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 demonstrate:

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

**Student Learning Outcomes Assessed This Year**:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Measures</th>
<th>SLOs Assessed</th>
<th>Results</th>
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<tr>
<td>WEST-E scores</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>In 2012-2013, the last complete year for which data is available, 16 History or History/Social Studies majors passed the WEST-E subject test in social studies. 20 percent of the questions on the WEST-E test knowledge of U.S. history, and another 20 percent of the questions test knowledge of world history. The average score of WWU History and/or History/Social Studies majors was 259, 19 points above the passing score of 240 and 2 points above the mean score of 257 for statewide test takers in the same period.</td>
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Written assignments submitted by a sample of students who took upper-division courses in three different fields: ancient history (HIST 311), European history (HIST 315 or HIST 316), and U.S. history (HIST 391)

A group of students who had all taken the same upper-division course in each of three different fields was identified, and their work—written and oral—was evaluated by the professor. I then consulted with each faculty member to determine how well each student had demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the current historiographical and theoretical debates among historians in each of these fields. Faculty members reported that all members of the sample had effectively demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the current historiographical and theoretical debates among historians in each of these geographic/chronological fields, although some students in the sample demonstrated much greater knowledge and understanding of these debates than others.

Senior Exit Survey

Graduates’ satisfaction with Western’s contribution to their development of the ability to critically evaluate information is higher among history majors than among majors in all but one other department in the college, although majors in Communication Studies, Liberal Studies, and Psychology expressed satisfaction equal to that of history majors.

Changes based on assessment findings:

Because a section of HIST 391 was 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 the entire department 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 2014 and determine what changes can be made to courses to improve student performance, particularly in the demonstration of knowledge and understanding of historiographical and theoretical debates among historians in the fields of ancient, European, and U.S. history.