Course/Program Title: **World History II (HIS-102)**

Course/Program Team: **Lore Kuehnert, Tim Jenness**

Expected Learning Outcomes

1) Demonstrate the ability to evaluate and utilize primary sources.
2) Demonstrate the ability to analyze secondary sources through the identification of important themes and author bias; critically evaluate the arguments presented in the source and demonstrate the ability to formulate alternative interpretations.
3) 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 which 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on the assessment were designed to pose significant challenges to even those students who became adept at interpreting historical documents.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 to the order of question items were been implemented, although no changes to item content were made, and results seemed consistent (see Follow-up below) for the pre-test, with possible slight improvement of one item on post-test.

(Historical note, final restatement: Assessment data based upon essay questions was gathered prior to Fall 2013, although the legacy data was lost when the History program was moved from the Humanities to the Social Sciences division in Summer 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

As compared to data from the preceding years, data for each outcome shows similar improvement from pre-test to post-test for each student, however the overall number of students scoring 6 or better on the post-test is lower than that measured last year, and pre-test scores are significantly lower. In Fall of 2016, 15% of students scored 6 points or better on the initial assessment, whereas by the end of the semester 59% of students scored 6 points or better. For Spring of 2017, 21% of students scored 6 points or better on the initial assessment, whereas by the end of the semester 57% of students scored 6 points or better. The low pretest scores, which were lower this year than in any other year, raise concerns that a significant number of students have inadequate support for developing college-level reading skills. Coincidentally, at the beginning of this year the English prerequisite for the course was lowered to ENG 099 or placement in ENG 100 (from the prior prerequisite of 100 or placement in 101). Since the assessment tool is a reading comprehension-based tool, it suggests that the reading comprehension levels reflected by the English placement had a bearing on this year's pretest data.

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	21	57
FA16	15	59
(Assessment tool revised Summer, 2016.)		
SP16	38	62
FA15	28	66
SP15	31	54
FA14 (For this semester some data was omitted because of errors.)	18	36
SP14	38	58
FA13	23	64

Follow-up
1) The assessment tool emphasizes primary source reading skills, and does not adequately include the assessment of secondary documents. Because the change in the English prerequisites needed to be measured in some way, planned revisions to the assessment tool were not made, aside from slight revision to the order of items on the assessment tool. Further revision will be considered, but will be delayed until the following year, after the new lower-cost textbook is being implemented.
2) The lower ENG prerequisite may need to be reconsidered. Nonetheless, in terms of reading-level, the material taught in HIS 102 includes documents that are more current and have less antiquated language than that taught in HIS 101.

3) Results indicate that continuing instructional emphasis should be placed upon developing students' abilities to process historical evidence, but that for many students supplemental support in reading comprehension is required.   (See budget justification below.)
4) Implementing the pre-test and post-test and awarding points on a CR/NC basis for participation has led to better participation in the assessment for online sections, and should be continued to insure adequate data collection for online sections.

Budget Justification

As demonstrated by the data collected, an increasing number of students entering HIS 102 require support for reading comprehension. 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.