

Unit Name: Department of History and Philosophy Assessment Summary Fall 2008-Spring 2009

What are the student learning outcomes in your unit?

Student reading: critical reading skills with both primary and secondary sources.
Student writing skills.
Student research skills.

Which outcome did you assess this academic year?

All three above. We have conducted two department assessment meetings (Dec.2007, and Dec.2008). Our goals were similar in the past two years, except that in December 2008, we gave greater emphasis to the preparation of majors' basic skills in historical research and writing.

How did you assess their skills before, during and / or at the end of the semester / academic year?

Our assessment tools are primarily our capstone proseminars. In philosophy, the capstone is conducted as an independent studies course (PHIL P383 or PHIL P490), and in history, it is offered twice a year, in spring and fall. Starting from fall 2009, intensive writing becomes a universal feature for all history J495 capstone proseminars instead of optional. We have also introduced a 200 level history proseminar on top of the two J495 proseminars. The former is to introduce basic historical methodologies for history research, interpretation, and writing. History majors who enroll in fall 2009 or after have to take the course as a prerequisite to their two J495s. This helps to ensure that when history majors take J495, their research and writing skills will be adequate for the classes, and for a history junior/senior. The first H225 proseminar on methodology is going to be offered in spring 2010, and from then on, it will be offered every fall (starting from fall 2010).

Another form of assessment we have used is student panels at the annual IU Northwest COAS research meetings. Each year, we have one or two excellent student panels organized by faculty members. We plan to continue the practice in the spring 2010 COAS student research meeting.

Almost every semester in the past two years, we have one history major requesting to do an internship in archival research. We usually accommodate them and sometimes we encourage some majors to do so, usually working out a plan with Steve MacShane at the Calumet Regional Archives, providing our students with a chance to exercise their primary research skills.

We also hope to promote history majors' academic communication with colleges and universities in the region through the establishment of the IU Northwest branch of the history honor society, Phi Alpha Theta. Nine history majors were inducted into the society in May 2009.

We meet once a year to assess our teaching outcomes, in December.

Please summarize the data you have collected this semester / academic year.

We are still in the process of collecting more data on whether majors improve in overall skills when they take the additional 200 level proseminar on spring and fall 2010. We declared student writing as one important goal to work on first in December 2007. By December 2008, we found to raise history majors' ability to research and write, they needed a course in more elementary

methodology, which is why we launched the 200 level course on historical methodology. In December 2009 we may be able to collect more data on the basic research / writing skills of our current history majors (as over 12 have graduated or are about to graduate since summer 2009), which will help us better design the 200 level course in 2010, as well as coming up with other measures to help students learn.

Please describe any programmatic changes you have made or are planning to make based on the data you have collected.

The most prominent programmatic change is the historical methodology course we now required all incoming history majors starting from fall 2009. Also, the new history honor society, Phi Alpha Theta, along with the History Club, may promote a higher level of academic standards among our majors. We will also continue to send students to internships at the Calumet Regional Archives, something we started doing about two years ago. We may routinize sending students to the COAS research conference (currently many of our proseminars already do so: have students present their seminar papers at the conference. We may do more of it with our other upper level courses, too).

****Note:** Please use this template to provide the responses to the prompts above.**