

## **Course Outcomes Guide**

**June 2017**

**Course/Program Title: World History I (HIS 101)**

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### **Expected Learning Outcomes:**

- 1) Identify and evaluate primary and secondary source materials and demonstrate an understanding of their historical context and relevance; Recognize bias and its impact upon the value of the source; Extract valid and valuable information from the source.
- 2) Recognize important trends and themes in human cultural, economic, political and ideological development; Identify and evaluate the impact of these historical trends upon global development.

### **Assessment**

Since Fall 2013 a rigorous ten-question assessment has been implemented each semester. The assessment includes several primary source reading selections and ten multiple choice questions that require students to evaluate and analyze both the content of the sources and the trends and themes common to several or all of the sources. Students take the assessment at the beginning of the semester and then again at the end of the semester to determine the degree to which they have mastered the desired skills. Specific questions in the assessment tool measure the application of methods used in the study of history and the application of historical knowledge learned in the course. Items included on the assessment were designed to pose significant challenges to even those students who became adept at interpreting historical documents. This is the fourth year in which this assessment has been implemented. As part of a 4 year cycle of review, the assessment has been evaluated, and some revisions have been implemented, although a few other revisions will be made this coming year (see Follow-up below).

(Historical Note: A source analysis assessment of ten questions was designed and was first utilized in the Fall of 2009. However, most of the data gathered was lost when the History program was moved from the Humanities to the Social Sciences Division during the summer of 2012, a change which coincided with the hires of the current full-time faculty members.)

### **Validation**

Internal validation includes analysis of the data collected, as well as comparisons between the assessment data and the outcomes of other types of exercises assigned in this course. Moreover, the results from the new assessment tool seem to yield data that is consistent with the data that has survived from 2009-2011. External validation derives from the alignment of the assessment tools with standards set by the American Historical Association in the 2016 Tuning core document, "History Discipline Core" (<https://www.historians.org/teaching-and-learning/tuning-the-history-discipline/2016-history-discipline-core>).

## Results

Assessment scores have improved over the course of each semester in almost every section for which data was reported. This year's pre-test scores may have been stronger because of revisions made to the assessment tool, and this likely accounts for some of the improvement on the post-test scores as well. Nonetheless, improvement in the test scores between the pre-and post-tests is comparable to improvement measured over the course during preceding years. The earlier form of the assessment tool seemed overly rigorous, particularly for a pre-test, and the current revision appears to have addressed this problem, and we hope that the upcoming year's data will support this conclusion.

The following table provides a semester by semester comparison of aggregate data:

Semester/Year	Percentage of students scoring 6 or better on Pre-test	Percentage of students scoring 6 or better on Post-test
SP17	50	70
FA16	37	66
(Assessment tool revised Summer, 2016.)		
SP16	29	66
FA15	26	56
SP15	15	52
FA14 (For this semester some data was omitted because of errors.)	36	65
SP14	21	46
FA13	16	46

## Follow-up

The earlier version of this assessment tool seemed overly rigorous, particularly for a pre-test, and the current revision appears to have addressed this problem, and we hope that the upcoming year's data will support this conclusion. However, we are still concerned with the following:

- 1) Items on the assessment tool were revised to better reflect the average incoming level of reading comprehension, thus this year's data does not consistently reflect the issues with reading comprehension in the same way as prior years data had. By comparison, data collected in HIS 102 (which had for the first year been offered with the same ENG 099 or placement in 100 prerequisite as HIS 101) demonstrated low pre-test scores similar to the trend seen up to this point in data for HIS 101.
- 2) We continue to be concerned about the number of students in online courses who do not complete the pre- or post- tests. These assessment tools may need to be required and graded in some way in order to obtain more complete data. Next year faculty will discuss a universal procedure (for both face-to-face and online sections) that will yield more complete online results.

## **Budget Justification**

Previously, data collected for HIS 101 reflected an increasing number of students entering HIS 102 with inadequate reading comprehension skills. Although scores were stronger, this appears to reflect a change in the HIS 101 assessment tool itself, especially since improvement between the pre-test and post-test reflect a similar average rate of progress. In comparison data from HIS 102, where the assessment tool did not change, reflected a continuing problem with low pre-test scores. Thus, the budget justification given here is the same as for HIS 102, as follows.

Raising the ENG prerequisite would provide one possible approach to addressing the trend of declining pre-test scores, but would leave many students with fewer options for fulfilling the behavioral and social sciences education requirement within the first year of a student's 2-year degree pathway. Current History faculty are exploring the use of some classroom activities to improve student's study of history through reading, however reading comprehension cannot be adequately addressed within the confines of the disciplinary curriculum. Three other Maryland Community Colleges (Frederick, Garrett and Prince Georges) offer pre- or co-requisite reading comprehension courses to address this gap, and co-instruction in college-level reading would be another, if more costly approach to solving the issue. Alternatively, providing targeted assistance in reading comprehension to students via the Student Learning Center would require access to tutors or faculty proficient in teaching remedial reading, but may provide a more practically and fiscally flexible approach.