

STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT PROGRAM SUMMARY FORM

Program Name: MA in History

Dept: History

College: CLAS

Submitted by: Lee Patterson

Part 1:

CGS Learning Goal #1 A depth of content knowledge	Program Learning Goal(s): Students will identify and describe the major historical events and significant interpretations and major terms of scholarly debate within their chosen concentrations of study (i.e., Modern World, Premodern World, US).
How are learners assessed?	1) Course grades in introductory proseminars (HIS 5800, HIS 5810, and HIS 5820) 2) Comprehensive examination: comprehensive examination committees will complete a comprehensive examination assessment rubric for each student. (Exam rubric attached.) 3) Instructor assigned to HIS 5999 provides data from assessment rubric of capstone for teacher program (using comprehensive exam rubric, attached).
What are the expectations for the students?	80% of students will demonstrate competency in this area by achieving a B or better in one of the Proseminars (HIS 5800, 5810, or 5820), and 90% will demonstrate competency in Factual Knowledge as defined in the comprehensive examination rubric in their first attempt at completing comprehensive examinations.
What are the expectations for the program?	Same as for students.
What were the results?	1) In the period Fall 2024 to Summer 2025, in the traditional MA, a total of 9 grades were issued for HIS 5820. In the teacher MA, 18 for HIS 5820. All of these grades were B or higher, except for one Incomplete that remains unresolved. 2) In this period, we had no students in the traditional MA completing comprehensive exams (two did graduate in Fall 2024, but they had already taken their exams in Spring 2024, whose results were included in the previous assessment report). 3) All 4 students in the capstone (HIS 5999) for the teacher program in this period successfully completed the course, earning a B or higher.
How are the results shared? How will these results be used?	There is 1) an annual review of the curriculum by the Graduate Coordinator, in consultation with the department graduate committee; 2) student and coordinator consultation with the student's faculty mentor. Coordinator collects all results of examinations, research papers submitted by examinees, and exit interviews, along with

	grades from the proseminars, and shares with the graduate committee, department faculty, and chair.
CGS Learning Goal #2: Critical thinking and problem-solving skills	Program Learning Goal(s): Students will describe, compare, and evaluate historical interpretations (historiography) based on an understanding of historical methodologies and disciplinary modes of writing.
How are learners assessed?	1) Student historiography papers in HIS 5000, both traditional and teacher program, will be collected and assessed using a Historiography rubric (attached). 2) Comprehensive examination committees will complete a rubric for each student in traditional program upon completion of exams. (Exam rubric attached.) 3) Instructor assigned to HIS 5999 provides data from assessment rubric of capstone for teacher program (using comprehensive exam rubric, attached).
What are the expectations for the students?	80% of students will demonstrate competency as defined in the Historiography rubric in HIS 5000 and 90% will demonstrate competency in Historiography and Synthesis and Analysis as defined in the comprehensive examination rubric in their first attempt at completing comprehensive examinations.
What are the expectations for the program?	Same as for students.
What were the results?	1) The number of students in HIS 5000 was 18 (9 traditional, 9 teacher) in Fall 2024. The data shows that in both disciplinary modes of writing and methodology, 15 students achieved at least a "Competent" rating. 2) We had no students taking comprehensive exams in this period. 3) All 4 students completing the capstone in the teacher program were at least "Competent" in historiography and analysis.
How are the results shared? How will these results be used?	There is 1) an annual review of the curriculum by the Graduate Coordinator, in consultation with the graduate committee; 2) student and coordinator consultation with the student's faculty mentor. Coordinator collects all results and shares with the graduate committee, department faculty and chair; committee headed by student's faculty mentor assess comprehensive exams; 3) instructor assigned to HIS 5000 provides data from assessment rubric.
CGS Learning Goal #3: Effective oral and written communication skills	Program Learning Goal(s): Students will present their ideas clearly and effectively using the accepted conventions of historical writing, including accurate use of Chicago/Turabian citation system.

How are learners assessed?	1) Students in traditional program submit a revised primary research paper or MA thesis that are collected by each examination committee. The paper or thesis is part of the students' examination dossiers and is used to complete the final section of the comprehensive examination rubric. 2) Students in teacher program write a reflective essay in HIS 5999: Capstone, which is assessed using the final section of the comprehensive examination rubric.
What are the expectations for the students?	80% will demonstrate competency as defined in the comprehensive examination rubric; another 10% will demonstrate a high level of competency or better.
What are the expectations for the program?	Same as for students.
What were the results?	1) From Fall 2024 to Summer 2025, we had two students complete the traditional MA, but they had previously taken their comprehensive exams and submitted the required papers in Spring 2024. The assessment data from those papers was included in the previous report. There is no new data for the current period. 2) In HIS 5999, all 4 students were judged at least "Competent."
How are the results shared? How will these results be used?	There is 1) an annual review of the curriculum by the Graduate Coordinator, in consultation with the department graduate committee; 2) student and coordinator consultation with the student's faculty mentor, a process documented in reports submitted to coordinator. The coordinator collects all results and shares with the graduate committee, department faculty, and chair.
CGS Learning Goal #4: Evidence of advanced scholarship through research and/or creative activity.	Program Learning Goal(s): Students will produce an original research project using advanced scholarship based on appropriate methodologies that include analysis of primary sources and that situates the research within significant and relevant historiography.
How are learners assessed?	Students in the traditional program submit a revised primary research paper or MA thesis that is collected by each examination committee. The paper or thesis is part of the students' examination dossiers and is used to complete the final section of the comprehensive examination rubric.
What are the expectations for the students?	80% will demonstrate competency in Originality and Knowledge Creation as defined in the assessment rubric; another 10% will demonstrate a high level of competency or better.

What are the expectations for the program?	Same as for students.
What were the results?	As previously stated, we had no new submissions in this assessment period.
How are the results shared? How will these results be used?	There is 1) an annual review of the curriculum by the Graduate Coordinator, in consultation with the graduate committee; 2) student and coordinator consultation with the student's faculty mentor, a process documented in reports submitted to coordinator. Coordinator collects all results and shares with the department graduate committee, faculty and department chair.

CGS Learning Goal #5: Ethics and Professional Responsibility	Program Learning Goal(s): Students will make responsible use of evidence, avoid plagiarism, maintain respectful and honest engagement with other scholars, demonstrate self-awareness of biases, and show appreciation of the diverse nature of perspectives and experiences in historical accounts.
How are learners assessed?	Aside from anecdotal feedback in exit interviews conducted by the Graduate Coordinator, measured data is also provided through an ethics rubric filled out by the instructor of HIS 5810 and HIS 5820.
What are the expectations for the students?	90% will demonstrate competency as defined in the Ethics Learning Goal Rubric (attached). 10% will rate as Exceptional.
What are the expectations for the program?	Same as for students.
What were the results?	We have data for HIS 5820 in Spring 2025. The rubrics show the following for the 27 students in HIS 5820: 1 was deemed "Not Competent," 16 "Competent" and 10 "Exceptional." Exit interviews with students in both traditional and teacher MA indicate that our faculty routinely incorporate discussion of ethical responsibility of historians in our courses.
How are the results shared? How will these results be used?	There is 1) an annual review of the curriculum by the Graduate Coordinator, in consultation with the graduate committee. 2) Instructor assigned to HIS 5810 and HIS 5820 provides data from assessment rubric. 3) Coordinator collects all results and shares with the department graduate committee, faculty and department chair.

Part 2

Describe what your program's assessment accomplishments since your last report was submitted. Discuss ways in which you have responded to the Graduate Assessment Summary Response from last year's report or simply describe what assessment work was initiated, continued, or completed.

As is common, our graduate program sometimes experiences ups and down regarding available assessment data. In the period from Fall 2024 through Summer 2025, we had only two students graduating from our traditional MA program while four completed the teacher-option MA. The two students in the traditional MA had already taken their comprehensive exams in Spring 2024, and those results were included in the previous assessment report. We are anticipating much higher numbers in 2025-2026 and 2026-2027.

Included in our assessments of both the traditional and the teacher program are the required courses of Historiography and the proseminars. The proseminars, one for each concentration in the program (US, Premodern, Modern), were designed to address the problem of spotty coverage in a student's foundation when taking the comprehensive exams (i.e., the MA Exams in the traditional program) or HIS 5999: Capstone (in the teacher program). In conjunction with Historiography, they introduce students to major problems and themes in the discipline as well as how to "think historically" when tackling these problems. While these courses generally seem to achieve our stated goals, occasional gaps still occur in the MA Exams and capstone essays. The content of each proseminar is largely the same, but some small variation inevitably occurs due to an instructor's own research interests. See further under Part 3.

Regarding MA Exams, we have continued our practice of issuing take-home exams over a 72-hour period with answers emailed back to the Graduate Coordinator. We implemented this initially because of the pandemic, when the traditional MA was still F2F, but of course it's necessary for the current online format of the program. The goal is to better replicate the historical process with greater emphasis on citation usage and better awareness of historiography, even more so than when these exams were conducted in Coleman Hall years ago.

Of course, the teacher program uses the capstone course (HIS 5999) for similar evaluation. In that case, the instructor represents one of the three concentrations and recruits experts in the other two, forming a committee that evaluates annotated bibliographies (one for each field), composes the prompts for the reflective essays, evaluates those essays, and conducts the final oral examination. The assessment process itself is fairly smooth, but we have now started to run into a problem: this semester (Fall 2025) we have two students for whom there is no overlap in Modern World courses. So I, as instructor of record, had to recruit one expert to examine one student and another to examine the other. But we may be phasing out the capstone course altogether in the near future (see under 3. Below).

For both programs, in addition to assessment of work in the courses mentioned above, I, as Graduate Coordinator, conducted exit interviews with graduating students by Zoom. Each student conveyed an overwhelmingly positive experience with their program. Regarding the fifth learning goal, I made sure to ask about how it manifested in the courses, and students in both programs felt that their instructors took account of historians' need for ethical and professional responsibility. Meanwhile, the Graduate Committee recently developed an Ethics Learning Goal rubric that we use in two of our proseminars, HIS 5810: Proseminar in Premodern History and HIS 5820: Proseminar in Modern History, at least one of which will be taken by every student in both programs. However, major changes are planned here as well (under 3. below).

Part 3

Summarize changes and improvements in curriculum, instruction, and learning that have resulted from the implementation of your assessment program. How have you used the data? What have you learned? In light of what you have learned through your assessment efforts this year and in past years, what are your plans for the future?

This past year has yielded mostly satisfactory results in our assessment efforts, despite smaller amounts of data. Overall, we feel confident in the efficacy of our assessment methods as described above. However, the Graduate Committee and the department are considering some major structural changes, which will no doubt impact assessment in the future. These changes are responses to the budget and staffing environments many of us at EIU are facing rather than to assessment issues. However, we feel confident that the new structures will have positive impacts on assessment.

This information is extremely up-to-date as the History Graduate Committee met today (15 Oct 2025) to advance our discussion. We are now in the process of developing a proposed action plan that will be submitted to the department at large. To summarize, we are looking at the language of our learning goals to see if there is any need for updating. If there are any changes, we will make them clear in the next assessment report. Second, we are considering reducing the number of concentrations from three to two, with World replacing Modern World and Premodern World. This would mean a reconfiguration of our proseminars. The assessment of ethical responsibility would continue to be handled in this new World Proseminar. Third, we are discussing transitioning from the MA Exams in the traditional MA and the capstone course (HIS 5999) in the teacher-option MA to a portfolio-based capstone experience. What items to include are the focus of this discussion, but would certainly include assignments exhibiting established learning objectives such as citation usage and historiography. In future assessment reports, as the new structure is implemented for newer students while the older one is slowly phased out, the Graduate Coordinator will be sure to differentiate the two modes of assessment so that interpretation of the data is clear.