

STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT REPORT

PROGRAM: HISTORY

SUBMITTED BY: Dr. John Patrick Mullins, Associate Professor of History

DATE: 9/30/2015

BRIEFLY DESCRIBE WHERE AND HOW ARE DATA AND DOCUMENTS USED TO GENERATE THIS REPORT BEING STORED:

Paper copies of the short analytical essays, research papers, and exit surveys from HI 420 are stored in a file in Dr. Jace Stuckey's office. Paper copies of the Supervisor Final Evaluation Forms and Summary Reflective Statements from HI 400 are stored in a file in Dr. Mark Benbow's office.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Program description from the Course Catalog (2014-2015 Undergraduate Catalog):

The study of history aims to improve an understanding of the modern world through a perspective that enables evaluation of both its mature and its underdeveloped conditions. The history program at Marymount focuses primarily on the areas of European and American history. Resources for the study of history in the Washington area are extraordinary, and many students find opportunities to witness firsthand history-making events in this capital city.

The history major — traditionally a preparation for careers in law, business, teaching, research, and many other fields — includes courses essential to the study of the European and American traditions. The requirements of the major are deliberately flexible to accommodate a variety of options within the discipline and with other fields of study.

Internship opportunities in the Washington area are outstanding. The study abroad program offers internship and study programs in numerous locations. The most popular destinations include England, Ireland, and Italy.

History majors are encouraged to consider a minor concentration in another discipline.

Upon successful completion of the history program, students will be able to

• demonstrate knowledge of historical events through analysis of their causes and interrelationships, and by application of theories of historical interpretation to those events;



- demonstrate satisfactory skills in the development of a research question, its analysis, and the application of evidence from primary and/or secondary sources that pertain to that question, and complete a well-written paper presenting analysis of the research findings related to that question; and
- present themselves as professionals by effectively utilizing their critical analysis, problem solving, and communication skills in applied settings such as an internship or student teaching.

Minors are offered in history and public history, as well as a secondary-level teaching licensure program.

PLEASE NOTE: With the arrival of Marymount's new Registrar in Fall 2015, the History Faculty will submit the three new revised Learning Outcomes (see below) as a replacement to the three obsolete bullet points in the above description of the History Program, so that the description will be up to date for the 2016-2017 undergraduate catalog (unless the University Assessment Committee advises further revision of our new Learning Outcomes).

List all of the program's learning outcomes: (regardless of whether or not they are being assessed this year)

| Learning Outcome | Year of Last Assessment | Assessed This Year | Year of Next Planned Assessment |
|--|----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1) Students will be able to comprehend historical events through identification of their causes and consequences and analysis of primary and secondary evidentiary sources by means of close reading of texts within historical context. | 2013-2014 | 2014-2015 | 2016-2017 |
| 2) Students will be able to research and integrate evidence from primary and secondary sources by synthesizing data into a general interpretation of past events in a logically structured, interpretive paper that applies knowledge of historical theory and method. | 2013-2014 | 2014-2015 | 2016-2017 |
| 3) Students will be able to communicate effectively in oral and written forms and apply problem solving and analytical skills to attain professional goals. | 2013-2014 | 2014-2015 | 2016-2017 |
| | | | |



PLEASE NOTE: The History Faculty has revised its Learning Outcomes for 2014-2015:

- 1) Students will demonstrate the ability to analyze and assess critically primary and secondary sources within their historical contexts.
- 2) Students will demonstrate the ability to interpret history through research and synthesis of evidentiary sources and application of theory and method.
- 3) Students will demonstrate the ability to apply historical knowledge effectively through the construction and communication of oral and written arguments in a professional forum.

Describe how the program's outcomes support Marymount's mission, strategic plan, and relevant school plan:

Through the standards set by its revised Learning Outcomes, the History Program requires students to seek knowledge through active inquiry and first-hand research into the available evidence, thereby fostering the intellectual growth and intellectual curiosity prioritized by Marymount's university mission and strategic plan.

In accordance with Marymount's objectives of remaining true to its Catholic identity, developing moral character, and educating the whole person, the History Learning Outcomes challenge students to exercise those habits of independent judgment, critical analysis, and rigorous examination of evidence necessary to participate responsibly in community and public life and make mature, informed life-choices, rather than bowing to momentary impulse, prevailing consensus, time honored dogma, or received authority.

By introducing our students to the theory and methodology of the discipline of history, the History Learning Outcomes enable them to cultivate the wisdom one can derive from knowledge of the fundamental causes of human behavior. Moreover, the Learning Outcomes contribute to diversity and a global perspective by encouraging students to evaluate human behavior in its socio-cultural contexts and take it on its own terms, thereby promoting an understanding of and sensitivity to those people who have different customs and ways of life and see the world from perspectives different from our own.

Finally, by prioritizing the skills of oral and written arguments in a professional forum (through the mechanism of the History Internship), the History Program's revised Learning Outcomes advance our students' career preparation, engage our students in the larger community, and foster collaborative ties between our program of study at Marymount and such regional institutions as the Smithsonian Institute, the Arlington Historical Society, and the U.S. State Department.



The History Program is integral to the humanistic education that lies at the heart of Marymount's Liberal Arts Core Curriculum and the mission of the School of Arts and Sciences. But its Learning Outcomes also hone skills and provide experience that prepare our graduates for a wide range of professional opportunities, including those for which the greater D.C. area is particularly rich, such as academic history, secondary education, public history, archival and library science, and public service. By highlighting the vocational utility of a liberal arts education in general and the History Program in particular, our Learning Outcomes contribute to the recruitment and retention of Marymount's students and the attractiveness of Marymount as a school of choice.

Provide a brief description of the assessment process used including strengths, challenges and planned improvements and provide evidence of the existence of a culture of continuous improvement based on assessment:

In February 2015, two members of the History Faculty met with Marymount's Director of Institutional Assessment to address her concerns and the recommendations stated in the University Assessment Committee's Review of the 2013-2014 Student Assessment Report for the History Program. The result was a fruitful exchange in which the History Faculty developed and implemented an overhaul of its assessment procedures for the 2014-2015 academic year. With guidance from the director, we created and adopted a new Student Learning Assessment Plan, featuring revised and simplified Student Learning Outcomes, appropriate rubrics for the measurement of student performance, and the addition of indirect measures.

We trust that these efforts to consider and respond creatively to recommendations from the UAC, learn from the best practices of other programs and universities, correct the shortcomings of the past, and develop effective solutions for the future confirm the History Faculty's commitment to using assessment activity as a tool for the continuous improvement of the job we do for our students. The three members of the History Faculty worked together, to an unprecedented degree, on assessment of our program in Spring, Summer, and early Fall 2015, suggesting a culture-level transformation in how we conceive and execute assessment activity.

In the 2014-2015 academic year, the History Faculty assessed student learning by evaluating performance on assignments designed to measure all three of the revised Learning Outcomes. We confined assessment of student performance to those students who completed HI 420 Senior Seminar and HI 400 History Internship. These are the only two courses at Marymount restricted to History Majors and designed entirely for the benefit of History Majors, and therefore best suited to assess how well our Majors are achieving the desired Learning Outcomes. (All of our other



courses are open to non-Majors and designed to support the Liberal Arts Core Curriculum primarily and the program of study in History only secondarily.)

As the tables below indicate, we assessed Learning Outcomes 1 and 2 with a direct measure consisting of student performance on short analytical essays and the capstone Research Paper in HI 420 Senior Seminar, with an exit survey serving as an indirect measure. We assessed Learning Outcome 3 with a direct measure consisting of student performance on three of the criteria on the Supervisor Final Evaluation Form distributed to internship site supervisors by Marymount's Center for Career Services. We backed up that assessment with each student's Summary Reflective Statement as an indirect measure.

For the 2014-2015 academic year, we acquired data for HI 420 Senior Seminar (offered annually each spring semester) as taught in Spring 2015. We acquired data for HI 400 History Internship in Spring and Summer 2015, as directed by the History Program's Academic Internship Mentor. (There were no students registered in HI 400 in Fall 2014.) The three members of the History Faculty examined the direct and indirect measures from these courses in September 2015 and reached a consensus on our evaluation of student learning over the last academic year. This report provides a record of our assessment activity, quantification of the data we collected accordingly, and our analysis of and conclusions regarding that data.

The History Faculty has reached the overall conclusion that our revised assessment procedures have proven to be effective tools for the evaluation of student learning in our program of study at Marymount. We are delighted with student performance on Learning Outcomes for the 2014-2105 academic year. The History Program is fulfilling its objective of teaching History in service to the Liberal Arts Core Curriculum, our undergraduate Majors, and Marymount's mission as a whole.

For the next assessment cycle, we intend to assess student performance on the same Learning Outcomes according to the same methods we used in 2014-2015, unless otherwise advised by the UAC. In light of the improvement of our methods and the high ratings of the History Majors for 2014-2015 (see below), no further changes to our assessment activity are planned for the next cycle. The History Faculty would very much favor putting assessment of our program on a two-year cycle, in which case we would resume formal assessment activity in the 2016-2017 academic year. We appreciate your consideration.



Describe how the program implemented its planned improvements from last year:

PLEASE NOTE: In the 2013-2014 Student Learning Assessment Report for the History Program, no improvements were planned for 2014-2015 (besides hiring two full-time faculty members, which the UAC's Review judged not to be an appropriate example of program improvement). The improvements that we implemented in 2014-2015 were not stated in our previous Report but rather made in response to the UAC's Review of our report from late Fall 2014.

| Outcome | Planned Improvement | Update (Indicate when, where, and how planned improvement was completed. If planned improvement was not completed, please provide explanation.) |
|---------|---------------------|---|
| N/A | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Provide a response to last year's University Assessment Committee review of the program's learning assessment report:

In its Fall 2014 Review of the History Program's 2013-2014 Student Assessment Report, the UAC shared several concerns and offered several recommendations for improvement. With guidance from the director of Institutional Assessment, the History Faculty addressed each concern and developed appropriate improvements in its revised Student Learning Assessment Plan.

We replaced the Student Learning Outcomes listed in the Assessment Report with three revised SLOs which address the UAC's concerns. The new SLOs state outcomes in terms of what a student will be expected to do, drawing upon the action-verbs of Bloom's Taxonomy where appropriate. The new SLOs are measurable and defined in discipline-specific terms, and they contribute directly to the university mission. The new SLOs are not "double-barreled" and are appropriately numbered in the new Plan and this Report.



In the Plan and this Report, we have indicated which specific documents have served as assessment items, and we have provided new rubrics for assessment of student performance on these items. The rubrics assure that our data on the direct measures is individualized and quantifiable. These new rubrics have been embedded in the body of this Report. In addition to direct measures, we have added indirect measures of student learning.

As per the UAC's Review, we have had all three full-time members of the History Faculty (as of Summer 2015) assess the direct and indirect measures of student learning for the 2014-2015 academic year. The assessment analysis and conclusions below are the results of the consensus we reached on this matter. The UAC can also find below the final numbers from our data collection on student performance in the last year and our conclusions resulting from analysis of this data. We revised performance standards, requiring 70% of our students to "meet or exceed" the stated outcomes, rather than the vague standard of "two-thirds."

We have also omitted the names of specific faculty members from this Report, except where it could not be helped (at the beginning, in which the location of our assessment data had to be provided). As previously noted, two History Faculty members consulted with the director of Institutional Assessment, and the faculty reached consensus on a new Assessment Plan, as per the requirements of the UAC in its Review. With respect to both planning and implementation, the History Faculty has addressed each of the UAC's stated concerns about the deficiency of our previous year's assessment to the best of our ability, to our own satisfaction, and hopefully to the satisfaction of the UAC.

| Outcomes and Past Assessment | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| Learning Outcome 1: Students will demonstrate the ability to analyze and assess critically primary and secondary sources within their historical contexts. | | | | |
| Is this outcome being reexamined? Yes X No | | | | |
| If yes, give a brief summary of previous results (including trends) and any changes made to the program. | | | | |
| Not applicable. | | | | |



Assessment Activity

| Outcome Measures Explain how student learning will be measured and indicate whether it is direct or indirect. | Performance Standard Define and explain acceptable level of student performance. | Data Collection Discuss the data collected and student population | Analysis 1) Describe the analysis process. 2) Present the findings of the analysis including the numbers participating and deemed acceptable. |
|---|---|--|---|
| Direct measure: Student performance in completion of short analytical papers required in Senior Seminar will provide the data for assessing this outcome. The rubric below indicates how student learning will be measured. | 70% of students in Senior Seminar must attain a rating of "meets or exceeds criteria" on all items in the rubric. | In Spring 2015, 7 students completed Senior Seminar. The assessment item was a short analytical essay requiring analysis of primary and secondary sources. | The History Faculty assessed student performance on the short analytical essay according to the three criteria stated in the rubric below. Of the 7 students assessed, all 7 met or exceeded the criteria for Learning Outcome 1. |
| Indirect measure: An exit survey given to students in Senior Seminar at the end of the semester. | 70% of students in Senior Seminar respond that their program of study in History "meets or exceeds" the objective of providing them with the skills and opportunities to attain Learning Outcome 1. | In Spring 2015, 7 students completed Senior Seminar. The assessment item was an exit survey. | 1) The History Faculty examined student responses to the Senior Seminar exit survey and quantified their responses. 2) According to the exit surveys, all 7 students responded that their program of study in History met or exceeded the objective of providing them with the skills and opportunities to attain Learning Outcome 1. |



RUBRIC FOR LEARNING OUTCOME 1 (direct measure)

| Criteria | Exceeds 5 | Criteria 4 | Meets (| Criteria 2 | Fails to Meet Criteria |
|---|--------------|---------------|---------|---------------|------------------------|
| The paper identifies the author's thesis and supporting arguments. | | _3 | | | |
| 2) The paper identifies the author's methods of argument and use of evidence. | _4 | _3 | | | |
| 3) The paper assesses the source in proper historical context. | r _4 | _3 | | | |

Interpretation of Results

Extent this learning outcome has been achieved by students (Use both direct and indirect measure results):

Seven out of seven students met or exceeded all three criteria for the direct measure of Learning Outcome 1. This 100% rating well exceeds our target of at least a rating of 70%. The History Faculty was delighted with student performance for Learning Outcome 1 and gratified that the students also consider themselves well trained by the History Program to achieve this outcome, as the indirect measure indicates.

Program strengths and opportunities for improvement <u>relative to assessment of outcome</u>:

Assessment of Learning Outcome 1 for the 2014-2015 indicates that Marymount's History Program is particularly strong in training students to examine sources in their historic contexts, assess those sources critically, and communicate their conclusions in a short essay format. No specific plans for further improvement of our methods of teaching and assessing this outcome are currently under consideration by the History Faculty.



Discuss planned curricular or program improvements for this year based on assessment of outcome:

While there are no specific plans at present under consideration, one possible improvement would be to confine HI 250 Research and Writing to History Majors and redesign the course accordingly, so that student performance on Learning Outcome 1 in this course might be used in addition to or in place of student performance in Senior Seminar.

Learning Outcome 2:

Students will demonstrate the ability to interpret history through research and synthesis of evidentiary sources and application of theory and method.

| Is this outcome being reexamined? | | Yes X | | No |
|-----------------------------------|--|-------|--|----|
|-----------------------------------|--|-------|--|----|

If yes, give a brief summary of previous results (including trends) and any changes made to the program.

Not applicable.

Assessment Activity

| Outcome Measures Explain how student learning will be measured and indicate whether it is direct or indirect. | Performance Standard Define and explain acceptable level of student performance. | Data Collection Discuss the data collected and student population | Analysis 1) Describe the analysis process. 2) Present the findings of the analysis including the numbers participating and deemed acceptable. |
|---|--|--|--|
| Direct measure: | 70% of students in | In Spring 2015, 7 | The History Faculty assessed student |
| Student performance | Senior Seminar must | students completed | performance on the Research Paper |
| in completion of the | attain a rating of | Senior Seminar. The | according to the six criteria stated in the |
| Research Paper | "meets or exceeds | assessment item was | rubric below. |



| required in Senior Seminar will provide the data for assessing this outcome. The rubric below indicates how student learning will be measured. | criteria" on all items in the rubric. | a Research Paper requiring research of sources, synthesis of findings, and application of theory and method in the formulation of an original interpretation of history. | 2) Of the 7 students assessed, all 7 met or exceeded the criteria for Learning Outcome 1. |
|--|---|--|--|
| Indirect measure: An exit survey given to students in Senior Seminar at the end of the semester. | 70% of students in Senior Seminar respond that their program of study in History "meets or exceeds" the objective of providing them with the skills and opportunities to attain Learning Outcome 2. | In Spring 2015, 7 students completed Senior Seminar. The assessment item was an exit survey. | The History Faculty examined student responses to the Senior Seminar exit survey and quantified their responses. According to the exit surveys, all 7 students responded that their program of study in History met or exceeded the objective of providing them with the skills and opportunities to attain Learning Outcome 2. |

RUBRIC FOR LEARNING OUTCOME 2 (direct measure)

| Criteria | Exceeds | Criteria | Meets Criteria | | Fails to meet Criteria | |
|--|---------|----------|----------------|---|------------------------|--|
| | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | |
| The paper presents a well formulated | | | | | | |
| research question and thesis. | _3 | _3 | _1 | | | |
| 1 | | | | | | |
| The paper applies appropriate primary and/or secondary resources to the investigation of the | | | | | | |
| research of the question. | _3 | _3 | _1 | | | |
| 3) The paper is well written and well organized. | _3 | 3 | _1 | | | |



| 4) The paper applies appropriate analysis and interpretation to the sources as they pertain to the research question. | _3 | 3 | _1 | |
|---|----|----|----|--|
| 5) Chicago style is accurately and thoroughly used to document sources in footnotes and bibliography. | _3 | _3 | _1 | |
| 6) The findings are plausible and well defended. | _3 | _3 | _1 | |
| | | | | |

Interpretation of Results

Extent this learning outcome has been achieved by students (Use both direct and indirect measure results):

Six out of seven students exceeded all six criteria for the direct measure of Learning Outcome 2, while one student met the criteria. This 100% rating well exceeds our target of at least a rating of 70%. As with this year's student performance on Learning Outcome 1, the History Faculty is very pleased with student performance for Learning Outcome 2 and with the students' reflection on their training for this outcome, as per the exit survey.

Program strengths and opportunities for improvement <u>relative to assessment of outcome</u>:

Assessment of Learning Outcome 2 for the 2014-2015 indicates that students are exceptionally well prepared to make an original interpretation of the past by conducting research and integrating evidence around a thesis. No specific plans for further improvement of our methods of teaching and assessing this outcome are currently under consideration by the History Faculty.

Discuss planned curricular or program improvements for this year based on assessment of outcome:

No specific plans for improvement with respect to Learning Outcome 2 are currently under consideration.



Learning Outcome 3:

Students will demonstrate the ability to apply historical knowledge effectively through the construction and communication of oral and written arguments in a professional forum.

| Is this outcome being reexamined? |
|--|
| If yes, give a brief summary of previous results (including trends) and any changes made to the program. |
| Not applicable. |

Assessment Activity

| Outcome Measures Explain how student learning will be measured and indicate whether it is direct or indirect. | Performance Standard Define and explain acceptable level of student performance. | Data Collection Discuss the data collected and student population | Analysis 1) Describe the analysis process. 2) Present the findings of the analysis including the numbers participating and deemed acceptable. |
|---|--|---|---|
| Direct measure: The direct measure for the outcome is the Supervisor Final Internship Evaluation | The acceptable level of student performance will be a rating of "Excellent" or "Good" on the criteria of "oral | Each intern has a site supervisor who is required as a part of the Center for Career Services internship | 1) The History Faculty collected the ratings which each of the 8 interns received from his or her site supervisor on three criteria from among the eight listed on the Supervisor Final Internship Evaluations. |
| form that every site supervisor completes for each intern. The form provides a rubric measuring student | communication," "written communication," and "apply academic knowledge to the | agreement to submit to the Academic Internship Mentor (AIM) an evaluation form developed by the | 2) According to the Supervisor Final Internship Evaluations for our 8 interns in 2014-2015, all 8 students met or exceeded two of the three criteria for Learning Outcome 3, and 7 out of 8 students met or |
| performance in the HI 400 History Internship | workplace" achieved by 70% of student interns. | CCS describing the student's performance in History Internship. | exceeded the third criterion. |



| Arlington, Virginia | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| on a scale from "Excellent" to "Poor." Three criteria measure student attainment of Learning Outcome 3, namely "oral communication, "written communication," and "apply academic knowledge to the workplace." | | This outcome is analyzed by scoring the ratings received by interns on the three criteria put in boldface on the rubric below. In Spring 2015, 6 students completed the History Internship; 2 History Majors did the internship in Summer 2015. There were no students enrolled in HI 400 in Fall 2014. The results for student performance on Learning Outcome 3 derive from the work of those 8 students. | |
| Indirect measure: The Summary Reflective Statement, a final short essay in which the student reflects on his or her internship and the ways in which Marymount coursework prepared the student for experiential learning, which is submitted at | 70% of students in Senior Seminar respond that their program of study in History "meets or exceeds" the objective of providing them with the skills and opportunities to attain Learning Outcome 3. | In Spring 2015, 6 students completed the History Internship; 2 History Majors did the internship in Summer 2015. There were no students enrolled in HI 400 in Fall 2014. The results for student performance on Learning Outcome 3 derive from the | 1) The History Faculty examined the Summary Reflective Statements from 8 interns and quantified their responses. 2) According to their essays, 2 interns strongly agreed that the Marymount program in history had prepared them to achieve Learning Outcome 3; 4 students agreed; and 2 students were neutral on the question. |



| the conclusion of the | Summary Reflective | |
|------------------------|------------------------|--|
| internship as a course | Statement submitted by | |
| requirement of HI 400 | those 8 students. | |
| History Internship. | | |
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RUBRIC FOR LEARNING OUTCOME 3 (direct measure)

Supervisor Final Internship Evaluation Form:

| Criteria | Excellent | Good | Neutral | Fair | Poor |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|------|---------|------|------|
| Attendance and Punctuality | | | | | |
| Follows Directions | | | | | |
| Adheres to Deadlines | | | | | |
| Takes Initiative without Supervision | | | | | |
| Oral Communication | _5 | 3 | | | |

| Ability to Accept Criticism Apply Academic Knowledge | 6 | | | |
|---|---|----|----|------|
| Apply Academic Knowledge To the Workplace | | _1 | _1 | |

Overall Professionalism Rating

Overall Performance Rating

Interpretation of Results

Extent this learning outcome has been achieved by students (Use both direct and indirect measure results):

For the direct measure of Learning Outcome 3, all eight students completing the History Internship in 2014-2015 met or exceeded two of the three criteria (oral and written communication) from the direct measure, for a rating of 100%. Seven of eight met or exceeded the third criterion (application of academic knowledge to the workplace), for a rating of 87%. All eight interns well exceeded the program goal for 70% of our students to score excellent or good ratings from their site supervisors on all three criteria for Learning Outcome 3.

For the indirect measure, six out of eight students reflected that the History Program had met or exceeded the objective of preparing them for application of their academic knowledge to oral and written communication in a professional forum. Two out of eight gave a neutral response.

With an 87-100% positive response from supervisors about our students, and a 75% positive response from our students about the History Program, the History Faculty is satisfied that our Majors' performance has secured handily our program standard for Learning Outcome 3.



Program strengths and opportunities for improvement <u>relative to assessment of outcome</u>:

Assessment of Learning Outcome 3 for the 2014-2015 indicates that the History Program has properly trained and prepared our Majors with the academic skills and knowledge they need for successful oral and written communication in a professional forum. No specific plans for further improvement of our methods of teaching and assessing this outcome are currently under consideration by the History Faculty.

Discuss planned curricular or program improvements <u>for this year based on assessment of outcome:</u>

No specific plans for improvement with respect to Learning Outcome 3 are currently under consideration.

Appendices