

2012-2013 M.A. in History Academic Assessment Plan

Office of the Provost

*University of
Florida*

*Institutional
Assessment*

*Continuous Quality
Enhancement*

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Academic Assessment Plan for Ph.D. in History

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Instructions: Use this template to prepare your Academic Assessment Plan. Some of the information has been pre-loaded into the template for you. Refer to pages 1-5 of the instructions for descriptions of each section.

A. Mission

The History Department provides important skills to its students in analytical reading, critical thinking and writing, and reconstructing the past through the use of primary source evidence and established scholarship. As active scholars themselves, the History Department's faculty shares their intellectual mission with students by constructing a battery of challenging courses that offer a wide variety of geographical, chronological, and methodological approaches. Over time, history students develop the ability to analyze complex problems and provide solutions through a combination of research and writing; this expertise goes far beyond the particular content of their field of study to inform the student's interaction with historical, contemporary, and future problems.

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences' mission is "to lead the academic quest to understand our place in the universe" and "to ensure equitable access for all of its constituencies present, drawing strength from our rich heritage of racial, ethnic and gender diversity." The University of Florida's mission is to create the "broadly diverse environment necessary to foster multi-cultural skills and perspectives in its teaching and research for its students to contribute and succeed in the world of the 21st century." The History Department contributes to these goals by doing more than simply providing access to a finite body of knowledge concerning the past; it empowers students at the University of Florida to refine those analytical qualities of critical thinking and expression necessary to succeed in their chosen educational, professional, or vocational field. The Department thus weds the intellectual talent, experience, and energy of its faculty with students' needs to acquire essential skills that will serve them over a lifetime of personal, educational, and vocational challenges. In doing so, it is solidly in line with the Florida Board of Governors' strategic plan for the University of Florida that "nurtures young people from diverse backgrounds to address the needs of our societies while creating new knowledge and the pursuit of new ideas." By analyzing the past, then, UF's history students hone abilities that can improve their futures as well as those of the citizens of Florida, the nation, and the world.

B. Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Measures

2011-2012:

There were no specific SLOs for the M.A. Program in the History Department in 2011-2012

2012-2013:

SLO Type	Student Learning Outcome	Assessment Method	Degree Delivery
Knowledge	Students will identify, define, and describe major issues in the history of their fields of study as well as mastery of the relevant body of historiography.	Thesis and non-thesis track: Evaluated in oral examinations conducted by their M.A. Committee.	Campus
		Non-thesis track: Evaluated in written examination composed and assessed by their M.A. Committee.	
Professional Behavior	Students write journal quality papers.	Students will write a non-thesis paper of journal-article quality or a multi-chapter M.A. Thesis.	Campus
Skills	Students will demonstrate and apply methods and practices of historical research and writing.	Students will complete and defend a thesis or non-thesis paper based on original research that demonstrates a new and unique interpretation of the material.	Campus

C. Research

MA work at the University of Florida follows one of two tracks (thesis or non-thesis), but students on each track are trained to do research so that they can go on to doctoral programs, teach history, or work in a range of professions that require the ability to do independent research and writing

In the first, or Thesis track, students receive their degrees upon the presentation and successful defense of an MA Thesis. In the second, non-thesis track, students receive their degrees after completing a non-thesis paper and taking a written exam. Students who follow the thesis track write an MA Thesis with 2-3 chapters. This thesis is written while students are taking seminars and independent studies and often arises out of work the student has done in either a seminar or independent study. The thesis, which builds on the student's research in primary and secondary sources, is written under the direction of a thesis advisor and a thesis committee of other faculty members (typically a thesis committee has three members). When the thesis is completed, students following the thesis track defend their thesis in an oral examination before their thesis committee. During this oral examination, students are also examined on their knowledge of the scholarly literature in their field and the relationship of their thesis to that scholarly literature.

Students following the non-thesis MA track write an article length-paper of roughly 30-45 pages that relies on both primary and secondary sources. This paper is written while students are taking seminars and independent studies and often arises out of work the student has done in either a seminar or independent study. The paper is written under the direction of the student's advisor. When the non-thesis paper is completed, students following the non-thesis track are examined in two stages. In the first stage, they take a written examination prepared by their advisor and MA Committee (which usually consists of two other faculty members in addition to the advisor). This written examination tests students on their understanding of the relevant historical scholarship in their field. After students have successfully completed their written examination, students on the non-thesis track sit an oral examination conducted by their MA Committee. During this oral examination, students defend their non-thesis paper and are also examined on their knowledge of the scholarly literature in their field and the relationship of their thesis to that scholarly literature.

D. Assessment Timeline

Use this Assessment Timeline template for your plan. Add or delete rows and columns to accommodate your SLOs and assessments.

Program M.A.. in History

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Assessment	Assessment 1	Assessment 2
SLOs		
Knowledge		
Thesis Track	M.A. Thesis	Oral Examination
Non-thesis Track	Written exam	Oral Examination
Skills		
Scholarly writing	Thesis or non-thesis paper	
Professional Behavior		
Scholarly research and writing	Thesis or non-thesis paper	

E. Assessment Cycle

Use this Assessment Cycle template for your plan. Add or delete rows as needed to accommodate your SLOs.

Assessment Cycle for:

Program MA in History College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Analysis and Interpretation:

Various times during the academic year. MA hearings and exams typically happen in Fall and Spring semesters, though they may occur during summer session in rare instances. All graduate students meet with the graduate coordinator to outline their goals for the year at

the start of fall semester every year; students turn in an annual plan of study every year. This plan of study is reviewed (and signed) by the student's thesis advisor and reviewed by the graduate coordinator, and helps the department track the student's progress to make sure students are taking seminars and independent studies that are related to their intended thesis topics.

Program Modifications:

Completed as needed based on assessment of MA Committees.

Dissemination:

Completed after proposals for reform are discussed with the graduate committee, the department faculty and/or the graduate students.

SLOs	Year	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Content Knowledge					
Thesis track		x	X	x	X
Non thesis track		X	X	X	X
Skills					
Scholarly research		X	X	X	X
Professional Behavior					
Scholarly research and writing		X	X	X	X

Content and skills indicated in thesis defenses and exams have been assessed continuously by the program.

F. Measurement Tools

The History Department measures MA student progress in several interlocking ways. For non-thesis MA students, the required written exams measure **content knowledge** by assessing student familiarity with basic issues in the history of their fields and the relevant body of historiography. These examinations, which have an oral and a written component, are conducted by M.A. Committee committees and occur in the student's final year, which is typically the second or third year after the student enters the M.A. program. Students on the M.A. Thesis track are required to include an extended analysis of the relevant historical literature in their thesis. They are then orally examined on this material by their M.A. Committee during their thesis defense.

The historical knowledge gained in seminars and independent studies provide the foundation for the students' **skill-based outcome**. Student progress through these courses and seminars is tracked by the department through annual plans of study that are prepared by graduate students every year, approved by thesis advisors, and reviewed by the Graduate Coordinator. Each student utilizes and builds on his or her knowledge of historiographical arguments as he or she prepares and defends the M.A. thesis or takes the written exam associated with the non-thesis track. In either case, students demonstrate these skills-based outcomes to their advisor and the members of

the M.A. Committees. Students' MA thesis and non-thesis papers are assessed on these skills using the assessment rubric attached to this document as an appendix.

Students learn and demonstrate **professional behavior** as they research and write their M.A. theses or journal quality non-thesis papers. Over the course of their training they are mentored in this learning process by faculty advisors and through participation in the graduate program's professionalization workshops, weekly brown bag lunches, and the history grad program's internal wiki (<https://sites.google.com/site/ufhistorynetwork/>). M.A. students practice this **professional behavior** as they research and write their M.A. theses or journal quality non-thesis papers, and their mastery of these behaviors is evaluated using the assessment rubric attached to this document.

Assessment Oversight

Here, list the names and contact information of those who oversee the assessment process in your program. Add or delete rows as needed.

Name	Department Affiliation	Email Address	Phone Number
Elizabeth Dale	Graduate Coordinator	edale@ufl.edu	273-3387
Jessica Harland – Jacobs	Associate Chair	harlandj@ufl.edu	273-3382
Juliana Barr	Undergraduate Coordinator	jbarr@ufl.edu	273-3364

APPENDIX

Assessment Rubric for MA Thesis and Non-Thesis Papers; Department of History

Decisions about the substantive merit of MA Thesis and Non-Thesis Papers are within the sole discretion of the student's examining committee. The standards below outline our additional expectations about all MA Thesis and Non-Thesis Papers (this assessment rubric will also be used to evaluate Second-Year Seminar Papers). Each of the three main aspects set out below will be weighed equally, and papers will be graded satisfactory or unsatisfactory on each aspect, using the criteria listed below.

Assessment criteria for primary-source research: <i>To receive a satisfactory assessment for this criterion, the student must receive a satisfactory assessment on at least three of the following four categories</i>		
	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Appropriate selection of primary sources (<i>this may include an assessment of the student's use of materials in a language other than English</i>)		
Contextualization of primary sources		
Analysis of primary sources		
Use of primary sources to support argument		
Assessment criteria for use of scholarly literature: <i>To receive a satisfactory assessment for this criterion, the student must receive a satisfactory assessment on at least three of these four categories</i>		
	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Appropriate breadth of secondary sources (it is expected that the paper will rely on a combination of books and articles, and, to the extent possible, will engage a problem that involves both recent and older works)		
Appropriate relationship between secondary sources and topic		
Analysis of secondary sources		
Use of secondary sources to frame research question		
Assessment criteria for writing: <i>To receive a satisfactory assessment for this criterion, the student must receive a satisfactory assessment on at least three of these four categories.</i>		
	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Statement of thesis or question and relationship between thesis (or question) and discussion		
Structure and organization		
Clarity of writing		
Adequacy of citation form		

Figure 1. University of Florida Graduate/Professional Program Assessment Plan Review Rubric

Related resources are found at <http://www.ua.assessment.edu>

Program:

Year:

Component	Criterion	Rating			Comm
		Met	Partially Met	Not Met	
Mission Statement	Mission statement is articulated clearly.				
	The program mission clearly supports the College and University missions, and includes specific statements describing how it				

	supports these missions.				
Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and Assessment Measures	SLOs are stated clearly.				
	SLOs focus on demonstration of student learning.				
	SLOs are measurable.				
	Measurements are appropriate for the SLO.				
Research	Research expectations for the program are clear, concise, and appropriate for the discipline.				
Assessment Map	The Assessment Map indicates the times in the program where the SLOs are assessed and measured.				
	The Assessment Map identifies the assessments used for each SLO.				
Assessment Cycle	The assessment cycle is clear.				
	All student learning outcomes are measured.				
	Data is collected at least once in the cycle.				
	The cycle includes a date or time period for data analysis and interpretation.				
	The cycle includes a date for planning improvement actions based on the data analysis.				
	The cycle includes a date for dissemination of results to the appropriate stakeholders.				

University of Florida Graduate/Professional Program Assessment Plan Review Rubric, continued

Component	Criterion	Rating			Comments
		Met	Partially Met	Not Met	
Measurement Tools	Measurement tools are described clearly and concisely.				
	Measurements are appropriate for the SLOs.				
	Methods and procedures reflect an appropriate balance of direct and indirect methods.				
	The report presents examples of at least one measurement tool.				
Assessment Oversight	Appropriate personnel (coordinator,				

	committee, etc.) charged with assessment responsibilities are identified				
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