

History BA/BS

BA Graduate Preparation

Goal Description:

History BA graduates often seek to teach. In addition, all History BA graduates should possess certain analytical skills best evinced by the historical research process. As appropriate, the department will monitor student preparation for teaching certification and, in general, student mastery of history-thinking skills.

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

History Research And Thinking Skills

Learning Objective Description:

History students will demonstrate specific history thinking and research skills through the writing of finished history research projects.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Senior Level Student Learning Outcome Assessments

Indicator Description:

During the course of the semester, students enrolled in 4000-level (senior level) courses will demonstrate mastery of historical scholarship and writing skills, as determined by a panel of history faculty.

A panel of two faculty members will select at random a sample of at least one-quarter of the total of 4000-level final research papers and scrutinize them according to an assessment instrument. This is the instrument perfected in previous years by panels of 4000-level evaluators and can be modified every year by that year's panel.

Criterion Description:

The rubric specifies four areas: Thesis; Evidence; Documentation; and Organization. The benchmark of success is an average score of 3.5/5 on each and a score of 14 overall.

Findings Description:

A sample of 12 papers (one quarter of the fall semester) received average scores of 3.75 on each criterion and 15 overall. The spring semester papers will be scored in August.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Research and Thinking Skills Action

Action Description:

The Department of History will cease to use this assessment method/matrix and will streamline/reform its undergraduate program to fit its changing student profile

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

History Teacher Certification Preparation

Learning Objective Description:

To equip would-be public school history teachers with the skills to pass the Texas state examination for certification.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

TEXES Examination

Indicator Description:

Teacher education students who major or minor in History will pass the TExES examination.

Students who major in History and minor in secondary education must pass a state examination in History (or Social Studies) to be certified to teach in Texas. The School of Education informs each of these students of their obligation to take the "TExES" test. Generally a third of all History majors have this minor.

Passage of the TExES by a score of 80% qualifies the graduate to teach in Texas schools.

To qualify to take the TExES test, a student must score 80% on an official practice test. This test is furnished to the department by the Texas Education Agency. As of February 2015, both the History and Social Studies tests are new. The department administers the practice tests and furnishes scores to the School of Education, which in turn informs the students if they are qualified to take the final test.

Criterion Description:

70% of all teacher education students who major or minor in History will pass the TEXES history examination with at least a score of 80%.

Findings Description:

In 2016-17, 12 of 17 History students passed the TExES History test with a score of at least 70%, a rate of 71%. 6 of 16 passed the Social Studies test, a rate of 38%.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Research and Thinking Skills Action

Action Description:

The Department of History will cease to use this assessment method/matrix and will streamline/reform its undergraduate program to fit its changing student profile

Skills In And Knowledge Of History

Goal Description:

B.A. History graduates will be prepared for successful careers and productive citizenship by gaining ample knowledge and skills in departmental courses.

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Learning Outcomes

Learning Objective Description:

To expose students, especially during their lower level classes, to various methods of teaching and intellectual stimuli all promoting key historical thinking skills.

Students will have multiple pedagogical experiences designed to ascertain which forms produce best results.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Self- And Instructor Evaluations In History Core Curriculum

Indicator Description:

Students will have multiple pedagogical experiences designed to ascertain which forms produce best results. We will sample a group of students representing 5% of our total 1300-level students in a study. The faculty selected for this exercise are those teaching multiple sections of 1301/2 of similar size.

In the Fall of 2014, two sections of HIST 1301 were employed in an experiment. Using one section as a control, a comparison was made to an identically populated related section. (This was repeated in Spring 2015 using HIST 1302.) The following methods were used in the test section:

- 1. Reduction of lecture in favor of interactive student research activity.
- 2. Frequent promotion of small-group and team co-operative learning.
- 3. Use of Jeopardy-style gaming to promote information rehearsal.

Changes in assessments were:

- 1. Shift from memorization performance to researched essay responses.
- 2. Increased emphasis in grading expectations on appropriate use of critical thinking and analysis skills in addition to content recitation.
- 3. Provision of a consistent critical thinking and writing analysis rubric in preparation for all exams.

The traditionally taught course consisted of lecture and power point delivery assessed through short-answer and multiple-choice testing as is commonly practiced in freshman sections.

Success would be indicated by enhanced assessment performance from students in experimental sections.

Criterion Description:

Testing outcomes will be compared. Success would be indicated by enhanced assessment performance from students in experimental sections. Because this is a new program objective, the specific amount of desired demonstrable performance is difficult to estimate.

Findings Description:

In 2016-17, in the first control group, the pre-post-test increase was 8.63% and in the experimental group 14.21%. In the second control group, the pre-post-test increase was 18.17% and in the two experimental groups 6.81% and 9.53%. However, both experimental groups in the second example scored higher on the post-test vs. the control group.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Learning Outcomes Action

Action Description:

The Department of History will cease to use this assessment method/matrix and will streamline/reform its undergraduate program to fit its changing student profile

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Learning Outcomes: Tests

Learning Objective Description:

Students will acquire relevant historical knowledge and the ability to put it to use.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Pre-Post Testing In History Core Curriculum

Indicator Description:

Students enrolled in lower-level US history courses, by far the largest enrollments in the department's curriculum, will demonstrate an enhancement in historical knowledge over the course of the term. The department, consulting Texas norms, has devised pre-and post-tests based for this purpose.

Criterion Description:

The department devised a new instrument (attached) of 25 questions, based on the norms the state of Texas has expressed for the introductory history courses mandated for every public university student. The department expects measurable improvement in the post-test results versus the pre-test, of at least 10%.

Findings Description:

In 2016-17, students averaged 54% on the pre-test and 62% on the post-test, an improvement of 14.8%.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Pre-Post Testing Action

Action Description:

The Department of History will cease to use the current Pre and Post tests and will develop a new assessment to fit its changing student and faculty profile.

Update to Previous Cycle's Plan for Continuous Improvement

Previous Cycle's Plan For Continuous Improvement (Do Not Modify):

1. We shall introduce skill, and non-merely content-based classroom assessments.

2. We shall develop a plan of rolling out such assessments over the levels of our courses from the service/core courses through our major.

Update of Progress to the Previous Cycle's PCI:

2016-17 was a transitional year in the Department of History. The Department now has a new Chair, Associate Chair, and Graduate Director. The Department did not accomplish any of the stated goals in the previous PCI. The Department has spent the last year working to create a new system of committees and processes for governance and assessment.

2016–17 Plan for Continuous Improvement

Closing Summary:

The Department of History will

1. develop a new assessment plan to fit the changing student and faculty profile better.
2. strive to build an intellectual community in the department.
3. develop a new teaching mentoring program for all its faculty.
4. streamline and reform its undergraduate program.
5. develop new Pre-Post tests.