University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Detailed Assessment Report
2015-2016 History BA
As of: 11/10/2016 04:44 PM 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

SLO 1: Research

Research: Research and conduct an investigation, consulting appropriate works for developing a bibliography.

Connected Document
Assessment Form

Related Measures

M 1: HIST 490 Final Paper

Research: A committee of Six UL Lafayette historians, both assistant and associate professors, evaluated a random sampling of research papers from two 2015 sections of the department's capstone course, HIST 490: Historical Research and Writing (the other professor who taught HIST 490 in 2015 left UL Lafayette without making her final papers available to us). In this course, students produce a significant research paper focusing on a historical topic and using primary and secondary sources. For the Research goal, students had to demonstrate their ability to conduct extensive research in the library, in online databases, and/or other archival collections. Students had to demonstrate an ability to evaluate the validity and value of source material. The working criteria this year for earning a rank of outstanding, satisfactory, passable with reservations, or unsatisfactory in this category is included in this report as an attachment.

Number of students assessed = 20

Source of Evidence: Written assignment(s), usually scored by a rubric

Connected Document
Assessment Form

Target:

This year the Outcomes Assessment Committee used our expansive rubric to evaluate the student success rate in achieving the four student learning goals/objectives by breaking those goals down into further subcategories for more detailed analysis. This expansive rubric allows the committee to determine not simply whether or not the department's goals are achieved, but to what degree those goals are met. As always, this year's assessment strategy targeted not simply student success rates, but equally as important, a reevaluation of the language that constitutes these expansive rubric guidelines. The committee continues to collect feedback from evaluators as to the usefulness of the rubric. As we have found over the previous three

years, agreeing on the language that constitutes the rubric guidelines is quite complicated and challenging. Rubric revisions remain a constant and necessary process as we seek to increase the user-friendliness of the rubric as well as its effectiveness in evaluating whether or not our majors are achieving our departmental undergraduate goals. This year, the evaluation team consisted of six faculty members, three of whom were new to the process. In part, the committee hoped to evaluate the usefulness of the rubric that was created by past committee members. As this evaluation rubric continues to be vetted and revised, it will enhance the department's ability to generate history majors who produce work of not simply satisfactory, but outstanding, merit.

Despite failing in achieving this goal in several categories last year, the committee determined to maintain the goal that 80 percent of the papers must earn evaluations of "Outstanding," "Satisfactory," or "Passable, with Reservations" in order to demonstrate that the department "achieved" each particular goal. Two evaluators read each paper. To achieve a goal, the paper could not receive a mark of "Unsatisfactory," by either evaluator, in the measurable category.

Finding (2015-2016) - Target: Not Met

This year we achieved a success rate of 75% in the category of "Research," demonstrating that we did not attain our goal in this category. The committee determined that one quarter of the students did not succeed in identifying appropriate sources. We are concerned by this finding and plan to discuss it with our faculty this fall. We believe that we should continue to maintain a high threshold of 80% for declaring success in each of our goals. We will share this information with the faculty who taught 490 last year, and who plan to teach HIST 490 this fall.

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

Enhanced Course Descriptions

In order to better inform our students of course opportunities, the department now is providing enhanced course descriptions to majors during the advising period. This should allow students to better determine through what coursework they choose to develop their skills in each of the department's four goals.

Established in Cycle: 2009-2010
Implementation Status: In-Progress
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
Measure: HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Communicate
| Interpret & Analyze | Research
Measure: HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Distinguish Sources

Creation of Rotating HIST 490 Papers Assessment Team

Last year the Outcomes Assessment Committee decided that, beginning in the 2010-2011 assessment cycle, an assessment "team" comprised of rotating faculty in the history program would take charge of evaluating the HIST 490 papers for outcomes assessment. This would ensure that

all history faculty gain a much stronger and immediate sense of the successes and shortcomings of our undergraduate program, as demonstrated by the results of the assessment. In addition, the committee proposed that no faculty member who taught HIST 490 during the year that the assessed papers from that assessment cycle were produced will serve on the team. This year the committee decided to postpone the implementation of this rotating team in order that the committee may test out the newly proposed and significantly expanded rubric guidelines and language. As a result, and based upon this year's assessment results, the committee plans to reevaluate the rubric guidelines and language during the 2011-2012 year, and establish the rotating team for the 2012 Outcomes and Assessment cycle.

Established in Cycle: 2010-2011
Implementation Status: Finished
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Communicate
> | Interpret & Analyze | Research
> **Measure:** HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Distinguish Sources

Implementation Description: This team will be assigned each year by the outcomes assessment committee.
Projected Completion Date: 05/2011

Critical Evaluation of Rubric Guidelines and Language

Please see the attached document entitled, "Evaluation of Working Rubric Guidelines for the 2010 Year" for an extensive Action Plan regarding the implementation and results of our current rubric draft.

Established in Cycle: 2010-2011
Implementation Status: In-Progress
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Communicate
> | Interpret & Analyze | Research
> **Measure:** HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Distinguish Sources

Implementation Description: The committee will revise the rubric guidelines and revisit our working goal subcategories for future assessment of the HIST 490 papers.
Connected Document
> Rubric Results: Raw Data for 2011 Report

Development of Out-of-the-Classroom Learning Experiences 2010-2011

Faculty are working to establish additional alternative and "out of the classroom" learning experiences for students.

The department offered an exciting new course, HIST 471, "History of Nature," that challenged students to explore the historical and changing concept of "nature" from medieval to modern times, and

from agricultural, religious, philosophical, and political perspectives. Over the course of the semester, undergraduate and graduate students in the course travelled to several local sites where people generally work or play in "nature," including the university's Sustainable Agriculture Complex in Cade, Earthshare Gardens, the Nature Station, and the Cultural Resource Institute of Acadiana (C.R.I.A.) in Arnaudville. By exploring these different contexts of "nature," students developed a keen sense of the history of the concept as well as its use and significance in the present.

Last fall, fifteen out of seventeen students in the HIST 430 course, "Southern History" elected to embark upon a non-required fieldtrip to Colfax, Louisiana, where their professor demonstrated the complex ways in which local communities remember and interpret divisive and important historical events such as the Colfax Massacre.

In addition, the department during the summer of 2010 offered "History on the Move," an extraordinarily successful six-credit hour course and out of the classroom learning experience. Students spent four weeks studying and experiencing the history of the American Southwest. A hands-on and experiential approach to learning History, the class departed in vans from Lafayette and visited historic sites, museums, and parks in Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, and Washington State. Two faculty members led the students and worked with them to analyze the historical interpretations of the sites that they encountered along the way.

Finally, the HIST 371: Interpreting History in Museums course provided students the opportunity to visit seven museums in Louisiana, where they toured the facilities with curators and other museum staff, in addition to gaining the opportunity to participate in two exhibit projects with local museums. The first group worked to reinterpret all of the buildings featured in the guided tours at the Vermilionville Living History Museum in Lafayette. The goal of the reinterpretation was to incorporate or to expand the interpretation of Acadiana's peoples of color within the tours. The second group conducted the preliminary research and fieldwork for a major exhibit installation, "Faith and Form," at the university's Hilliard Art Museum. The exhibit, scheduled to open in the summer of 2012, will feature religious art from congregations in Lafayette Parish and the six other parishes that surround the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

The department is buoyed by the success of these innovate approaches to learning, and we plan to design and implement similar courses in the future.

Established in Cycle: 2010-2011
Implementation Status: In-Progress
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Research

Implementation Description: Faculty are considering new, innovative ways better to link the classroom to the "field".

Exit Survey Proposal

The Outcomes Assessment Committee continues to consider the development of an Exit Survey for history majors. This survey will provide the department with an additional tool by which it can evaluate its mission to students and its success in meeting and in calibrating student, departmental, and university goals.

Established in Cycle: 2010-2011
Implementation Status: In-Progress
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Communicate
> | Interpret & Analyze | Research
> **Measure:** HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Distinguish Sources

Implementation Description: The assessment committee is considering the implementation and design of the exit survey.
Connected Documents
> History Department Senior Survey
> Senior Exit Survey

Implementation of New Course Offerings

Last year the department's curriculum committee was charged with the task of creating new courses to incorporate within our course catalog. This year the new courses gained incorporation within our course catalog, and students are already targeting and enrolling in these courses that reflect innovations and developments in each of the diverse history fields taught at ULL. These updates particularly reflect the expertise of the department's faculty hires over the last ten years.

Established in Cycle: 2010-2011
Implementation Status: In-Progress
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Research

Implementation Description: This year a number of faculty proposed to design and teach some of the department's new course offerings, and the department is witnessing strong enrollments in consequence.

Topical Course Section Offerings for HIST 490

The capstone course, HIST 490, underwent a dramatic change last year, as some of the 490 sections are now offered as topical courses. These offerings allow for faculty and students in the classroom to much more deeply explore a particular period and field of history as students develop their research papers. This past year, one of the topic 490 courses included a focus on the European Crusades and generated an exciting, thematically oriented set of papers.

Established in Cycle: 2010-2011
Implementation Status: In-Progress

Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):

> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
> Communicate
> | Interpret & Analyze | Research
> **Measure:** HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
> Distinguish Sources

Implementation Description: Faculty who teach HIST 490 are
evaluating and implementing topical sections for HIST 490.

Exit Survey Draft Completed for Implementation in Next Cycle

This year the Outcomes Assessment Committee developed an Exit
Survey for history majors, a draft of which is included with this report.
Once approved in final form by the committee and the department head,
this survey will provide the department with an additional tool by which it
can evaluate its mission to students and its success in meeting and in
calibrating student, departmental, and university goals.

Established in Cycle: 2011-2012
Implementation Status: In-Progress
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):

> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
> Communicate
> | Interpret & Analyze | Research
> **Measure:** HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
> Distinguish Sources

Connected Document

> History Department Senior Survey

Links to Action Plan Documents

For further information on how the department is evaluating and
responding to the outcomes reported here, please see the document
"Evaluation of Working Rubric Guidelines for the 2011-12 cycle" along
with the additional Action Plan documents attached for this cycle.

Established in Cycle: 2011-2012
Implementation Status: Planned
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):

> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
> Research

New Faculty Cycled in to Use Rubric to Evaluate 490 Papers

Last year the Outcomes Assessment Committee decided that, beginning
in the 2012 assessment cycle, fellow faculty members in the department
would rotate into the committee on a regular basis to evaluate the HIST
490 papers for outcomes assessment. This would ensure that all history
faculty gain a much stronger and immediate sense of the successes and
shortcomings of our undergraduate program, as demonstrated by the
results of the assessment. We also believe that rotating new faculty into
the evaluation process will provide them with a new perspective in
thinking about the pedagogical opportunities for emphasizing our
departmental goals in the survey and upper-division courses. We had
planned to implement this rotation last year, but the committee decided

to postpone the implementation of this rotating team in order that the committee may test out the newly proposed and significantly expanded rubric guidelines and language. This year, accordingly, we cycled in two new evaluators, and they have already provided invaluable feedback in regard to the rubric and in regard to better implementing strategies to meet our departmental goals. We will continue to bring new faculty into the outcomes assessment process in this manner.

Established in Cycle: 2011-2012
Implementation Status: Planned
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Communicate
> | Interpret & Analyze | Research
> **Measure:** HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Distinguish Sources

Out of Classroom Learning Experiences

Faculty are working to establish additional alternative and "out of the classroom" learning experiences for students. In the fall 2011 semester, as part of the HIST 366: African American Women's History course, Professor Mary Farmer Kaiser provided students with an opportunity to apply their classroom knowledge to one of the year's most popular (and controversial) films, The Help. 12 students (out of 28 undergraduates in the class) watched the film with Dr. Farmer-Kaiser at the beginning of the semester, and developed responses both at the beginning and at the conclusion of the semester. By contextualizing the film with the course materials, students witnessed a dramatic change in their interpretation of the film from the beginning of the course to the end. Faculty like Farmer-Kaiser are constantly looking for new ways to apply classroom knowledge to the out-of-the-classroom experiences of our students. The history honor society, Phi Alpha Theta, organized monthly "Dinners with the Professor." These dinners enable a group of PAT students to meet with a professor for dinner. We believe that these opportunities allow our PAT students, who are mostly history majors, to get to know our faculty in a new context as well as learn more about the historian's profession through a less formal, out-of-the-classroom conversation. In an introductory course on historic preservation taught to both undergraduates and graduate students, the class headed into the field on numerous occasions to see how preservation is practiced at a number of historic sites including the Shadows on the Teche and the Rayne Historic District. In addition, the department during the summer of 2012 offered "History on the Move," an extraordinarily successful six-credit hour course and out of the classroom learning experience. Last summer the path-breaking domestic study/travel program rolled to the American Southwest in a four week trip with 11 undergraduate students, including 9 history majors. A hands-on and experiential approach to learning History, the class travelled from Lafayette, across Texas, and through New Mexico, Colorado, Utah, Nevada, and Arizona. Along the way an extraordinary variety of historic sites, museums, and landscapes served as the students' classroom. The department will continue to develop these sorts of unique and alternative learning experiences to diversify the students' educational opportunities.

Established in Cycle: 2011-2012

Implementation Status: Planned
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
> Communicate
> | Interpret & Analyze | Research
> **Measure:** HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
> Distinguish Sources

Reevaluation of Rubric Guidelines 2011-2012

This year the department of history revisited the language for assessing the success of each HIST 490 paper along with the Goals and Subcategories that the department is currently using in its Rubric (See the document entitled, "Outcomes Assessment Rubric 490.2012.doc"). The previous rubric was organized in the following fashion:

I.   Research

II.   Distinguish Sources

III.   Interpret & Analyze

  A.   Presentation of Argument

  B.   Understanding of Sources

  C.   Logic

  D.   Structure/Organization

IV.   Communicate

  A.   Grammar/Style/Prose

  B.   Proper Citation

After assessing the 2010 490 papers, the outcomes assessment committee determined that the language in the guidelines was insufficient and unclear in content. Accordingly, the committee met in the spring of 2012, rewrote the language on the guidelines, and reorganized the evaluation categories (see the above mentioned document). With a new set of guidelines in hand, the committee organized the evaluation of the success of students within the following goals and goal subcategories for each HIST 490 paper:

I. Research

II. Distinguish Sources

III. Interpret & Analyze

        A.   Presentation of Argument

        B.   Analysis of Sources

        C.   Evidence in Support of Thesis

IV.   Communicate

        A.   Grammar/Style/Prose

        B.   Organization

        C.   Proper Citation

While the organization is different, the committee significantly streamlined and clarified the descriptions and instructions for evaluating each goal and goal subcategory. However, post-evaluation reports from the committee indicate a further need to revise and clarify the instructions for each category, if not to revisit some of the categories and subcategories themselves.

Success of the New Rubric and Language

In many ways, the committee found that this clarified, expansive rubric enables us to make much more precise determinations as to how well the students developed skills in line with our department's goals. Newly revised goal subcategories enabled the evaluators to investigate multiple successes and failures found within each of our four goals (Research, Distinguish Sources, Interpret & Analyze, and Communicate). All evaluators believe that the creation of these subcategories served to further our Outcomes and Assessment Evaluation in a positive manner.

Challenges Revealed Through the New Rubric and Language

At the same time, an analysis of the collected evaluation sheets for all

20 papers demonstrates that the committee will need to continue to rethink the language associated with each goal and subcategory and the language associated with the meanings prescribed to the ranks of "Outstanding," "Satisfactory," "Passable with Reservations" and "Unsatisfactory" for each goal and subcategory.

The successes and failures of the new rubric are demonstrated through a comparison of the 2011 and 2012 reports, along with the continued feedback from our evaluators. A comparison of the 2011 report with the 2012 report demonstrates, on the one hand, that the new rubric guidelines and organization largely have ameliorated confusion over how to evaluate whether or not students met the "Distinguish Sources" goal. In the 2011 report, only 48% achieved the goal of "Distinguish Sources." The committee immediately set out to investigate this problem by discussing individual evaluation experiences with the papers. It became clear that many in the committee were confused as to how to assess this goal based upon the 490 papers. This confusion seems to have resulted in wildly disparate assessments of whether or not students were achieving this goal. The committee then clarified the language of the rubric guidelines for the 2012 report. Accordingly, the 2012 report indicates that 90% of students met this goal.

Although this seems like a significant improvement, some of the committee members in this round of evaluations voiced continuing concerns that the rubric was insufficient at providing appropriate instructions in this regard. One committee member wrote, "What determines whether an evaluator can recognize if a student understands the difference between primary and secondary sources? Looking at the bibliography and notes is not enough, that's for sure. How they are used is really what determines whether a student 'gets' it, right?" The member suggested that our "note to evaluators" under this category in the guidelines, to "simply search the notes to make this determination" did not enable us to truly get a sense of whether or not students clearly understood the difference between these sources.

Evaluators also suggested that we revisit our rubric language in terms of defining success for students in the subcategory (under Interpret & Analyze) of "presentation of thesis." Can any argument, no matter how obvious or unchallenged, serve as a satisfactory thesis? Or should we generate more specific language in the evaluation instructions so that we ensure that students understand what constitutes a meaningful thesis statement?

Finally, committee members also expressed concern over the evaluation of internet sources. Although faculty members who teach HIST 490 may vet all internet sources before allowing their inclusion in capstone research papers, the vetting process is not revealed in the

final draft of the papers. We are considering the need to require
annotations for internet sources, so that evaluators can better
understand the nature of the sources themselves (as opposed to the
obvious and widely understood, stringent vetting process that
corresponds with peer-reviewed academic journal articles, for
example).

The committee is determined to continue the course of refining our
instruments for evaluating the success of our students. Next year we
plan to one again revise the rubric guidelines, taking all of these
matters into consideration. We must determine what language works,
and what does not, and we must ascertain the merits of each of the
subcategories and ranks that we utilized this year.   We see this as a
process that may take some time, but a process that will ultimately
sharpen our ability to assess the success of our history majors in
achieving the fundamental goals of the BA Program in History

Established in Cycle: 2011-2012
Implementation Status: In-Progress
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
> Communicate
> | Interpret & Analyze | Research
> **Measure:** HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
> Distinguish Sources

improve footnote teaching in 490

improve footnote teaching in 490

Established in Cycle: 2012-2013
Implementation Status: Planned
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
> Research
> **Measure:** HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
> Distinguish Sources

Connected Documents
> Assessment Form
> Outcomes Assessment Rubric 2012

Moving forward for 2014-2015

We are generally disappointed with the results of our assessment this
year. To begin with, we feel it important to stress that the data was
compromised this year due to the fact that we only had access to the
papers for one section of HIST 490. This was due to a faculty
retirement, as we were unable to secure that professor's papers for this
assessment. The results, therefore, as quite skewed, and do not reflect
the success or failure of the department's ability to meet its goals for the
years. In addition, we spent a great deal of time clarifying our rubric this
year, which provided greater assistance to our assessment team,
particularly for the two new faculty members who had not yet gone
through our assessment process. On the other hand, of course, the

results are troubling in regard to this particular section. We feel that the low rankings in multiple category indicates that we need to work with our HIST 490 professors in calibrating their expectations with ours in regard to what defines student success in the classes. We will plan to meet with the upcoming HIST 490 professors in order to discuss this matter and develop a plan.

Our senior exit survey results indicate that students are desirous of greater diversity in course offerings. In particular, they indicated a desire for courses in Asian history, African history, Middle East history, Pacific history, and Latin American history. We successfully hired an incoming Latin Americanist, but because our department remains down by six or seven faculty lines, we are unable to meet student demands for courses that focus on areas outside of the U.S. and Europe. An action plan to remedy this problem is unavailable to us, beyond asking the administration to free up more lines for additional hires next year.

Established in Cycle: 2013-2014
Implementation Status: Planned
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Communicate
> | Interpret & Analyze | Research
> **Measure:** HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Distinguish Sources

Implementation Description: We will meet with the upcoming HIST 490 professors to discuss this year's assessment and our department's expectations for students. We will also think about ways to enhance student training in these areas in 100- through 300-level courses.
Responsible Person/Group: The outcomes assessment committee.
Additional Resources: We need to hire faculty who can teach areas beyond the U.S. and Europe.
Connected Documents
> assessment rubric for 2013-2014
> Senior Exit Survey

Moving forward for 2015-2016

Last year's assessment report demonstrated what we considered to be significant problems in our undergraduate program. Our sample only included papers from one section, but the rate of failure in achieving multiple of our goals in that section left many of us very concerned. We convened a meeting at the beginning of the fall semester to discuss the assessment report, to identify our students' weaknesses, and to try to determine an appropriate action plan for this year and beyond. The faculty decided to revise the major requirements in two significant ways: first, we will begin requiring majors to take a 300 level "History Skills" course, taught thematically by a variety of faculty. This course will explicitly target our four goals of Research, Interpret & Analyze, Communicate, and Distinguish Sources by requiring students to write a minor research paper and book reviews, to complete exercises on analyzing and distinguishing primary and secondary sources, and to develop skills in assessing historiography. We feel that by ensuring that these specific skills are cultivated at the 300 level, the students will be

better prepared for the challenges awaiting them in HIST 490. In addition, we expanded the number of required 400 level seminars in order for students to continue a rigorous skill development in assessing and critiquing secondary sources through discussion, book reviews, and historiographical papers. This expansion of the senior seminar courses also fits the needs of the students, expressed in this year's senior survey, to offer more courses at this level.

The senior survey this year also reveals the desire for us to expand our coursework, particularly in Asian history, "Ancient history" (including Greek and Roman history), Civil Rights and Gender Equality, and Latin American history. The seniors reported feeling that not enough non-U.S. courses are currently offered. We completed a successful search for a modern Europeanist, but their concerns indicate a need for additional faculty in non-U.S. areas; our faculty agree with this concern and hope that the administration will succeed in unfreezing more of our frozen lines next year to achieve this purpose.

We revised slightly the language of the rubric this year in order to continue our process of refinement for our assessment teams.

Of the four sections assessed this year, two of them were organized thematically, such that students research and wrote their paper on a theme such as the foreign policy-themed, "U.S. and the World in the 20th Century". Of the two thematically-organized sections, only 15% of the students received an "unsatisfactory" mark in any category of our rubric. In contrast, within the remaining two sections, 57% of the students received at least one unsatisfactory mark. We are not sure if we should attribute the success of the former students to the thematically-oriented courses, which utilize historiographies and research materials that sit more firmly within the wheelhouse of the faculty members who teach them, or if another factor is involved (we will begin tracking the enrollments of these sections as they relate to each section's assessment results, and we will also convene all of the faculty this fall to revisit the department's goals for the undergraduate program in order to provide more course content that speaks directly to ensuring greater specific success in those categories). We will continue to monitor such differences in future assessments, and will make sure that all faculty teaching 490 (and all faculty in the program) receive our annual assessment reports, along with our rubric guidelines for assessing our 490 students.

All of these steps, we believe, will lead to increased success rates among our students in achieving our goals, and will continue our trajectory of innovating our courses and undergraduate program.

Established in Cycle: 2014-2015
Implementation Status: Planned
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
    Measure: HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
    Communicate
    | Interpret & Analyze | Research
    Measure: HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**

Distinguish Sources

Implementation Description: We will monitor the success of next year's 300 level "history skills" courses, and will distribute our assessment report and rubric guidelines to all faculty, such that they will keep apprised of our goals, success rates, and challenges, as they design and administer their courses.

Responsible Person/Group: Assessment Committee

Moving Forward for 2016/2017

We believe that this year marks a bump in the road for our assessment due to some particular circumstances that we can correct this coming year. Of particular concern is the fact, according to our committee's assessment of HIST 490 final papers, that 35% of our students seemed unable to present an identifiable thesis in their HIST 490 papers. In addition, 35% were deemed unable to satisfactorily distinguish between primary and secondary sources. We are not sure what happened this year, as these numbers seem an aberration from our earlier successes. However, we are implementing steps to insure that we will not see these numbers again.

In the fall of 2014, for example, we convened a meeting to discuss the previous assessment report, to identify our students' weaknesses, and to try to determine an appropriate action plan for this year and beyond. As a result, the faculty decided to revise the major requirements in two significant ways: first, we began requiring majors to take a 300 level "History Skills" course, taught thematically by a variety of faculty. This course explicitly targets our four goals of Research, Interpret & Analyze, Communicate, and Distinguish Sources by requiring students to write a minor research paper and book reviews, to complete exercises on analyzing and distinguishing primary and secondary sources, and to develop skills in assessing historiography. We feel that by ensuring that these specific skills are cultivated at the 300 level, the students will be better prepared for the challenges awaiting them in HIST 490. The first of these courses were offered in the spring of 2016, so we will be able to monitor its impact in the coming years. In addition, we expanded the number of required 400 level seminars in order for students to continue a rigorous skill development in assessing and critiquing secondary sources through discussion, book reviews, and historiographical papers. This expansion of the senior seminar courses also fits the needs of the students, expressed in recent senior surveys, to offer more courses at this level. The senior survey this year also reveals the desire for us to expand our coursework, particularly in Asian history, "Ancient history" (including Greek and Roman history), Civil Rights and Gender Equality, and Latin American history. The seniors reported feeling that not enough non-U.S. courses were currently offered. We completed a successful search for a modern Europeanist, but she left our department this spring for a position at Tulane University. We are also dealing with multiple additional departures this year, which is compounding our difficulty to meet student concerns for additional faculty in non-U.S. areas, and to meet the needs of our students interested in U.S. or European history. Our faculty agrees with their concerns and hopes that the administration will enable us to hire more

faculty to replace those who have left last year (and those who may be leaving this year).

This year we assessed papers from two sections of HIST 490. The two sections we assessed were not topically themed. Last year demonstrated greater success with 490 sections organized by topic than those that were not organized in such fashion. For that reason, we will recommend to the instructors teaching 490 in the coming year to organize the class in a matter that best aligns with their specialization. We also plan to circulate more thoroughly the responsibility for teaching 490 among our faculty.

We will continue to monitor such differences in future assessments, and will make sure that all faculty teaching 490 (and all faculty in the program) receive our annual assessment reports, along with our rubric guidelines for assessing our 490 students. All of these steps, we believe, will lead to increased success rates among our students in achieving our goals, and will continue our trajectory of innovating our courses and undergraduate program.

Established in Cycle: 2015-2016
Implementation Status: Planned
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Communicate
> | Interpret & Analyze | Research
> **Measure:** HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Distinguish Sources

Implementation Description: We plan to make the faculty aware of this year's outcomes assessment so that they take pains to ensure that these fundamentals are built into all of our course offerings. Our redesign of the major curriculum will also help, though we will not see those results for another 2-3 years. We also will encourage faculty to design 490 courses that align with their specialization, as these seem to be the most effective course sections to date.
Responsible Person/Group: John Troutman

SLO 2: Distinguish Sources
Distinguish Sources: Distinguish between primary and secondary sources.

Connected Document
[Assessment Form](#)

Related Measures

M 2: HIST 490-- Final Paper

Distinguish Sources: A committee of Six UL Lafayette historians, both assistant and associate professors, evaluated a random sampling of research

papers from two 2015 sections of the department's capstone course, HIST 490: Historical Research and Writing. In this course, students produce a significant research paper focusing on a historical topic and using primary and secondary sources. For the Distinguish Sources goal, students had to properly determine the categories of the sources materials they were working with. The working criteria this year for earning a rank of outstanding, satisfactory, passable with reservations, or unsatisfactory in this category is included in this report as an attachment.

Number of students assessed = 20

Source of Evidence: Written assignment(s), usually scored by a rubric

Connected Document

Assessment Form

Target:

This year the Outcomes Assessment Committee used our expansive rubric to evaluate the student success rate in achieving the four student learning goals/objectives by breaking those goals down into further subcategories for more detailed analysis. This expansive rubric allows the committee to determine not simply whether or not the department's goals are achieved, but to what degree those goals are met. As always, this year's assessment strategy targeted not simply student success rates, but equally as important, a reevaluation of the language that constitutes these expansive rubric guidelines. The committee continues to collect feedback from evaluators as to the usefulness of the rubric. As we have found over the previous three years, agreeing on the language that constitutes the rubric guidelines is quite complicated and challenging. Rubric revisions remain a constant and necessary process as we seek to increase the user-friendliness of the rubric as well as its effectiveness in evaluating whether or not our majors are achieving our departmental undergraduate goals. This year, the evaluation team consisted of six faculty members, three of whom were new to the process. In part, the committee hoped to evaluate the usefulness of the rubric that was created by past committee members. As this evaluation rubric continues to be vetted and revised, it will enhance the department's ability to generate history majors who produce work of not simply satisfactory, but outstanding, merit. The committee determined to maintain the goal that 80 percent of the papers must earn evaluations of "Outstanding," "Satisfactory," or "Passable, with Reservations" in order to demonstrate that the department "achieved" each particular goal. Two evaluators read each paper. To achieve a goal, the paper could not receive a mark of "Unsatisfactory," by either evaluator, in the measurable category.

Finding (2015-2016) - Target: Not Met
This year we achieved a success rate of 65% in the category of "Distinguish Sources," demonstrating that students did not attain our goal in this category. We are very disappointed with this result and will convene the faculty to discuss it in the fall. We believe that we should continue to maintain a high threshold of 80% for declaring success in each of our goals.

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

Enhanced Course Descriptions
In order to better inform our students of course opportunities, the department now is providing enhanced course descriptions to

majors during the advising period. This should allow students to better determine through what coursework they choose to develop their skills in each of the department's four goals.

Established in Cycle: 2009-2010
Implementation Status: In-Progress
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Communicate
> | Interpret & Analyze | Research
> **Measure:** HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Distinguish Sources

Creation of Rotating HIST 490 Papers Assessment Team

Last year the Outcomes Assessment Committee decided that, beginning in the 2010-2011 assessment cycle, an assessment "team" comprised of rotating faculty in the history program would take charge of evaluating the HIST 490 papers for outcomes assessment. This would ensure that all history faculty gain a much stronger and immediate sense of the successes and shortcomings of our undergraduate program, as demonstrated by the results of the assessment. In addition, the committee proposed that no faculty member who taught HIST 490 during the year that the assessed papers from that assessment cycle were produced will serve on the team. This year the committee decided to postpone the implementation of this rotating team in order that the committee may test out the newly proposed and significantly expanded rubric guidelines and language. As a result, and based upon this year's assessment results, the committee plans to reevaluate the rubric guidelines and language during the 2011-2012 year, and establish the rotating team for the 2012 Outcomes and Assessment cycle.

Established in Cycle: 2010-2011
Implementation Status: Finished
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Communicate
> | Interpret & Analyze | Research
> **Measure:** HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Distinguish Sources

Implementation Description: This team will be assigned each year by the outcomes assessment committee.
Projected Completion Date: 05/2011

Critical Evaluation of Rubric Guidelines and Language

Please see the attached document entitled, "Evaluation of Working Rubric Guidelines for the 2010 Year" for an extensive Action Plan regarding the implementation and results of our current rubric draft.

Established in Cycle: 2010-2011
Implementation Status: In-Progress
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**

Communicate
| Interpret & Analyze | Research
Measure: HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
Distinguish Sources

Implementation Description: The committee will revise the rubric
guidelines and revisit our working goal subcategories for future
assessment of the HIST 490 papers.
Connected Document
[Rubric Results: Raw Data for 2011 Report](#)

Exit Survey Proposal

The Outcomes Assessment Committee continues to consider the
development of an Exit Survey for history majors. This survey will
provide the department with an additional tool by which it can evaluate
its mission to students and its success in meeting and in calibrating
student, departmental, and university goals.

Established in Cycle: 2010-2011
Implementation Status: In-Progress
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
Measure: HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
Communicate
| Interpret & Analyze | Research
Measure: HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
Distinguish Sources

Implementation Description: The assessment committee is
considering the implementation and design of the exit survey.
Connected Documents
[History Department Senior Survey](#)
[Senior Exit Survey](#)

Topical Course Section Offerings for HIST 490

The capstone course, HIST 490, underwent a dramatic change last year,
as some of the 490 sections are now offered as topical courses. These
offerings allow for faculty and students in the classroom to much more
deeply explore a particular period and field of history as students
develop their research papers. This past year, one of the topic 490
courses included a focus on the European Crusades and generated an
exciting, thematically oriented set of papers.

Established in Cycle: 2010-2011
Implementation Status: In-Progress
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
Measure: HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
Communicate
| Interpret & Analyze | Research
Measure: HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
Distinguish Sources

Implementation Description: Faculty who teach HIST 490 are
evaluating and implementing topical sections for HIST 490.

Exit Survey Draft Completed for Implementation in Next Cycle

This year the Outcomes Assessment Committee developed an Exit

Survey for history majors, a draft of which is included with this report. Once approved in final form by the committee and the department head, this survey will provide the department with an additional tool by which it can evaluate its mission to students and its success in meeting and in calibrating student, departmental, and university goals.

Established in Cycle: 2011-2012
Implementation Status: In-Progress
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Communicate
> | Interpret & Analyze | Research
> **Measure:** HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Distinguish Sources

Connected Document
> History Department Senior Survey

Links to Action Plan Documents

For further information on how the department is evaluating and responding to the outcomes reported here, please see the document "Evaluation of Working Rubric Guidelines for the 2011-12 cycle" along with the additional Action Plan documents attached for this cycle.

Established in Cycle: 2011-2012
Implementation Status: Planned
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Distinguish Sources

New Faculty Cycled in to Use Rubric to Evaluate 490 Papers

Last year the Outcomes Assessment Committee decided that, beginning in the 2012 assessment cycle, fellow faculty members in the department would rotate into the committee on a regular basis to evaluate the HIST 490 papers for outcomes assessment. This would ensure that all history faculty gain a much stronger and immediate sense of the successes and shortcomings of our undergraduate program, as demonstrated by the results of the assessment. We also believe that rotating new faculty into the evaluation process will provide them with a new perspective in thinking about the pedagogical opportunities for emphasizing our departmental goals in the survey and upper-division courses. We had planned to implement this rotation last year, but the committee decided to postpone the implementation of this rotating team in order that the committee may test out the newly proposed and significantly expanded rubric guidelines and language. This year, accordingly, we cycled in two new evaluators, and they have already provided invaluable feedback in regard to the rubric and in regard to better implementing strategies to meet our departmental goals. We will continue to bring new faculty into the outcomes assessment process in this manner.

Established in Cycle: 2011-2012
Implementation Status: Planned
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):

Measure: HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
Communicate
| Interpret & Analyze | Research
Measure: HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
Distinguish Sources

On the Treatment of Internet-based Sources, 2011-2012

The committee members also expressed concern over the evaluation of
internet sources. Although faculty members who teach HIST 490 may
vet all internet sources before allowing their inclusion in capstone
research papers, the vetting process is not revealed in the final draft of
the papers. Over the next year we will consider the need to require
annotations for internet sources, so that evaluators can better
understand the nature of the sources themselves (as opposed to the
obvious and widely understood, stringent vetting process that
corresponds with peer-reviewed academic journal articles, for example).

Established in Cycle: 2011-2012
Implementation Status: In-Progress
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
Measure: HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
Interpret & Analyze
Measure: HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
Distinguish Sources

Out of Classroom Learning Experiences

Faculty are working to establish additional alternative and "out of the
classroom" learning experiences for students. In the fall 2011 semester,
as part of the HIST 366: African American Women's History course,
Professor Mary Farmer Kaiser provided students with an opportunity to
apply their classroom knowledge to one of the year's most popular (and
controversial) films, The Help. 12 students (out of 28 undergraduates in
the class) watched the film with Dr. Farmer-Kaiser at the beginning of
the semester, and developed responses both at the beginning and at the
conclusion of the semester. By contextualizing the film with the course
materials, students witnessed a dramatic change in their interpretation of
the film from the beginning of the course to the end. Faculty like Farmer-
Kaiser are constantly looking for new ways to apply classroom
knowledge to the out-of-the-classroom experiences of our students. The
history honor society, Phi Alpha Theta, organized monthly "Dinners with
the Professor." These dinners enable a group of PAT students to meet
with a professor for dinner. We believe that these opportunities allow our
PAT students, who are mostly history majors, to get to know our faculty
in a new context as well as learn more about the historian's profession
through a less formal, out-of-the-classroom conversation. In an
introductory course on historic preservation taught to both
undergraduates and graduate students, the class headed into the field
on numerous occasions to see how preservation is practiced at a
number of historic sites including the Shadows on the Teche and the
Rayne Historic District. In addition, the department during the summer of
2012 offered "History on the Move," an extraordinarily successful
six-credit hour course and out of the classroom learning experience.
Last summer the path-breaking domestic study/travel program rolled to
the American Southwest in a four week trip with 11 undergraduate
students, including 9 history majors. A hands-on and experiential

approach to learning History, the class travelled from Lafayette, across Texas, and through New Mexico, Colorado, Utah, Nevada, and Arizona. Along the way an extraordinary variety of historic sites, museums, and landscapes served as the students' classroom. The department will continue to develop these sorts of unique and alternative learning experiences to diversify the students' educational opportunities.

Established in Cycle: 2011-2012
Implementation Status: Planned
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Communicate
> | Interpret & Analyze | Research
> **Measure:** HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Distinguish Sources

Reevaluation of Rubric Guidelines 2011-2012

This year the department of history revisited the language for assessing the success of each HIST 490 paper along with the Goals and Subcategories that the department is currently using in its Rubric (See the document entitled, "Outcomes Assessment Rubric 490.2012.doc"). The previous rubric was organized in the following fashion:

      I.   Research

      II.   Distinguish Sources

      III.   Interpret & Analyze

          A.   Presentation of Argument

          B.   Understanding of Sources

          C. Logic

          D. Structure/Organization

      IV.   Communicate

          A.   Grammar/Style/Prose

          B.   Proper Citation

After assessing the 2010 490 papers, the outcomes assessment committee determined that the language in the guidelines was

insufficient and unclear in content. Accordingly, the committee met in the spring of 2012, rewrote the language on the guidelines, and reorganized the evaluation categories (see the above mentioned document). With a new set of guidelines in hand, the committee organized the evaluation of the success of students within the following goals and goal subcategories for each HIST 490 paper:

I. Research

II. Distinguish Sources

III. Interpret & Analyze

      A.   Presentation of Argument

      B.   Analysis of Sources

      C.   Evidence in Support of Thesis

IV.   Communicate

      A.   Grammar/Style/Prose

      B.   Organization

      C.   Proper Citation

While the organization is different, the committee significantly streamlined and clarified the descriptions and instructions for evaluating each goal and goal subcategory. However, post-evaluation reports from the committee indicate a further need to revise and clarify the instructions for each category, if not to revisit some of the categories and subcategories themselves.

Success of the New Rubric and Language

In many ways, the committee found that this clarified, expansive rubric enables us to make much more precise determinations as to how well the students developed skills in line with our department's goals. Newly revised goal subcategories enabled the evaluators to investigate multiple successes and failures found within each of our four goals (Research, Distinguish Sources, Interpret & Analyze, and Communicate). All evaluators believe that the creation of these subcategories served to further our Outcomes and Assessment

Evaluation in a positive manner.

Challenges Revealed Through the New Rubric and Language

At the same time, an analysis of the collected evaluation sheets for all 20 papers demonstrates that the committee will need to continue to rethink the language associated with each goal and subcategory and the language associated with the meanings prescribed to the ranks of "Outstanding," "Satisfactory," "Passable with Reservations" and "Unsatisfactory" for each goal and subcategory.

The successes and failures of the new rubric are demonstrated through a comparison of the 2011 and 2012 reports, along with the continued feedback from our evaluators. A comparison of the 2011 report with the 2012 report demonstrates, on the one hand, that the new rubric guidelines and organization largely have ameliorated confusion over how to evaluate whether or not students met the "Distinguish Sources" goal. In the 2011 report, only 48% achieved the goal of "Distinguish Sources." The committee immediately set out to investigate this problem by discussing individual evaluation experiences with the papers. It became clear that many in the committee were confused as to how to assess this goal based upon the 490 papers. This confusion seems to have resulted in wildly disparate assessments of whether or not students were achieving this goal. The committee then clarified the language of the rubric guidelines for the 2012 report. Accordingly, the 2012 report indicates that 90% of students met this goal.

Although this seems like a significant improvement, some of the committee members in this round of evaluations voiced continuing concerns that the rubric was insufficient at providing appropriate instructions in this regard. One committee member wrote, "What determines whether an evaluator can recognize if a student understands the difference between primary and secondary sources? Looking at the bibliography and notes is not enough, that's for sure. How they are used is really what determines whether a student 'gets' it, right?" The member suggested that our "note to evaluators" under this category in the guidelines, to "simply search the notes to make this determination" did not enable us to truly get a sense of whether or not students clearly understood the difference between these sources.

Evaluators also suggested that we revisit our rubric language in terms of defining success for students in the subcategory (under Interpret & Analyze) of "presentation of thesis." Can any argument, no matter how obvious or unchallenged, serve as a satisfactory thesis? Or should we generate more specific language in the evaluation

instructions so that we ensure that students understand what
constitutes a meaningful thesis statement?

Finally, committee members also expressed concern over the
evaluation of internet sources. Although faculty members who teach
HIST 490 may vet all internet sources before allowing their inclusion in
capstone research papers, the vetting process is not revealed in the
final draft of the papers. We are considering the need to require
annotations for internet sources, so that evaluators can better
understand the nature of the sources themselves (as opposed to the
obvious and widely understood, stringent vetting process that
corresponds with peer-reviewed academic journal articles, for
example).

The committee is determined to continue the course of refining our
instruments for evaluating the success of our students. Next year we
plan to one again revise the rubric guidelines, taking all of these
matters into consideration. We must determine what language works,
and what does not, and we must ascertain the merits of each of the
subcategories and ranks that we utilized this year.   We see this as a
process that may take some time, but a process that will ultimately
sharpen our ability to assess the success of our history majors in
achieving the fundamental goals of the BA Program in History

Established in Cycle: 2011-2012
Implementation Status: In-Progress
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
> Communicate
> | Interpret & Analyze | Research
> **Measure:** HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
> Distinguish Sources

improve footnote teaching in 490

improve footnote teaching in 490

Established in Cycle: 2012-2013
Implementation Status: Planned
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
> Research
> **Measure:** HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
> Distinguish Sources

Connected Documents
> Assessment Form
> Outcomes Assessment Rubric 2012

Moving forward for 2014-2015

We are generally disappointed with the results of our assessment this
year. To begin with, we feel it important to stress that the data was

compromised this year due to the fact that we only had access to the papers for one section of HIST 490. This was due to a faculty retirement, as we were unable to secure that professor's papers for this assessment. The results, therefore, as quite skewed, and do not reflect the success or failure of the department's ability to meet its goals for the years. In addition, we spent a great deal of time clarifying our rubric this year, which provided greater assistance to our assessment team, particularly for the two new faculty members who had not yet gone through our assessment process. On the other hand, of course, the results are troubling in regard to this particular section. We feel that the low rankings in multiple category indicates that we need to work with our HIST 490 professors in calibrating their expectations with ours in regard to what defines student success in the classes. We will plan to meet with the upcoming HIST 490 professors in order to discuss this matter and develop a plan.

Our senior exit survey results indicate that students are desirous of greater diversity in course offerings. In particular, they indicated a desire for courses in Asian history, African history, Middle East history, Pacific history, and Latin American history. We successfully hired an incoming Latin Americanist, but because our department remains down by six or seven faculty lines, we are unable to meet student demands for courses that focus on areas outside of the U.S. and Europe. An action plan to remedy this problem is unavailable to us, beyond asking the administration to free up more lines for additional hires next year.

Established in Cycle: 2013-2014
Implementation Status: Planned
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Communicate
> | Interpret & Analyze | Research
> **Measure:** HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Distinguish Sources

Implementation Description: We will meet with the upcoming HIST 490 professors to discuss this year's assessment and our department's expectations for students. We will also think about ways to enhance student training in these areas in 100- through 300-level courses.
Responsible Person/Group: The outcomes assessment committee.
Additional Resources: We need to hire faculty who can teach areas beyond the U.S. and Europe.
Connected Documents
> assessment rubric for 2013-2014
> Senior Exit Survey

Moving forward for 2015-2016

Last year's assessment report demonstrated what we considered to be significant problems in our undergraduate program. Our sample only included papers from one section, but the rate of failure in achieving multiple of our goals in that section left many of us very concerned. We convened a meeting at the beginning of the fall semester to discuss the assessment report, to identify our students' weaknesses, and to try to determine an appropriate action plan for this year and beyond. The

faculty decided to revise the major requirements in two significant ways: first, we will begin requiring majors to take a 300 level "History Skills" course, taught thematically by a variety of faculty. This course will explicitly target our four goals of Research, Interpret & Analyze, Communicate, and Distinguish Sources by requiring students to write a minor research paper and book reviews, to complete exercises on analyzing and distinguishing primary and secondary sources, and to develop skills in assessing historiography. We feel that by ensuring that these specific skills are cultivated at the 300 level, the students will be better prepared for the challenges awaiting them in HIST 490. In addition, we expanded the number of required 400 level seminars in order for students to continue a rigorous skill development in assessing and critiquing secondary sources through discussion, book reviews, and historiographical papers. This expansion of the senior seminar courses also fits the needs of the students, expressed in this year's senior survey, to offer more courses at this level.

The senior survey this year also reveals the desire for us to expand our coursework, particularly in Asian history, "Ancient history" (including Greek and Roman history), Civil Rights and Gender Equality, and Latin American history. The seniors reported feeling that not enough non-U.S. courses are currently offered. We completed a successful search for a modern Europeanist, but their concerns indicate a need for additional faculty in non-U.S. areas; our faculty agree with this concern and hope that the administration will succeed in unfreezing more of our frozen lines next year to achieve this purpose.

We revised slightly the language of the rubric this year in order to continue our process of refinement for our assessment teams.

Of the four sections assessed this year, two of them were organized thematically, such that students research and wrote their paper on a theme such as the foreign policy-themed, "U.S. and the World in the 20th Century". Of the two thematically-organized sections, only 15% of the students received an "unsatisfactory" mark in any category of our rubric. In contrast, within the remaining two sections, 57% of the students received at least one unsatisfactory mark. We are not sure if we should attribute the success of the former students to the thematically-oriented courses, which utilize historiographies and research materials that sit more firmly within the wheelhouse of the faculty members who teach them, or if another factor is involved (we will begin tracking the enrollments of these sections as they relate to each section's assessment results, and we will also convene all of the faculty this fall to revisit the department's goals for the undergraduate program in order to provide more course content that speaks directly to ensuring greater specific success in those categories). We will continue to monitor such differences in future assessments, and will make sure that all faculty teaching 490 (and all faculty in the program) receive our annual assessment reports, along with our rubric guidelines for assessing our 490 students.

All of these steps, we believe, will lead to increased success rates among our students in achieving our goals, and will continue our trajectory of innovating our courses and undergraduate program.

Established in Cycle: 2014-2015
Implementation Status: Planned
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
> Communicate
> | Interpret & Analyze | Research
> **Measure:** HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
> Distinguish Sources

Implementation Description: We will monitor the success of next
year's 300 level "history skills" courses, and will distribute our
assessment report and rubric guidelines to all faculty, such that they will
keep apprised of our goals, success rates, and challenges, as they
design and administer their courses.
Responsible Person/Group: Assessment Committee

Moving Forward for 2016/2017

We believe that this year marks a bump in the road for our
assessment due to some particular circumstances that we can correct
this coming year. Of particular concern is the fact, according to our
committee's assessment of HIST 490 final papers, that 35% of our
students seemed unable to present an identifiable thesis in their HIST
490 papers. In addition, 35% were deemed unable to satisfactorily
distinguish between primary and secondary sources. We are not sure
what happened this year, as these numbers seem an aberration from
our earlier successes. However, we are implementing steps to insure
that we will not see these numbers again.

In the fall of 2014, for example, we convened a meeting to discuss the
previous assessment report, to identify our students' weaknesses, and
to try to determine an appropriate action plan for this year and
beyond. As a result, the faculty decided to revise the major
requirements in two significant ways: first, we began requiring majors
to take a 300 level "History Skills" course, taught thematically by a
variety of faculty. This course explicitly targets our four goals of
Research, Interpret & Analyze, Communicate, and Distinguish
Sources by requiring students to write a minor research paper and
book reviews, to complete exercises on analyzing and distinguishing
primary and secondary sources, and to develop skills in assessing
historiography. We feel that by ensuring that these specific skills are
cultivated at the 300 level, the students will be better prepared for the
challenges awaiting them in HIST 490. The first of these courses were
offered in the spring of 2016, so we will be able to monitor its impact in
the coming years. In addition, we expanded the number of required
400 level seminars in order for students to continue a rigorous skill
development in assessing and critiquing secondary sources through
discussion, book reviews, and historiographical papers. This
expansion of the senior seminar courses also fits the needs of the
students, expressed in recent senior surveys, to offer more courses at
this level. The senior survey this year also reveals the desire for us to
expand our coursework, particularly in Asian history, "Ancient history"
(including Greek and Roman history), Civil Rights and Gender

Equality, and Latin American history. The seniors reported feeling that not enough non-U.S. courses were currently offered. We completed a successful search for a modern Europeanist, but she left our department this spring for a position at Tulane University. We are also dealing with multiple additional departures this year, which is compounding our difficulty to meet student concerns for additional faculty in non-U.S. areas, and to meet the needs of our students interested in U.S. or European history. Our faculty agrees with their concerns and hopes that the administration will enable us to hire more faculty to replace those who have left last year (and those who may be leaving this year).

This year we assessed papers from two sections of HIST 490. The two sections we assessed were not topically themed. Last year demonstrated greater success with 490 sections organized by topic than those that were not organized in such fashion. For that reason, we will recommend to the instructors teaching 490 in the coming year to organize the class in a matter that best aligns with their specialization. We also plan to circulate more thoroughly the responsibility for teaching 490 among our faculty.

We will continue to monitor such differences in future assessments, and will make sure that all faculty teaching 490 (and all faculty in the program) receive our annual assessment reports, along with our rubric guidelines for assessing our 490 students. All of these steps, we believe, will lead to increased success rates among our students in achieving our goals, and will continue our trajectory of innovating our courses and undergraduate program.

Established in Cycle: 2015-2016
Implementation Status: Planned
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Communicate
> | Interpret & Analyze | Research
> **Measure:** HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Distinguish Sources

Implementation Description: We plan to make the faculty aware of this year's outcomes assessment so that they take pains to ensure that these fundamentals are built into all of our course offerings. Our redesign of the major curriculum will also help, though we will not see those results for another 2-3 years. We also will encourage faculty to design 490 courses that align with their specialization, as these seem to be the most effective course sections to date.
Responsible Person/Group: John Troutman

SLO 3: Interpret & Analyze

Interpret & Analyze: Interpret and analyze evidence found in primary sources and develop

a historical argument based on and sustained by the evidence available.

Connected Document
Assessment Form

Related Measures

M 3: HIST 490 Final Paper

Interpret & Analyze: A committee of Six UL Lafayette historians, both assistant and associate professors, evaluated a random sampling of research papers from two 2015 sections of the department's capstone course, HIST 490: Historical Research and Writing. In this course, students produce a significant research paper focusing on a historical topic and using primary and secondary sources. For the Research goal, students had to demonstrate their ability to conduct extensive research in the library, in online databases, and/or other archival collections. Students had to demonstrate an ability to evaluate the validity and value of source material. The working criteria this year for earning a rank of outstanding, satisfactory, passable with reservations, or unsatisfactory in this category is included in this report as an attachment. Number of students assessed = 20

Source of Evidence: Written assignment(s), usually scored by a rubric

Connected Document
Assessment Form

Target:

This year the Outcomes Assessment Committee used our expansive rubric to evaluate the student success rate in achieving the four student learning goals/objectives by breaking those goals down into further subcategories for more detailed analysis. This expansive rubric allows the committee to determine not simply whether or not the department's goals are achieved, but to what degree those goals are met. As always, this year's assessment strategy targeted not simply student success rates, but equally as important, a reevaluation of the language that constitutes these expansive rubric guidelines. The committee continues to collect feedback from evaluators as to the usefulness of the rubric. As we have found over the previous three years, agreeing on the language that constitutes the rubric guidelines is quite complicated and challenging. Rubric revisions remain a constant and necessary process as we seek to increase the user-friendliness of the rubric as well as its effectiveness in evaluating whether or not our majors are achieving our departmental undergraduate goals.

This year, the evaluation team consisted of six faculty members, three of whom were new to the process. In part, the committee hoped to evaluate the usefulness of the rubric that was created by past committee members. As this evaluation rubric continues to be vetted and revised, it will enhance the department's ability to generate history majors who produce work of not simply satisfactory, but outstanding, merit.

The committee determined to maintain the goal that 80 percent of the papers must earn evaluations of "Outstanding," "Satisfactory," or "Passable, with Reservations" in order to demonstrate that the department "achieved" each particular goal. Two evaluators read each paper. To achieve a goal, the paper could not receive a mark of "Unsatisfactory," by either evaluator, in the measurable category.

Finding (2015-2016) - Target: Partially Met
This year we achieved a success rate of 65%, 75%, and 85% in the three categories of "Interpret and Analyze," demonstrating that we only partially attained our goals in this category. We are disappointed that students achieved only 65% success in "Presentation of Thesis," and 75% in "Analysis of Sources." It appears that a significant number of students failed in these two 490 sections to deliver a clear thesis, just as many seemed to struggle in understanding how to properly assess sources. We are troubled by these results and are looking into the matter--we will discuss these findings with the faculty in the fall. We believe that we should continue to maintain a high threshold of 80% for declaring success in each of our goals.

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

Enhanced Course Descriptions

In order to better inform our students of course opportunities, the department now is providing enhanced course descriptions to majors during the advising period. This should allow students to better determine through what coursework they choose to develop their skills in each of the department's four goals.

Established in Cycle: 2009-2010
Implementation Status: In-Progress
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Communicate
> | Interpret & Analyze | Research
> **Measure:** HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Distinguish Sources

Creation of Rotating HIST 490 Papers Assessment Team

Last year the Outcomes Assessment Committee decided that, beginning in the 2010-2011 assessment cycle, an assessment "team" comprised of rotating faculty in the history program would take charge of evaluating the HIST 490 papers for outcomes assessment. This would ensure that all history faculty gain a much stronger and immediate sense of the successes and shortcomings of our undergraduate program, as demonstrated by the results of the assessment. In addition, the committee proposed that no faculty member who taught HIST 490 during the year that the assessed papers from that assessment cycle were produced will serve on the team. This year the committee decided to postpone the implementation of this rotating team in order that the committee may test out the newly proposed and significantly expanded rubric guidelines and language. As a result, and based upon this year's assessment results, the committee plans to reevaluate the rubric guidelines and language during the 2011-2012 year, and establish the rotating team for the 2012 Outcomes and Assessment cycle.

Established in Cycle: 2010-2011
Implementation Status: Finished
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Communicate
> | Interpret & Analyze | Research

Measure: HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
Distinguish Sources

Implementation Description: This team will be assigned each year by
the outcomes assessment committee.
Projected Completion Date: 05/2011

Critical Evaluation of Rubric Guidelines and Language

Please see the attached document entitled, "Evaluation of Working
Rubric Guidelines for the 2010 Year" for an extensive Action Plan
regarding the implementation and results of our current rubric draft.

Established in Cycle: 2010-2011
Implementation Status: In-Progress
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
  Measure: HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
Communicate
| Interpret & Analyze | Research
  Measure: HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
Distinguish Sources

Implementation Description: The committee will revise the rubric
guidelines and revisit our working goal subcategories for future
assessment of the HIST 490 papers.
Connected Document
  Rubric Results: Raw Data for 2011 Report

Exit Survey Proposal

The Outcomes Assessment Committee continues to consider the
development of an Exit Survey for history majors. This survey will
provide the department with an additional tool by which it can evaluate
its mission to students and its success in meeting and in calibrating
student, departmental, and university goals.

Established in Cycle: 2010-2011
Implementation Status: In-Progress
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
  Measure: HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
Communicate
| Interpret & Analyze | Research
  Measure: HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
Distinguish Sources

Implementation Description: The assessment committee is
considering the implementation and design of the exit survey.
Connected Documents
  History Department Senior Survey
  Senior Exit Survey

Topical Course Section Offerings for HIST 490

The capstone course, HIST 490, underwent a dramatic change last year,
as some of the 490 sections are now offered as topical courses. These
offerings allow for faculty and students in the classroom to much more
deeply explore a particular period and field of history as students
develop their research papers. This past year, one of the topic 490

courses included a focus on the European Crusades and generated an exciting, thematically oriented set of papers.

Established in Cycle: 2010-2011
Implementation Status: In-Progress
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
> Communicate
> | Interpret & Analyze | Research
> **Measure:** HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
> Distinguish Sources

Implementation Description: Faculty who teach HIST 490 are evaluating and implementing topical sections for HIST 490.

Clarifying a Successful Thesis Statement, 2011-2012

Evaluators also suggested that we revisit our rubric language in terms of defining success for students in the subcategory (under Interpret & Analyze) of "presentation of thesis." Can any argument, no matter how obvious or unchallenged, serve as a satisfactory thesis? Or should we generate more specific language in the evaluation instructions so that we ensure that students understand what constitutes a meaningful thesis statement? We will continue to discuss this issue to develop improved and agreed-upon language in the rubric guidelines.

Established in Cycle: 2011-2012
Implementation Status: In-Progress
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
> Interpret & Analyze

Exit Survey Draft Completed for Implementation in Next Cycle

This year the Outcomes Assessment Committee developed an Exit Survey for history majors, a draft of which is included with this report. Once approved in final form by the committee and the department head, this survey will provide the department with an additional tool by which it can evaluate its mission to students and its success in meeting and in calibrating student, departmental, and university goals.

Established in Cycle: 2011-2012
Implementation Status: In-Progress
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
> Communicate
> | Interpret & Analyze | Research
> **Measure:** HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
> Distinguish Sources

Connected Document
> History Department Senior Survey

Links to Action Plan Documents

For further information on how the department is evaluating and responding to the outcomes reported here, please see the document "Evaluation of Working Rubric Guidelines for the 2011-12 cycle" along with the additional Action Plan documents attached for this cycle.

Established in Cycle: 2011-2012
Implementation Status: Planned
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Interpret & Analyze

New Faculty Cycled in to Use Rubric to Evaluate 490 Papers

Last year the Outcomes Assessment Committee decided that, beginning in the 2012 assessment cycle, fellow faculty members in the department would rotate into the committee on a regular basis to evaluate the HIST 490 papers for outcomes assessment. This would ensure that all history faculty gain a much stronger and immediate sense of the successes and shortcomings of our undergraduate program, as demonstrated by the results of the assessment. We also believe that rotating new faculty into the evaluation process will provide them with a new perspective in thinking about the pedagogical opportunities for emphasizing our departmental goals in the survey and upper-division courses. We had planned to implement this rotation last year, but the committee decided to postpone the implementation of this rotating team in order that the committee may test out the newly proposed and significantly expanded rubric guidelines and language. This year, accordingly, we cycled in two new evaluators, and they have already provided invaluable feedback in regard to the rubric and in regard to better implementing strategies to meet our departmental goals. We will continue to bring new faculty into the outcomes assessment process in this manner.

Established in Cycle: 2011-2012
Implementation Status: Planned
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Communicate
> | Interpret & Analyze | Research
> **Measure:** HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Distinguish Sources

On the Treatment of Internet-based Sources, 2011-2012

The committee members also expressed concern over the evaluation of internet sources. Although faculty members who teach HIST 490 may vet all internet sources before allowing their inclusion in capstone research papers, the vetting process is not revealed in the final draft of the papers. Over the next year we will consider the need to require annotations for internet sources, so that evaluators can better understand the nature of the sources themselves (as opposed to the obvious and widely understood, stringent vetting process that corresponds with peer-reviewed academic journal articles, for example).

Established in Cycle: 2011-2012
Implementation Status: In-Progress
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
> Interpret & Analyze
> **Measure:** HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
> Distinguish Sources

Out of Classroom Learning Experiences

Faculty are working to establish additional alternative and "out of the classroom" learning experiences for students. In the fall 2011 semester, as part of the HIST 366: African American Women's History course, Professor Mary Farmer Kaiser provided students with an opportunity to apply their classroom knowledge to one of the year's most popular (and controversial) films, The Help. 12 students (out of 28 undergraduates in the class) watched the film with Dr. Farmer-Kaiser at the beginning of the semester, and developed responses both at the beginning and at the conclusion of the semester. By contextualizing the film with the course materials, students witnessed a dramatic change in their interpretation of the film from the beginning of the course to the end. Faculty like Farmer-Kaiser are constantly looking for new ways to apply classroom knowledge to the out-of-the-classroom experiences of our students. The history honor society, Phi Alpha Theta, organized monthly "Dinners with the Professor." These dinners enable a group of PAT students to meet with a professor for dinner. We believe that these opportunities allow our PAT students, who are mostly history majors, to get to know our faculty in a new context as well as learn more about the historian's profession through a less formal, out-of-the-classroom conversation. In an introductory course on historic preservation taught to both undergraduates and graduate students, the class headed into the field on numerous occasions to see how preservation is practiced at a number of historic sites including the Shadows on the Teche and the Rayne Historic District. In addition, the department during the summer of 2012 offered "History on the Move," an extraordinarily successful six-credit hour course and out of the classroom learning experience. Last summer the path-breaking domestic study/travel program rolled to the American Southwest in a four week trip with 11 undergraduate students, including 9 history majors. A hands-on and experiential approach to learning History, the class travelled from Lafayette, across Texas, and through New Mexico, Colorado, Utah, Nevada, and Arizona. Along the way an extraordinary variety of historic sites, museums, and landscapes served as the students' classroom. The department will continue to develop these sorts of unique and alternative learning experiences to diversify the students' educational opportunities.

Established in Cycle: 2011-2012
Implementation Status: Planned
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
> Communicate
> | Interpret & Analyze | Research
> **Measure:** HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
> Distinguish Sources

Reevaluation of Rubric Guidelines 2011-2012

This year the department of history revisited the language for

assessing the success of each HIST 490 paper along with the Goals and Subcategories that the department is currently using in its Rubric (See the document entitled, "Outcomes Assessment Rubric 490.2012.doc"). The previous rubric was organized in the following fashion:

      I.   Research

      II.   Distinguish Sources

      III.   Interpret & Analyze

          A.   Presentation of Argument

          B.   Understanding of Sources

          C.   Logic

          D.   Structure/Organization

      IV.   Communicate

          A.   Grammar/Style/Prose

          B.   Proper Citation

After assessing the 2010 490 papers, the outcomes assessment committee determined that the language in the guidelines was insufficient and unclear in content. Accordingly, the committee met in the spring of 2012, rewrote the language on the guidelines, and reorganized the evaluation categories (see the above mentioned document). With a new set of guidelines in hand, the committee organized the evaluation of the success of students within the following goals and goal subcategories for each HIST 490 paper:

I. Research

II. Distinguish Sources

III. Interpret & Analyze

          A.   Presentation of Argument

B.   Analysis of Sources

C.   Evidence in Support of Thesis

IV.   Communicate

A.   Grammar/Style/Prose

B.   Organization

C.   Proper Citation

While the organization is different, the committee significantly streamlined and clarified the descriptions and instructions for evaluating each goal and goal subcategory. However, post-evaluation reports from the committee indicate a further need to revise and clarify the instructions for each category, if not to revisit some of the categories and subcategories themselves.

Success of the New Rubric and Language

In many ways, the committee found that this clarified, expansive rubric enables us to make much more precise determinations as to how well the students developed skills in line with our department's goals. Newly revised goal subcategories enabled the evaluators to investigate multiple successes and failures found within each of our four goals (Research, Distinguish Sources, Interpret & Analyze, and Communicate). All evaluators believe that the creation of these subcategories served to further our Outcomes and Assessment Evaluation in a positive manner.

Challenges Revealed Through the New Rubric and Language

At the same time, an analysis of the collected evaluation sheets for all 20 papers demonstrates that the committee will need to continue to rethink the language associated with each goal and subcategory and the language associated with the meanings prescribed to the ranks of "Outstanding," "Satisfactory," "Passable with Reservations" and "Unsatisfactory" for each goal and subcategory.

The successes and failures of the new rubric are demonstrated through a comparison of the 2011 and 2012 reports, along with the continued feedback from our evaluators. A comparison of the 2011 report with the 2012 report demonstrates, on the one hand, that the

new rubric guidelines and organization largely have ameliorated confusion over how to evaluate whether or not students met the "Distinguish Sources" goal. In the 2011 report, only 48% achieved the goal of "Distinguish Sources." The committee immediately set out to investigate this problem by discussing individual evaluation experiences with the papers. It became clear that many in the committee were confused as to how to assess this goal based upon the 490 papers. This confusion seems to have resulted in wildly disparate assessments of whether or not students were achieving this goal. The committee then clarified the language of the rubric guidelines for the 2012 report. Accordingly, the 2012 report indicates that 90% of students met this goal.

Although this seems like a significant improvement, some of the committee members in this round of evaluations voiced continuing concerns that the rubric was insufficient at providing appropriate instructions in this regard. One committee member wrote, "What determines whether an evaluator can recognize if a student understands the difference between primary and secondary sources? Looking at the bibliography and notes is not enough, that's for sure. How they are used is really what determines whether a student 'gets' it, right?" The member suggested that our "note to evaluators" under this category in the guidelines, to "simply search the notes to make this determination" did not enable us to truly get a sense of whether or not students clearly understood the difference between these sources.

Evaluators also suggested that we revisit our rubric language in terms of defining success for students in the subcategory (under Interpret & Analyze) of "presentation of thesis." Can any argument, no matter how obvious or unchallenged, serve as a satisfactory thesis? Or should we generate more specific language in the evaluation instructions so that we ensure that students understand what constitutes a meaningful thesis statement?

Finally, committee members also expressed concern over the evaluation of internet sources. Although faculty members who teach HIST 490 may vet all internet sources before allowing their inclusion in capstone research papers, the vetting process is not revealed in the final draft of the papers. We are considering the need to require annotations for internet sources, so that evaluators can better understand the nature of the sources themselves (as opposed to the obvious and widely understood, stringent vetting process that corresponds with peer-reviewed academic journal articles, for example).

The committee is determined to continue the course of refining our instruments for evaluating the success of our students. Next year we plan to one again revise the rubric guidelines, taking all of these matters into consideration. We must determine what language works,

and what does not, and we must ascertain the merits of each of the subcategories and ranks that we utilized this year.   We see this as a process that may take some time, but a process that will ultimately sharpen our ability to assess the success of our history majors in achieving the fundamental goals of the BA Program in History

Established in Cycle: 2011-2012
Implementation Status: In-Progress
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Communicate
> | Interpret & Analyze | Research
> **Measure:** HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Distinguish Sources

Moving forward for 2014-2015

We are generally disappointed with the results of our assessment this year. To begin with, we feel it important to stress that the data was compromised this year due to the fact that we only had access to the papers for one section of HIST 490. This was due to a faculty retirement, as we were unable to secure that professor's papers for this assessment. The results, therefore, as quite skewed, and do not reflect the success or failure of the department's ability to meet its goals for the years. In addition, we spent a great deal of time clarifying our rubric this year, which provided greater assistance to our assessment team, particularly for the two new faculty members who had not yet gone through our assessment process. On the other hand, of course, the results are troubling in regard to this particular section. We feel that the low rankings in multiple category indicates that we need to work with our HIST 490 professors in calibrating their expectations with ours in regard to what defines student success in the classes. We will plan to meet with the upcoming HIST 490 professors in order to discuss this matter and develop a plan.

Our senior exit survey results indicate that students are desirous of greater diversity in course offerings. In particular, they indicated a desire for courses in Asian history, African history, Middle East history, Pacific history, and Latin American history. We successfully hired an incoming Latin Americanist, but because our department remains down by six or seven faculty lines, we are unable to meet student demands for courses that focus on areas outside of the U.S. and Europe. An action plan to remedy this problem is unavailable to us, beyond asking the administration to free up more lines for additional hires next year.

Established in Cycle: 2013-2014
Implementation Status: Planned
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Communicate
> | Interpret & Analyze | Research
> **Measure:** HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Distinguish Sources

Implementation Description: We will meet with the upcoming HIST 490 professors to discuss this year's assessment and our department's expectations for students. We will also think about ways to enhance student training in these areas in 100- through 300-level courses.
Responsible Person/Group: The outcomes assessment committee.
Additional Resources: We need to hire faculty who can teach areas beyond the U.S. and Europe.
Connected Documents

> assessment rubric for 2013-2014
> Senior Exit Survey

Moving forward for 2015-2016

Last year's assessment report demonstrated what we considered to be significant problems in our undergraduate program. Our sample only included papers from one section, but the rate of failure in achieving multiple of our goals in that section left many of us very concerned. We convened a meeting at the beginning of the fall semester to discuss the assessment report, to identify our students' weaknesses, and to try to determine an appropriate action plan for this year and beyond. The faculty decided to revise the major requirements in two significant ways: first, we will begin requiring majors to take a 300 level "History Skills" course, taught thematically by a variety of faculty. This course will explicitly target our four goals of Research, Interpret & Analyze, Communicate, and Distinguish Sources by requiring students to write a minor research paper and book reviews, to complete exercises on analyzing and distinguishing primary and secondary sources, and to develop skills in assessing historiography. We feel that by ensuring that these specific skills are cultivated at the 300 level, the students will be better prepared for the challenges awaiting them in HIST 490. In addition, we expanded the number of required 400 level seminars in order for students to continue a rigorous skill development in assessing and critiquing secondary sources through discussion, book reviews, and historiographical papers. This expansion of the senior seminar courses also fits the needs of the students, expressed in this year's senior survey, to offer more courses at this level.

The senior survey this year also reveals the desire for us to expand our coursework, particularly in Asian history, "Ancient history" (including Greek and Roman history), Civil Rights and Gender Equality, and Latin American history. The seniors reported feeling that not enough non-U.S. courses are currently offered. We completed a successful search for a modern Europeanist, but their concerns indicate a need for additional faculty in non-U.S. areas; our faculty agree with this concern and hope that the administration will succeed in unfreezing more of our frozen lines next year to achieve this purpose.

We revised slightly the language of the rubric this year in order to continue our process of refinement for our assessment teams.

Of the four sections assessed this year, two of them were organized thematically, such that students research and wrote their paper on a theme such as the foreign policy-themed, "U.S. and the World in the 20th Century".   Of the two thematically-organized sections, only 15% of the students received an "unsatisfactory" mark in any category of our rubric. In contrast, within the remaining two sections, 57% of the

students received at least one unsatisfactory mark. We are not sure if we should attribute the success of the former students to the thematically-oriented courses, which utilize historiographies and research materials that sit more firmly within the wheelhouse of the faculty members who teach them, or if another factor is involved (we will begin tracking the enrollments of these sections as they relate to each section's assessment results, and we will also convene all of the faculty this fall to revisit the department's goals for the undergraduate program in order to provide more course content that speaks directly to ensuring greater specific success in those categories). We will continue to monitor such differences in future assessments, and will make sure that all faculty teaching 490 (and all faculty in the program) receive our annual assessment reports, along with our rubric guidelines for assessing our 490 students.

All of these steps, we believe, will lead to increased success rates among our students in achieving our goals, and will continue our trajectory of innovating our courses and undergraduate program.

Established in Cycle: 2014-2015
Implementation Status: Planned
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
>   **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Communicate
> | Interpret & Analyze | Research
>   **Measure:** HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Distinguish Sources

Implementation Description: We will monitor the success of next year's 300 level "history skills" courses, and will distribute our assessment report and rubric guidelines to all faculty, such that they will keep apprised of our goals, success rates, and challenges, as they design and administer their courses.
Responsible Person/Group: Assessment Committee

Moving Forward for 2016/2017

We believe that this year marks a bump in the road for our assessment due to some particular circumstances that we can correct this coming year. Of particular concern is the fact, according to our committee's assessment of HIST 490 final papers, that 35% of our students seemed unable to present an identifiable thesis in their HIST 490 papers. In addition, 35% were deemed unable to satisfactorily distinguish between primary and secondary sources. We are not sure what happened this year, as these numbers seem an aberration from our earlier successes. However, we are implementing steps to insure that we will not see these numbers again.

In the fall of 2014, for example, we convened a meeting to discuss the previous assessment report, to identify our students' weaknesses, and to try to determine an appropriate action plan for this year and beyond. As a result, the faculty decided to revise the major

requirements in two significant ways: first, we began requiring majors to take a 300 level "History Skills" course, taught thematically by a variety of faculty. This course explicitly targets our four goals of Research, Interpret & Analyze, Communicate, and Distinguish Sources by requiring students to write a minor research paper and book reviews, to complete exercises on analyzing and distinguishing primary and secondary sources, and to develop skills in assessing historiography. We feel that by ensuring that these specific skills are cultivated at the 300 level, the students will be better prepared for the challenges awaiting them in HIST 490. The first of these courses were offered in the spring of 2016, so we will be able to monitor its impact in the coming years. In addition, we expanded the number of required 400 level seminars in order for students to continue a rigorous skill development in assessing and critiquing secondary sources through discussion, book reviews, and historiographical papers. This expansion of the senior seminar courses also fits the needs of the students, expressed in recent senior surveys, to offer more courses at this level. The senior survey this year also reveals the desire for us to expand our coursework, particularly in Asian history, "Ancient history" (including Greek and Roman history), Civil Rights and Gender Equality, and Latin American history. The seniors reported feeling that not enough non-U.S. courses were currently offered. We completed a successful search for a modern Europeanist, but she left our department this spring for a position at Tulane University. We are also dealing with multiple additional departures this year, which is compounding our difficulty to meet student concerns for additional faculty in non-U.S. areas, and to meet the needs of our students interested in U.S. or European history. Our faculty agrees with their concerns and hopes that the administration will enable us to hire more faculty to replace those who have left last year (and those who may be leaving this year).

This year we assessed papers from two sections of HIST 490. The two sections we assessed were not topically themed. Last year demonstrated greater success with 490 sections organized by topic than those that were not organized in such fashion. For that reason, we will recommend to the instructors teaching 490 in the coming year to organize the class in a matter that best aligns with their specialization. We also plan to circulate more thoroughly the responsibility for teaching 490 among our faculty.

We will continue to monitor such differences in future assessments, and will make sure that all faculty teaching 490 (and all faculty in the program) receive our annual assessment reports, along with our rubric guidelines for assessing our 490 students. All of these steps, we believe, will lead to increased success rates among our students in achieving our goals, and will continue our trajectory of innovating our courses and undergraduate program.

Established in Cycle: 2015-2016

Implementation Status: Planned
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
    Measure: HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
    Communicate
    | Interpret & Analyze | Research
    Measure: HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
    Distinguish Sources

Implementation Description: We plan to make the faculty aware of this
year's outcomes assessment so that they take pains to ensure that
these fundamentals are built into all of our course offerings. Our
redesign of the major curriculum will also help, though we will not see
those results for another 2-3 years. We also will encourage faculty to
design 490 courses that align with their specialization, as these seem to
be the most effective course sections to date.
Responsible Person/Group: John Troutman

SLO 4: Communicate

Communicate: Produce historical essays that are coherent, cogent, grammatically correct,
and which properly cite information through bibliography and footnotes.

Connected Document
> Assessment Form

Related Measures

M 4: HIST 490 Final Paper

Communicate:

A committee of Six UL Lafayette historians, both assistant and associate professors,
evaluated a random sampling of research papers from two 2015 sections of the
department's capstone course, HIST 490: Historical Research and Writing. In this
course, students produce a significant research paper focusing on a historical topic
and using primary and secondary sources. For the Communicate goal, students had
to demonstrate their ability to communicate effectively and properly through the
technical craft of a research paper. The working criteria this year for earning a rank of
outstanding, satisfactory, passable with reservations, or unsatisfactory in this category
is included in this report as an attachment.

Number of students assessed = 20

Source of Evidence: Written assignment(s), usually scored by a rubric

Connected Document
> Assessment Form

Target:

This year the Outcomes Assessment Committee used our expansive rubric to
assess the student success rate in achieving the four student learning
goals/objectives by breaking those goals down into further subcategories for more
detailed analysis. This expansive rubric allows the committee to determine not
simply whether or not the department's goals are achieved, but to what degree
those goals are met. As always, this year's assessment strategy targeted not

simply student success rates, but equally as important, a reevaluation of the language that constitutes these expansive rubric guidelines. The committee continues to collect feedback from evaluators as to the usefulness of the rubric. As we have found over the previous three years, agreeing on the language that constitutes the rubric guidelines is quite complicated and challenging. Rubric revisions remain a constant and necessary process as we seek to increase the user-friendliness of the rubric as well as its effectiveness in evaluating whether or not our majors are achieving our departmental undergraduate goals. This year, the evaluation team consisted of six faculty members, three of whom were new to the process. In part, the committee hoped to evaluate the usefulness of the rubric that was created by past committee members. As this evaluation rubric continues to be vetted and revised, it will enhance the department's ability to generate history majors who produce work of not simply satisfactory, but outstanding, merit. Despite failing in achieving this goal in several categories last year, the committee determined to maintain the goal that 80 percent of the papers must earn evaluations of "Outstanding," "Satisfactory," or "Passable, with Reservations" in order to demonstrate that the department "achieved" each particular goal. Two evaluators read each paper. To achieve a goal, the paper could not receive a mark of "Unsatisfactory," by either evaluator, in the measurable category.

Finding (2015-2016) - Target: Met

This year we achieved a success rate of 95%, 95% and 90% in our three sub-categories of "Communicate," demonstrating success in attaining our goal in this category. We are pleased that we achieved this score. We believe that we should continue to maintain a high threshold of 80% for declaring success in each of our goals. We will share this information with the faculty who taught 490 last year, and who plan to teach HIST 490 this fall.

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

Enhanced Course Descriptions

In order to better inform our students of course opportunities, the department now is providing enhanced course descriptions to majors during the advising period. This should allow students to better determine through what coursework they choose to develop their skills in each of the department's four goals.

Established in Cycle: 2009-2010
Implementation Status: In-Progress
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
Measure: HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Communicate
| Interpret & Analyze | Research
Measure: HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Distinguish Sources

Creation of Rotating HIST 490 Papers Assessment Team

Last year the Outcomes Assessment Committee decided that, beginning in the 2010-2011 assessment cycle, an assessment "team" comprised of rotating faculty in the history program would take charge of evaluating the HIST 490 papers for outcomes assessment. This would ensure that all history faculty gain a much stronger and immediate sense of the successes and shortcomings of our undergraduate program, as demonstrated by the results of the assessment. In addition, the committee proposed that no faculty member who taught HIST 490

during the year that the assessed papers from that assessment cycle were produced will serve on the team. This year the committee decided to postpone the implementation of this rotating team in order that the committee may test out the newly proposed and significantly expanded rubric guidelines and language. As a result, and based upon this year's assessment results, the committee plans to reevaluate the rubric guidelines and language during the 2011-2012 year, and establish the rotating team for the 2012 Outcomes and Assessment cycle.

Established in Cycle: 2010-2011
Implementation Status: Finished
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Communicate
> | Interpret & Analyze | Research
> **Measure:** HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Distinguish Sources

Implementation Description: This team will be assigned each year by the outcomes assessment committee.
Projected Completion Date: 05/2011

Critical Evaluation of Rubric Guidelines and Language

Please see the attached document entitled, "Evaluation of Working Rubric Guidelines for the 2010 Year" for an extensive Action Plan regarding the implementation and results of our current rubric draft.

Established in Cycle: 2010-2011
Implementation Status: In-Progress
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Communicate
> | Interpret & Analyze | Research
> **Measure:** HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:** Distinguish Sources

Implementation Description: The committee will revise the rubric guidelines and revisit our working goal subcategories for future assessment of the HIST 490 papers.
Connected Document
> Rubric Results: Raw Data for 2011 Report

Exit Survey Proposal

The Outcomes Assessment Committee continues to consider the development of an Exit Survey for history majors. This survey will provide the department with an additional tool by which it can evaluate its mission to students and its success in meeting and in calibrating student, departmental, and university goals.

Established in Cycle: 2010-2011
Implementation Status: In-Progress
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**

Communicate
| Interpret & Analyze | Research
Measure: HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
Distinguish Sources

Implementation Description: The assessment committee is
considering the implementation and design of the exit survey.
Connected Documents
> History Department Senior Survey
> Senior Exit Survey

Topical Course Section Offerings for HIST 490

The capstone course, HIST 490, underwent a dramatic change last year,
as some of the 490 sections are now offered as topical courses. These
offerings allow for faculty and students in the classroom to much more
deeply explore a particular period and field of history as students
develop their research papers. This past year, one of the topic 490
courses included a focus on the European Crusades and generated an
exciting, thematically oriented set of papers.

Established in Cycle: 2010-2011
Implementation Status: In-Progress
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
> Communicate
> | Interpret & Analyze | Research
> **Measure:** HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
> Distinguish Sources

Implementation Description: Faculty who teach HIST 490 are
evaluating and implementing topical sections for HIST 490.

Exit Survey Draft Completed for Implementation in Next Cycle

This year the Outcomes Assessment Committee developed an Exit
Survey for history majors, a draft of which is included with this report.
Once approved in final form by the committee and the department head,
this survey will provide the department with an additional tool by which it
can evaluate its mission to students and its success in meeting and in
calibrating student, departmental, and university goals.

Established in Cycle: 2011-2012
Implementation Status: In-Progress
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
> Communicate
> | Interpret & Analyze | Research
> **Measure:** HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
> Distinguish Sources

Connected Document
> History Department Senior Survey

Links to Action Plan Documents

For further information on how the department is evaluating and
responding to the outcomes reported here, please see the document
"Evaluation of Working Rubric Guidelines for the 2011-12 cycle" along

with the additional Action Plan documents attached for this cycle.

Established in Cycle: 2011-2012
Implementation Status: Planned
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
> Communicate

New Faculty Cycled in to Use Rubric to Evaluate 490 Papers

Last year the Outcomes Assessment Committee decided that, beginning in the 2012 assessment cycle, fellow faculty members in the department would rotate into the committee on a regular basis to evaluate the HIST 490 papers for outcomes assessment. This would ensure that all history faculty gain a much stronger and immediate sense of the successes and shortcomings of our undergraduate program, as demonstrated by the results of the assessment. We also believe that rotating new faculty into the evaluation process will provide them with a new perspective in thinking about the pedagogical opportunities for emphasizing our departmental goals in the survey and upper-division courses. We had planned to implement this rotation last year, but the committee decided to postpone the implementation of this rotating team in order that the committee may test out the newly proposed and significantly expanded rubric guidelines and language. This year, accordingly, we cycled in two new evaluators, and they have already provided invaluable feedback in regard to the rubric and in regard to better implementing strategies to meet our departmental goals. We will continue to bring new faculty into the outcomes assessment process in this manner.

Established in Cycle: 2011-2012
Implementation Status: Planned
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
> Communicate
> | Interpret & Analyze | Research
> **Measure:** HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
> Distinguish Sources

On the Grammar/Style/Prose Deficit, 2011-2012

Whereas our Communicate goal was met this year when we averaged the success rate of the goal's subcategories, one subcategory, "Grammar/Style/Prose," indicated a deficit, as only 75% of the 490 papers satisfied the evaluators in this category. This marks a drop from last year, when 80% of students satisfied the evaluators in their use of grammar, style, and prose. The committee will need to convene in the fall of 2012 in order to address this issue and to determine what sort of action should gain implementation to rectify this problem.

Established in Cycle: 2011-2012
Implementation Status: In-Progress
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**

Communicate

Out of Classroom Learning Experiences

Faculty are working to establish additional alternative and "out of the classroom" learning experiences for students. In the fall 2011 semester, as part of the HIST 366: African American Women's History course, Professor Mary Farmer Kaiser provided students with an opportunity to apply their classroom knowledge to one of the year's most popular (and controversial) films, The Help. 12 students (out of 28 undergraduates in the class) watched the film with Dr. Farmer-Kaiser at the beginning of the semester, and developed responses both at the beginning and at the conclusion of the semester. By contextualizing the film with the course materials, students witnessed a dramatic change in their interpretation of the film from the beginning of the course to the end. Faculty like Farmer-Kaiser are constantly looking for new ways to apply classroom knowledge to the out-of-the-classroom experiences of our students. The history honor society, Phi Alpha Theta, organized monthly "Dinners with the Professor." These dinners enable a group of PAT students to meet with a professor for dinner. We believe that these opportunities allow our PAT students, who are mostly history majors, to get to know our faculty in a new context as well as learn more about the historian's profession through a less formal, out-of-the-classroom conversation. In an introductory course on historic preservation taught to both undergraduates and graduate students, the class headed into the field on numerous occasions to see how preservation is practiced at a number of historic sites including the Shadows on the Teche and the Rayne Historic District. In addition, the department during the summer of 2012 offered "History on the Move," an extraordinarily successful six-credit hour course and out of the classroom learning experience. Last summer the path-breaking domestic study/travel program rolled to the American Southwest in a four week trip with 11 undergraduate students, including 9 history majors. A hands-on and experiential approach to learning History, the class travelled from Lafayette, across Texas, and through New Mexico, Colorado, Utah, Nevada, and Arizona. Along the way an extraordinary variety of historic sites, museums, and landscapes served as the students' classroom. The department will continue to develop these sorts of unique and alternative learning experiences to diversify the students' educational opportunities.

Established in Cycle: 2011-2012
Implementation Status: Planned
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
> Communicate
> | Interpret & Analyze | Research
> **Measure:** HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
> Distinguish Sources

Reevaluation of Rubric Guidelines 2011-2012

This year the department of history revisited the language for assessing the success of each HIST 490 paper along with the Goals and Subcategories that the department is currently using in its Rubric (See the document entitled, "Outcomes Assessment Rubric 490.2012.doc"). The previous rubric was organized in the following

fashion:

    I.   Research

    II.   Distinguish Sources

    III.   Interpret & Analyze

        A.   Presentation of Argument

        B.   Understanding of Sources

        C.   Logic

        D.   Structure/Organization

    IV.   Communicate

        A.   Grammar/Style/Prose

        B.   Proper Citation

After assessing the 2010 490 papers, the outcomes assessment committee determined that the language in the guidelines was insufficient and unclear in content. Accordingly, the committee met in the spring of 2012, rewrote the language on the guidelines, and reorganized the evaluation categories (see the above mentioned document). With a new set of guidelines in hand, the committee organized the evaluation of the success of students within the following goals and goal subcategories for each HIST 490 paper:

I. Research

II. Distinguish Sources

III. Interpret & Analyze

        A.   Presentation of Argument

        B.   Analysis of Sources

        C.   Evidence in Support of Thesis

IV.   Communicate

    A.   Grammar/Style/Prose

    B.   Organization

    C.   Proper Citation

While the organization is different, the committee significantly streamlined and clarified the descriptions and instructions for evaluating each goal and goal subcategory. However, post-evaluation reports from the committee indicate a further need to revise and clarify the instructions for each category, if not to revisit some of the categories and subcategories themselves.

Success of the New Rubric and Language

In many ways, the committee found that this clarified, expansive rubric enables us to make much more precise determinations as to how well the students developed skills in line with our department's goals. Newly revised goal subcategories enabled the evaluators to investigate multiple successes and failures found within each of our four goals (Research, Distinguish Sources, Interpret & Analyze, and Communicate). All evaluators believe that the creation of these subcategories served to further our Outcomes and Assessment Evaluation in a positive manner.

Challenges Revealed Through the New Rubric and Language

At the same time, an analysis of the collected evaluation sheets for all 20 papers demonstrates that the committee will need to continue to rethink the language associated with each goal and subcategory and the language associated with the meanings prescribed to the ranks of "Outstanding," "Satisfactory," "Passable with Reservations" and "Unsatisfactory" for each goal and subcategory.

The successes and failures of the new rubric are demonstrated through a comparison of the 2011 and 2012 reports, along with the continued feedback from our evaluators. A comparison of the 2011 report with the 2012 report demonstrates, on the one hand, that the new rubric guidelines and organization largely have ameliorated confusion over how to evaluate whether or not students met the "Distinguish Sources" goal. In the 2011 report, only 48% achieved the

goal of "Distinguish Sources." The committee immediately set out to investigate this problem by discussing individual evaluation experiences with the papers. It became clear that many in the committee were confused as to how to assess this goal based upon the 490 papers. This confusion seems to have resulted in wildly disparate assessments of whether or not students were achieving this goal. The committee then clarified the language of the rubric guidelines for the 2012 report. Accordingly, the 2012 report indicates that 90% of students met this goal.

Although this seems like a significant improvement, some of the committee members in this round of evaluations voiced continuing concerns that the rubric was insufficient at providing appropriate instructions in this regard. One committee member wrote, "What determines whether an evaluator can recognize if a student understands the difference between primary and secondary sources? Looking at the bibliography and notes is not enough, that's for sure. How they are used is really what determines whether a student 'gets' it, right?" The member suggested that our "note to evaluators" under this category in the guidelines, to "simply search the notes to make this determination" did not enable us to truly get a sense of whether or not students clearly understood the difference between these sources.

Evaluators also suggested that we revisit our rubric language in terms of defining success for students in the subcategory (under Interpret & Analyze) of "presentation of thesis." Can any argument, no matter how obvious or unchallenged, serve as a satisfactory thesis? Or should we generate more specific language in the evaluation instructions so that we ensure that students understand what constitutes a meaningful thesis statement?

Finally, committee members also expressed concern over the evaluation of internet sources. Although faculty members who teach HIST 490 may vet all internet sources before allowing their inclusion in capstone research papers, the vetting process is not revealed in the final draft of the papers. We are considering the need to require annotations for internet sources, so that evaluators can better understand the nature of the sources themselves (as opposed to the obvious and widely understood, stringent vetting process that corresponds with peer-reviewed academic journal articles, for example).

The committee is determined to continue the course of refining our instruments for evaluating the success of our students. Next year we plan to one again revise the rubric guidelines, taking all of these matters into consideration. We must determine what language works, and what does not, and we must ascertain the merits of each of the subcategories and ranks that we utilized this year.   We see this as a process that may take some time, but a process that will ultimately

sharpen our ability to assess the success of our history majors in achieving the fundamental goals of the BA Program in History

Established in Cycle: 2011-2012
Implementation Status: In-Progress
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
> Communicate
> | Interpret & Analyze | Research
> **Measure:** HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
> Distinguish Sources

Moving forward for 2014-2015

We are generally disappointed with the results of our assessment this year. To begin with, we feel it important to stress that the data was compromised this year due to the fact that we only had access to the papers for one section of HIST 490. This was due to a faculty retirement, as we were unable to secure that professor's papers for this assessment. The results, therefore, as quite skewed, and do not reflect the success or failure of the department's ability to meet its goals for the years. In addition, we spent a great deal of time clarifying our rubric this year, which provided greater assistance to our assessment team, particularly for the two new faculty members who had not yet gone through our assessment process. On the other hand, of course, the results are troubling in regard to this particular section. We feel that the low rankings in multiple category indicates that we need to work with our HIST 490 professors in calibrating their expectations with ours in regard to what defines student success in the classes. We will plan to meet with the upcoming HIST 490 professors in order to discuss this matter and develop a plan.

Our senior exit survey results indicate that students are desirous of greater diversity in course offerings. In particular, they indicated a desire for courses in Asian history, African history, Middle East history, Pacific history, and Latin American history. We successfully hired an incoming Latin Americanist, but because our department remains down by six or seven faculty lines, we are unable to meet student demands for courses that focus on areas outside of the U.S. and Europe. An action plan to remedy this problem is unavailable to us, beyond asking the administration to free up more lines for additional hires next year.

Established in Cycle: 2013-2014
Implementation Status: Planned
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
> Communicate
> | Interpret & Analyze | Research
> **Measure:** HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
> Distinguish Sources

Implementation Description: We will meet with the upcoming HIST 490 professors to discuss this year's assessment and our department's expectations for students. We will also think about ways to enhance

student training in these areas in 100- through 300-level courses.
Responsible Person/Group: The outcomes assessment committee.
Additional Resources: We need to hire faculty who can teach areas beyond the U.S. and Europe.
Connected Documents

> assessment rubric for 2013-2014
> Senior Exit Survey

Moving forward for 2015-2016

Last year's assessment report demonstrated what we considered to be significant problems in our undergraduate program. Our sample only included papers from one section, but the rate of failure in achieving multiple of our goals in that section left many of us very concerned. We convened a meeting at the beginning of the fall semester to discuss the assessment report, to identify our students' weaknesses, and to try to determine an appropriate action plan for this year and beyond. The faculty decided to revise the major requirements in two significant ways: first, we will begin requiring majors to take a 300 level "History Skills" course, taught thematically by a variety of faculty. This course will explicitly target our four goals of Research, Interpret & Analyze, Communicate, and Distinguish Sources by requiring students to write a minor research paper and book reviews, to complete exercises on analyzing and distinguishing primary and secondary sources, and to develop skills in assessing historiography. We feel that by ensuring that these specific skills are cultivated at the 300 level, the students will be better prepared for the challenges awaiting them in HIST 490. In addition, we expanded the number of required 400 level seminars in order for students to continue a rigorous skill development in assessing and critiquing secondary sources through discussion, book reviews, and historiographical papers. This expansion of the senior seminar courses also fits the needs of the students, expressed in this year's senior survey, to offer more courses at this level.

The senior survey this year also reveals the desire for us to expand our coursework, particularly in Asian history, "Ancient history" (including Greek and Roman history), Civil Rights and Gender Equality, and Latin American history. The seniors reported feeling that not enough non-U.S. courses are currently offered. We completed a successful search for a modern Europeanist, but their concerns indicate a need for additional faculty in non-U.S. areas; our faculty agree with this concern and hope that the administration will succeed in unfreezing more of our frozen lines next year to achieve this purpose.

We revised slightly the language of the rubric this year in order to continue our process of refinement for our assessment teams.

Of the four sections assessed this year, two of them were organized thematically, such that students research and wrote their paper on a theme such as the foreign policy-themed, "U.S. and the World in the 20th Century".   Of the two thematically-organized sections, only 15% of the students received an "unsatisfactory" mark in any category of our rubric. In contrast, within the remaining two sections, 57% of the students received at least one unsatisfactory mark. We are not sure if we should attribute the success of the former students to the thematically-oriented courses, which utilize historiographies and

research materials that sit more firmly within the wheelhouse of the
faculty members who teach them, or if another factor is involved (we will
begin tracking the enrollments of these sections as they relate to each
section's assessment results, and we will also convene all of the faculty
this fall to revisit the department's goals for the undergraduate program
in order to provide more course content that speaks directly to ensuring
greater specific success in those categories). We will continue to
monitor such differences in future assessments, and will make sure that
all faculty teaching 490 (and all faculty in the program) receive our
annual assessment reports, along with our rubric guidelines for
assessing our 490 students.

All of these steps, we believe, will lead to increased success rates
among our students in achieving our goals, and will continue our
trajectory of innovating our courses and undergraduate program.

Established in Cycle: 2014-2015
Implementation Status: Planned
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
> **Measure:** HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
> Communicate
> | Interpret & Analyze | Research
> **Measure:** HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
> Distinguish Sources

Implementation Description: We will monitor the success of next
year's 300 level "history skills" courses, and will distribute our
assessment report and rubric guidelines to all faculty, such that they will
keep apprised of our goals, success rates, and challenges, as they
design and administer their courses.
Responsible Person/Group: Assessment Committee

Moving Forward for 2016/2017

We believe that this year marks a bump in the road for our
assessment due to some particular circumstances that we can correct
this coming year. Of particular concern is the fact, according to our
committee's assessment of HIST 490 final papers, that 35% of our
students seemed unable to present an identifiable thesis in their HIST
490 papers. In addition, 35% were deemed unable to satisfactorily
distinguish between primary and secondary sources. We are not sure
what happened this year, as these numbers seem an aberration from
our earlier successes. However, we are implementing steps to insure
that we will not see these numbers again.

In the fall of 2014, for example, we convened a meeting to discuss the
previous assessment report, to identify our students' weaknesses, and
to try to determine an appropriate action plan for this year and
beyond. As a result, the faculty decided to revise the major
requirements in two significant ways: first, we began requiring majors
to take a 300 level "History Skills" course, taught thematically by a
variety of faculty. This course explicitly targets our four goals of

Research, Interpret & Analyze, Communicate, and Distinguish Sources by requiring students to write a minor research paper and book reviews, to complete exercises on analyzing and distinguishing primary and secondary sources, and to develop skills in assessing historiography. We feel that by ensuring that these specific skills are cultivated at the 300 level, the students will be better prepared for the challenges awaiting them in HIST 490. The first of these courses were offered in the spring of 2016, so we will be able to monitor its impact in the coming years. In addition, we expanded the number of required 400 level seminars in order for students to continue a rigorous skill development in assessing and critiquing secondary sources through discussion, book reviews, and historiographical papers. This expansion of the senior seminar courses also fits the needs of the students, expressed in recent senior surveys, to offer more courses at this level. The senior survey this year also reveals the desire for us to expand our coursework, particularly in Asian history, "Ancient history" (including Greek and Roman history), Civil Rights and Gender Equality, and Latin American history. The seniors reported feeling that not enough non-U.S. courses were currently offered. We completed a successful search for a modern Europeanist, but she left our department this spring for a position at Tulane University. We are also dealing with multiple additional departures this year, which is compounding our difficulty to meet student concerns for additional faculty in non-U.S. areas, and to meet the needs of our students interested in U.S. or European history. Our faculty agrees with their concerns and hopes that the administration will enable us to hire more faculty to replace those who have left last year (and those who may be leaving this year).

This year we assessed papers from two sections of HIST 490. The two sections we assessed were not topically themed. Last year demonstrated greater success with 490 sections organized by topic than those that were not organized in such fashion. For that reason, we will recommend to the instructors teaching 490 in the coming year to organize the class in a matter that best aligns with their specialization. We also plan to circulate more thoroughly the responsibility for teaching 490 among our faculty.

We will continue to monitor such differences in future assessments, and will make sure that all faculty teaching 490 (and all faculty in the program) receive our annual assessment reports, along with our rubric guidelines for assessing our 490 students. All of these steps, we believe, will lead to increased success rates among our students in achieving our goals, and will continue our trajectory of innovating our courses and undergraduate program.

Established in Cycle: 2015-2016
Implementation Status: Planned
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):

Measure: HIST 490 Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
Communicate
| Interpret & Analyze | Research
Measure: HIST 490-- Final Paper | **Outcome/Objective:**
Distinguish Sources

Implementation Description: We plan to make the faculty aware of this
year's outcomes assessment so that they take pains to ensure that
these fundamentals are built into all of our course offerings. Our
redesign of the major curriculum will also help, though we will not see
those results for another 2-3 years. We also will encourage faculty to
design 490 courses that align with their specialization, as these seem to
be the most effective course sections to date.
Responsible Person/Group: John Troutman

Analysis Questions and Analysis Answers

How were assessment results shared and evaluated within the unit?
They were shared over email in the Summer of 2016, and discussed online in an email
exchange. Then in the Fall of 2016, we began a faculty-wide discussion at in-person faculty
meetings that have taken place over the course of the semester. A new undergraduate
committee was appointed to respond to the needs identified in the assessment and to
implement the plan.

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?
We are implementing the Moving Forward for 2016/2017 Action Plan, which in many ways
replicates the Moving Forward Action Plan of the previous cycle. This is because, in
2015-2016, the faculty did not gain the opportunity to meet together to discuss our recent
assessment findings and concerns. As a result, few changes took place and our findings
suffered. However, we are now convening regularly-scheduled meetings where
assessment is serving as an important topic and we are addressing the concerned
identified in the last cycle (see below).

What has the unit learned from the current assessment cycle? What is working well, and what is working less well in achieving desired outcomes?
Our first 300 level "History Skills" course is being taught this fall, with more online for the
spring 2017 semester. This course explicitly targets our four goals of Research, Interpret &
Analyze, Communicate, and Distinguish Sources by requiring students to write a minor
research paper and book reviews, to complete exercises on analyzing and distinguishing
primary and secondary sources, and to develop skills in assessing historiography. In
addition, we expanded the number of required 400 level seminars in order for students to
continue a rigorous skill development in assessing and critiquing secondary sources
through discussion, book reviews, and historiographical papers. This expansion of the
senior seminar courses also fits the needs of the students, expressed in recent senior
surveys, to offer more courses at this level. The senior survey this year also reveals the
desire for us to expand our coursework, particularly in Asian history, "Ancient history"
(including Greek and Roman history), Civil Rights and Gender Equality, and Latin American
history. We are also placing HIST 490 into rotation with multiple faculty, so that more of our
faculty become aware of the need to ensure that our four goals are taught in their lower
level courses.