

## Annual Assessment Report Template

*This form is intended to facilitate reporting program outcomes assessment to accrediting agencies, Board of Trustees, Strategic Planning Committee, and other internal or external audiences.*

*The department mission statement, PLO's, curricular map and multi-year assessment plan should be posted on the departmental website.*

**Department: HISTORY**

**Date: September 1, 2015**

**Department Chair: Alister Chapman**

### I. Program Learning Outcome (PLO) assessment

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Program Learning Outcome</b>           | Students will be able to select an appropriate research topic, and locate, evaluate, and responsibly use primary and secondary sources relevant to their work.  |
| <b>Who is in Charge</b>                   | Alister Chapman, chair  |
| <b><u>Direct Assessment Methods</u></b>   | Departmental assessment in HIS198 Senior Research Seminar of three aspects of research (quality of sources, appropriateness of topic, and accuracy of attribution). Heather Keane and Alister Chapman conducted this assessment, using a rubric drawn up for the exercise. In addition, Molly Riley and the team working on the information literacy ILO used HIS198 papers for their assessment.   |
| <b><u>Indirect Assessment Methods</u></b> | The students in HIS198 took the survey prepared for the ILO assessment.   |
| <b>Major Findings</b>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our own assessment data (drawing from an updated version of our standard rubric for HIS198) suggested that students did a noticeably better job finding an appropriate topic than they did finding good sources and citing them correctly. Given that professors in the department help a great deal with the first of these, this was not a great surprise. Nevertheless, we were still disappointed with the poor performance on the other two skills we assessed. (See appendices for data).</li> <li>• 45% of students reported that they found it hard or very hard to find an appropriate topic.</li> <li>• 30% reported that they found it hard or very hard to find sources for their topic.</li> <li>• By contrast, 69% said that they found writing the paper hard or very hard and 61% said that organizing their paper was hard or very hard. This suggests that students feel more confident in their research abilities than in their</li> </ul> |

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|                             | <p>ability to construct and carry through arguments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% of our students scored as proficient or competent in source evaluation, according to the institutional research data on our HIS198 senior seminar. 95.8% were proficient or competent on source integration. See ILO report for this data.</li> <li>• This ILO research data confirmed our sense that students could do better with source attribution, although 75% of our students were still proficient or competent in this area.</li> </ul>   |
| Closing the Loop Activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marianne Robins targeted research training in HIS1 Foundations of History in Spring 2015.</li> <li>• The department discussed how much we focus on research skills between HIS1 and HIS198.</li> <li>• The results of this assessment will be given to Chandra Mallampalli, on sabbatical 2014-15, who is teaching HIS198 Fall 2015. In particular, the chair will discuss with Dr. Mallampalli the conversation the department had regarding the HIS198 annotated bibliography project.</li> <li>• Alister Chapman is incorporating a new research paper into his HIS140 course this Fall.</li> </ul> |
| Discussion                  |   |

**II. Follow-ups**

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Program Learning Outcome    | Primary Source outcome, assessed 2013-14   |
| Who is in Charge            | Marianne Robins, Chandra Mallampalli, and Alister Chapman  |
| Major Findings              |  |
| Closing the Loop Activities | We did not do any assessment of primary source work this year, but we continued work in this area. For example, primary source work was central to HIS121 Medieval Mediterranean (Fall 2014) and HIS142 European Intellectual History (Spring 2015). In addition, Rachel Winslow's HIS8 US History Since 1877 included a fresh array of primary sources. Alister Chapman's HIS140 course Fall 2015 will require students to work with primary sources throughout the semester. |

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| <b>Discussion</b> |  |

**III. Other assessment or Key Questions-related projects**

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <b>Project</b>          | <b>Communication and Recruitment</b>  |
| <b>Who is in Charge</b> | <b>Alister Chapman</b>  |
| <b>Major Findings</b>   |   |
| <b>Action</b>           | <b>We completed our website reconfiguration, incorporating our new mission statement and new language for our primary pages with the academic pages redesign initiated by the provost’s office. Ruby Jeanne Shelton was very helpful throughout this process. We also ordered a fresh batch of history t shirts for our majors, which they appreciate. In 2015-16 we will consider adjustments to our major that will make it more workable for students.</b> |
| <b>Discussion</b>       |   |

**IV. Adjustments to the Multi-year Assessment Plan (optional)**

| <b>Proposed adjustment</b>                                      | <b>Rationale</b>  | <b>Timing</b> |
|---|---|---------------|
| <b>Removal of Tutoring in HIS1 Foundations of History pilot</b> | <b>We piloted this in Spring 2013, but results were disappointing. We have not tried again since.</b> |               |
|   |   |               |

**V. Appendices**

- A. Prompts or instruments used to collect the data

- B. Rubrics used to evaluate the data
- C. Relevant assessment-related documents/samples (optional)

|                                | <b>Superior Paper</b>   | <b>Good Paper</b>   | <b>Needs help Paper</b>  | <b>Really Needy Paper</b>  |
|--------------------------------|---|---|--|--|
| <b>Topic</b>                   | Paper is based on an excellent foundation of primary and secondary sources, and makes a clear contribution to the historiography. The topic is manageable.  | Paper is based on a good foundation of primary and secondary sources, and aims to make a contribution to the historiography. The topic was too broad/narrow for a semester-long project.                          | Paper has a weak foundation in primary and/or secondary sources, and it is unclear how it relates to the historiography. The topic was much too broad/narrow for a semester-long project.  | The paper's foundation in primary and secondary sources is obviously inadequate. There is little to no attempt to relate the paper to the historiography. The topic was unsuitable for a history research project.   |
| <b>Thesis</b>                  | Thesis is easily identifiable, plausible, novel, sophisticated, insightful, and clear. The argument is very well situated in the broader historical context.  | Thesis is promising, but may be slightly unclear, or lacking in insight or originality. The argument is well situated in the broader historical context.  | Thesis may be unclear (contains many vague terms), appears unoriginal, or offers relatively little that is new; provides little around which to structure the paper. There is an attempt to situate the argument in its broader historical context.                                  | Thesis is difficult to identify at all, may be bland restatement of obvious point. No attempt is made to situate the argument in its broader historical context.   |
| <b>Use of primary sources</b>  | Primary source information used to buttress every point with at least one example. Examples support arguments and fit within paragraph. Analysis is fresh and exciting, posing new ways to think of the material. The student is able to gauge critically what questions she/he can and cannot answer on the basis of the sources used (the paper addresses the issue of the potential and limitations of the sources). | Primary sources used to support most points. Some evidence does not support point, or may appear where inappropriate. Evidence often related to mini-thesis, though links perhaps not very clear.                 | Primary sources used to support some points. Points often lack supporting evidence, or evidence used where inappropriate (often because there may be no clear point). Quotes appear often without analysis relating them to points, or analysis offers nothing beyond the quotation. | Very few or very weak use of primary sources. General failure to support statements, or evidence seems to support no statement. Very little or very weak attempt to relate evidence to argument; may be no identifiable argument, or no evidence to relate it to.. |
| <b>Secondary literature</b>    | Intelligently analyzes the historiographical debate the paper is addressing. Engages in mature fashion with books and articles that are recent and appropriate for the topic. Extensive and up to date bibliography.  | Analyzes the historiographical debate, the paper is addressing. Engages books and articles that are appropriate for the topic. Extensive bibliography.  | Analyzes the historiographical debate in a scant or inadequate manner. Little engagement with the arguments of others. Bibliography does not reflect the current state of the field.   | Lacks any grasp of historiographical debate, and consults few authoritative sources. No engagement with the arguments of others. Inadequate bibliography.  |
| <b>Structure</b>               | Evident, understandable, appropriate for thesis. Excellent transitions from point to point. Paragraphs support solid topic sentences.   | Generally clear and appropriate, though may wander occasionally. May have a few unclear transitions, or a few paragraphs without strong topic sentences.  | Generally unclear, often wanders or jumps around. Few or weak transitions, many paragraphs without topic sentences.  | Unclear, often because thesis is weak or non-existent. Transitions confusing and unclear. Few topic sentences.   |
| <b>Logic and argumentation</b> | All ideas in the paper flow logically; the argument is identifiable, reasonable, and sound. Author anticipates and successfully defuses counter-arguments; makes novel connections to outside material (from other  | Argument of paper is clear, usually flows logically and makes sense. Some evidence that counter-arguments acknowledged, though perhaps not addressed. Occasional insightful connections to outside material made. | Logic may often fail, or argument may often be unclear. May not address counter-arguments or make any outside connections. May contain logical contradictions.   | Ideas do not flow at all, usually because there is no argument to support. Simplistic view of topic; no effort to grasp possible alternative views. Many logical contradictions, or simply too incoherent to determine.  |

|                    |   |   |   |  |
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|                    | parts of the class, or other classes) which illuminate thesis.  |   |   |  |
| <b>Composition</b> | Sentence structure, grammar, and diction excellent; correct use of punctuation; minimal to no spelling errors. Excellent integration of quoted material into sentences. | Sentence structure, grammar, and diction strong despite occasional lapses; punctuation often used correctly. Some (minor) spelling errors. Quotes well integrated into sentences. | Problems in sentence structure, grammar, and diction (usually not major). Errors in punctuation and spelling. Quotes may be poorly integrated into sentences. | Big problems in sentence structure, grammar, and diction. Frequent major errors in punctuation, and spelling. Quotes not integrated into sentences; "plopped in" in improper manner. |
| <b>Attribution</b> | Documents sources consistently and completely.  | Cites sources throughout the paper with only occasional errors or inconsistencies.  | Frequently cites sources incorrectly or leaves out some citations.  | Displays fundamental errors in citation or bibliography.   |
| <b>Other</b>       |   |   |   |  |

Student

QUALITY OF SOURCES

|    | AC Rating | HK Rating | Average    |
|----|-----------|-----------|------------|
| 1  | 3         | 3         | 3          |
| 2  | 4         | 4         | 4          |
| 3  | 3         | 4         | 3.5        |
| 4  | 4         | 3.5       | 3.75       |
| 5  | 4         | 2.5       | 3.25       |
| 6  | 3         | 3         | 3          |
| 7  | 2.5       | 2         | 2.25       |
| 8  | 2         | 3         | 2.5        |
| 9  | 3         | 2.5       | 2.75       |
| 10 | 2.5 N/A   |           | 2.5        |
| 11 | 2.5       | 2         | 2.25       |
| 12 | 3         | 3         | 3          |
| 13 | 3         | 2         | 2.5        |
|    |           |           | 2.94230769 |

APPROPRIATENESS OF TOPIC

|  | AC Rating | HK Rating | Average    |
|--|-----------|-----------|------------|
|  |           | 4         | 4          |
|  |           | 4         | 4          |
|  |           | 3         | 3          |
|  |           | 4         | 4          |
|  |           | 4 N/A     | 4          |
|  |           | 4         | 4          |
|  |           | 4         | 2          |
|  |           | 3         | 4          |
|  |           | 4         | 4          |
|  |           | 4 N/A     | 4          |
|  |           | 3         | 4          |
|  |           | 4 N/A     | 4          |
|  |           | 4         | 4          |
|  |           |           | 3.76923077 |

ACCURACY OF ATTRIBUTION

|  | AC Rating | HK Rating | Average    |
|--|-----------|-----------|------------|
|  |           | 3         | 4          |
|  |           | 3         | 4          |
|  |           | 4         | 3          |
|  |           | 4         | 4          |
|  |           | 4         | 4          |
|  |           | 3         | 2          |
|  |           | 1         | 2          |
|  |           | 4         | 3          |
|  |           | 3         | 4          |
|  |           | 3         | 3          |
|  |           | 1         | 2          |
|  |           | 3         | 4          |
|  |           | 3         | 3          |
|  |           |           | 3.11538462 |