

## Course Outcomes Guide

**Course/Program Title:** HIS 201 – United States History I

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**Course/Program Team:** Drs. Timothy Jenness and Lore Kuehnert

### Expected Learning Outcomes:

1. Analyze and evaluate primary and secondary sources; demonstrate knowledge of the sources' content, identify bias, and express a critical opinion of the validity of the author's argument.
2. Demonstrate the ability to think critically about a specific historical event based on the examination of a variety of source materials.
3. Recognize important trends and themes in United States history and demonstrate the connection between historical foundations and current events.
4. Recognize the contributions of voluntary and coerced immigrants to the American nation.

**Assessment** (How do or will students demonstrate achievement of each outcome? Please attach a copy of your assessment electronically.)

Comprised of several primary source reading selections and ten multiple choice questions, the assessment requires students to evaluate and analyze the sources' content and identify trends and themes common to several or all of the passages. Students are administered the assessment at the beginning and end of the semester to determine the degree to which they have achieved the desired outcomes. At least 70% of students should be able to achieve a minimum score of seven on the assessment after completing the course.

**Validation** (What methods have you used or will you use to validate your assessment?)

Internal validation includes analysis of the data collected by faculty with terminal degrees in the discipline. The results from the assessment tool typically yields data that are generally consistent from semester to semester. External validation derives from the alignment of the assessment tools with standards set by the American Historical Association in the 2013 tuning core document, "History Discipline Core" (<http://www.historians.org/teaching-and-learning/current-projects/tuning>).

**Results** (What do your assessment data show? If you have not yet assessed student achievement of your learning outcomes, when is assessment planned?)

Assessment data for the academic year 2017-2018 is summarized below:

	<u><b>Pre-Test</b></u>	<u><b>Post-Test</b></u>
<u>Fall 2017</u>		
Average score (2 sections/27 students)	6.44	7.11
% of students achieving a score of 7+	51.9%	70.4%
<u>Spring 2018</u>		
Average score (3 sections/30 students)	5.33	7.07
% of students achieving a score of 7+	53.3%	60.0%

The updated data continue to show that a majority of students perform better on the assessment after completing the course. Assignments designed to strengthen students' analytical and critical thinking skills and the course's overall rigor undoubtedly contributed to the aggregate improvement. Post-test data in SP18, for instance, reveal that 56.7% of students struggled to draw conclusions after reading select passages (portions of Outcomes 1 and 3). Similarly, 80% of students failed to identify the central argument of a specific passage (portions of Outcomes 1, 2, and 4). These skills require an ability to read carefully and thoughtfully. Given the lack of general preparedness (e.g. reading comprehension, etc.) and weak critical thinking skills with which many students enter college, this is an ongoing pedagogical challenge that cannot be overcome in one semester but is one that faculty continue to address on a case-by-case basis.

**Follow-up** (How have you used or how will you use the data to improve student learning?) Faculty integrate a variety of primary documents and analytical strategies in each course to strengthen students' ability to analyze and interpret historical evidence. Review of the SLOA data will continue to determine the effectiveness of the current course design. Long-term decreases or increases in aggregate scores will be analyzed to determine if any changes in the course are necessary. Ongoing faculty discussions focus on strategies that might more effectively address student deficiencies.

**Budget Justification** (What resources are necessary to improve student learning?) Resources appear adequate at this time.