

History Department

December, 2009

Middle States Assessment Plan:
Background Information and Revised Plan

Part I: Background:

Assessment Scaffolding Previously in Place

- Department Objectives
 - Sample Assessment Strategies
 - Reading and Writing Guidelines
 - Definitions of Letter Grades
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History Department
Montclair State University
Program Objectives

Listed below are the Program Objectives for the Undergraduate History Major at Montclair State University. They are divided into three categories: Critical Understandings about the nature of history and historical knowledge; Intellectual Skills necessary for and fostered by historical study; and Intellectual Dispositions characteristic of students seriously engaged in the study of history.

A. Critical Understandings:

- 1. Human Agency and Historical Contingency:** History is the product of human agency and as a result is never inevitable or foreordained.
Objective: At the end of the program students will be able to describe examples of human agency in historical development.
- 2. Causation and Complexity:** Human agency is always the product of multiple causes and history as a result is inherently complex.
Objective: At the end of the program students will be able to describe examples of the causal complexity of significant historical developments.
- 3. Change and Continuity:** Historical time is characterized by constant change and lasting continuity
Objective: At the end of the program students will be able to describe examples of how change and continuity mark historical time.
- 4. Interpretive:** Knowledge of human history is always interpretive.
Objective: At the end of the program students will be able to describe examples of the interpretive nature of historical knowledge.
- 5. Factual Basis:** A basis in fact is a necessary condition of all historical knowledge.
Objective: At the end of the program students will be able to describe examples which demonstrate the importance of factual accuracy in all historical knowledge.
- 6. Perspective:** Individual perspective is a critical condition of historical knowledge.
Objective: At the end of the program students will be able to describe examples of which demonstrate the importance of perspective in all historical knowledge.

B. Intellectual Skills:

- 1. Posing Historical Questions:** At the end of the program students will be able to pose historical questions.
- 2. Formulating Historical Hypotheses:** At the end of the program students will be able to formulate historical hypotheses.

- 3. Using Various Research Media:** At the end of the program students will be able to demonstrate proficiency in using several research media.
- 4. Using Primary and Secondary Sources:** At the end of the program students will be able to distinguish between primary and secondary sources and also use both in constructing an historical argument/interpretation.
- 5. Evaluating Evidence:** At the end of the program students will be able to evaluate historical evidence on the basis of factual reliability and relevance to a specific topic.
- 6. Citing Evidence:** At the end of the program students will be able to cite evidence, using one of several standard citation systems.
- 7. Distinguishing Fact and Opinion:** At the end of the program students will be able to distinguish fact and opinion.
- 8. Distinguishing Cause and Effect:** At the end of the program students will be able to causes and effects.
- 9. Constructing Chronology and Sequencing Events:** At the end of the program students will be able to construct a chronological sequence of events.
- 10. Communicating Conclusions in Written and Oral Formats:** At the end of the program students will be able to communicate conclusions in both written and oral formats.

C. Intellectual Dispositions:

- 1. A Healthy Sense of Skepticism:** Throughout the program students will demonstrate a healthy sense of skepticism.
- 2. A Purposeful Curiosity:** Throughout the program students will demonstrate a purposeful curiosity.
- 3. A Sense of Intellectual Persistence:** Throughout the program students will demonstrate a sense of intellectual persistence.
- 4. A Resourceful and Deliberative Spirit:** Throughout the program students will demonstrate a resourceful and deliberative spirit.
- 5. An Enthusiastic Sense of Joy in Learning:** Throughout the program students will demonstrate an enthusiastic sense of joy in learning.

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Sample Assessment Strategies

1. **In-Class Examinations:** Examination of student comprehension of class lectures and/or assigned readings by means of restricted and constructed response questions, but most often emphasizing the latter.
2. **Take-Home Examinations:** Examination of student comprehension of class lectures and/or assigned readings, almost always by means of constructed response essay questions.
3. **Focused Literature Reviews:** Annotated bibliographical essays about a series of topically related readings.
4. **Synthesizing Essays:** Essays in which students synthesize a series of short readings about a related topic, usually involving both primary and secondary sources.
5. **Monograph Analyses:** Essays in which students critically analyze the thesis and argumentation of a monographic study.
6. **Film Analyses:** Essays in which students critically analyze the thesis and representative argumentation of a historical film, viewed either in class or out.
7. **Formal Research Papers:** Semester-long research paper, usually 8-18 pages in length, in which all of the requirements of a publishable-quality manuscript are followed.
8. **Quizzes:** Relatively short in-class examination of student comprehension of a recent lecture and/or assigned reading, usually involving a series of limited constructive response questions.
9. **Scored Discussions:** Students, either individually or in small groups, lead a full-class discussion about a single or short series of assigned readings.
10. **Formal Debates:** Students in small teams debate a specific historical thesis in front of the rest of the class.
11. **Oral Presentations:** Students, either individually or in small groups, make oral presentations to the rest of class about a relevant topic, issue or question.

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Guidelines for Written and Reading Assignments

A. Guidelines for Written Assignments

- 1. Final Course Grades:** Final grades in all 200-, 300-, and 400-level courses should not be based solely on in-class examinations, but rather should include at least one significant out-of-class writing assignment of approximately the following lengths:
 - a. 200-level courses 5-7 pages (i.e., 1250-2000 words);
 - b. 300-level courses 7-10 pages (i.e., 1750-3000 words);
 - c. 400-level courses 8-12 pages (i.e., 2500-3500 words);
 - d. Senior Seminar 12-18 pages (3500-6000 words).
- 2. Professor's Discretion:** The specific nature of all writing assignments is the professor's discretion.

B. Guidelines for Reading Assignments:

1. Total Amount of Reading

- a. 200-level courses: 1100-1500 total pages (i.e., about 75-100 pages per week)
 - b. 300-level courses: 1500-2250 total pages (i.e., about 100-150 pages per week)
 - c. 400-level courses: 1500-3000 total pages (i.e., about 100-200 per week)
- 2. Clarification:** Totals should include estimate of reading for all research assignments

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Definitions of Letter Grades

- **A:** Excellent, superior in most every respect
- **B:** Good, better than what is expected of serious university student
- **C:** Acceptable, but lower than what is expected of serious university student
- **D:** Marginally acceptable work
- **F:** Unacceptable work

Part II: Assessment Program: Overview, Curriculum Guide and Documentation

- Brief Overview
 - Revised HIST Curriculum Guide (effective Fall 2010)
 - Curriculum Alignment Document
 - Assessment Template Document
 - Assessment Rubric Document
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History Department
Montclair State University
Brief Overview of Assessment Program¹

As indicated in both the Curriculum Alignment and Assessment Template documents below, the History Department has selected six of its established Program Objectives for this round of the Middle States Assessment Program. Each objective will be introduced to students in HIST 100 The Study of History and will then be assessed on an interim basis in HIST 300 Research Seminar and on a final basis in the capstone course, HIST 400 Senior Seminar. All three courses are required of History Majors and must be taken in the order indicated above, that sequence insured by the curricular prerequisite requirements outlined in the Curriculum Guide below. The specific strategy that will be used to assess all six objectives will be a significant research assignment which must conform to the department's established Writing Guidelines for 300- and 400-level courses, with those Guidelines included above. The department has also developed a Rubric for these research assignments, included below, which will promote a high degree of standardization in grading, thus enabling comparisons of results over time. Finally, only full time members of the History Department may teach HIST 100, HIST 300 and HIST 400.

Greater specificity in the Assessment Program is indicated in the documents below and also some of those included above.

¹ This program was developed with the assistance of Barbara Ritola and Joanne Cote-Bonanno of the Provost's Office. While the format for the Curriculum Alignment and Assessment Template documents do not conform to grids distributed to department chairs and program coordinators for this report, both Barbara and Joanne have agreed that the format used in the report is nevertheless satisfactory.

HISTORY MAJOR CURRICULUM GUIDE FOR UNDERGRADUATES
Fall 2010
General Education Fall 2002

1. GENERAL EDUCATION (51-57 sh)

A. New Student Seminar (1 s.h.)

B. Interdisciplinary Courses:

B1. Contemporary Issues I (3 s.h.)

B2. Contemporary Issues II (3 s.h.)

B3. Contemporary Issues III (3 s.h.)

C. Communication:

C1. Writing/Literature (6 s.h.)

C2. Communication (3 s.h.)

D. Fine and Performing Arts (3 s.h.)

F. Humanities:

F1. World Literature or General Humanities (3s.h.)

F2. Philosophy or Religion (3 s.h.)

G. Computer Science (0-3 s.h.)

H. Mathematics (3 s.h.)

I. Natural/Physical Science Laboratory (4 s.h.)

J. Physical Education (1 s.h.)

K. Social Science:

K1. American or European History (3 s.h.)
HIST 103, 105, 106, 117 or 118

K2. Non-Western Cultural Perspectives (3 s.h.)
HIST 108, 114, 132

K3. Social Science (3 s.h.)

2. GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS (6-9 s.h.)

A. World Languages (3-6 s.h.)

B. Multicultural Elective (3 s. hrs)

3. HISTORY MAJOR (36 s.hrs.)

Introductory Sequence 12 sh

HIST 100 The Study of History 3 sh
(Writing Requirement course for Majors)

Survey Sequence 9 sh

- American History (HIST 117 or 118)
- European History (HIST 103 , 105 or 106)
- Non-Western History (one course – HIST 108, 109, 114, 116, 128, 129, 131, 132, or 133)

Elective Sequence 12 sh

Second Non-Western Course: 100-300 level 3 sh

Electives 200-300 levels 9 sh

- 200 level (Any History Course)
- 200-300 level (Any History Course)
- 300 level (Any History Course)

Research Sequence 12 sh

HIST 300 Research Seminar 3 sh

Electives 400 level 6 sh

- 400 level (Any History Course)
- 400 level (Any History Course)

HIST 400 Senior Seminar 3 sh

Prerequisites:

- Students must pass one 100-level course to take a 200-level course.
- Students must pass four 100-level courses, including Hist 100, and one 200-level course to take a 300-level course
- Students must pass Hist 300 to take a 400-level course

4. FREE ELECTIVES: 27-33 SH

REQUIRED TOTAL for GRADUATION 120 SH

History Department
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Curriculum Alignment

1. ***Goal #1: At the end of the program students will be able to describe examples of the interpretive nature of historical knowledge.***
 - a. **Introduction:** HIST 100 The Study of History
 - b. **Preliminary Reinforcement:** Three required 100-level survey courses in US, European and Non-Western History
 - c. **Secondary Reinforcement:** 200- and 300-level History electives
 - d. **Tertiary Reinforcement:** HIST 300: Research Methodology (required research assignment)
 - e. **Capstone Reinforcement:** HIST 400 Senior Seminar (required research assignment)

2. ***Goal #2: At the end of the program students will be able to describe examples which demonstrate the importance of factual accuracy in all historical knowledge.***
 - a. **Introduction:** HIST 100 The Study of History
 - b. **Preliminary Reinforcement:** Three required 100-level survey courses in US, European and Non-Western History
 - c. **Secondary Reinforcement:** 200- and 300-level History electives
 - d. **Tertiary Reinforcement:** HIST 300: Research Methodology (required research assignment)
 - e. **Capstone Reinforcement:** HIST 400 Senior Seminar (required research assignment)

3. ***Goal #3: At the end of the program students will be able to describe examples of which demonstrate the importance of perspective in all historical knowledge.***
 - a. **Introduction:** HIST 100 The Study of History
 - b. **Preliminary Reinforcement:** Three required 100-level survey courses in US, European and Non-Western History
 - c. **Secondary Reinforcement:** 200- and 300-level History electives
 - d. **Tertiary Reinforcement:** HIST 300: Research Methodology (required research assignment)
 - e. **Capstone Reinforcement:** HIST 400 Senior Seminar (required research assignment)

4. ***Goal #4: At the end of the program students will be able to distinguish between primary and secondary sources and also use both in constructing an historical argument/interpretation.***
 - a. **Introduction:** HIST 100 The Study of History
 - b. **Preliminary Reinforcement:** Three required 100-level survey courses in US, European and Non-Western History
 - c. **Secondary Reinforcement:** 200- and 300-level History electives
 - d. **Tertiary Reinforcement:** HIST 300: Research Methodology
 - e. **Capstone Reinforcement:** HIST 400 Senior Seminar

5. ***Goal #5: At the end of the program students will be able to distinguish fact and opinion.***
 - a. **Introduction:** HIST 100 The Study of History
 - b. **Preliminary Reinforcement:** Three required 100-level survey courses in US, European and Non-Western History
 - c. **Secondary Reinforcement:** 200- and 300-level History electives
 - d. **Tertiary Reinforcement:** HIST 300: Research Methodology (required research assignment)
 - e. **Capstone Reinforcement:** HIST 400 Senior Seminar (required research assignment)

6. *Goal #6: At the end of the program students will be able to distinguish causes and effects.*
 - a. **Introduction:** HIST 100 The Study of History
 - b. **Preliminary Reinforcement:** Three required 100-level survey courses in US, European and Non-Western History
 - c. **Secondary Reinforcement:** 200- and 300-level History electives
 - d. **Tertiary Reinforcement:** HIST 300: Research Methodology (required research assignment)
 - e. **Capstone Reinforcement:** HIST 400 Senior Seminar (required research assignment)

History Department
Montclair State University
Assessment Template

Goal #1: At the end of the program students will be able to describe examples of the interpretive nature of historical knowledge.

1. Required Course Names:

- **Goal Introduced:** HIST 100 The Study of History
- **Interim Assessment:** HIST 300 Research Methodology
- **Capstone Assessment:** HIST 400 Senior Seminar

2. Assessment Measures:

- **Interim Assessment:** HIST 300 – A formal research paper
- **Capstone Assessment:** HIST 400 – A formal research paper

3. Who Will Develop Measures:

- **Interim Assessment:** HIST 300 – Department (in accordance with Department Assessment Guidelines attached)
- **Capstone Assessment:** HIST 400 – Department (in accordance with Department Assessment Guidelines attached)

4. Where Will Assessment Take Place: HIST 300 and HIST 400

5. Assessment Schedule:

- **Interim Assessment:** HIST 300 – Several sections of course offered every semester; prerequisite regimen will greatly influence when individual students take the course
- **Capstone Assessment:** HIST 400 – Several sections of course offered every semester; prerequisite regimen will greatly influence when individual students take the course

6. Dissemination of Results:

- **Grade Distributions/Faculty:** At the first department meeting each semester, grade distribution information for all sections of HIST 300 and HIST 400 from previous semester will be distributed to all department members
- **Grade Distribution/Administration:** The same grade distribution information as above will be sent each semester to the Dean of CHSS and the Provost of the university approximately one week after it is distributed to all department members

7. Use of Data:

- **General Plan:** Department members will review data every semester, making adjustments in individual courses and possibly the overall program organization as data seems to warrant.
- **Specific Plan:** If 50% of the total number of students in either HIST 300 or HIST 400 fail to receive grades of B- or better, department will take specific remedial actions

Goal #2: At the end of the program students will be able to describe examples which demonstrate the importance of factual accuracy in all historical knowledge.

1. Required Course Names:

- **Goal Introduced:** HIST 100 The Study of History
- **Interim Assessment:** HIST 300 Research Methodology
- **Capstone Assessment:** HIST 400 Senior Seminar

2. Assessment Measures:

- **Interim Assessment:** HIST 300 – A formal research paper (in accordance with Department Assessment Guidelines attached)
- **Capstone Assessment:** HIST 400 – A formal research paper (in accordance with Department Assessment Guidelines attached)

3. Who Will Develop Measures:

- **Interim Assessment:** HIST 300 – Department (in accordance with Department Assessment Guidelines attached)
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Goal #3: At the end of the program students will be able to describe examples of which demonstrate the importance of perspective in all historical knowledge.

1. Required Course Names:

- **Goal Introduced:** HIST 100 The Study of History
- **Interim Assessment:** HIST 300 Research Methodology
- **Capstone Assessment:** HIST 400 Senior Seminar

2. Assessment Measures:

- **Interim Assessment:** HIST 300 – A formal research paper (in accordance with Department Assessment Guidelines attached)
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Goal #4: At the end of the program students will be able to distinguish between primary and secondary sources and also use both in constructing an historical argument/interpretation.

1. Required Course Names:

- **Goal Introduced:** HIST 100 The Study of History
- **Interim Assessment:** HIST 300 Research Methodology
- **Capstone Assessment:** HIST 400 Senior Seminar

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Goal #5: At the end of the program students will be able to distinguish fact and opinion.

1. Required Course Names:

- **Goal Introduced:** HIST 100 The Study of History
- **Interim Assessment:** HIST 300 Research Methodology
- **Capstone Assessment:** HIST 400 Senior Seminar

2. Assessment Measures:

- **Interim Assessment:** HIST 300 – A formal research paper (in accordance with Department Assessment Guidelines attached)
- **Capstone Assessment:** HIST 400 – A formal research paper (in accordance with Department Assessment Guidelines attached)

3. Who Will Develop Measures:

- **Interim Assessment:** HIST 300 – Department (in accordance with Department Assessment Guidelines attached)
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4. Where Will Assessment Take Place: HIST 300 and HIST 400

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Goal #6: At the end of the program students will be able to distinguish causes and effects.

1. Required Course Names:

- **Goal Introduced:** HIST 100 The Study of History
- **Interim Assessment:** HIST 300 Research Methodology
- **Capstone Assessment:** HIST 400 Senior Seminar

2. Assessment Measures:

- **Interim Assessment:** HIST 300 – A formal research paper (in accordance with Department Assessment Guidelines attached)
- **Capstone Assessment:** HIST 400 – A formal research paper (in accordance with Department Assessment Guidelines attached)

3. Who Will Develop Measures:

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History Department: Research Paper Rubric

Course/Section _____

Name _____

<u>Content (approximately 50% of Final Grade)</u>	<u>Points</u>
- Significant Topic/Question (0 – 10 points)	
- Sufficient Relevant Evidence (0 – 10 points)	
- Sufficient Analysis (0 – 11 points)	
- Factual Accuracy (0 – 10 points)	
- Historical Contextualization (0 – 10 points)	
<u>Organization (approximately 25% of Final Grade)</u>	<u>Points</u>
- First Section: Clearly Present Thesis (0 – 8 points)	
- Subsequent Sections: Support/Advance Thesis (0 – 8 points)	
- Final Section: Summarize Overall Argument (0 – 8 points)	
<u>Style (approximately 25% of Final Grade)</u>	<u>Points</u>
- Ideas Clearly Presented (0 – 5 points)	
- Ideas Logically Sequenced (0 – 5 points)	
- Overall Grammatical Soundness (0 – 5 points)	
- Appropriate Documentation (0 – 5 points)	
- Proper Citation and Bibliographical Format (0 – 5 points)	
Final Point Total	

Final Point Totals – Final Grades:

- **A range:** At least 90 points
- **B range:** At least 80 points
- **C range:** At least 70 points
- **D range:** At least 60 points
- **F:** Fewer than 60 points