

Georgia State University

Assessment Data by Section

2014-2015 History Assessment of Core

As of: 3/18/2016 01:56 PM EST

Mission / Purpose

The U.S. History Survey (2110) introduces students to the fundamentals of historical thinking and historical methods through analysis of political, economic, and social developments in the United States.

Goals

G 1: Historical Knowledge and Critical Thinking Skills

The World History surveys (1111 and 1112) and the U.S. History survey (2110) introduce students to the fundamentals of historical thinking and historical methods through analysis of political, economic, and social developments.

Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives

SLO 1: Source Differentiation (M: 1)

Students in 1111, 1112, and 2110 will be able to identify and differentiate primary and secondary sources, and to analyze and interpret them.

SLO 2: Encounters and Conflicts in Historical Context (M: 2)

Students in 1111, 1112, and 2110 will be able to discuss and analyze historical developments, encounters, or conflicts that both emphasize and transcend cultural and geographic boundaries, with an appreciation for how historical context, change over time, and/or spatial dimensions affect historical responses.

SLO 3: Historical Geography (M: 3)

Students in 1111, 1112, and 2110 will demonstrate understanding of the ways in which geography both determines and is constructed through human history.

Measures, Targets, and Findings

M 1: Source Differentiation (O: 1)

Instructors will test and assess students based on questions asked in formal exams, quizzes, and/or in-class writing assignments. (Assignments testing these objectives are given at instructors' discretion.) A student who receives a 1 cannot differentiate a primary source from a secondary source. A student who receives a 2 can differentiate a primary source from a secondary source, but is not able to put those differences to use in his/her historical interpretation. A student who receives a 3 can both differentiate primary sources from secondary sources and put those differences to use in historical interpretation in a reasonably proficient way. A student who receives a 4 can both differentiate primary sources from secondary sources and put those differences to use in sophisticated historical interpretation.

Source of Evidence: Written assignment(s), usually scored by a rubric

Target for O1: Source Differentiation

80% to receive 2 or above; 60% to receive 3 or above; 30% to receive 4.

Findings 2014-2015 - Target: Partially Met

Over the course of the 2014-15 school year, students in HIST 2110 (our U.S. History survey) responded to questions/assignments that tested their ability to differentiate between primary and secondary sources. Each instructor of 2110 was to submit work from five students (the first three students and the last two students on the roster) that tested this Student Learning Objective. Student material was submitted for 35 different sections of 2110 over the course of the year (which constitutes about a third of the total number of sections of HIST 2110 taught in 2014-15). The instructors assessed the students' answers themselves, and then these assessments (and the assignments from which they were derived) were reviewed by the History Department's Freshman Studies/Core Assessment Committee (Marni Davis, Denis Gainty, Jeff Young). FINDINGS: Of the 118 usable answers of student work submitted for this SLO: 12 received a 1 (10%); 30 received a 2 (25%); 45 received a 3 (38%); and 31 received a 4 (26%). Therefore: 90% of students received a 2 or above (which exceeds our target of 80%); 64% of students received a 3 or above (which exceeds our target of 60%);

and 26% of students received a 4 (which just misses our target of 30%).

M 2: Encounters and Conflicts in Historical Context (O: 2)

Instructors will test and assess students based on questions asked in formal exams, quizzes, and/or in-class writing assignments. (Assignments testing these objectives are given at instructors' discretion.) A student who receives a 1 cannot understand or explain developments, encounters, or conflicts within or among past societies in their historical contexts. A student who receives a 2 can recognize and analyze developments, encounters, or conflicts within or among past societies, and is able to use historical context to show understanding of multiple historical perspectives in a rudimentary way. A student who receives a 3 can recognize and analyze developments, encounters, or conflicts within or among past societies, and is able to use historical context to show understanding of multiple historical perspectives in a reasonably proficient way. A student who receives a 4 demonstrates creativity in recognizing and analyzing developments, encounters, or conflicts within or among past societies, and is able to use historical context to show understanding of multiple historical perspectives in a sophisticated way.

Source of Evidence: Written assignment(s), usually scored by a rubric

Target for O2: Encounters and Conflicts in Historical Context

80% to receive 2 or above; 60% to receive 3 or above; 30% to receive 4.

Findings 2014-2015 - Target: Partially Met

Over the course of the 2014-15 school year, students in HIST 2110 (our U.S. History survey) responded to questions/assignments that tested their understanding of historical context, through a range of historical perspectives, including but not limited to political, economic, social, cultural, and environmental history. Each instructor of 2110 was to submit work from five students (the first three students and the last two students on the roster) that tested this Student Learning Objective. Student material was submitted for 35 different sections of 2110 over the course of the year (which constitutes about a third of the total number of sections of HIST 2110 taught in 2014-15). The instructors assessed the students' answers themselves, and then these assessments (and the assignments from which they were derived) were reviewed by the History Department's Freshman Studies/Core Assessment Committee (Marni Davis, Denis Gainty, Jeff Young). FINDINGS: Of the 145 usable answers of student work submitted for this SLO: 12 received a 1 (8%); 35 received a 2 (23%); 67 received a 3 (45%); and 35 received a 4 (23%). Therefore: 92% of students received a 2 or above (which exceeds our target of 80%); 68% of students received a 3 or above (which exceeds our target of 60%); and 23% of students received a 4 (which misses our target of 30%).

M 3: Historical Geography (O: 3)

Instructors will test and assess students based on questions asked in formal exams, quizzes, and/or in-class writing assignments. (Assignments testing these objectives are given at instructors' discretion.) A student who receives a 1 cannot identify selected geographic features or understand the historical significance of geography. A student who receives a 2 can identify selected geographic features, but cannot explain them in a historical context. A student who receives a 3 can identify selected geographic features, and demonstrates reasonable proficiency in explaining them in a historical context. A student who receives a 4 can identify a range of geographic features, and demonstrates creativity and insight in explaining them in a historical context.

Source of Evidence: Written assignment(s), usually scored by a rubric

Target for O3: Historical Geography

80% to receive 2 or above; 60% to receive 3 or above; 30% to receive 4.

Findings 2014-2015 - Target: Met

Over the course of the 2014-15 school year, students in HIST 2110 (our U.S. History survey) responded to questions/assignments that tested their understanding of historical geography, or the ways in which geography both determines and is constructed through human history. Each instructor of 2110 was to submit work from five students (the first three students and the last two students on the roster) that tested this Student Learning Objective. Student material was submitted for 35 different sections of 2110 over the course of the year (which constitutes about a third of the total number of sections of HIST 2110 taught in 2014-15). The instructors assessed the students' answers themselves, and then these assessments (and the assignments from which they were derived) were reviewed by the History Department's Freshman Studies/Core Assessment Committee (Marni Davis, Denis Gainty, Jeff Young). FINDINGS: Of the 75 usable student answers submitted for this SLO: 3 received a 1 (4%); 13 received a 2 (17%); 37 received a 3 (49%); and 22 received a 4 (29%). Therefore: 96% of students received a 2 or above (which exceeds our target of 80%); 78% of students received a 3 or above (which exceeds our target of 60%); and 29% of students received a 4 (which misses our target of 30%, but at a rate that is statistically insignificant).

Analysis Questions and Analysis Answers

2. Analysis of Assessment Findings: Where appropriate, discuss the significance of the findings in light of (1) the

desired results, (2) findings from previous years, (3) recent changes in the educational program or the assessment process, etc. What did you learn from the assessment? In particular: (1) What strengths and weaknesses do the findings reveal about the program and/or the assessment process? (2) What impact have recent program changes had on student learning (indicate those program changes that resulted from previous assessment findings)? (3) What impact have recent changes in the assessment process had on the quality of the findings?

This is the first year (of the three in which we have been assessing the Core with these SLOs and instruments) when we have not met our targets on all three measures. This year, for both Objective 1 (Source Differentiation) and Objective 2 (Encounters and Conflicts in Historical Context), we were under our target goal for the percentage of students who would receive the best possible ranking on performance on the assignment in question. This is not a worrisome development -- in general, students are meeting our expectations, and the gap between our targets and our actual measures is not wide. Still, it is worth thinking about why this drop has taken place. It would be difficult to come to any definitive conclusion about this. This year was only the second time that HIST 2110 has been assessed, so we cannot know whether this year represented a drop in student performance, or whether 2012-13's findings were uncharacteristically high. We would only be able to know this by using the same assessment materials for several more cycles. Even then, it would be hard to say whether this drop tells us something about our students, or rather about our instructors. Because each instructor is asked to construct his/her own assignment to test each of the SLOs, the assignments tend to vary, in terms of both content and incisiveness. Some of the assignments instructors use are, in fact, not usable for our purposes, despite the fact that we give them many model assignments and are available for consultation throughout the semester. This concern about our assessment program -- along with others -- has led us (in the Core Assessment/Freshman Studies Committee) to seek to rethink and revise our assessment program.

4. Use of Assessment Findings for Program Improvement: Describe any changes in (1) the educational program and/or (2) the assessment process that are planned or being implemented in response to this year's assessment findings. Be as specific as possible with regard to the nature and timing of the changes to be made as well as their linkages to the assessment findings. Also, briefly summarize the status of previous years' action plans.

The Freshman Studies/Core Assessment committee (Marni Davis, Denis Gainty, Jeff Young) has been discussing the creation of a different assessment instrument. Our goal is to devise a more uniform set of questions, so that all of our students in a course (HIST 2110, HIST 1111, HIST 1112) will be answering the same set of questions, regardless of instructor. This, we hope, will give us a more accurate account of our students' abilities, performance, and learning. We are not currently able to be specific about what that new assessment instrument will look like; we are still discussing possibilities, and it is important that our faculty approves of the direction of these changes. But our new action plan will reflect our intentions, and will be in process through the summer of 2016.