Program Assessment Report
For History and Broad Field Social Studies with a History Emphasis (BFSS) Programs 2013-14
Department of History and Philosophy
September 21, 2015

Introduction—
This assessment is based on results of the direct measurement and the indirect measurement. While the former comes from the faculty evaluation of 8 senior seminar papers selected from more than 40 such papers written by HIST 485 students in the spring and fall 2014 semesters, the latter derives from 15 exit surveys returned to us by the HIST 485 students in the fall 2014 and spring 2015 semesters. With the application of these two measurements, program performance of History and BFSS can be assessed from two different perspectives, the students’ perspective and the History faculty’s perspective, allowing us to determine the extent to which we have succeeded in achieving the program outcomes by examining the gap between these two perspectives. Put in another way, the less the gap is, the more successful we are in realizing the outcomes set for the program.

Direct Measurement (See Appendix 1)—
Six program outcomes/objectives are measured by History faculty through evaluating the research papers of the graduating seniors in HIST 485 History Seminar. While the measurement results for this review period are consistent with the results of the previous reviews, the student performance in three area is particularly strong: 1. Demonstrate knowledge of college level history (58% of the papers were given an A rating); 3. Conduct research on historical subjects in primary sources and secondary writings (33% of the papers were given an A rating); and 6. Meet standards of professional integrity (46% of the papers were given an A rating).

Indirect Measurement (See Appendix 2)—
As an indirect measurement of the program outcomes, the senior exit survey consists of 7 questions. The questions that measure the same learning objectives as the direct measurement questions aforementioned are: 1. I am prepared to write a historically focused research paper; 4. I am able to interpret primary and secondary sources; and 7. I am aware of important standards of professional integrity and able to honor them. For Question 1, 47% of the students strongly agree with the statement. For Question 4, also 47% of the students strongly agree with the statement. And for Question 7, 94% of the students strongly agree with the statement.

Conclusion—
The gap between the direct measurement results and the indirect measurement results is negligible and in several cases they are almost identical to one another, indicating a high level of success in fulfilling the learning objectives and achieving the program outcomes. This has been done under very challenging circumstances, such as budget cut and significant reduction in faculty positions instrumental to sustaining the programs.

In 2013, the University Assessment Committee suggested that we revise our Assessment Plan (see Appendix 3) so that it would more accurately measure the learning outcomes, be more closely related the University’s strategic plan and missions, be better able to turn out the data that the stakeholders may wish to access to and so on. We will review these suggestions and discuss how to incorporate them into the current plan before—hopefully—the next assessment report is due.
As a result of the decline in student population, we have decided to offer just one sections of HIST 485 in a year instead of two sections a year as we have done so far. To ensure the future assessments be done on the basis of rich and strong database, we plan to make up for the missing direct and indirect measurement data from the eliminated HIST 485 section by student papers and survey from 300-level (upper-division) history courses.

Respectfully submitted by

Zhiguo Yang
Professor of History and Department Chair
History and Philosophy Department
Appendix 1
Topics of the Reviewed Seminar Papers
(Direct Measurement)

2. Religious Influence on American Values and Government
3. Historiography Of Caribbean Piracy In The Late 17th And Early 18th Century
4. From Rising to Revolution: How the Easter Rising of 1916 Lead to the Anglo-Irish War
5. The Lesser of Two Evils
6. For We Ne’er Shall Look Upon His Like Again: Thomas Paine’s Tragic Fall From Grace
7. The May Fourth Movement in China: Intellectual Renaissance or Failed Experiment
8. The Great Depression
# Seminar Paper Evaluation Rubric

| 1. Demonstrate knowledge of college level history | A. Demonstrates understanding of concepts, historical facts and causality relevant to research in history | B. Identifies concepts, historical facts, and causality relevant to research in history | C. Misses or misunderstands key concepts, facts, and causality chains |
| Analyze, interpret, and critique primary sources and secondary literature | A. Grasps well the perspectives, biases, and contexts of primary and secondary writings | B. Conveys awareness of perspectives, biases, and contexts | C. Fails to grasp the perspectives, biases, and contexts |
| 3. Conduct research on historical subjects in primary sources and secondary writings | A. Identifies parameters of research, locates and uses appropriate primary sources and secondary writings | B. Locates and uses some relevant primary and secondary material | C. Fails to identify and locate important primary and secondary material relevant to the paper’s subject matter |
| 4. Articulate arguments on historical subjects with clarity and coherence | A. Develops and supports a cogent argument | B. Discusses a topic without clarity of the argument and provides minimal coherence and supporting evidence | C. Fails to develop an argument with sufficient clarity, coherence, and supporting evidence |
| 5. Recognize the meaning and significance of historiography in the field of history | A. Identifies critical patterns in historiography and incorporates them into the argument | B. Conveys some understanding of shifting interpretation of a given subject-matter over time | C. Does not incorporate historiography in the paper |
| 6. Meet standards of professional integrity | A. Mastered academic conventions of citations, objectivity, and attribution of credit | B. Grasps some of the conventions of citations, objectivity, and attribution of credit | C. Does not demonstrate knowledge of the professional standards as defined; plagiarizes |
### Appendix 2
Summary of History/BFSS Program Exit Survey 2014 – 2015  
(Indirect Measurement)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Slightly Agree</th>
<th>Slightly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I am prepared to write a historically focused research paper.</td>
<td>7 (47%)</td>
<td>7 (47%)</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I have the skills needed to discuss historical issues.</td>
<td>12 (80%)</td>
<td>2 (14%)</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I am able to analyze primary and secondary sources.</td>
<td>8 (53%)</td>
<td>6 (41%)</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I am able to interpret primary and secondary sources.</td>
<td>7 (47%)</td>
<td>7 (47%)</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I am able to situate primary and secondary sources in contexts of time, place, and value system.</td>
<td>9 (60%)</td>
<td>4 (26%)</td>
<td>2 (14%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I am able to recognize some major interpretations in the discipline of history.</td>
<td>9 (60%)</td>
<td>5 (34%)</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I am aware of important standards of professional integrity and able to honor them.</td>
<td>14 (94%)</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes—**
1. The total number of the students who returned the exit survey is 15. They were from HIST 485 History Seminar in fall 2014 and in spring 2015.
2. The current exit survey form was designed by the Department in spring 2013, in accordance with the format and requirement from the Provost’s Office.
Appendix 3  
HISTORY PROGRAM ASSESSMENT PLAN  
Revised in October 2013  

The assessment plan was first drafted in fall 2006 and has been used for assessing the History Program since 2007. The current version of the plan reflects our established assessment procedure and the new requirements and focuses of the ongoing Program Prioritization and Program Audit and Review.

Program Learning Outcomes—  
The following learning outcomes have been identified as the best measurement of History Program. They are specific to history discipline but also linked to the UWRF’s three strategic goals. These learning outcomes are: By the time the students graduate or are close to graduating, they will

1. Be prepared to write a historically focused research paper;  
2. Have the skills needed to discuss historical issues;  
3. Be able to analyze primary and secondary sources;  
4. Be able to interpret primary and secondary sources;  
5. Be able to situate primary and secondary sources in contexts of time, place, and value system;  
6. Be able to recognize some major interpretations in the discipline of history; and  
7. Become aware of important standards of professional integrity and be able to practice them.

Profile of Where Learning Outcomes Are Being Achieved—  
- History 485: History Seminar has been identified as the course where the achievement of all 7 learning outcomes is measured. This is a research-oriented course that all History and BFSS majors are required to take in their senior year.  
- Step-by-step and incremental achievement of the learning outcomes measured through HIST 485 will be realized through 100-, 200- and 300-level history courses. See the attached Course Map for details.

Venues for Assessing Learning Outcomes—  
- The direct measure used to assess the level at which the learning outcomes are achieved will be the final research papers written by students enrolled in History 485. For details, see the attached History Seminar Research Paper Evaluation Rubric.  
- The indirect measure to assess the achievement of the learning outcomes will be an exit survey administered in History 485. On average and at any given year, about 30 graduating seniors will take the exit survey. For details, see the attached History Program Exit Survey.

Process for Assessment—  
1. The History faculty will meet annually during J-term (the week before spring semester begins) or in early spring semester for a two-hour meeting to evaluate the History Seminar research papers from the preceding fall and spring semesters.  
2. Using the direct and indirect measurement tools, we will assess student achievement of all learning outcomes.  
3. Upon the completion of the assessment, suggestions and recommendations for improvement, if any, will be outlined in the Assessment Report submitted each spring to the Provost and University Assessment Committee.  
4. Measures for changes and improvement, if any, will be discussed by Department at the end of each academic year and implemented in the following year.