

# University of Louisiana at Lafayette

## Detailed Assessment Report

### 2015-2016 History MA

As of: 11/11/2016 10:56 AM CENTRAL

(Includes those Action Plans with Budget Amounts marked *One-Time, Recurring, No Request.*)

## Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives, with Any Associations and Related Measures, Targets, Findings, and Action Plans

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### SLO 1: Historical Narrative

Students will demonstrate familiarity with historical narratives in a major and secondary field of study.

#### Related Measures

#### **M 1: Comprehensive Exams - Historical Narrative**

(1) MA students in History demonstrate that they possess familiarity with the historical narrative in both a major and a secondary field of study through the comprehensive examinations (both written and oral) that they take once the coursework for the degree program has been completed. A committee of three faculty members evaluates the comprehensive examinations (both written and oral) completed each year. Assessments use a 4-level rubric that rates student accomplishment as: Strong Pass, Pass, Weak Pass, Fails.

ACHIEVED: Explanation: MA students who completed the comprehensive exams (written and oral) demonstrated that they met this goal. In the major area of study, one earned a score of Strong Pass, three earned a score of Pass, and three a score of Weak Pass. In the secondary field of study, one earned a score of Strong Pass, four earned a score of Pass, and two a score of Weak Pass. Success for this goal was 100 percent.

Number of Students Assessed: 7 (spring 2016)

Source of Evidence: Comprehensive/end-of-program subject matter exam

#### **Connected Documents**

[Comps and Orals Assessment](#)

[Exit Survey 2011-2012](#)

[Learning Outcomes and Assessment Goals](#)

#### **Target:**

ACHIEVED. Explanation: A successful learning outcome will be considered when 80% of the samples meet the goals set by the History Department for graduate work in history.

**Finding (2015-2016) - Target: Met**

ACHIEVED: Explanation: MA students who completed the comprehensive exams (written and oral) demonstrated that they met this goal. In the major area of study, one earned a score of Strong Pass, three earned a score of Pass, and three a score of Weak Pass. In the secondary field of study, one earned a score of Strong Pass, four earned a score of Pass, and two a score of Weak Pass. Success for this goal was 100 percent.

Number of Students Assessed: 7 (spring 2016)

**Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):**

**Historiographical Focus**

The 2011-2012 assessment process revealed positive results overall for students' achievement of this goal in terms of the major and minor fields of study. The Graduate Committee nevertheless remains committed to its focus on students' grasp of historiography and ability to assess significant literature. (1) To emphasize this commitment, the Graduate Committee reminded faculty of Goal #2 and its recommendations regarding historiographical focus for HIST 515/525/535 courses and all comprehensive exam questions. (2) In order to evaluate whether these recommendations and reminders are being implemented by faculty, the Graduate Committee has begun the process of reviewing HIST 515/525/535 syllabi from the past several years. The graduate committee will review these syllabi in the Fall of 2012. (3) Additionally, the Graduate Committee will review written comprehensive examination questions for historiographical content, from the years 2010-2012. The graduate committee will review these questions in the Fall of 2012. (4) In order to keep the program at an "achieved" status, the Committee has begun discussing ways to identify potentially challenged students. Students who receive lower than an A in their first semester of graduate coursework will receive special attention in order to help them grasp the narrative contours of their field. (5) The graduate committee also wishes to improve the number of "weak passes," so that we have more clear and certain "pass" and "strong pass" reports. In order to improve these weak passes, the graduate committee believes that the early intervention with weak students will be beneficial. Among the entirety of students assessed for 2011-2012, two out of thirteen (15%) achieved "weak pass;" the graduate committee believes that we can improve this percentage. (6) The graduate committee has implemented an exit survey to illicit student feedback (see below, goal 4).

**Established in Cycle:** 2011-2012

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Comprehensive Exams - Historical Narrative |

**Outcome/Objective:** Historical Narrative

**Measure:** Comprehensive Exams - Historiography |

**Outcome/Objective:** Historiography

**Measure:** Comprehensive Exams - Public History |

**Outcome/Objective:** Public History

**Measure:** HIST 505 | **Outcome/Objective:** Research & Writing

**Redesign our Assessment Plan**

The graduate committee has determined that, after many years of consistently meeting our assessment goals in historiography, historical narratives, research, and public history, it was time to reevaluate our assessment tools and objectives. We came to this decision because, although we had been meeting our goals, our overall sense was that, nevertheless, at least 40-50% of our graduating MA students were not quite grasping historiography or the argumentation skills and presentation of evidence that we expect of research papers. Many were simply "slipping through the cracks." So we have decided that, in the 2016-17 academic year, we will implement new assessment objectives and tools for assessment. In many ways, we had been hanging on to the system that was first put in place in 2007-2008. With a new assessment application coming on board with Live Text, we believe that it is time for a fresh approach. Below you will find a list of evaluation questions for historiography and research papers.

#### Evaluation of Historical Accounts:

1. Are students able to identify and articulate an author's argument?
2. Are students able analyze how historical accounts are constructed?
3. Can student determine which historical accounts make formative contributions to the field and outline why?
4. Can students synthesize historical accounts, generating unique perspectives about them?

#### Construction of Professional Historical Accounts:

1. Are students able to produce a supportable historical argument?
2. Are students able to situation their own arguments within the relevant historiography?
3. Can students identify and interpret relevant and diverse evidence to support their arguments?
4. Can students construct historical arguments using professionally acceptable standards of writing?

**Established in Cycle:** 2015-2016

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Comprehensive Exams - Historical Narrative |

**Outcome/Objective:** Historical Narrative

**Measure:** Comprehensive Exams - Historiography |

**Outcome/Objective:** Historiography

**Measure:** Comprehensive Exams - Public History |

**Outcome/Objective:** Public History

**Measure:** HIST 505 | **Outcome/Objective:** Research & Writing

**Measure:** Thesis | **Outcome/Objective:** Historiography | Research & Writing

**Implementation Description:** The graduate committee will refine these evaluation goals and design measurements over the course of the Fall 2016 semester.

**Projected Completion Date:** 11/2016

**Responsible Person/Group:** Chad Parker, Sara Ritchey, graduate committee

**Additional Resources:** More faculty!

## SLO 2: Historiography

Students will identify and explain significant literature, developments in historical thought, current trends, and historiographical debates in a major and secondary field of study.

### Related Measures

#### **M 2: Comprehensive Exams - Historiography**

(2) MA students in History demonstrate that they can identify and explain the significant literature and historiographical thought, trends, and debates in both a major and a secondary field of study through the comprehensive examinations (both written and oral) that they take once the coursework for the degree program has been completed. A committee of three faculty members evaluates the comprehensive examinations (both written and oral) completed each year. Assessments use a 4-level rubric that rates student accomplishment as: Strong Pass, Pass, Weak Pass, Fails.

ACHIEVED. Explanation: Based on oral and written comprehensive exams, for goal two, six of seven students earned a score of Weak Pass (1), Pass (4), or Strong Pass (1), with one student earning a score of Fails in the Major area of study. Success for this part of the goal is 86 percent. This part of the goal is therefore met. For the Secondary area of study, again, six of seven students earned a score of Weak Pass (4), Pass (1), or Strong Pass (1), within again only one student earning a score of fail. Success for this part of the goal is 86 percent. This part of the goal is therefore met.

Number of Students Assessed: 7 (spring 2016)

Source of Evidence: Comprehensive/end-of-program subject matter exam

#### **Connected Documents**

[Comps and Orals Assessment](#)

[Exit Survey 2011-2012](#)

### Learning Outcomes and Assessment Goals

#### **Target:**

ACHIEVED. Explanation: A successful learning outcome will be considered when 80% of the samples meet the goals set by the History Department for graduate work in history.

#### **Finding (2015-2016) - Target: Met**

ACHIEVED. Explanation: Based on oral and written comprehensive exams, for goal two, six of seven students earned a score of Weak Pass (1), Pass (4), or Strong Pass (1), with one student earning a score of Fails in the Major area of study. Success for this part of the goal is 86 percent. This part of the goal is therefore met. For the Secondary area of study, again, six of seven students earned a score of Weak Pass (4), Pass (1), or Strong Pass (1), within again only one student earning a score of fail. Success for this part of the goal is 86 percent. This part of the goal is therefore met.

Number of Students Assessed: 7 (spring 2016)

#### **Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):**

##### **Historiographical Focus**

The 2011-2012 assessment process revealed positive results overall for students' achievement of this goal in terms of the major and minor fields of study. The Graduate Committee nevertheless remains committed to its focus on students' grasp of historiography and ability to assess significant literature. (1) To emphasize this commitment, the Graduate Committee reminded faculty of Goal #2 and its recommendations regarding historiographical focus for HIST 515/525/535 courses and all comprehensive exam questions. (2) In order to evaluate whether these recommendations and reminders are being implemented by faculty, the Graduate Committee has begun the process of reviewing HIST 515/525/535 syllabi from the past several years. The graduate committee will review these syllabi in the Fall of 2012. (3) Additionally, the Graduate Committee will review written comprehensive examination questions for historiographical content, from the years 2010-2012. The graduate committee will review these questions in the Fall of 2012. (4) In order to keep the program at an "achieved" status, the Committee has begun discussing ways to identify potentially challenged students. Students who receive lower than an A in their first semester of graduate coursework will receive special attention in order to help them grasp the narrative contours of their field. (5) The graduate committee also wishes to improve the number of "weak passes," so that we have more clear and certain "pass" and "strong pass" reports. In order to improve these weak passes, the graduate committee believes that the early intervention with weak students will be beneficial. Among the entirety of students assessed for 2011-2012, two out of thirteen (15%) achieved "weak pass;" the graduate committee believes that we can improve this percentage. (6) The graduate committee has implemented an exit survey to illicit student feedback (see below, goal 4).

**Established in Cycle:** 2011-2012

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):****Measure:** Comprehensive Exams - Historical Narrative |**Outcome/Objective:** Historical Narrative**Measure:** Comprehensive Exams - Historiography |**Outcome/Objective:** Historiography**Measure:** Comprehensive Exams - Public History |**Outcome/Objective:** Public History**Measure:** HIST 505 | **Outcome/Objective:** Research & Writing**Historiography**

The program needs to continue working to improve student understanding of and ability to work with historiography. While we achieved our goals, the graduate committee would like to see better results. Changes to the program that limit lecture courses and require more seminars, along with the institution of the thesis prospectus process, we believe, have been helpful, but more steps are needed. The Graduate Committee and Department will begin conversations next year about new assessment tools and possibly ways to improve the program's introductory course, HIST 590: Historiography.

**Established in Cycle:** 2015-2016**Implementation Status:** Planned**Priority:** High**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):****Measure:** Comprehensive Exams - Historiography |**Outcome/Objective:** Historiography**Measure:** Thesis | **Outcome/Objective:** Historiography**Responsible Person/Group:** Chad Parker, Sara Ritchey, Graduate Committee, Graduate Faculty.**Redesign our Assessment Plan**

The graduate committee has determined that, after many years of consistently meeting our assessment goals in historiography, historical narratives, research, and public history, it was time to reevaluate our assessment tools and objectives. We came to this decision because, although we had been meeting our goals, our overall sense was that, nevertheless, at least 40-50% of our graduating MA students were not quite grasping historiography or the argumentation skills and presentation of evidence that we expect of research papers. Many were simply "slipping through the cracks." So we have decided that, in the 2016-17 academic year, we will implement new assessment objectives and tools for assessment. In many ways, we had been hanging on to the system that was first put in place in 2007-2008. With a new assessment application coming on board with Live Text, we believe that it is time for a fresh approach. Below you will find a list of evaluation questions for historiography and research papers.

Evaluation of Historical Accounts:

1. Are students able to identify and articulate an author's argument?
2. Are students able analyze how historical accounts are constructed?
3. Can student determine which historical accounts make formative contributions to the field and outline why?
4. Can students synthesize historical accounts, generating unique perspectives about them?

#### Construction of Professional Historical Accounts:

1. Are students able to produce a supportable historical argument?
2. Are students able to situation their own arguments within the relevant historiography?
3. Can students identify and interpret relevant and diverse evidence to support their arguments?
4. Can students construct historical arguments using professionally acceptable standards of writing?

**Established in Cycle:** 2015-2016

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

#### **Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Comprehensive Exams - Historical Narrative |

**Outcome/Objective:** Historical Narrative

**Measure:** Comprehensive Exams - Historiography |

**Outcome/Objective:** Historiography

**Measure:** Comprehensive Exams - Public History |

**Outcome/Objective:** Public History

**Measure:** HIST 505 | **Outcome/Objective:** Research & Writing

**Measure:** Thesis | **Outcome/Objective:** Historiography | Research & Writing

**Implementation Description:** The graduate committee will refine these evaluation goals and design measurements over the course of the Fall 2016 semester.

**Projected Completion Date:** 11/2016

**Responsible Person/Group:** Chad Parker, Sara Ritchey, graduate committee

**Additional Resources:** More faculty!

#### **M 5: Thesis**

MA students on the thesis track may be assessed for research skills and historiographical engagement.

ACHIEVED. Explanation: MA students who defended a thesis this spring demonstrated achievement of this goal. One of the five theses earned a strong pass while the other four a pass. With a 100 percent pass rate, this goal was met.

Number of Students Assessed: 5 (spring 2016)

Source of Evidence: Senior thesis or culminating major project

### Connected Document

[HIST 599 Contract](#)

#### Target:

Students will identify and explain significant literature, developments in historical thought, current trends, and historiographical debates in a major and secondary field of study. A successful learning outcome will be considered when 80% of the samples met the goals set by the History Department for graduate work in history.

#### Finding (2015-2016) - Target: Met

ACHIEVED. Explanation: MA students who defended a thesis this spring demonstrated achievement of this goal. One of the five theses earned a strong pass while the other four a pass. With a 100 percent pass rate, this goal was met. Number of Students Assessed: 5 (spring 2016)

#### Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):

##### Historiography

The program needs to continue working to improve student understanding of and ability to work with historiography. While we achieved our goals, the graduate committee would like to see better results. Changes to the program that limit lecture courses and require more seminars, along with the institution of the thesis prospectus process, we believe, have been helpful, but more steps are needed. The Graduate Committee and Department will begin conversations next year about new assessment tools and possibly ways to improve the program's introductory course, HIST 590: Historiography.

**Established in Cycle:** 2015-2016

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

#### **Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Comprehensive Exams - Historiography |

**Outcome/Objective:** Historiography

**Measure:** Thesis | **Outcome/Objective:** Historiography

**Responsible Person/Group:** Chad Parker, Sara Ritchey, Graduate Committee, Graduate Faculty.

##### Redesign our Assessment Plan

The graduate committee has determined that, after many years of consistently meeting our assessment goals in historiography, historical narratives, research, and public history, it was time to reevaluate our assessment tools and objectives. We came to this decision because, although we had been meeting our goals, our overall sense was that, nevertheless, at least 40-50% of our graduating MA students were not quite grasping historiography

or the argumentation skills and presentation of evidence that we expect of research papers. Many were simply "slipping through the cracks." So we have decided that, in the 2016-17 academic year, we will implement new assessment objectives and tools for assessment. In many ways, we had been hanging on to the system that was first put in place in 2007-2008. With a new assessment application coming on board with Live Text, we believe that it is time for a fresh approach. Below you will find a list of evaluation questions for historiography and research papers.

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4. Can students synthesize historical accounts, generating unique perspectives about them?

#### Construction of Professional Historical Accounts:

1. Are students able to produce a supportable historical argument?
2. Are students able to situation their own arguments within the relevant historiography?
3. Can students identify and interpret relevant and diverse evidence to support their arguments?
4. Can students construct historical arguments using professionally acceptable standards of writing?

**Established in Cycle:** 2015-2016

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

#### **Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Comprehensive Exams - Historical Narrative |

**Outcome/Objective:** Historical Narrative

**Measure:** Comprehensive Exams - Historiography |

**Outcome/Objective:** Historiography

**Measure:** Comprehensive Exams - Public History |

**Outcome/Objective:** Public History

**Measure:** HIST 505 | **Outcome/Objective:** Research & Writing

**Measure:** Thesis | **Outcome/Objective:** Historiography  
| Research & Writing

**Implementation Description:** The graduate committee will refine these evaluation goals and design measurements over the course of the Fall 2016 semester.

**Projected Completion Date:** 11/2016

**Responsible Person/Group:** Chad Parker, Sara Ritchey, graduate committee

**Additional Resources:** More faculty!

### **SLO 3: Research & Writing**

Students will produce a work of primary source historical research written in Standard English that engages the historiography, is original, has a strong, well-supported thesis, and meets professional standards for form and content.

#### Related Measures

##### **M 3: HIST 505**

(3) MA students in History demonstrate their ability to produce a work of primary source historical research in HIST 505: Graduate Seminar in Research and Writing, which is taught every spring semester. A sampling of three final papers from HIST 505 each year is evaluated bi-annually by a committee of three faculty members. Papers are assessed according to their success in meeting professionally accepted standards for primary source historical research, form, content, and documentation. Assessments used a 4-level rubric that rates student accomplishment as: Strong Pass, Pass, Weak Pass, Fails. There are four subsidiary goals within this larger goal: 1) demonstration of primary source historical research, 2) strong, well-supported thesis, 3) engagement in appropriate historiography and 4) meets professional standards for form and content.

Since this assessment is done every two years, it was not reported this cycle.

Source of Evidence: Comprehensive/end-of-program subject matter exam

#### **Connected Documents**

[Exit Survey 2011-2012](#)

[Learning Outcomes and Assessment Goals](#)

#### **Target:**

A successful learning outcome will be considered when 80% of the samples meet the goals set by the History Department for graduate work in history

#### **Finding (2015-2016) - Target: Not Reported This Cycle**

Since this assessment is done every two years, it was not reported this cycle. Will be reported in 2016-2017

#### **Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):**

##### **Historiographical Focus**

The 2011-2012 assessment process revealed positive results overall for students' achievement of this goal in terms of the major and minor fields

of study. The Graduate Committee nevertheless remains committed to its focus on students' grasp of historiography and ability to assess significant literature. (1) To emphasize this commitment, the Graduate Committee reminded faculty of Goal #2 and its recommendations regarding historiographical focus for HIST 515/525/535 courses and all comprehensive exam questions. (2) In order to evaluate whether these recommendations and reminders are being implemented by faculty, the Graduate Committee has begun the process of reviewing HIST 515/525/535 syllabi from the past several years. The graduate committee will review these syllabi in the Fall of 2012. (3) Additionally, the Graduate Committee will review written comprehensive examination questions for historiographical content, from the years 2010-2012. The graduate committee will review these questions in the Fall of 2012. (4) In order to keep the program at an "achieved" status, the Committee has begun discussing ways to identify potentially challenged students. Students who receive lower than an A in their first semester of graduate coursework will receive special attention in order to help them grasp the narrative contours of their field. (5) The graduate committee also wishes to improve the number of "weak passes," so that we have more clear and certain "pass" and "strong pass" reports. In order to improve these weak passes, the graduate committee believes that the early intervention with weak students will be beneficial. Among the entirety of students assessed for 2011-2012, two out of thirteen (15%) achieved "weak pass;" the graduate committee believes that we can improve this percentage. (6) The graduate committee has implemented an exit survey to illicit student feedback (see below, goal 4).

**Established in Cycle:** 2011-2012

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Comprehensive Exams - Historical Narrative |

**Outcome/Objective:** Historical Narrative

**Measure:** Comprehensive Exams - Historiography |

**Outcome/Objective:** Historiography

**Measure:** Comprehensive Exams - Public History |

**Outcome/Objective:** Public History

**Measure:** HIST 505 | **Outcome/Objective:** Research & Writing

**Redesign our Assessment Plan**

The graduate committee has determined that, after many years of consistently meeting our assessment goals in historiography, historical narratives, research, and public history, it was time to reevaluate our assessment tools and objectives. We came to this decision because, although we had been meeting our goals, our overall sense was that, nevertheless, at least 40-50% of our graduating MA students were not quite grasping historiography or the argumentation skills and presentation of evidence that we expect of research papers. Many were simply "slipping through the cracks." So we have decided that, in the 2016-17 academic year, we will implement new assessment objectives and tools for assessment. In many ways, we had been hanging

on to the system that was first put in place in 2007-2008. With a new assessment application coming on board with Live Text, we believe that it is time for a fresh approach. Below you will find a list of evaluation questions for historiography and research papers.

#### Evaluation of Historical Accounts:

1. Are students able to identify and articulate an author's argument?
2. Are students able analyze how historical accounts are constructed?
3. Can student determine which historical accounts make formative contributions to the field and outline why?
4. Can students synthesize historical accounts, generating unique perspectives about them?

#### Construction of Professional Historical Accounts:

1. Are students able to produce a supportable historical argument?
2. Are students able to situation their own arguments within the relevant historiography?
3. Can students identify and interpret relevant and diverse evidence to support their arguments?
4. Can students construct historical arguments using professionally acceptable standards of writing?

**Established in Cycle:** 2015-2016

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

#### **Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Comprehensive Exams - Historical Narrative |

**Outcome/Objective:** Historical Narrative

**Measure:** Comprehensive Exams - Historiography |

**Outcome/Objective:** Historiography

**Measure:** Comprehensive Exams - Public History |

**Outcome/Objective:** Public History

**Measure:** HIST 505 | **Outcome/Objective:** Research & Writing

**Measure:** Thesis | **Outcome/Objective:** Historiography | Research & Writing

**Implementation Description:** The graduate committee will refine these evaluation goals and design measurements over the course of the Fall 2016 semester.

**Projected Completion Date:** 11/2016

**Responsible Person/Group:** Chad Parker, Sara Ritchey, graduate committee

**Additional Resources:** More faculty!

### **M 5: Thesis**

MA students on the thesis track may be assessed for research skills and historiographical engagement.

ACHIEVED. Explanation: MA students who defended a thesis this spring demonstrated achievement of this goal. One of the five theses earned a strong pass while the other four a pass. With a 100 percent pass rate, this goal was met.

Number of Students Assessed: 5 (spring 2016)

Source of Evidence: Senior thesis or culminating major project

#### **Connected Document**

[HIST 599 Contract](#)

#### **Target:**

The MA thesis is evaluated to determine if students achieve Goal 3: the ability to produce a work of primary source historical research written in Standard English that engages the historiography, has a strong, well-supported thesis, and meets professional standards for form and content.

#### **Finding (2015-2016) - Target: Met**

ACHIEVED. Explanation: MA students who defended a thesis this spring demonstrated achievement of this goal. One of the five theses earned a strong pass while the other four a pass. With a 100 percent pass rate, this goal was met.

Number of Students Assessed: 5 (spring 2016)

#### **Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):**

##### **Redesign our Assessment Plan**

The graduate committee has determined that, after many years of consistently meeting our assessment goals in historiography, historical narratives, research, and public history, it was time to reevaluate our assessment tools and objectives. We came to this decision because, although we had been meeting our goals, our overall sense was that, nevertheless, at least 40-50% of our graduating MA students were not quite grasping historiography or the argumentation skills and presentation of evidence that we expect of research papers. Many were simply "slipping through the cracks." So we have decided that, in the 2016-17 academic year, we will implement new assessment objectives and tools for assessment. In many ways, we had been hanging on to the system that was first put in place in 2007-2008. With a new assessment application coming on board with Live Text, we believe that it is time for a fresh approach. Below you will find a list of evaluation questions for historiography and research papers.

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### Construction of Professional Historical Accounts:

1. Are students able to produce a supportable historical argument?
2. Are students able to situation their own arguments within the relevant historiography?
3. Can students identify and interpret relevant and diverse evidence to support their arguments?
4. Can students construct historical arguments using professionally acceptable standards of writing?

**Established in Cycle:** 2015-2016

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

#### **Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Comprehensive Exams - Historical Narrative |

**Outcome/Objective:** Historical Narrative

**Measure:** Comprehensive Exams - Historiography |

**Outcome/Objective:** Historiography

**Measure:** Comprehensive Exams - Public History |

**Outcome/Objective:** Public History

**Measure:** HIST 505 | **Outcome/Objective:** Research & Writing

**Measure:** Thesis | **Outcome/Objective:** Historiography | Research & Writing

**Implementation Description:** The graduate committee will refine these evaluation goals and design measurements over the course of the Fall 2016 semester.

**Projected Completion Date:** 11/2016

**Responsible Person/Group:** Chad Parker, Sara Ritchey, graduate committee

**Additional Resources:** More faculty!

**SLO 4: Public History**

Students will demonstrate a working knowledge of important literature, premises, and/or practical approaches to working in a given area of Public History (i.e. Historic Preservation, Local History, Museums, Archives, Applied Research).

**Related Measures****M 4: Comprehensive Exams - Public History**

(4) MA students in History with either a major or secondary field in Public History demonstrate their working knowledge of the field through the comprehensive examinations (both written and oral) that they take once the coursework for the degree program has been completed. A committee of three faculty members evaluated comprehensive exams completed each semester. Assessments used a 4-level rubric that rates student accomplishment as: Strong Pass, Pass, Weak Pass, Fails.

ACHIEVED. Explanation: Goal four is specifically designed to assess the area of public history as a field. All students met the goal with one earning a score of Strong Pass and four earning a score of Pass, meaning a success rate of 100 percent. This goal is therefore met.

Number of Students Assessed: 5 (spring 2016)

Source of Evidence: Comprehensive/end-of-program subject matter exam

**Connected Documents**

[Comps and Orals Assessment](#)

[Exit Survey 2011-2012](#)

[Learning Outcomes and Assessment Goals](#)

**Target:**

ACHIEVED. Explanation: A successful learning outcome will be considered when 80% of the samples meet the goals set by the History Department for graduate work in history.

**Finding (2015-2016) - Target: Met**

ACHIEVED. Explanation: Goal four is specifically designed to assess the area of public history as a field. All students met the goal with one earning a score of Strong Pass and four earning a score of Pass, meaning a success rate of 100 percent. This goal is therefore met.

Number of Students Assessed: 5 (spring 2016)

**Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):****Historiographical Focus**

The 2011-2012 assessment process revealed positive results overall for students' achievement of this goal in terms of the major and minor fields of study. The Graduate Committee nevertheless remains committed to its focus on students' grasp of historiography and ability to assess significant literature. (1) To emphasize this commitment, the Graduate Committee reminded faculty of Goal #2 and its recommendations regarding historiographical focus for HIST 515/525/535 courses and all

comprehensive exam questions. (2) In order to evaluate whether these recommendations and reminders are being implemented by faculty, the Graduate Committee has begun the process of reviewing HIST 515/525/535 syllabi from the past several years. The graduate committee will review these syllabi in the Fall of 2012. (3) Additionally, the Graduate Committee will review written comprehensive examination questions for historiographical content, from the years 2010-2012. The graduate committee will review these questions in the Fall of 2012. (4) In order to keep the program at an “achieved” status, the Committee has begun discussing ways to identify potentially challenged students. Students who receive lower than an A in their first semester of graduate coursework will receive special attention in order to help them grasp the narrative contours of their field. (5) The graduate committee also wishes to improve the number of “weak passes,” so that we have more clear and certain “pass” and “strong pass” reports. In order to improve these weak passes, the graduate committee believes that the early intervention with weak students will be beneficial. Among the entirety of students assessed for 2011-2012, two out of thirteen (15%) achieved “weak pass;” the graduate committee believes that we can improve this percentage. (6) The graduate committee has implemented an exit survey to illicit student feedback (see below, goal 4).

**Established in Cycle:** 2011-2012

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Comprehensive Exams - Historical Narrative |

**Outcome/Objective:** Historical Narrative

**Measure:** Comprehensive Exams - Historiography |

**Outcome/Objective:** Historiography

**Measure:** Comprehensive Exams - Public History |

**Outcome/Objective:** Public History

**Measure:** HIST 505 | **Outcome/Objective:** Research & Writing

### **Reevaluation of Assessing Public History Skills**

Given that the 2012-2013 assessment process revealed good results overall for students' achievement of this goal no substantial changes to this goal have been adopted for the upcoming year by the Graduate Committee. We have hired a new faculty member in Public History and are eager to revise our goals and evaluation process when his tenure commences in the Fall of 2013.

**Established in Cycle:** 2012-2013

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Comprehensive Exams - Public History |

**Outcome/Objective:** Public History

**Implementation Description:** Expectation for evaluation and planning when new faculty member commences in Fall 2013.

**Responsible Person/Group:** Director of Public History and Graduate Committee

**Assess Public history**

We have hired a new public historian, who has added important classes and rigors to our Public History track.

**Established in Cycle:** 2013-2014

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Comprehensive Exams - Public History |

**Outcome/Objective:** Public History

**Implementation Description:** Our new Public Historian, Thomas Cauvin, has introduced many new initiatives that we will have the opportunity to assess in coming years.

**Responsible Person/Group:** Sara Ritchey

**Raise Standard**

Since the success rate was 100%, we will raise the target for next cycle.

**Established in Cycle:** 2013-2014

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Comprehensive Exams - Public History |

**Outcome/Objective:** Public History

**Graduate Committee Enhancement**

We are in discussions about the possibility of adding a graduate student in an advisory role on our graduate committee. We believe that the addition of a graduate student will provide us with a better sense of the real conceptual and workload difficulties that graduate students face.

We have developed tentative policy outline on the graduate student's role:

Each year the graduate committee will select one graduate student representative from among the graduate assistants in history (GAs), preferably a student in their second year in the MA program. The GA representatives participation on the committee will count toward their 20-hours of work per week. The GA representative will have no voting powers on the graduate committee, but will serve in an advisory role. The GA representative will not attend *all* meetings, but will be called in when the agenda addresses issues related to graduate student life and the curriculum. The GA representative must not be present during committee discussions that involve GA allocation decisions, any other student issues, or any confidential information.

The purpose of the appointment of a GA representative to the graduate committee is to provide a voice and representation for graduate students, to enable graduate students to feel invested in the MA program and a part of the decision-making of the committee. The graduate committee will also gain valuable insight into the student perspective on professional development needs, student culture and personal dynamics, and curricular concerns.

**Established in Cycle:** 2015-2016

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Comprehensive Exams - Public History |

**Outcome/Objective:** Public History

**Implementation Description:** To be discussed over the course of the Fall 2016 semester, implemented in Spring.

**Responsible Person/Group:** Chad Parker, Sara Ritchey, Graduate Committee

### **Redesign our Assessment Plan**

The graduate committee has determined that, after many years of consistently meeting our assessment goals in historiography, historical narratives, research, and public history, it was time to reevaluate our assessment tools and objectives. We came to this decision because, although we had been meeting our goals, our overall sense was that, nevertheless, at least 40-50% of our graduating MA students were not quite grasping historiography or the argumentation skills and presentation of evidence that we expect of research papers. Many were simply "slipping through the cracks." So we have decided that, in the 2016-17 academic year, we will implement new assessment objectives and tools for assessment. In many ways, we had been hanging on to the system that was first put in place in 2007-2008. With a new assessment application coming on board with Live Text, we believe that it is time for a fresh approach. Below you will find a list of evaluation questions for historiography and research papers.

#### Evaluation of Historical Accounts:

1. Are students able to identify and articulate an author's argument?
2. Are students able analyze how historical accounts are constructed?
3. Can student determine which historical accounts make formative contributions to the field and outline why?
4. Can students synthesize historical accounts, generating unique perspectives about them?

#### Construction of Professional Historical Accounts:

1. Are students able to produce a supportable historical argument?
2. Are students able to situation their own arguments within the relevant historiography?
3. Can students identify and interpret relevant and diverse evidence to support their arguments?

4. Can students construct historical arguments using professionally acceptable standards of writing?

**Established in Cycle:** 2015-2016

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Comprehensive Exams - Historical Narrative |

**Outcome/Objective:** Historical Narrative

**Measure:** Comprehensive Exams - Historiography |

**Outcome/Objective:** Historiography

**Measure:** Comprehensive Exams - Public History |

**Outcome/Objective:** Public History

**Measure:** HIST 505 | **Outcome/Objective:** Research & Writing

**Measure:** Thesis | **Outcome/Objective:** Historiography | Research & Writing

**Implementation Description:** The graduate committee will refine these evaluation goals and design measurements over the course of the Fall 2016 semester.

**Projected Completion Date:** 11/2016

**Responsible Person/Group:** Chad Parker, Sara Ritchey, graduate committee

**Additional Resources:** More faculty!

## Analysis Questions and Analysis Answers

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### How were assessment results shared and evaluated within the unit?

Assessment results were shared in writing with the entire faculty. The faculty prioritized initiatives over email during the summer, and then began a thorough discussion of our curriculum in regular faculty meetings in the Fall semester. The undergraduate curriculum committee has been re-organized in order to develop initiatives that will address our concerns.

### Identify which action plans [created in prior cycle(s)] were implemented in this current cycle. For each of these implemented plans, were there any measurable or perceivable effects? How, if at all, did the findings appear to be affected by the implemented action plan?

#### Historiographical Focus:

"The 2011-2012 assessment process revealed positive results overall for students' achievement of this goal in terms of the major and minor fields of study. The Graduate Committee nevertheless remains committed to its focus on students' grasp of historiography and ability to assess significant literature. (1) To emphasize this commitment, the Graduate Committee reminded faculty of Goal #2 and its recommendations regarding historiographical focus for HIST 515/525/535 courses and all comprehensive exam questions. (2) In order to evaluate whether these recommendations and reminders are being implemented by faculty, the Graduate Committee has begun the process of reviewing HIST 515/525/535 syllabi from the past

several years. The graduate committee will review these syllabi in the Fall of 2012. (3) Additionally, the Graduate Committee will review written comprehensive examination questions for historiographical content, from the years 2010-2012. The graduate committee will review these questions in the Fall of 2012. (4) In order to keep the program at an "achieved" status, the Committee has begun discussing ways to identify potentially challenged students. Students who receive lower than an A in their first semester of graduate coursework will receive special attention in order to help them grasp the narrative contours of their field. (5) The graduate committee also wishes to improve the number of "weak passes," so that we have more clear and certain "pass" and "strong pass" reports. In order to improve these weak passes, the graduate committee believes that the early intervention with weak students will be beneficial. Among the entirety of students assessed for 2011-2012, two out of thirteen (15%) achieved "weak pass;" the graduate committee believes that we can improve this percentage. (6) The graduate committee has implemented an exit survey to illicit student feedback (see below, goal 4)."

2015-2016:

Historiography continues to present the most challenges, as many students both report that they do not feel well trained in this area. Faculty assessments indicate that indeed, student understanding of historiography is the most unsuccessful part of assessments. Students noted in the exit survey this year that they did not believe that their introductory course on historiography, HIST 590, prepared them at all. Instead, they indicated that they had learned the concept better in reading seminars. The committee will recommend a larger discussion about revising HIST 590 to make it more relevant and it will communicate the larger problems about achieving this goal to the entire faculty.

#### **Exit Survey:**

"We have implemented a new exit survey for matriculating MA students. The survey asks them about program weaknesses and strengths, including acquisition of internships and jobs, comprehensive exam process, mentoring, historiographical understanding, and preparedness for work in the field."

2015-2016:

We continue to send out the exit survey for graduating MA students, and we have created one for mid-program students. The mid-program survey is a trial and participation has been limited, so we are not comfortable analyzing its results. The exit survey, however, continues to return helpful information.

### **Reevaluation of Assessing Public History Skills**

“Given that the 2012-2013 assessment process revealed good results overall for students’ achievement of this goal no substantial changes to this goal have been adopted for the upcoming year by the Graduate Committee. We have hired a new faculty member in Public History and are eager to revise our goals and evaluation process when his tenure commences in the Fall of 2013.”

2015-2016:

No recommendations have been made to revise these standards.

### **Raise Standard**

“Since the success rate was 100%, we will raise the target for next cycle.”

2015-2016:

No further action has taken place.

### **Additional Historiography Assessments and Interventions**

“Our Exit Review survey for the last five years has indicated two important, related weaknesses: 1) students struggle with Historiography 2) students perpetually rate HIST 515/525/535 courses as their least educationally valuable experience in the MA program in history. In the Fall of 2014, we adopted a new policy for HIST 515/525/535 courses that students may take no more than 6 hours of credit in these courses, that professors must include a significant historiographical component and seminar experience, and that professors can choose whether to open these courses.”

2015-2016:

With the previous revision to limit the number of undergraduate/graduate lecture course that MA students could take for credit, we have not seen a substantial change to our assessments of historiography. We have little indication that there is a faculty-wide embrace, or even knowledge, of the need to enhance historiography training.

## Assessment of Thesis

“We introduced an assessment of students’ theses at the time of the thesis defense. This assessment allows us to track progress from the HIST 505 level to the thesis level, to determine if students are developing stronger research and writing skills. The results are favorable, and indicate that students are progressing. Additionally, we have developed a new “thesis track” that will help student to progress from history 505 to the thesis process. Students must now submit a thesis proposal, which they defend orally for their committee. They must also present a timeline for research, writing, revision, and defense. We will assess the advantages of this new process next year.”

2015-2016:

We continue to pursue the thesis prospectus path, and we have found that it has steered a few students away from unworkable theses and into either better theses or toward the exam track. With only one group of graduating students who have completed the prospectus, we do not have enough data to draw definitive conclusions. The Graduate Committee remains unhappy with the number of thesis students who graduate after four semesters. The committee will recommend to the faculty that they be more rigorous about research possibilities at the prospectus stage, so as to guide MA students more effectively toward a more workable path toward on-time graduation. Moreover, beginning in fall 2016, all students taking HIST 599: Research and Thesis must establish with their supervising professors a plan of action in order to receive HIST 599 credit. A “contract” has been created to guide this process.

### **What has the unit learned from the current assessment cycle? What is working well, and what is working less well in achieving desired outcomes?**

The program needs to continue working to improve student understanding of and ability to work with historiography. While we achieved our goals, the graduate committee would like to see better results with Goal 2. While assessment reports in the past have indicated a need for more communication with the department, it has not followed as desired. However, we do see that a number of good theses were completed this cycle and we see continued success with the public history internship program.