Department: History

Assessment Coordinator: Kevin Leonard

Departmental Mission: The study of history is essential to a liberal education. The mission of the Department of History is to create and nurture a community of scholars, including students in general education courses, undergraduate majors and minors, graduate students, faculty, and staff, who value historical thinking. We prepare students for thoughtful participation in public affairs, further education, and a wide range of careers by fostering an appreciation of the diversity of human cultures and experiences, the development of research and analytical skills, and the ability to communicate effectively, especially in writing.

Department Student Learning Outcomes: Upon graduation, (Department or Program) majors will be able to:

1. demonstrate knowledge and understanding of fundamental concepts and concerns of the discipline and of major historical events in each of at least three difference geographic areas and/or chronological periods.
2. demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the current historiographical and theoretical debates among historians in each of these geographic areas and/or chronological periods.
3. analyze thoughtfully and thoroughly primary and secondary sources.
4. articulate their ideas clearly and effectively both in writing and in oral presentations and discussions.
5. conduct historical research by identifying, locating, gathering, and analyzing appropriate primary and secondary sources in order to produce persuasive historical interpretations.

GUR (liberal arts & sciences) Learning Outcomes

6. __________
7. __________
History (cont.)

Student Learning Outcomes (Departmental and GUR) Assessed This Year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Measures</th>
<th>SLOs Assessed</th>
<th>Results</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Final papers and presentations in HIST 499</td>
<td>4, 5</td>
<td>Summaries of student performance, relative to SLO 4 and 5, were reported by faculty teaching HIST 499, our capstone seminar. Faculty reported that 80 percent of students demonstrated that they were able to articulate their ideas clearly and effectively in writing and in oral presentations and discussions and that 86 percent of students demonstrated that they were able to conduct historical research.</td>
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<td>WEST-E scores</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>In the past year 10 history/social studies majors and 1 history major passed the WEST-E subject test in Social Studies. Their average score was 259, 19 points higher than is needed to pass, and four points higher than the statewide mean score.</td>
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<td>Senior Exit Survey</td>
<td>4, 5</td>
<td>Graduates’ satisfaction with Western’s contribution to their development of writing skills is higher among history majors than among majors in all but one other department in the college. Graduates of only two of the other fourteen departments or programs in the college express greater satisfaction than history majors with Western’s contribution to their ability to use library resources for research.</td>
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Changes based on assessment findings:

Because three sections of HIST 499 were taught in the spring, the data regarding student achievement relative to our programmatic learning objectives were incomplete until the very end of the academic year, and faculty did not have the opportunity to discuss assessment and decide on changes before the summer. Members of the department will discuss the results of this assessment process at our retreat in September 2012 and determine what changes can be made to courses to improve student performance, particularly in written and oral communication.