

Department of History -- Assessment Report (Fall 2016)
For General Education Courses in History¹
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Preamble

History is an integral part of General Education at Central Connecticut State University. Along with its importance for becoming an active and informed citizen and understanding culture and society, studying history contributes directly to two General Education Objectives in the University: Global Awareness, and Critical Reading and Thinking Skills.

In the fall 2012, we had departmental conversations about how to measure relevant learning outcomes, and we developed a rubric aimed at measuring them. We have been using it ever since. (See Appendix A.)

General Education- Summary

1. *Which general education courses has the department taught over the last five years?*

HIST 100 Search in History

Introduction to intellectual processes and value systems in history. Titles and themes may vary from section to section. Study Area II

HIST 121 World Civilization I

World civilization to the 17th century. Study Area II [I]

HIST 122 World Civilization II

World civilization from the 17th century. Study Area II [I]

HIST 161 American History to 1877

Political, economic, social, and cultural development to 1877. No credit given to students who have credit for HIST 261. CSUS Common Course. Study Area II

HIST 162 American History from 1877 to present

Political, economic, social, and cultural development since 1877. No credit given to students who have credit for

HIST 262. CSUS Common Course. Study Area II 200s

HIST 231 Ancient Mediterranean World

Cultures of ancient Near East and Mediterranean. Study Area II [I]

HIST 232 Medieval Europe

European history and institutions from the fall of Rome to 1300. Study Area II [I]

¹ Upper level History courses are not included in this assessment since inadequate data were collected to perform a meaningful analysis.

HIST 233 Renaissance and Enlightenment Europe

European history from the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries. Topics include the Renaissance, the Reformation, European Expansion, the Scientific Revolution, and the Enlightenment. Study Area II [I]

HIST 234 Modern Europe

European history from the 18th century to the present. Study Area II [I]

HIST 251 East Asia to 1800

Political, cultural, economic, and social history of East Asian countries. Note: No credit will be given to students who have credit for HIST 351. Fall. (O) Study Area II [I]

HIST 252 East Asia since 1800

Continuation of HIST 251, with additional emphasis on contemporary, foreign, and colonial politics related to East Asia. NOTE: No credit given to students who have credit for HIST 352. Spring. (O) Study Area II [I]

HIST 253 History of the South Pacific

Begins with the history of the Tahitians, Hawaiians, and Maori, and Australian aborigines before contact with Europe, examining their oral traditions. Also examines exploration and cultural contact between the peoples of Polynesia and Australia and Anglo-Europeans. Fall. (O) Study Area II

HIST 271 Introduction to African History and Culture

Focuses on some of the enduring aspects of African material culture and technologies. Also examines social and political issues related to African civilization over time. Irregular. Study Area II

HIST 277 History of Christianity I

Christianity from its origins to 1450 A.D. Jewish origins, literature, central doctrines, and institutional development. Consideration of its influence on secular life and institutions. NOTE: No credit given to student who have credit for HIST 377. Fall. (O) Study Area II [I]

HIST 278 History of Christianity II

Christianity from 1450 A.D. to present. Continuation of Christianity I. NOTE: No credit given to students who have credit for HIST 378. Spring. (O) Study Area II [I]

HIST 281 History of Latin America to 1823

Social, economic, political, and cultural development of Latin American countries to 1823. NOTE: No credit given to students with credit for HIST 381. Cross listed with LAS 281 and 381. No credit given to with credit for LAS 281 or 381. Fall. (O) Study Area II [I]

HIST 282 History of Latin America since 1823

Social, economic, political, and cultural development of Latin American countries since 1823. No credit given to students with credit for HIST 382. Cross listed with LAS 282. No credit given to students with credit for LAS 282 or 382. Spring. (O) Study Area II [I]

2. Which General Education Learning Objective is addressed in these courses?

A: All of our courses at the 100- and 200-levels meet the following two established General Education Objectives @ <http://www.ccsu.edu/page.cfm?p=14893>:

Objective 1: To develop global awareness, historical perspective, and appreciation of social and cultural diversity in the world. Relevant outcomes include the ability to: analyze an issue from the perspective of another cultural tradition or historical period; understand and respect cultural differences; read, write, speak, and understand a foreign language at an enhanced level.

Objective 2: To develop critical thinking and critical reading skills. Relevant outcomes include the ability to: define a problem; assemble evidence to support a conclusion; assess the validity of a sustained argument; and analyze information to uncover underlying meanings, structures, and patterns.

3. Which courses and Learning Outcome were assessed over the last five years?

In 2014-2016, 27 sections of General Education courses were assessed on Learning Objective 2 (“critical reading skills”) comprising 912 students.

General Education Findings—For each General Education Learning Outcome

1. *Describe how student learning was evaluated.*
From Fall 2014 to Spring 2016, full and part time faculty conducted an assessment to determine the degree to which students were aware of interpretive differences in either primary sources, secondary sources, or both, and were able to discuss and interpret those differences in the assignment.
2. *Describe the evaluation process, criteria used, and who completed the evaluation.*
Student learning was evaluated by trained instructors (full-time and part-time) reviewing one assignment for each student in their class. This assignment was sometimes a final exam, and sometimes a research paper. The assessment focused on primary sources, secondary sources, or both.
3. *Append examples of the rubric.*
See Appendix A.
4. *Explain the link between the assessment method and each learning outcome being measured.*
We believe that the assessment method is adequate to measure **General Education Learning Objective #2** (“critical reading skills”). The ability to identify interpretive differences is central to critical reading skills. General Education Learning Objective

- #1 will be evaluated in future years (see Assessment Plan).
5. Summarize Student Performance.

14 professors assessed 27 classes comprising a total of 912 students.

In both primary and secondary source assignments, approximately 75% of all students assessed showed an “excellent grasp” or “very good grasp” of the ability to detect interpretative differences; 71% were able to discuss those differences in primary source assignments and 67% in secondary source assignments. This represents an increase of 7% for discussing primary sources and a decrease in 8% for discussing secondary sources.

Given that our General Education courses aim at the two broad objectives of 1) developing global awareness, and 2) teaching critical thinking skills, it is not surprising that many of our professors do not teach the more discipline-specific skills of interpreting and using primary sources, and interpreting and using secondary sources in these classes, and for that reason, it is impressive that among those who do pursue this aim, $\frac{2}{3}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of students performed as well as they did.

6. Trend Five-Year Data

| | 2012-2013 | 2013-2014 | 2014-2016 |
|----|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Q1 | 56.7 | 78.4 | 75 |
| Q2 | 54 | 73 | 66 |
| Q3 | 58.6 | 76.7 | 75 |
| Q4 | 49.6 | 63.9 | 71 |

Analysis

The data indicates a statistically significant increase in the ability to discuss differences in perspective in primary source readings, but a statistically significant decrease in the ability to analyze and discuss differences among secondary sources. There is no statistically significant change in the student’s ability to recognize differences in perspective in either primary or secondary sources. Why this is the case is unclear, though it may be because professors have spent more time and attention on analysis and use of primary sources in class. The results indicate that we are having a high degree of success in General Education Objective 2 (Critical Reading). The changes that have been introduced over the past 5 years have been successful, as demonstrated by several years of data.

General Education Analysis—for each Learning Objective

1. We need to develop a rubric more suitable for measuring General Education Objectives #1 (Global Awareness) and #2 (Critical Reading and Thinking).
2. We do not have enough data, nor sufficient confidence in the instrument, to generalize about the results over time.

Use of Results

The department should consider two steps for future assessments. First, given that we have several successful years of assessing these learning outcomes, we should identify a new set of learning outcomes to measure. Second, and partly as a result of the first point, we need to develop a new assessment instrument with more precise rubrics to improve the quality of the data. Higher rates of compliance are also a desideratum.

Appendix A: Rubric for Assessing Courses

| | Not Applicable to this Assignment (NA) | Excellent Grasp | Very Good Grasp | Partial Grasp | Minimal Grasp | No Grasp |
|---|--|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|----------|
| <i>SECONDARY SOURCES</i> | | | | | | |
| <i>Question 1: Awareness of interpretive differences between scholars of her subject, i.e., secondary sources</i> | | | | | | |
| <i>Question 2: Ability to put those secondary sources into conversation and relate to one's thesis</i> | | | | | | |
| <i>PRIMARY SOURCES</i> | | | | | | |
| <i>Question 3: Awareness of interpretive differences of perspective between historical actors, as demonstrated in primary sources</i> | | | | | | |
| <i>Question 4: Ability to discuss and interpret differences found in primary sources</i> | | | | | | |

Appendix B: Aggregated Data based on Faculty Assessment of their 100 and 200-level courses:

Question 1: Awareness of interpretive differences between secondary sources

| Course | Excellent | Very Good | Partial | Minimal | No Grasp |
|--------|-----------|-----------|---------|---------|----------|
| 121 | 7 | 11 | 5 | 3 | 7 |
| 121 | 23 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 0 |
| 121 | 16 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 0 |
| 121 | 20 | 8 | 6 | 0 | 1 |
| 121 | 15 | 9 | 6 | 1 | 2 |
| 121 | 16 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| 121 | 14 | 14 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| 122 | 9 | 2 | 7 | 5 | 10 |
| 161 | 7 | 14 | 9 | 3 | 0 |
| 162 | 19 | 7 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| 162 | 3 | 22 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| 162 | 9 | 20 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| 162 | 55 | 7 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| 231 | 20 | 11 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 231 | 20 | 3 | 7 | 1 | 2 |
| 231 | 15 | 10 | 6 | 1 | 1 |
| 233 | 2 | 9 | 8 | 5 | 2 |
| | 270 | 162 | 81 | 29 | 28 |
| | 47% | 28% | 14% | 5% | 5% |

Question 2: Ability to discuss these differences and relate them to one's own thesis

| Course | Excellent | Very Good | Partial | Minimal | No Grasp |
|--------|-----------|-----------|---------|---------|----------|
| 121 | 7 | 11 | 5 | 3 | 7 |
| 121 | 23 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 0 |
| 121 | 16 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 0 |
| 121 | 19 | 9 | 5 | 1 | 1 |
| 121 | 14 | 10 | 5 | 2 | 2 |
| 121 | 18 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| 121 | 17 | 11 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| 122 | 9 | 2 | 7 | 5 | 10 |
| 161 | 5 | 11 | 8 | 7 | 2 |
| 162 | 19 | 6 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| 162 | 4 | 21 | 5 | 1 | 0 |
| 162 | 9 | 20 | 3 | 1 | |
| 162 | 3 | 5 | 6 | 0 | 4 |
| 231 | 23 | 8 | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| 231 | 21 | 3 | 6 | 1 | 2 |
| 231 | 14 | 12 | 5 | 1 | 1 |
| 233 | 2 | 10 | 7 | 5 | 2 |
| | 223 | 152 | 80 | 35 | 33 |
| | 39% | 27% | 14% | 6% | 6% |

Question 3: Awareness of interpretive differences between primary sources

| Course | Excellent | Very Good | Partial | Minimal | No Grasp |
|--------|-----------|-----------|---------|---------|----------|
| 100 | 10 | 13 | 6 | 3 | 1 |
| 121 | 7 | 11 | 5 | 3 | 7 |
| 121 | 23 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 0 |
| 121 | 17 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 0 |
| 121 | 20 | 7 | 6 | 1 | 1 |
| 121 | 13 | 11 | 6 | 1 | 2 |
| 122 | 9 | 2 | 7 | 5 | 10 |
| 161 | 8 | 16 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| 161 | 18 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 161 | 7 | 12 | 9 | 1 | 0 |
| 161 | 15 | 10 | 5 | 1 | 0 |
| 161 | 13 | 8 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| 161 | 22 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| 161 | 5 | 15 | 10 | 2 | 0 |
| 162 | 46 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 162 | 16 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 1 |
| 162 | 4 | 21 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| 162 | 9 | 20 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| 162 | 2 | 12 | 10 | 4 | 0 |
| 162 | 7 | 14 | 7 | 2 | 0 |
| 231 | 23 | 8 | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| 231 | 19 | 4 | 7 | 1 | 2 |
| | 313 | 205 | 118 | 34 | 24 |
| | 45% | 30% | 17% | 5% | 3% |

Question 4: Ability to discuss and interpret these differences

| Course | Q2 Excellent | Q2 Very Good | Q2 Partial | Q3 Minimal | Q4 No Grasp |
|--------|--------------|--------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| 100 | 10 | 12 | 7 | 3 | 1 |
| 121 | 7 | 11 | 5 | 3 | 7 |
| 121 | 21 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 0 |
| 121 | 16 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 0 |
| 121 | 20 | 9 | 5 | 0 | 1 |
| 121 | 14 | 10 | 6 | 1 | 2 |
| 122 | 9 | 2 | 7 | 5 | 10 |
| 161 | 9 | 13 | 5 | 0 | 2 |
| 161 | 19 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| 161 | 7 | 12 | 9 | 1 | 0 |
| 161 | 14 | 7 | 9 | 1 | 0 |
| 161 | 13 | 8 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| 161 | 22 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| 161 | 2 | 8 | 17 | 5 | 0 |
| 162 | 46 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 162 | 16 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 1 |
| 162 | 4 | 21 | 5 | 1 | 0 |
| 162 | 9 | 20 | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| 162 | 2 | 12 | 9 | 4 | 1 |
| 162 | 5 | 9 | 12 | 3 | 1 |
| 231 | 22 | 8 | 4 | 1 | 0 |
| 231 | 20 | 4 | 6 | 1 | 2 |
| | 307 | 187 | 132 | 39 | 28 |
| | 44% | 27% | 19% | 6% | 4% |