argument**
Graduates should be able to identify accurately the author’s central argument. If this is not stated explicitly in the introduction or conclusion, graduates should be able to discover the argument by looking for:
- What the author is arguing against
- Key, repeated terms
- How the author disputes how other authors use the same terms (e.g., “colonialism,” “peasant uprisings,” “secularization”)
- Important concepts in italics of boldface
- Important propositions
- Summary sections

Graduates should be able to place a particular book or article in the broader Historical conversation on their topic (Historiography). They should work out what contribution the author is making to the Historical discussion.

Graduates should be able to state the author’s argument in their own words.

Graduates should also know how to find reviews of books and articles, which may help in identifying an author’s argument.

**Criticizing secondary sources**
“Thou shall not take cheap shots” (Nicholas Wolterstorff). Criticism is a positive, negative, or neutral evaluation of the book’s thesis and the evidence used to support it. Graduates should be able to engage in informed criticism of secondary sources. In particular, they should be able to:
- Analyze how well the author has supported the thesis with primary sources
- Ask whether the author’s conclusions are the only ones that could be drawn from the evidence
- Look to see whether the author addressed counter arguments
- Identify unspoken assumptions on which the author relies for History/her thesis
- If they disagree with an author’s argument, graduates should be able to explain why they do so.

**Assessing the Secondary Source’s Value**
Graduates should be able to make a final assessment of the source’s truth value and significance, by asking:

- Whether they agree or disagree with the author
- What is at stake in the argument
- What wider concerns the work addresses
- Whether our grasp of the event, person or process be significantly altered if the book were not written

2. Researching as a Historian

Research is at the heart of the Historian’s task. Therefore, our graduates should be able to carry on Historical research well, having developed a range of skills and aptitudes foundational for independent Historical inquiry.

To be effective Historical researchers, graduates must be able to select and appropriate research topic; locate relevant sources; and determine the character of the existing Historiography on their topic.

**Selecting and defining appropriate research topics**

A critical starting point for any research project is the identification of a research topic that is researchable and worth researching.

Graduates should be able to ascertain the qualities of a good research topic. They may do so through asking questions such as:

- Is the topic interesting to me?
- Is it the sort of question a Historian can answer?
- Does the topic suit my intellectual ability?
- Is the subject doable in the prescribed paper length?
- Are there adequate and appropriate sources available to me on this subject?
- Does this topic matter? Why is it significant?

Graduates should be able to formulate a good, central research question with corresponding sub-questions to guide their research. Research questions should be clear, open-ended, of appropriate scope, answerable, and of appropriate complexity. An example of a good central research question might be “For what reasons and to what extent did Germany’s use of unrestricted submarine warfare contribute to America’s decision to enter World War One?” Sub-questions might include: What were the reasons for Germany’s submarine policy? What did the Germans anticipate the American response to be? How committed was the Wilson administration and the American public to maintaining our policy of neutrality? What political, economic, military, and moral considerations shaped American reactions to submarine warfare?

**Locating pertinent primary and secondary sources**

Identifying and locating useful Historical evidence (primary and secondary sources) is essential to the completion of sound Historical research. Graduates should know how to locate pertinent sources for their research topics.

- Graduates should therefore be able to navigate effectively within the library collections of Westmont and a university research library (e.g. UCSB). This means knowing how to access
all the resources that these libraries have available to students of History, particularly through effective use of online catalogs.

- Graduates should be able to locate and use printed and online reference works including dictionaries, encyclopedias, and bibliographies.
- Graduates should be able to locate and use printed and online databases/search engines, especially those geared towards Historical research such as World Cat, Historical Abstracts, and America: History and Life
- Graduates should be able to use interlibrary loan effectively.
- Graduates should be able to evaluate the reliability of internet sources

Ascertaining the Historiography

- Historical research typically builds upon the work of past scholars. As students engage in their research, they enter into ongoing conversations. Graduates should therefore be able to understand the Historiography in their field of research.

- Graduates should be able to map and categorize the interpretations past Historians have offered on subjects related to their research. This will require effective reading of secondary sources (see “Reading Secondary Sources”, above).

- Graduates should be able to determine neglected or understudied aspects of their research topics based on their familiarity with the existing Historiography.

- Graduates should be able to recognize representations of major schools of interpretation (e.g. Marxist, Feminist, Subaltern) as they may appear within the scholarship on their subject.

3. Writing as a Historian

Every academic discipline has its own particular conventions when it comes to writing. History graduates should therefore be able to write well as Historians. Such writing may take a variety of different forms, including book reports, annotated bibliographies, and in-class essays, but the principal form of writing in the discipline is papers which develop a Historical argument. To write a good History paper, graduates must be able to develop an argument; make use of different forms of Historical writing; write in an appropriate manner; and provide the requisite scholarly apparatus.

Developing an argument

A good argument is the key to a good History paper. Graduates should therefore know how to put a Historical argument together.

To that end, graduates must be able to:

- Write strong introductions to their papers with a clear thesis statement. A thesis statement is typically a single sentence which lays out the central contentions of the paper. A good introduction is one that states what the paper is about, what it will argue for, and (usually) how the student will develop that argument in the various sections of the paper.
• Structure a paper. Papers should be broken up into clear sections, ideally adumbrated in the introduction and marked clearly with headings in the text. Each section of the paper should make a clear contribution to the argument being mounted, and be explicitly tied to that argument.

• Write appropriate transitions. The beginning and end of each section of the paper are particularly important. Graduates should be able to craft these in such a way that the reader is reminded of the paper’s argument, how it is being developed, and how the constituent parts of the paper fit together.

• Compose coherent paragraphs. Every paragraph should contribute to the overall argument of the paper.

• Write an effective conclusion. Graduates should be able to write conclusions which form a fitting climax to their papers, as opposed to allowing them to peter out. An effective conclusion is one which typically reminds the reader of the paper’s key arguments and may raise further questions elicited by the research.

**Using Different Forms of Historical Writing**

A good History paper will use a variety of modes of writing. In particular, graduates should be able to use the following forms of Historical writing:

• **Narrative.** Every History paper will include some account of what happened in the past. Graduates should be able to describe the events, people, and places that they study clearly and concisely, providing sufficient detail for the general reader but not a surfeit. Ideally, graduates should be able to recount events in ways which are sympathetic and absorbing.

• **Exposition.** This form of Historical writing has two dimensions, relating to events and sources respectively.

• Firstly, graduates need to be able to put forward explanations of why things happened or why particular events were significant. Simply relating what happened is not enough.

• Secondly, graduates need to be able to incorporate the findings of their research on primary and secondary sources into their papers. This requires the ability to summarize these sources, and explain their significance. A key part of this is the ability to relate primary sources to Historiographical debates and place secondary sources in these debates.

• **Argument.** Graduates should be able to argue Historically in ways that are careful, fair, and compelling. Such arguments may relate to primary sources (why is a particular document important?), or to the Historiography (why does the student find one Historian more persuasive than another?), or to broader questions of significance or causation. These arguments may either be integral parts of the argument which is the whole paper or the whole itself.

In order to mount good arguments, graduates must be:

- Careful—so as to understand others before agreeing or disagreeing
- Fair—so as not to misrepresent others
- Alert to how evidence is used—so as to gauge how much credence to give to a particular source
- Conscious of the strengths of different points of view—so as to avoid simplistic arguments

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2 This section makes use of Richard Marius and Melvin E. Page, *A Short Guide to Writing About History*, 5th edn. (New York: Pearson Education, 2005), 52-74, but modifies some of their categories.
- Charitable—so as not to sound arrogant
- Able to marshal evidence for their case
- Willing to admit the weaknesses in their argument.

**Writing in an appropriate manner**

Graduates should learn how to write in ways which are suitable for their task. In particular, a good History paper will:

- Be written in simple, clear, direct prose, without airs and graces
- Use the active rather than the passive voice whenever possible
- Use the past tense when referring to past events
- Adopt a tone appropriate for academic work. Graduates do not need to affect pretentious prose, but they should be aware that papers are not the place for laid-back breeziness.
- Put the writer in the background. A good paper will be creative and reflect the writer’s own personality, but ultimately it is about others and not a vehicle for self-promotion. The personal pronouns “I, me, my” should therefore usually be used rarely in a good History paper, and mainly in the introduction and conclusion.
- Use quotations appropriately. Quotations from primary sources should be used to illustrate points and illuminate people and periods. Quotations from secondary sources should be used sparingly. Quotations should normally be less than three lines in length.

In addition, graduates should be able to write English well, using correct grammar, vocabulary, and punctuation. Recommended style guides include:


**Providing the Requisite Scholarly Apparatus**

Graduates should be able to use the notation and bibliographic conventions laid out in the *Chicago Manual of Style*. They should know when to cite their sources, how to cite them correctly, and what should go into their bibliography.

A major reason for this is in order to avoid plagiarism. Students should consult the college’s “Plagiarism Policy” in order to understand what plagiarism is. Students should be particularly careful to provide a footnote whenever they are making use of material from their sources, even if they are not directly quoting them.
Appendix 2: Evidence

Goal 1

- History 001, Sp 2005: primary source responses – initial responses (14) and second responses (22) – grading sheets and analysis
- History 121, Sp 2005: primary source analysis (11) – student work copies in department portfolio
- History 121, Sp 2005: final exam, primary source analysis (12) – student work copies in department portfolio
- History 185, Fall 2005: essays on primary sources (13)
- History 140, Fall 2005: three sets of essays (14 for each)
- History 198, Fall 2005: student survey (9)
- History 198, Fall 2005: student papers (4)
- History 121, Sp 2006: final exam, primary source analysis (13 essays) – student work copies in department portfolio
- History 001, Sp 2006: primary source analysis (18) & final papers (19)

Goal 2

- History 198, Fall 2005: essays
- History 198, Fall 2005: student survey
- Senior interviews, Spring 2006 – student work copies in department portfolio (notes)

History department meetings devoted in part or in full to assessment (department minutes are kept in the department portfolio)

2004-2005

- 9/21/04: Discussion of portfolios
- 10/5/04: distribution of tasks for the following Spring and continued discussion of portfolios
- 10/19/04: continued discussion of portfolios
- 11/2/04: continued discussion of portfolios
- 11/30/04: continued discussion of portfolios and department goals
- 12/9/04: discussion of department goals
- 3/08/2005: History 198 (established traditions in History. 198, GE imperatives and discussed possible tools for assessment)
- 3/22/05: History 198 (discussion of “integrating the major discipline” in the History. 198, and its particular components – faith and History, History and the Liberal Arts)
- 4/05/05: History 198 (discussion of History 198 goals and their implications for the class’ format)
- 5/16/05: History 198 ctd. We thoroughly discussed the three possible models for History 198, and decided to adopt

2005-2006
• 9/1/05: History 198 (discussion of shuttle service to improve students’ access to Historical resources at UCSB)
• 9/08/05: History 198 (assessment strategies such as primary sources analysis assignments; discussion of “integrating the major discipline”)
• 9/22/05: Discussion of Senior Survey as assessment tool
• 11/5/05: Discussion of Alister Chapman’s assessment plan, distribution of responsibilities for “what we want for our graduates”
• 11/17/05: Discussion of “skills in reading primary and secondary sources” in “what we want for our graduates”
• 12/1/05: Discussion of “skills in writing and research” in “what we want for our graduates”
• 12/15/05: Final discussion of the departmental document “what we want for our graduates”
• 1/9/06: Discussion of shuttle service and its impact on History 198. Discussion of changes in handouts, assessment and further efforts in assessment
• 1/23/06: Seminar papers: how to read them for assessment purposes
• 2/6/06: Discussion of January report and assignment of duties for the semester
• 2/24/06: discussion of new inputs to train our students in Historical skills, discussion of the departmental document and of formats for exit interviews
• 3/06/06: Discussion of portfolios and template for senior interviews (see appendices 5 & 6)
• 3/20/06: Assessment of Senior papers
• 4/13/06: Discussion of implications of our assessment for History 198
• 4/28/06: Senior interviews

May term 2006: email departmental conversation

Data Collected for Future Assessment

History 121 –Spring 2006
As part of their final exam, students were asked to reflect on the ways in which the class contributed to their ability to think Historically. 13 essays have been collected and filed. Our hope is that in a future assessment cycle, we would be able to assess the effectiveness of our courses for this General Education purpose. This set of essays could serve in an initial discussion in the department and point out areas of strength and weaknesses.

History 10 -Spring 2005, Fall 2005, Spring 2006
The professor kept all final papers in her 4 sections of History 10 (World History). The evidence could serve to assess our students’ development in understanding the role of a Christian Liberal Arts education. As such, it would serve to assess students’ performance in achieving one of the main goals of this course for their General Education.
Appendix 3: May 2005 discussion of History 198

HISTORY 198 ISSUES AND IDEAS

Issues to be resolved:

- Type and number of student written assignments
- Whether there will be a standard research paper assignment required of all students or a variety of options for finished products, all grounded in historical research
- Whether the course should seek to be primarily the type of integrative course prescribed by the GE Integrating the Major Discipline category or primarily a research course that fits better under the GE Research category
- How other department faculty, besides the one “teaching” the course, should contribute to it

Option A: A Research Course
- Primary purpose of course is for all students to produce a substantial research paper; multiple draft process, etc.
- Hold seminar meetings for first 4-6 weeks – concentrate on matters of research method; link students to one faculty person as their mentor
- Outside faculty do not need to attend seminar except for paper presentations at end of semester
- No seminar meetings for weeks 5-13; all student time spent on research and writing
- Students should have weekly meetings with mentor to monitor progress

Option B: An Integrative/Research Course
- Seminar meetings would be devoted primarily to readings and discussion of the three GE “integrative” questions: a) how do the different parts of History form a coherent whole? b) how does History relate to or fit into a liberal arts education overall? c) how do History and Christian faith relate?
- Seminar would meet weekly throughout the semester with multiple faculty participation (perhaps the teacher and rotating attendance by other faculty based on topic for that week?)
- Primary student written assignment for the course is a research paper/project – scope of project would be smaller/shorter than in option A; might allow for some variety in the nature of the finished product but all projects would need to be based on advanced (compared to HISTORY 1) Historical research
- Some assignments might allow students to orient them towards their future vocational plans

Option C: An Integrative Course
- Primary focus of course would be on integrating the major discipline through readings and discussion of the three GE “integrative” questions: a) how do the different parts of History
form a coherent whole? b) how does History relate to or fit into a liberal arts education overall? c) how do History and Christian faith relate?

- Written assignments would be oriented around the integrative issues, not an independent research project
- Seminar would meet weekly throughout the semester with multiple faculty participation (perhaps the teacher and rotating attendance by other faculty based on topic for that week?)
- Some assignments might allow students to orient them towards their future vocational plans
Appendix 4: History 198 Syllabus

HISTORY 198
Historical Method, Bibliography, and Research
Profs. Pointer, Chapman, Mallampalli, Robins
Fall 2005
4 Credits
M 3:30 – 6:00
Off: DH205, Ext.6787
Home: 565-9425
Fax: 565-6255
Email: pointer@westmont.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course is designed for advanced students of History and will help them develop essential skills of Historical research, thinking, writing, and presentation. A major focus of the course is the production of a substantial research project, which addresses an Historical problem of the student’s own choosing. The course also aims to help students integrate their study and understanding of History, seeing how its diverse parts form a coherent whole and how the discipline interacts with the Christian faith and with the whole of a Liberal Arts education.

COURSE PURPOSES:
1. To assist student growth in research, critical thinking, writing, and presentation skills within the discipline of History.
2. To introduce students to perennial and current questions of method and theory within the discipline of History.
3. To stimulate students’ reflection upon and refinement of their own understanding of History, and how it might both inform and be informed by Christian faith.
4. To consider how the discipline of History fits within a Liberal Arts education.

COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY: Both are required
John Tosh, ed., Historians on History
Ronald A. Wells, History and the Christian Historian
Additional readings will be distributed in class or put on reserve in the library.

COURSE PROCEDURE:
This class is a weekly seminar, designed to be conducted at a professional level. You should think of yourself as a Historian, working alongside other Historians in the seminar on issues of concern to the Historians’ community and assisting one another in the development of the skills of the Historian. Class sessions will be devoted to group discussions of methodological and theoretical issues in the discipline, research and communication strategies, and progress reports on individual student projects. Typically, two department faculty will be present at the seminar. Much of the work of the course requires students to work independently and to demonstrate a greater degree of self-discipline than is typical in college classes. You will need to dedicate consistent time each week to your research project in order to produce high quality work. Academic honesty in that work is an
absolute requirement. Plagiarism of any sort will be treated according to Westmont College policy. To plagiarize is to present someone else's work—History or her words, line of thought, or organizational structure—as your own. This occurs when sources are not cited properly, or when permission is not obtained from the original author to use History or her work. Another person's "work" can take many forms: printed or electronic copies of computer programs, musical compositions, drawings, paintings, oral presentations, papers, essays, articles or chapters, statistical data, tables or figures, etc. In short, if any information that can be considered the intellectual property of another is used without acknowledging the original source properly, this is plagiarism. Please familiarize yourself with the entire Westmont College Plagiarism Policy. This document defines different levels of plagiarism and the penalties for each. It also contains very helpful information on strategies for avoiding plagiarism. It cannot be overemphasized that plagiarism is an insidious and disruptive form of academic dishonesty. It violates relationships with known classmates and professors, and it violates the legal rights of people you may never meet.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING:

1. Class Attendance and Participation – Because of the seminar nature of this course, faithful class attendance and active participation are absolutely essential. Consequently, 15% of your final grade will be determined by attendance (5%) and participation (10%). Your attendance grade will be based on the number of classes missed: 0 misses = A; 1 miss = A-; 2 misses = B; 3 misses = C. Active participation means coming to class having read the assigned material, asking and responding to questions, listening attentively to student peers and faculty, offering your own insights, and, in general, working cooperatively and responsibly with your fellow Historians in the seminar. In this course, it also involves responsible use of the opportunity to be mentored in your research one-on-one by a department faculty person. Remember that it is your responsibility to work hard at engaging seriously with the course material. Moreover, students are invited to consider how, within the Christian learning community this class will constitute, they might serve one another and love their neighbor.

2. Research Project – The principal assignment for this course will be to research and produce a major Historical project. Students will select a research topic in the first two weeks of the semester and then have nine and a half weeks to research and produce a rough draft of their project. They will then have approximately three weeks to do revisions (if they wish) and submit a final draft. Because History today is conveyed to scholarly and general audiences through a range of mediums and formats, students may present their research findings in the mode of their choice. Options include a traditional scholarly paper of journal article length (20-25 pages, excluding endnotes and bibliography), class lesson plans, a video documentary, a virtual museum exhibit, a website, and an interactive CD. Students may wish to choose their presentation mode based on their own vocational interests. Whatever the topic, it is important to remember that undergirding all of the “finished products” will be extensive if not exhaustive Historical research. Marks of a superior project are:
   • Choice of a research question that is appropriate to available sources and that can be treated effectively in the presentation mode selected
   • Responsible use of both primary and secondary sources (“responsible” refers to matters of overt plagiarism, as well as to use of an appropriate number of sources and the way in which sources are used in the project)
   • A clear thesis that is logically developed and defended – your project must have a thesis regardless of its presentation format
• Evidence that the researcher has dealt thoughtfully and critically with the sources
• Evidence that the researcher is familiar with accepted practices of documentation.

In this case, that means following the formats for endnotes and bibliographies provided in the *Chicago Manual of Style* (Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*).

• Evidence that the researcher has mastered the mechanical elements of their selected mode of presentation so that the project is marked by clarity, coherence, logical development, sound organization, and creative expression. In the case of writing, that means producing a paper that is typed double spaced in 12 point font with normal margins, and reasonably free of errors in typing, spelling, punctuation, grammar, and usage.

There are many component parts to the successful completion of student projects. It is essential that students complete the following steps in a timely and professional manner:

**Due dates:**
- Submit preliminary topic – September 5
- Submit final topic and mentor selection – September 12
- Submit project proposal – September 19
- Submit annotated bibliography – October 3
- Submit outline of rough draft – October 24
- Submit rough draft – November 16 (Wednesday)
- Oral presentations of projects – December 5, 14
- Submit final draft – December 9 (Friday)

**THE ROUGH DRAFT MUST BE SUBMITTED TO DR. POINTER BY 5:00 ON WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 16TH.** It is the revised draft, not the rough draft, which is optional. The rough draft is worth 50% of the course grade. If a revised draft is submitted, the grade on it replaces the grade on the rough draft. **The final draft of the paper is due to Dr. Pointer by 5:00 on Friday, December 9th.**

**Here are instructions for some of the other constituent parts of the project:**

- **Preliminary topic** – Submit your topic in the form of a question to be explored; if you have more than one possible topic in mind, list several in question form
- **Final topic** – Again, express your topic in the form of a research question
- **Selection of a mentor** – Each student will work closely with one member of the History faculty who will serve as a mentor for the project. You will be paired with the professor whose expertise is closest to your topic. Weekly or bi-weekly meetings are necessary for this mentor relationship to be effective; the purposes of these meetings will include providing aid in defining and refining topics, establishing research schedules and agenda, discussing project design, setting weekly goals, etc. Mentors will grade you on how well you utilized this time and assistance. That grade will be part of your class participation grade.
- **Project proposal** – Each student will submit a 2-page typewritten (double spaced) proposal that explains your topic, describes how you intend to research that topic (including how you will make use of primary and secondary sources, and what your key primary sources will be), and defines the format or mode of presentation you intend to use.
- **Annotated Bibliography** -- Students will prepare an annotated bibliography on their topic. The purpose of this bibliography will be to provide a survey of the
quantity and quality of available resources on their topic. The bibliography should be characterized by the following:

(A) Indication of the topic being studied
(B) A listing of sources with full bibliographic citations. This should be as complete as possible but only include materials that you really believe will have some value; there is no virtue in “padding” your list. **This list should have at least 20 sources on it, 10 of which you will annotate.** The types of sources to be included are:
- standard general background secondary sources that provide a context for the topic
- useful published primary sources
- secondary sources – monographs, biographies, etc.
- journal articles (scholarly journals)
- manuscript (unpublished) primary sources
(C) A brief 2-3 sentence commentary for each of ten (10) of your sources which:
- describes the source, focusing on what is distinct about it
- provides salient evaluative information about the source
- explains the relevance and usefulness of the source for your topic

The other ten or more sources should be listed with full bibliographic citations. Given the importance of this step in the research process, the annotated bibliography is worth 10% of your course grade.

- **Outline** – Each student will submit a detailed outline (2-3 pages) that makes clear the content (including thesis) and organizational structure of your project
- **Oral Presentation** – Each student will have an opportunity to present their research project to the seminar. Presentations should clearly explain the topic, thesis, research methods, and research results of the project. They should be 25 minutes in length, including some time for discussion. The oral presentation is worth 5% of the course grade.

3. **Research Log/Journal** – To encourage regular and thoughtful research, students will keep a research log or journal that records or documents the evolution of their projects across the semester. It should contain everything related to their research and project preparation – references, ideas, outlines, research notes on primary and secondary sources, mentor suggestions, personal reflections, etc. At the end of the log, students are to write a 1-2 page concluding reflective essay which explores either: a) how doing this project has affected your faith and how your faith has affected doing this project; or b) how doing this project has affected your thinking about your future vocation. The log is worth 5% of the course grade and **is due with your projects on Friday, December 9th.**

4. **Reading Questions** – In order to ensure solid preparation for class discussions and to orient those discussions around student questions, students will prepare and submit discussion questions on the weekly reading assignments. Students should compose two questions for each assigned chapter or essay and type those on a regular size piece of paper for submission. Questions should be open-ended in nature and designed to facilitate lively discussion. Students will be regularly called upon to contribute their questions in class. Questions will be collected at the seminar each week. No late questions will be accepted except in the case of excused absences. Together the reading questions will be worth 10% of your course grade.

5. **Grading System** –
- Class Attendance and Participation = 15%
- Submission of topic, project proposal, outline = 5%
- Annotated Bibliography = 10%
- Oral presentation = 5%
- Rough or Final Draft of Project = 50%
- Research Log = 5%
- Reading Questions = 10%

COURSE SCHEDULE:

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tr>
<td>8/29</td>
<td>Framing Our Course Task</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/5</td>
<td>Defining the Historian’s Task</td>
<td>Tosh, 1-15; Wells, 1-22</td>
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<td>9/12</td>
<td>The Historytoricist Model</td>
<td>Tosh, 17-46; Wells, 106-23</td>
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<td>9/19</td>
<td>History, Progress, and Identity</td>
<td>Tosh, 47-82</td>
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<td>9/26</td>
<td>Class Struggle and History from the Bottom Up</td>
<td>Tosh, 83-125</td>
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<td>10/3</td>
<td>History as a Liberal Art</td>
<td>TBA</td>
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<td>10/10</td>
<td>Fall Holiday</td>
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<td>10/17</td>
<td>Gender and Race in History</td>
<td>Tosh, 127-66; Wells, 91-105</td>
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<td>10/24</td>
<td>What History Can Teach Us</td>
<td>Tosh, 167-212; Wells, 220-34</td>
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<td>10/31</td>
<td>History as Social Science</td>
<td>Tosh, 213-70</td>
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<td>History within the Liberal Arts Curriculum</td>
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<td>11/14</td>
<td>Postmodern Turns</td>
<td>Tosh, 271-306; Wells, 205-19</td>
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<td>11/28</td>
<td>History’s Public Role</td>
<td>Tosh, 325-39</td>
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<td>12/5</td>
<td>Project Presentations</td>
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<td>12/14</td>
<td>Project Presentations (3:00 – 5:00)</td>
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Appendix 5: History Department Portfolios, a checklist

**HISTORY DEPARTMENT PORTFOLIO**

Name: ______________________   ID: ____________

All History majors are required both to prepare a senior portfolio and to participate in an exit interview before graduation. Most of the material for your portfolio will come from work you completed in your History courses, starting from the time you entered the major. For this reason, be sure to save electronic copies of everything you write. It will provide you with a record of your progress in the major. The portfolio is also a place for you to assess and reflect upon your selections.

**Contents of the Senior Portfolio:**

1. A checklist of the portfolio material
2. A transcript of course work
3. A résumé of work experience
4. Sample of writing according to the following list:
   A. One project from 5 of the 6 following categories:
      Term paper exhibiting research skills
      Group project
      Oral presentation
      Annotated bibliography
      Project that crosses involves another discipline
      Book review
   
   B. One project from 5 of the following categories
      For the Standard and Graduate School Tracks:
      Upper-division non-western
Upper-division American
Upper-division modern European
Upper-division pre-modern European
Elective
History 1
History 198

For the International Track
Upper-division in your area of study
Upper-division outside your area of study
Westmont course (2 required samples)
Elective

5. Reflexive Essays

Write at least one essay on the following topics:

- Thinking Historically: what does this mean to you?
- What are the points of connection between your faith and the study of History?
- How does History relate to your calling?
- What is the place of History in the Liberal Arts?

Each essay should be about 4-7 pages long. They should make use of the pieces in the portfolio.

You are expected to make connections between the various aspects of the History major.

Idea:

HISTORY 198 could be a stepping stone for one of the essays

Administration of this: records office? How much do we want to go to the mat? How do we keep them accountable?

3 senior breakfasts? Informal conversations with small groups

Offering this to students and you can do it if you want
Appendix 6: History Department Exit interviews, a template

WESTMONT DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
Template for Senior Interviews for History Majors

Questions:
How is this interview connected to the portfolio?
How scripted do we want this to be?

Sample Questions
What books or courses in History have influenced you the most and why?
What are three things that you have learned from your major?

Tell us how your major has shaped your sense of vocation. What issues were clarified during your time as a History major? What issues require further reflection?

How able are you to articulate the place of History within your wider experience of a liberal arts education at Westmont?

Do you feel you know a lot more History than you did when you first came here?
WESTMONT DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
Senior Survey for History Majors

1. How well have your courses in the History Department helped you cultivate the following skills? Please comment on your improvement in each area.

   a. Capacity to read various kinds of Historical articles and books and discern their central arguments.

   b. Ability to critically engage or assess (the merits of) Historical claims.

   c. Reading and drawing inferences from primary sources.

   d. Grasping overarching trends and themes of Historiography.

   e. Conducting Historical research using primary and secondary sources.

   f. Writing a research paper.
g. Contributing to class discussions about Historical topics.

2. Tell us how your major has shaped your sense of vocation. What issues were clarified during your time as a History major? What issues require further reflection? Which courses or professors have been most helpful on this topic? In what ways have they helped?

3. How able are you to articulate the place of History within your wider experience of a liberal arts education at Westmont?

4. What are the points of connection between your faith and the study of History?

5. What areas of History (regional or time periods) remain unclear to you? In other words, what are the major gaps in your understanding of History?
If you return this survey by the next department social –and if it contains more than 30 words–, you might get:

a better recommendation letter
a Starbucks gift card