

Program-Level Assessment Plan (Academic)

Program/Division: History

DATES: Fall 2016/Spring 2017

Evaluators: Mike Clinton/Wayne Huss

University Learning Outcomes: ULO1 Communication Skills; ULO2 Professional Competency; ULO3 Moral and Ethical Judgment; ULO4 Problem Solving; ULO5 Critical Thinking; ULO6 Leadership in Society; ULO 7 Critical and Competent Use of Technology

ASSESSMENT RESEARCH QUESTION: For HIS107 [Fall 2016] & HIS109 [Spring 2017]: Do students show improvement on objective quizzes linked to the textbook material as the semester progresses?
For HIS131 [Fall 2016] & HIS132 [Spring 2017]: Do students show an improvement in performance on essay exams if they are permitted to bring with them to the final exam one side of one 3 x 5 index card per essay containing pertinent information for reference?

ASSESSMENT HYPOTHESIS: For HIS107 & HIS109: Students should demonstrate progressive improvement in quiz grades.
For HIS 131 & HIS132: Students should demonstrate progressive improvement in essay exams.

University Learning Outcomes (Directions: List ULO #s that align with identified PLOs)	Program Learning Outcomes	Key Courses that ensure that this objective is met.	Evidence	Assessment Practice (Example Rubric applied to random sample of Final Projects)	Assessment RESULTS (Example: 35 out of 50 students Met or Exceeded Standards on Applied Rubric)	Benchmark (Example: 75% Meet/Exceed Standard)	MET/ NOTMET/ IN PROCESS
ULO1 Communication Skills ULO3 Moral and Ethical Judgment ULO4 Problem Solving ULO5 Critical Thinking	PLO 1: Effectively read, reflect upon, and respond appropriately to historical information	HIS107, HIS109/ HIS131, HIS132 All history courses meet the program learning outcomes, but those listed above were the only ones assessed in AY2016-2017. The two courses required for	HIS107 & HIS109: Results of multiple-choice quizzes given to assess student acquisition of objective knowledge covered in the textbook	HIS107 & HIS109: Direct: comparison of results of first, third, and fifth quizzes	HIS107: <u>Standard No. 1:</u> [Clear Improvement] Consistent improvement across the 1 st , 3 rd , and 5 th quizzes – i.e. each quiz was a higher score than the earlier one. Also includes scores that were consistently perfect or near-perfect throughout the semester: 5/18 <u>Standard No. 2:</u> [Mixed Improvement] Improvement shown by the last quiz, although negligible or no improvement shown from the 1 st to the 3 rd quiz: 9/18	<u>Standard No. 1:</u> 28.8% <u>Standard No. 2:</u> 50.0% <u>Standard No. 3:</u> 22.2%	Mostly Met

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		history majors only were so under-subscribed that measuring them would have no statistical meaning. One student enrolled for HIS449: Historiography in Spring 2017 and one for HIS4000: Capstone Research Seminar in Fall 2016.			<p><u>Standard No. 3:</u> [Negligible or No Improvement] Quiz scores showed no improvement or negligible improvement: 4/18</p> <p>HIS109:</p> <p><u>Standard No. 1</u> (same as above) : 4/19</p> <p><u>Standard No. 2</u> (same as above): 10/19</p> <p><u>Standard No. 3</u> (same as above): 5/19</p>	<p><u>Standard No. 1:</u> 21.0%</p> <p><u>Standard No. 2:</u> 52.6%</p> <p><u>Standard No. 3:</u> 23.4%</p>	Mostly Met
			HIS131 & HIS132: Results of mid-term (w/o index cards) and final exam (w/index cards) essay questions used to assess student acquisition, understanding, and interpretation of historical information	HIS131 & HIS132: Direct: comparison of results of mid-term and final exam essay questions	HIS 131: <u>Standard No. 1:</u> [Clear Improvement] Significant improvement (one full grade or more) of writing, reasoning abilities, and proficiency in the use of accurate factual information: 2/23 <u>Standard No. 2:</u> [Mixed Improvement] Slight Improvement (one-half grade) of writing, reasoning abilities, and proficiency in the use of accurate factual information: 3/23 <u>Standard No. 3:</u> [Negligible or No Improvement] Essay grades show no	<p><u>Standard No. 1:</u> 8.7%</p> <p><u>Standard No. 2:</u> 13.0%</p> <p><u>Standard No. 3:</u> 78.3%</p>	Not Met

University Learning Outcomes <i>(Directions: List ULO #s that align with identified PLOs)</i>	Program Learning Outcomes	Key Courses that ensure that this objective is met.	Evidence	Assessment Practice <i>(Example Rubric applied to random sample of Final Projects)</i>	Assessment RESULTS <i>(Example: 35 out of 50 students Met or Exceeded Standards on Applied Rubric)</i>	Benchmark <i>(Example: 75% Meet/Exceed Standard)</i>	MET/ NOTMET/ IN PROCESS
					improvement, negligible Improvement or even decline: 18/23 HIS 132: <u>Standard No. 1</u> (same as above): 12/24 <u>Standard No. 2</u> (same as above): 7/24 <u>Standard No. 3</u> (same as above): 5/24	<u>Standard No. 1:</u> 50.0% <u>Standard No. 2:</u> 29.2% <u>Standard No. 3:</u> 20.8%	Mostly Met
ULO1 Communication Skills ULO3 Moral and Ethical Judgment ULO4 Problem Solving ULO5 Critical Thinking	PLO 2: Ask pertinent questions about the human past that lead to solving current human problems	HIS107, HIS109/ HIS131, HIS132	Same as above	Same as above			
ULO1 Communication Skills ULO3 Moral and Ethical Judgment ULO4 Problem Solving ULO5 Critical Thinking	PLO 3: Identify, evaluate, analyze, and interpret primary and secondary sources	HIS107, HIS109/ HIS131, HIS132	Same as above	Same as above			

University Learning Outcomes <i>(Directions: List ULO #s that align with identified PLOs)</i>	Program Learning Outcomes	Key Courses that ensure that this objective is met.	Evidence	Assessment Practice <i>(Example Rubric applied to random sample of Final Projects)</i>	Assessment RESULTS <i>(Example: 35 out of 50 students Met or Exceeded Standards on Applied Rubric)</i>	Benchmark <i>(Example: 75% Meet/Exceed Standard)</i>	MET/NOTMET/IN PROCESS
ULO1 Communication Skills ULO3 Moral and Ethical Judgment ULO4 Problem Solving ULO5 Critical Thinking	PLO 4: Critically assess differing, and often conflicting, interpretations of historical events and intellectual movements	HIS107, HIS109/ HIS131, HIS132	Same as above	Same as above			
ULO1 Communication Skills ULO3 Moral and Ethical Judgment ULO4 Problem Solving ULO5 Critical Thinking	PLO 5: Become responsible, thoughtful, and compassionate citizens in the global world of the twenty-first century through the study of history	HIS107, HIS109/ HIS131, HIS132	Same as above	Same as above			
	PLO 6:	N/A					
	PLO 7:	N/A					

Selected KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (Insert others as appropriate):

Enrollment / Total Student Credit Hours		Retention/Persistence Rate	FT/PT Faculty Ratio	Graduation/Completion Rate	Certification/Licensure/Field Test Pass Rate (If applicable)	Exit or Graduate Survey Results	Employment/Graduate School Rate
HIS107 (Fall 2016)	20/60	18/20 (90.0%)	1/0	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
HIS109 (Spring 2017)	21/63	19/21 (90.5%)	1/0	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
HIS131 (Fall 2016)	24/72	23/24 (95.8%)	1/0	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
HIS132 (Spring 2017)	26/78	24/26 (92.3%)	1/0	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown

Executive Summary of FINDINGS/RESULTS:

HIS107 [Fall 2016]:

Multiple-choice quizzes covering basic information (e.g., people, events, objects identified whose significance is emphasized in the lists at the end of each chapter, chronological sequence, cause/effect, etc.) serve several purposes in the course: they help to monitor the extent to which students have reviewed the textbook material, provide an opportunity to review the material, and reinforce to students their responsibility to read the textbook rather than relying exclusively on the lecture notes that I include in PowerPoint slides. Recent generations of students have been notoriously negligent in their responsibility to review material assigned in textbooks, so the quizzes are themselves a pedagogical tool to prompt them to fulfill that obligation. Moreover, I want students to realize that lectures are intended to build on information and ideas presented in the textbook, not to recapitulate them point by point; this requires that students have a sufficient familiarity—albeit certainly not a mastery—of the material coming into the lecture, so that I can refer to it without explaining what has already been explained in the textbook itself.

The results show a nearly perfect curve, with about equal numbers of students showing clear improvement and showing no improvement, while the remainder showing mixed improvement equaling the other two categories combined. This suggests that the quizzes have a modest impact. My impression is that the students who showed improvement are generally more motivated and self-directed, anyway, while the rest of the students remain indifferent to extending their study habits to more than a cursory review of the textbook. [MC]

HIS109 [Spring 2017]:

This assessment project replicated the one that I conducted during the previous semester. The results are very nearly the same; in fact, they show a reversal in the numbers showing clear improvement and those showing negligible or no improvement, although not a significant change. I followed through with the “next steps” of being more emphatic in clarifying the purpose for the quizzes in the syllabus and verbally in class, but that doesn’t seem to have made any difference. The results do reinforce my impression that the quizzes serve to distinguish those actively engaged in meeting their responsibilities as students and those with entrenched passive habits. [MC]

HIS131 [Fall 2016]:

Essay questions that assess the ability of students to synthesize course content covering important information (e.g. people, events, course themes as identified on detailed study guides) serve several purposes: they help monitor the extent to which students have reviewed lecture, discussion, and textbook material; they provide an opportunity to assess students' comprehension of the material; and they reinforce students' individual responsibility to achieve their own academic success. Essay exams also are consistent with university outcomes (in effect in AY2016-2017) of communication skills, moral and ethical judgment, problem solving, and critical thinking. Multiple choice exams usually only measure students' ability to recall memorized information at any given point of time and not necessarily their ability to actually learn the material and carry away with them something of value from any course.

For all essay exams, I give out the topics at least a week ahead of the exam date, but not the specific wording of the actual questions. Students choose the essay questions they want to do. I also provide students with sample answers to similar essay questions from students who have previously taken the same class to encourage them. In addition, I give students clear grading rubrics in paragraph format that specifically explain what is expected for particular grades.

The results of this assessment suggest that the use of index cards at best only has a modest impact on students' progressive academic improvement. My impression is that the students who showed improvement were generally more motivated and self-directed, anyway, while the rest of the students remained indifferent to augmenting their study habits to more than a cursory review of course material. On the other hand, these results also may indicate that the students were simply overwhelmed and overstretched by the many other demands upon them at the end of the semester. In any case, it is hard to imagine anything else that I, as the instructor, can do for students than what I am already doing. With all of this being said, my HIS131 class for Fall 2016 was quite a disappointment and presented an ongoing challenge to keep the students motivated. [WH]

HIS132 [Spring 2017]:

[Repeat of the first two paragraphs under HIS131 above.]

The results of this assessment suggest that the use of index cards does have a measurable impact on students' progressive academic improvement. My impression is that this group of students was generally more motivated and self-directed than that of HIS131 in Fall 2016. These students learned to change their study habits and were more highly motivated to put extra energy into their preparations in spite of the many other demands upon them at the end of the semester. On the other hand, perhaps these students found the subject matter of HIS132 more interesting than that of HIS131. Nonetheless, these results show that what I am already doing to help students improve their grades is working well and that it is not necessary for me to do any more. My HIS132 class for Spring 2017 was a refreshing change from my experience with the Fall 2016 HIS131 class. [WH]

NEXT STEPS:

HIS107 [Fall 2016]:

I will attempt to be more emphatic about how the quizzes link to the student's responsibility to review the textbook material, whether or not specific items from it get covered in-depth during the lectures. In addition to clarifying this in the syllabus, I will explain it verbally during the first class meeting and during the class preceding each quiz. [MC]

HIS209 [Spring 2017]:

I will continue to require quizzes as part of these survey courses because they do serve the several purposes that they're intended to serve. [MC]

HIS131 [Fall 2016]:

I will incorporate the practice of allowing students to bring with them index cards for use on the final exam, but not the mid-term exam, without letting the students know about this added opportunity until just prior to the final exam. Hopefully, students will realize the rewards or negative consequences of studying or not studying the course material and adapt accordingly.

Future plans will be to continue this assessment strategy over the next few semesters to see if the poor performance reported above makes up part of a pattern among Gwynedd Mercy students or is simply characteristic of one particular class. [WH]

HIS132 [Spring 2017]:

[Repeat of the first paragraph under HIS131 above.]

Future plans will be to continue this assessment strategy over the next few semesters to see how the mixed performance results between my Fall 2016 and my Spring 2017 classes play out over time. Is there a pattern among Gwynedd Mercy students or is it simply a matter of individual motivation? [WH]