



History | 2014-2015 Assessment Report

1. Please give a brief overview of the assessment data you collected this year. This can be in any form you feel is appropriate, such as a table, a short narrative of results, statistical analysis, highlighting findings that were of particular interest, etc. You will, however, likely want to submit results for each learning outcome you assessed this year individually.

Two years ago (2013), the History department reviewed its Learning Outcomes and its Assessment Program with an interest in improving our students' experiences and skills. The department adopted four new Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will be able to formulate an argument about the past.
2. Students will be able to be able to communicate that argument orally and in written work.
3. Students will be able to engage their peers in discussion (argument) about the past.
4. Students will be able to understand why history matters.

The department also agreed that its capstone seminar course, History 480 History Seminar, would remain the principal venue in which to assess student work. During the academic year 2014-2015, the department offered two sections of HIS 480, one each semester. The fall seminar was taught by Professor Heidi Sherman, and the spring seminar was taught by Professor Eric Morgan. At first glance, Heidi and Eric seem to have created two vastly different courses, with Heidi's focused Everyday Viking Life and Eric's focused on the American Road Trip. In addition, Heidi's course emphasized "experimental archaeology" while Eric's appeared to use much more traditional historical methods (reading books, writing reviews, in-class discussion, etc.). However, each course placed an emphasis on developing historical methods and communications skills. A few examples may help illustrate the process.

In Heidi's course, students spent approximately half of the semester examining the past through hands-on projects, including blacksmithing, woodworking, sewing, harvesting, and cooking, all using medieval methods of productions. In the process, students gained a first-hand view of everyday life in the Viking age. In addition, however, they were exposed to many different techniques of exploring the past, and of necessity began asking their own questions about the past (Outcome 1). In Eric's section of the course, students pursued more traditional historical methods, reading some nine monographs, writing book reviews, engaging in discussions, and the like (Outcomes 1 and 2). However, in both sections of the course, students were asked to develop their own projects based on what they had learned in the previous semester. In addition, these projects proved to be quite innovative. In Heidi's section, for example, students had to develop a project inspired by the work they had done in the first half of the semester; that is, they had to create their own "experimental archaeology" project. Here are a few of the completed projects:

- Tanning deer hide using traditional methods
- Making Viking cheese
- Collecting medieval herbal remedies
- Making a medieval bread oven
- Viking knitting

Likewise, Eric tasked his students with using digital technologies, specifically podcasts, to research, collect, and compose oral histories of Americans on the road. While vastly different, the projects in both seminars, the seminars emphasized the importance of formulating questions and arguments about the past, communicating those arguments, and engaging their peers (broadly defined to include not only their fellow students but also the community at large)(Outcomes 1, 2, and 3). In each of their assessments (appended to this document), Heidi and Eric emphasized an element of the History program at UWGB that is important to keep in mind: while we occasionally have a student who decides to pursue graduate-level work, most of our students are more interested in teaching, careers in public history, or other forms of social and political engagement. As Eric writes in the conclusion of his assessment:

"We are not training future scholars, of that I am certain. To remain both relevant and helpful to our students and their career goals, we should continue to embrace alternatives to traditional written assignments as the final assessment in the seminar, helping to inspire students to think more deeply about their relationship with the past and to emphasize their strengths. Critical thinking and research skills can be gained in a variety of ways, including collaborative projects."

It is clear that both Heidi and Eric emphasized the importance of critical thinking, research, and public engagement. This is suggested not only in the projects students created, such as those in Eric's seminar, which by definition seek to reach a public audience, but also in the way Heidi and Eric inspire their students. Heidi notes, for example, that her students took the material they learned and the projects they were working on "on the road" to teach some 200 fifth-grade students during Phuture Phoenix and UWGB Day at Lambeau Field. Such inspiration is difficult to quantify, but it is a good indication that students have learned the value of history (Outcome 4) and that they have a desire to communicate that value to other people.

While there clearly is still work that must be done – Eric notes that our students are often quiet and shy and sometimes unprepared for class – overall they did well. Eric notes that his students, with some guidance, were successful in achieving the goals he set for them, and Heidi notes that half of her students earned an A and another 40% earned a B. As History chair, I conclude, with Heidi and Eric, that our students are meeting our Learning Outcomes, even if there is room for improvement.

2. How will you use what you've learned from the data that was collected? Some examples are: particular improvements to the curriculum, incorporation of a different pedagogy, a change in assessment plan for the following year in order to obtain more specific feedback, better information or a better response rate, a determined need for faculty development in a particular area, better career alignment, a faculty retreat to discuss the data and how best to use it, etc.

The evidence presented in the assessment conducted by Eric and Heidi suggests that we are on the right track with our program. Students are learning how to formulate questions and arguments, to engage their peers, and to communicate. Indeed, I feel that our students' efforts at communication – participating in Phuture Phoenix and in UWGB Day at Lambeau Field, creating public podcasts – has improved significantly. And, we plan on continuing improvements in this area. Specifically, Professors Sherman and Aldrete are working with students to develop a "history road show" to take to area schools and talk about history. This is a project that comes directly from Heidi's seminar. Such enthusiasm also reflects students' appreciation for the value of history and their desire to share that understanding with others.

There is room for improvement, of course. As Eric notes in his report, some basic skills remain weak, particularly in terms of academic writing. I'm pleased to note, however, that we have just launched a brand new course to address these very issues: History 290 The Craft of History. This course has been designed specifically to introduce history students to the methods and skills historians use, including research and writing, as well as communication skills. The course also is intended to raise students' awareness of the value of history, and in general, to better prepare students for HIS 480 History Seminar. HIS 290 is a prerequisite for HIS 480, and so is required of all History majors. (We also are recommending it highly for History minors.) The first section of the course will be offered in Fall 2015 by Professor Jon Shelton, and a second section will be offered in Spring 2015 by Professor Eric Morgan. (I've attached a sample syllabus for HIS 290 to the end of this document.) In addition, Heidi will be offering HIS 480 again in Fall 2015 and intends again to teach it as an "experimental archaeology" course. It is our hope that by the 2016-2017 academic years (at least) we will begin to see marked improvement in student skills as a result of HIS 290 and continued innovation in HIS 480.

Appendix A

History Seminar Capstone Report: Fall 2014

Instructor: Heidi Sherman

In the Fall 2014 semester, 18 students majoring in History took History 480. As in the previous fall (2013), I taught the seminar as an experiential archaeology course in which students produced a major project that focused the material culture of daily life in the Viking Age.

Rationale:

A majority of our History students seek employment in the fields of education and public history, which requires that they be able to convey a complex historical past to the public. In many of our courses, we teach students how to read and interpret documents, but the field of material culture receives little attention, though it is often through artifacts in museums and classrooms that the public becomes most engaged and excited about the past. My intention for my iteration of the seminar is that, during the first half of the semester, students learn how to interpret a distant past, the Viking Age, through experiential archaeology projects produced by historical interpreters, professional public historians, and academics. These serve as models for students to then conceive of and mount their own experiential archaeology final project, which takes up the second half of the semester.

Training Modules:

During the first half of the semester, students did the following:

- 16 of the 18 students traveled to Owen Christianson's "Viking farmstead" where they studied blacksmithing, Viking recipes (preparing them themselves over the hearth), textiles, and woodworking.
- Harvested and processed the UWGB flax garden.
- Learned flintknapping from an archaeologist employed at Heritage Hill.
- Learned Viking wire knitting from a former UWGB student
- Medieval dye workshop (Alison Gates).
- Archaeological textiles workshop taught by Eva Andersson (Copenhagen, Denmark).
- Ancient metal workshop at Door County Forgeworks.

The students applied some of their developing skill in historical interpretation and education at two events. The class spent dozens of hours outside of class making over 100 wire chains using medieval

weaving techniques for the Phuture Phoenix students. They also taught classes on Viking daily life to over 200 fifth-grade students. Also, several students in the course represented the History program at UWGB Day held at the Lambeau Atrium in November.

Assessment:

Students were assessed by several means: discussion, a blog on what they learned at Viking camp, several presentations on artifact analysis, and a final project in which they undertook an experiential archaeology project, which they documented in a 10-15 page paper and a class presentation. Final projects included the following:

- Processing and tanning a deer hide using traditional techniques.
- Making a medieval-style leather jerkin.
- Making linseed oil.
- Viking cheese making.
- A medieval 'medicine cabinet': herbal remedies from medieval recipes.
- Viking wire knitting.
- Medieval coinage.
- Medieval bread ovens.
- Reconstructing a Viking-age burial mound in miniature.
- Sprang - Viking knitting.

Approximately half the class received final grades of "A" for the semester, while the rest earned grades of B. One student received a D for failure to meet the three in-class presentations requirement, and another did not complete the course, receiving a WF.

Appendix B

Assessment: History 480: Seminar in History

Road Trip! On the Road to Democracy and the American Dream

Spring 2015

Eric J. Morgan

Throughout the nation's history Americans have always loved to be on the move, embracing a pioneering spirit that is embedded deep within the country's democratic ideals of opportunity and expansion, of dreams and reinvention. With the widespread availability of cars and the establishment of a vast highway system by the mid-20th century, many Americans had more opportunities than ever before to explore their nation and to reinvent themselves, taking untraveled roads to seek out their own American dreams. Why has the road mattered so much to Americans as they have sought to find and define themselves amidst eras of expansion, depression, war, turbulence, and peace? Through histories, films, novels, other works of popular culture, and a digital humanities project, the spring 2015 seminar in history sought to find answers to this question, exploring the importance of the open road to democracy and the enduring American dream.

My first experience with the seminar in history last spring was mixed, as many of my students were unprepared for rigorous readings, discussions, and research papers. I decided to alter my course expectations slightly for this year's seminar, moving away from staid research papers and towards a collaborative digital humanities project, and the results were largely positive. I believe strongly in experimenting with pedagogy, and wanted to try something that would be more engaging than a research paper that could also be accessible to a general audience. Throughout the seminar students

were assessed on their overall participation, four book reviews, and a variety of smaller assignments related to their final project, a group podcast chronicling some aspect of the road in American life. To get us to that final goal we read nine books throughout the semester, from historical monographs to novels to memoirs, including some of the most notable books on the American road. As I experienced last year, many students were unfamiliar with the techniques of skimming or gutting a book to make reading a book per week a manageable task. Likewise, book reviews were often simplistic, offering general summaries rather than analysis on a book's strengths and weaknesses. Some students were also unprepared to engage in weekly discussions of our readings and films, probably preferring lectures (which I do not believe in for seminar courses). I did have several standout students who contributed excellent insights on a weekly basis, but overall students were quiet. I would describe our student population as shy. Students did team up to lead one discussion each throughout the semester, though the questions they posed were often uninspiring and many of the groups used PowerPoint presentations, which were awkward for a discussion-based class. We can do a better job of getting students to understand the idea of an argument and how to think critically about both the past and the writing of history. I consistently urged students as they were working on their podcasts to relate them back to our readings, even if not explicitly, to provide a framework or theme for their stories. I'm certainly not an instructor all that interested in theory or historiography, but I did want students to be able to make connections between the readings and films and the podcasts they were creating. With some guidance most groups were able to accomplish this goal.

Despite some issues with our weekly discussions and book reviews, this seminar was markedly improved from my first experience last year. I am absolutely convinced that students benefit more from hands-on and collaborative projects than traditional research papers. Writing remains important and my students did write a fair amount in our seminar (including a final reflective essay that asked them to pull together everything we had read and discussed throughout the course), but a traditional research paper is but one way to communicate and talk about history. The final projects, which required the collection of oral histories and the use of audio production technology, were fantastic and really epitomized the type of work our students are capable of producing. Each group created compelling stories that related to the broad theme of the course, and I was proud of the end product. We are not training future scholars, of that I am certain. To remain both relevant and helpful to our students and their career goals, we should continue to embrace alternatives to traditional written assignments as the final assessment in the seminar, helping to inspire students to think more deeply about their relationship with the past and to emphasize their strengths. Critical thinking and research skills can be gained in a variety of ways, including collaborative projects. I do think that we have some potential for making digital and public history a greater focus in our department, which would ultimately be a great benefit to our students in an undeniably digital world.

Appendix C

History 290: The Craft of History

Course Description

This course offers an overview of historical research methods, introducing students to the various ways in which historians think, debate, and write about the past. We will explore historiography, the difference between primary and secondary sources, types of primary sources, how to interpret and analyze various sources, digital resources, and potential careers for history majors. The major objective of this course is to enable students to comprehend and develop the skills of a historian, honing their

research, writing, and critical thinking skills, all of which are applicable to numerous career paths and integral to engaged citizenship.

Learning Outcomes

Through our lectures, readings, discussions, and various activities, we will accomplish the following by the end of the semester:

1. We will learn how to identify, locate, and analyze an array of primary and secondary sources integral to the study of history;
2. We will learn how to craft an appropriate historical question and a thesis or argument in response to that question;
3. We will learn how to substantiate an argument based on the use of evidence and analysis.

Course Texts

- Caroline Hoefflerle, *The Essential Historiography Reader*
- Anthony Brundage, *Going to the Sources: A Guide to Historical Research and Writing*
- Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*

Grading

Participation	100 points	25 percent
Reading Journal	100 points	25 percent
Research Portfolio	200 points	50 percent
TOTAL	400 points	100 percent

Assignments

1. Participation

This course will be discussion-based. Instead of your instructor simply presenting information to you, each week we will engage in active discussion of various topics related to historical methods. While I will offer an occasional lecture, the course is designed to facilitate discussion and active learning. As such, it is crucial that all students come to class prepared—meaning having read and thought about the assigned readings—and that all students participate in our weekly discussions. Talking about books and ideas can be intimidating, but rest assured that we are all here to learn from each other, and that there are no “right” or “wrong” answers. No question, however insignificant or trivial it may seem to you, is worth ignoring. If there is anything, however small, that you do not understand about an argument, theory, historical event, or whatever else may come up throughout the course, do not hesitate to say so. Since it is impossible to participate if you miss class, the more classes you do not attend, the worse your participation grade will be. Please let your instructor know if any emergencies arise that will preclude you from coming to class. Your overall participation is worth 25 percent (100 points) of your total grade for the course.

2. Reading Journal

All students will be expected to complete class readings for the date they are assigned. Once a week, students must submit a reading response journal in which you answer questions about the readings and compose your own discussion questions. These responses will be graded on a pass/fail basis. The reading journal is worth 25 percent (100 points) of your total grade for the course.

3. Research Portfolio

Your final assignment for this course is to produce a Research Portfolio on a topic of your choosing. This Research Portfolio is not a formal or complete research paper. Rather, it is intended to provide you a pathway to help develop the research, writing, and analytical skills you will need in order to develop a formal research paper or other project in the future. Once you have completed this portfolio, you will also have a good base of secondary and primary sources to develop a future research paper. The Research Portfolio will consist of the following components:

- Historiographical Essay and Bibliography (750 words, due Week Three)
- Research Question and Thesis Statement (750 words, due Week Nine)
- Primary Source Analysis (750 Words, due Week Twelve)

The combined research portfolio is worth 50 percent (200 points) of your total grade for the course.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Consistent with the federal law and the policies of the University of Wisconsin System, it is the policy of the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay to provide appropriate and necessary accommodations to students with documented physical and learning disabilities. If you anticipate requiring any auxiliary aids or services, please contact the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities at 465-2671 as soon as possible to discuss your needs and to arrange for the provision of services.

Academic Misconduct

The board of regents, administrators, faculty, academic staff and students of the University of Wisconsin System believe that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental to the mission of higher education and of the university of Wisconsin system. The university has a responsibility to promote academic honesty and integrity and to develop procedures to deal effectively with instances of academic dishonesty. Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, for the appropriate citation of sources, and for respect of others' academic endeavors. Students who violate these standards must be confronted and must accept the consequences of their actions.

Academic misconduct is an act in which a student: (a) Seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation; (b) Uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise; (c) Forges or falsifies academic documents or records; (d) Intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others; (e) Engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student's academic performance; or (f) Assists other students in any of these acts.

If you have any questions concerning academic misconduct, please contact your instructor or consult the section on academic disciplinary procedures at .

Course Schedule

1. Learning History All Over Again

Week One - What is History? An Introduction to History and Historiography

Week Two - How Historians Debate the Past

Week Three - Getting to Know your Library and Other Resources

- ****Historiographical Essay and Bibliography Due****

Week Four - Secondary Sources, Part I: Journal Articles and Academic Books

Week Five - Secondary Sources, Part II: Popular and Public History

Week Six - Exploring Public History

Week Seven - The Digital Humanities

Week Eight - Careers for History Majors, Part I

2. The Craft of History

Week Nine - Finding, Selecting, and Evaluating Secondary Sources

- ****Research Question and Thesis Statement Due****

Week Ten - On Writing: Style, Citations, and Bibliographies

Week Eleven - What are Primary Sources?

Week Twelve - Finding, Selecting, and Evaluating Primary Sources

- ****Primary Source Analysis Due****

Week Thirteen - Argument and Analysis

Week Fourteen - Careers for History Majors, Part II

Week Fifteen - Conclusions