

Assessment Plan for History Department (includes six parts):

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I. History Department Mission Statement

The Mission Statement of TCNJ announces the aim to be “a national exemplar in the education of those who seek to sustain and advance the communities in which they live.” Students are expected to apply the knowledge and intellectual strengths gained through their academic studies to lifelong learning and their roles as responsible, engaged citizens of a democratic society. In keeping with these goals, the School of Culture and Society (Humanities and Social Sciences) “fosters disciplinary and interdisciplinary work to address significant social issues” and encourages students “to understand local, national, global, cultural, political, and historical perspectives.” Working with the faculty, students in the School are expected to “learn how to read and think analytically, solve problems creatively, work with diverse partners, communicate effectively in speech and writing, use technology wisely, and participate fully in civic life.”

The Mission of the History Department as currently understood accords with the above objectives. The Department prepares both majors and non-majors for lifelong learning and responsible democratic citizenship through the study of ideas, institutions, people, and processes of the past that have shaped the history of all regions of the world. Its courses foster a global perspective, an appreciation for cultural and intellectual diversity and the free and responsible exchange of ideas. They teach skills critical not only to historical but to other forms of thought and analysis, as well, among them how to read critically for bias and perspective, how to compare divergent viewpoints, and how to weigh the scholarly merits of different accounts. All students in the major write a senior thesis in which they build on the knowledge and skills they have gained through coursework. In collaboration with faculty, thesis writers further develop the skills of historical research and writing in order to produce an original piece of historical scholarship.

The History Department faculty is comprised of active teacher-scholars who are recognized experts in their diverse fields. The Department commits itself to close contact between faculty and students. Both faculty and departmental administration carefully advise students in their selection of courses and guide them toward enriching extra- and co-curricular experiences such as study abroad, internships, and experiential learning and other cultural events. Graduates of the History Department have gone on to successful careers in such varied fields as college teaching and administration, museum design and management, library science, law, medicine, business, and public service. The Department has a special commitment to training primary and secondary school teachers who possess a solid command of history and know how to communicate its importance to young people. Our History/Education graduates enter the teaching job market and schools with strong command of historical content and a commitment to helping their own students become active and productive citizens.

II. History Department Program Goals

1. Supporting a global curriculum that introduces students to history from a variety of geographic, temporal and methodological approaches. To meet this goal, we support student

and faculty participation in international and national programs, internships, and community-based learning.

2. Valuing high-quality faculty scholarship and creative work in the belief that these pursuits are beneficial to the intellectual community and the world beyond the campus.

3. Modeling the best practices of teacher-scholars, including student-faculty collaborative research and service, and a commitment to assisting and mentoring our colleagues and students in these endeavors.

4. Seeking to achieve the strongest possible education toward lifelong learning, thoughtful leadership and compassionate, humane global citizenship.

5. Seeking to demonstrate to students and the wider community the relevance of history to past and present political, social and cultural issues. Only by understanding historical trends, can we fully engage in our communities.

6. Valuing an open, friendly collegial department, with strong relationships between faculty and students and among colleagues. We value and promote a multiplicity of perspectives, experience and interests.

7. Fostering interdisciplinary relationships between history and other programs. We do this as scholars, by engaging in dialogue and activity with scholars across the faculty. We encourage our students to seek additional majors, minors and liberal learning concentrations. Individual members of the faculty involve themselves and their students in interdisciplinary programs.

III. History Department Learning Outcomes

1. Analyze primary sources and demonstrate and explain connections between sources and their historical context.

2. Critically read and analyze secondary sources and identify central questions addressed, and compare and contrast different approaches to historical interpretation.

3. Demonstrate ability to conduct independent, original historical research by gathering a wide range of primary and secondary source data, formulating research questions, and using this material to construct a coherent, original narrative.

4. Interpret ways in which people from the past understood their own present and the ways they responded to the issues that confronted them.

5. Explain how significant historical issues establish new paths of historical development across time and space.

6. Use knowledge of the past to draw conclusions about contemporary situations.

7. Identify how historical events can have both obvious and subtle effects.

8. Identify the temporal structure of a historical narrative or story, and compare patterns of change and continuity across different civilizations, regions, and spatial dimensions.

IV. Matrix for Assessing Program Learning Outcomes

Learning outcome	Assessment	Where	When	Cycle
1. Analyze primary sources and demonstrate and explain connections between sources and their historical context. (analysis)	Any 300 level research paper <u>or</u> Any 400 level research paper	300 or 400-level history class	Sophomore through senior year	2013-2014
2. Critically read and analyze secondary sources and identify central questions addressed, and compare and contrast different approaches to historical interpretation. (interpretation)	a) Historiography paper b) Reading response assignment	a) HIS 210 b) 400-level readings seminar	a) Freshman or sophomore year b) Sophomore through senior year	2014-2015
3. Demonstrate ability to conduct independent, original historical research by gathering a wide range of primary and secondary source data, formulating research questions, and using this material to construct a coherent, original narrative. (research)	Any 300 level research paper <u>or</u> Any 400 level research paper * (*same paper as number 1 above)	300 or 400-level history class	Sophomore through senior year	2013-2014
4. Interpret ways in which people from the past understood their own present and the ways they responded to the issues that confronted them. (empathy)	Capstone paper	HIS 498	Senior year	2015-2016
5. Explain how significant historical issues establish new paths of historical development across time and space. (turning points)	Capstone paper	HIS 498	Senior year	2015-2016
6. Use knowledge of the past to draw conclusions about contemporary situations. (using the past)	Capstone paper	HIS 498	Senior year	2015-2016
7. Identify how historical events can have both obvious and subtle effects. (cause and effect)	Capstone paper	HIS 498	Senior year	2015-2016
8. Identify the temporal structure of a historical narrative or story, and compare patterns of change and continuity across different civilizations, regions, and spatial dimensions. (chronology; change and continuity)	One assignment (either research paper or historiography paper) on an aspect of global history	Any world/global history class	Sophomore through senior year	2016-2017

V. Annual Assessment Plan

Year	Course Focus	Learning Goals Assessed
2013-2014	400 level HIS class	1,3
2014-2015	HIS 210, Reading Seminar	2
2015-2016	HIS 498	4, 5, 6, 7
2016-2017	World/Global history class	8

VI. Description of Courses

HIS 354: Sample 300-level history course (Assessments 1 and 3)

This survey course explores the politics of culture in colonial-era and apartheid South Africa. It begins by studying the legal, religious, sexual and political history of colonialism, then delves into the history of African popular culture. How miners, beer brewers, women, musicians, gangsters, and journalists created cultures of resistance is an enduring theme. In the second half of the semester, students will create research papers about topics in South African history.

HIS 210: Craft of History (Assessment 2)

This course introduces students to history as an academic discipline. By reading historical works from different eras and geographic regions, we will discover how the interpretations and writing of history have changed over time. We will study and apply various methods used by historians to gather information and draw conclusions. Rather than understanding history merely as “what happened,” we will come to understand history as a dynamic relationship between the present and the past, in which people debate and disagree over the meanings and interpretations of historic events.

HIS 450: Sample Reading Seminar (Assessment 2)

An intensive study of Asian modern history through extensive readings by the student, and a series of oral and written reports. Open to students starting in the sophomore year. Two semesters required for all History majors. May fulfill departmental distribution requirements.

HIS 498: Capstone Seminar (Assessments 4, 5, 6, 7)

Small classes that focus on specific topics in history. Formal seminar reports and completion of major research paper. One semester required for all history majors. To be taken in the senior year.

HIS 321: Sample 300-level global history course (Assessment 8)

Globalization has shifted the focus away from the established interpretations of the rise of the Western world as a progressive, linear path of development that started in the north Atlantic and spread throughout the “rest” of the world. Increasing economic competition from China and India fostered scholars’ interest in comparing the economic performance and divergent trajectories within Eurasia

VII. Description of Assessments

Assessment 1 – 300-400 level research paper

Assessment 2 – Historiography paper

The purpose of a bibliographic essay is to write a critical review of the essential historical scholarship in a particular field. For your final assignment this semester, you will be required to situate your own work [which may take the form of a research question or a thesis] in the body of literature covered in your annotated bibliography. Students preparing to write a senior thesis or capstone are strongly encouraged to use this essay as the foundation for their proposals. Further details will be provided later in the semester.

Assessment 2 – Reading response papers

a) Students will write short reaction/analytical papers (1-page printed/typed single-spaced, 12pt font, 1.0" margins) on each of their weekly readings. When reading your assigned books and writing your papers, consider 1) Theses-Content-Argument made by the author; 2) their Methodology; 3) the Evidence they use to buttress their arguments; and, 4) discuss what you have learned from the work(s) that is interesting to you.

b) Students will write a four page seminar paper that distills the most salient points of that week's reading, provides vivid and detailed examples from the text, and evaluates the argument and evidence. The seminar paper will then serve as a guide in leading discussion.

Assessments 4-8 – Capstone paper

Each student to produce an original research paper of 20-25 pages in length. The final paper will be evaluated for the originality of the thesis; solidity of its historiographic background; methodologies utilized; sources used to buttress the arguments; and quality of writing.

Assessment 9 – Sample global history themed assignment (from HIS 452)

Your final project will explore a specific theme in Iranian, Afghan, or Tajik culture using visual and verbal representations. You may choose to focus on one filmmaker or writer, but you don't have to. You are required to use a minimum of two films, two literary sources (poetry collections, short stories, or novels), and two secondary sources. You can use other contemporary art forms with my approval, such as music, painting, video art, etc. The format of your project will be up to you. You may write a 12-page research paper (including footnotes for citations and a bibliography), or do a "creative project", such as create a journal or newspaper, or make a video based on film clips and/or interviews with "experts" in the field, design a television program, create a mock trial, publish a scrapbook, publish a diary, organize a conference, among others.