

SAN FRANCISCO STATE UNIVERSITY
ASSESSMENT REPORT: *Undergraduates*
2008-2009

I. PROGRAM: The Department of History

II. PROGRAM MISSION:

History is the study of change and continuity in human societies over time. It provides a mode of understanding human behavior by examining societies and cultures in light of their origins, the changes they have undergone during their existence, and the process by which they have reached their present state. From Herodotus on, history has defined a method of inquiry, a particular subject matter, and a form of explanation to help people investigate and make sense of our past and present world.

History students at San Francisco State University are expected to develop a broad knowledge and understanding of political, social, cultural, and economic institutions and values in many times and places. Undergraduate history majors achieve this goal by following a program that accords with the recommendations of the American Historical Association, our principal professional organization. That program requires students to complete foundational courses in the history of the United States and either Western Civilization or World History, a course in historical methods, which also serves as the department's GVAR course, courses designed to acquaint students with the diversity of the global setting in which they live (the department requires that students take a total of eight upper division courses in the United States, Europe, and either Africa, Asia, or Latin America), and a capstone research seminar with a writing requirement. In these courses, the S.F. State Department of History seeks to communicate a broad knowledge and understanding of the past while developing student skills of historical analysis and interpretation, including how to compare and contrast, synthesize, and draw conclusions.

III. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES AND STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES.

The History Department has identified six primary learning goals and outcomes for the undergraduate major.

1. Students must demonstrate knowledge of cultural and expressive traditions, institutions, economies, and societies across diverse historical contexts, including the history of the United States, Europe, and at least one other world region (Asia, Africa, or Latin America);

2. Students must demonstrate the ability to analyze and interpret primary and secondary sources about historical issues;
3. Students must demonstrate the ability to do historical research and to communicate the results within the context of major historiographical debates, using the conventions of historical writing;
4. Students must be able to identify ethical issues in academic historical research and the uses of history outside the discipline, including the implications for social justice and the well-being of local and/or global communities;
5. Students must demonstrate the ability to situate historical evidence and problems in both local and global contexts; and
6. Students should be able to articulate the relevance of historical research and the knowledge it produces to their lives.

Links between Educational Goals and Outcomes

The student learning outcomes were developed in relationship to the “Educational Goals for the Baccalaureate at San Francisco State University.” The chart below illustrates that relationship for the undergraduate History major. The numbers correspond to the way the educational goals and student learning outcomes are numbered above.

1. Competencies for Lifelong Intellectual Endeavor 2, 3
2. Intellectual Attainments 1
3. Appreciation of Diversity 1
4. Ethical Engagement 4
5. Integration and Application of Knowledge 5,6

IV. THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS.

The assessment regimen that we undertook for 2008-09 looks most closely at numbers 2 and 3 of the department’s objectives. After all, the abilities to think historically and to communicate the results of historical research effectively are two of the central tasks of our profession. Within the history major, two classes have particularly significant writing assignments: History 300, which is now our GWAR class, and the proseminar (numbered Hist. 640, 642, or 644), which is the capstone course of the major. Beginning in spring 2008, we began collecting ratings of the papers submitted in each section of Hist. 300; in fall 2008, we added ratings for the proseminar papers to our data bank. (For a copy of the rating form, see Appendix A.) We hoped that a comparison of the ratings in the two classes generally would reveal the “value added” by a rigorous training in historical methods. This component of assessment parallels the procedures that we have utilized in the past.

However, because of the usefulness of the information we collected during our pilot survey of graduate papers, in which we compared ratings of the writing samples that students submitted with their applications to work that they had done toward the end of their M.A. degree, we decided to institute a similar assessment process with our undergraduates. We wanted to be able to evaluate changes in individual students’ work over time. Therefore, to provide information that resembles our graduate records, we

moved beyond an aggregate comparison of Hist. 300 and proseminar data, keeping track of individual students' work on the rating sheets. We hoped to be able to evaluate individuals' work in the two courses, to get a closer focus on the progress that students were making within the major. In a way, this second component of our assessment process has much in common with collecting and evaluating a portfolio of student writing.

In past attempts at assessment, we have had the resources to hire instructors solely for the purpose of evaluating papers. In this era of scarcity, we can no longer afford to do so. Instead, we have asked each instructor of Hist. 300 or the proseminar to rate her or his own students. This change in procedure has undoubtedly inflated the ratings (in 2002-03, when we shifted from using outside evaluators to appraising our own students, the rankings jumped upward dramatically). So, while the numbers we have gathered this time are not usefully contrasted to numbers from 1998-1999, because of the change in data collection, the possible bias in the statistics is likely to be fairly consistent among faculty, tending upwards.

We collected ratings from thirteen sections of History 300, numbering 199 students in all. Four classes collected data for spring 2008, four in fall 2008, and five in spring 2009.

Assessment of Hist. 300 Papers, by Instructor

Sherry Katz 1 Spring 2008

Evidence/Analysis	5	4	7	4	8	5	4	7	8	7	6	7	8	9	9	6.5
Historical Sensibility	7	6	7	4	7	5	4	7	7	7	6	9	9	9	9	6.9
Historiography	6	6	6	6	7	1	6	6	6	7	8	8	9	9	9	6.7
Expression	7	3	6	6	7	3	5	8	7	7	7	9	9	9	8	6.7
Form	6	7	7	7	8	4	8	8	8	8	7	7	8	8	9	7.3
Overall Rating	6	5	7	5	8	5	4	7	8	7	6.5	7.5	9	9	9	6.9

Sherry Katz 2 Spring 2008

Argument	5	8	6	8	6	4	9	7	7	8	6	9	8	6	7	8	7
Evidence/Analysis	3	8.5	8	9	7	6	9	7	7	6	7	8.5	7	6	7	8	7.1
Historical Sensibility	4	9	8	9	6	7	9	7	7	8	8	9	7	6	6	8	7.4
Historiography	6	7	8	9	7	6	9	7	7	8	7	8	7	6	5	7	7.1
Expression	7	8	8	8	7	7	9	7	7	8	7	9	8	7	6	7	7.5
Form	8	8	9	9	8	7	9	9	9	8	7	8	8	7	7	8	8.1
Overall Rating	4	9	8	9	7	6	9	7	7	7	7	9	7	6	7	8	7.3

Laura Lisy-Wagner Spring 2008

Argument	7	7	8	8	7	9	8	5	8	9	3	8	9	7	8	8	5
Evidence/Analysis	6	7	5	8	6	9	8	6	8	7	5	5	8	6	8	8	5
Historical Sensibility	8	6	7	7	8	8	8	7	8	8	7	8	7	7	8	7	5
Historiography	7	2	4	7	8	4	6	2	2	5	6	8	8	2	2	7	2
Expression	8	5	5	7	7	8	8	5	8	8	6	6	7	7	7	8	7
Form	8	8	8	8	7	8	9	8	8	8	7	8	8	8	8	8	9
Overall Rating	7	7	6	8	7	8	8	5	8	8	6	7	8	7	7	8	5

cont.

Arg.	6	7	8	8	7.3
Ev./Anal.	6	6	9	4	6.7
Sens.	6	7	8	6	7.2
Histo.	3	7	7	3	4.9
Exp.	7	6	7	6	6.8
Form	9	8	9	7	8
Overall Rating	6	7	9	5	7

Tina Stevens Spring 2008

Argument	8	6	6	4	5	4	5	3	5.5	7	5.4
Evidence/Analysis	8	7.5	6	4	4	4	3	4	6	5	5.2
Historical Sensibility	8	7	7	4	5	4	2	3	6	7	5.3
Historiography	8	7	7	3	3	4	2	3	7	5	4.9
Expression	8.5	7	5	7	7	4	7	5	9	7	6.7
Form	9	8	6	7	4	3	6	2	7	5	5.7
Overall Rating	8.5	8	7	7	7	4	5	4	8	8	6.7

Richard Hoffman Fall 2008

Argument	4	4	8	5	6	6	9	6	6	9	8	3	4	6	7	4	3	7	6
Evidence/Analysis	4	7	8	5	5	6	8	4	4	9	8	1	4	6	7	2	3	5	5
Historical sensibility	4	6	8	7	8	7	9	9	5	9	9	4	4	7	7	6	3	7	7
Historiography	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na
Expression	4	4	9	6	6	6	9	7	8	9	9	1	3	7	8	6	4	6	6
Form	3	5	9	2	3	6	9	1	3	8	8	1	4	4	8	1	1	5	2
Overall Rating	4	6	8	6	6	6	9	6	5	9	9	3	4	6	7	4	3	7	6

cont.

Arg.	5	5.8
Ev./Anal.	5	5.3
Sens.	6	6.6
Histo.	na	
Exp.	5	6.2
Form	4	4.4
Overall Rating	5	6

Sherry Katz 1, Fall 2008

Argument	8	8	6	5	6	8	9	7	5	8	6	6	6	6	8	6	6.8
Evidence/Analysis	8	9	5	7	5	7	9	8	6	9	7	6	6	6	9	5	7
Historical Sensibility	8	9	6	7	5	8	9	7	4	9	8	5	5	7	9	6	7
Historiography	8	7	5	6	4	8	9	6	5	7	6	5	7	6	9	5	6.4
Expression	6	8	6	6	5	7	8	7	4	8	8	6	5	6	9	6	6.6
Form	7	9	8	5	8	7	9	8	6	9	8	6	7	5	9	7	7.4
Overall Rating	8	9	6	6	5	8	9	7	5	9	7	6	6	6	9	6	7

Sherry Katz 2, Fall 2008

Argument	7	8	5	9	5	8	7	5	6	6	6	6	7	6.5
Evidence/Analysis	7	8	6	8	5	8	6	6	6	5	6	7	8	6.6
Historical Sensibility	6	7	6	9	5	8	7	6	5	6	5	7	8	6.5
Historiography	6	8	4	9	5	7	6	5	6	6	5	7	7	6.2
Expression	7	7	5	9	6	5	9	5	5	6	5	5	8	6.3
Form	7	7	6	8	7	7	5	5	5	6	7	8	8	6.5
Overall Rating	7	8	6	9	5	8	6	5	6	6	6	7	8	6.5

Julyana Peard, Fall 2008

Argument	7	8	3.5	9	6	6	8	6	5	3	5	7	7	7	5	7	5	7	6.2
Evidence/Analysis	7	7	3.5	9	5	6	9	7	6	3	5.5	7	7	7	5	6	4	6	6.1
Historical Sensibility	6	8	3	9	5	6	9	7	6	2	6	6	8	6	5	6	4	7	6.1
Historiography	6	7	3	8	5	5	8	6	5	2	5	5	7	6	5	5	3	6	5.4
Expression	7	6	3	8	6	6	9	4	6	1	4	7	7	7	4	7	4	6	5.7
Form	7	7	4	9	6	6	9	7	6	3	6	6	7	7	5	6	4	7	6.2
Overall Rating	7	8	4	9	6	6	9	6	6	3	5	5	8	7	5	7	5	8	6.3

Sherry Katz Spring 2009

Argument	6	8	8	6	5	6	6	6	5	8	7	6	8	7	6.6
Evidence/Analysis	7	7	8	6	5	6	6	7	5	8	7	7	7	7	6.6
Historical Sensibility	6	7	9	7	6	8	7	6	6	7	8	7	8	6	7
Historiography	6	9	9	7	5	7	7	6	5	8	6	5	6	7	6.6
Expression	6	7	7	7	6	6	6	4	7	8	7	6	7	6	6.4
Form	8	8	9	5	6	8	8	4	8	7	5	6	8	8	7
Overall Rating	6	8	8	6	5	6	6	7	5	8	7	6	7	7	6.6

Laura Lisy-Wagner Spring 2009

Argument	7	7	8	8	7	9	8	5	8	9	3	8	9	7	8	8	5
Evidence/Analysis	6	7	5	8	6	9	8	6	8	7	5	5	8	6	8	8	5
Historical Sensibility	8	6	7	7	8	8	8	7	8	8	7	8	7	7	8	7	5
Historiography	7	2	4	7	8	4	6	2	2	5	6	8	8	2	2	7	2
Expression	8	5	5	7	7	8	8	5	8	8	6	6	7	7	7	8	7
Form	8	8	8	8	7	8	9	8	8	8	7	8	8	8	8	8	9
Overall Rating	7	7	6	8	7	8	8	5	8	8	6	7	8	7	7	8	5

cont.

Arg.													6	7	8	8	7.3
Ev./Anal.													6	6	9	4	6.7
Sens.													6	7	8	6	7.2
Histo.													3	7	7	3	4.9
Exp.													7	6	7	6	6.8
Form													9	8	9	7	8
Overall Rating													6	7	9	5	7

Barbara Loomis Spring 2009

Argument	7	7	8	8	9	4	5	5	8	3	8	4	4	4	6	7	6.1
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Evidence/Analysis	7	6	6	8	9	5	6	6	9	4	7	4	4	5	5	7	6.1
Historical Sensibility	7	7	8	7	8	3	6	5	9	4	7	6	4.5	3	6	7	6.1
Historiography	7	7	9	8	8	6	5	8	9	5	9	5	5	6	7	8	7
Expression	6	7	7	7	8	4	6	7	9	4	8	3	5	3	7	5	6
Form	8	6	9	8	9	7	6	7	9	7	4	5	9	3	9	7	7.1
Overall rating	7	7	8	8	9	5	6	5.5	9	4	8	5	5	4	6	7	6.5

Julyana Peard Spring 2009

Argument	8	9	9	2	5	5	3	7	8	7	7	8	5	7	9	7	7	6.6
Evidence/Analysis	7	8	9	2	4	5	3	7	9	7	7	8	5	7	6	7	7	6.4
Historical Sensibility	9	9	8	3	4	5	3	8	8	6	8	8	6	7	9	6	7	6.7
Historiography	8	8	7	2	4	4	3	7	9	6	7	7	5	7	8	6	7	6.2
Expression	8	8	7	3	4	5	3	7	9	6	8	7	5	7	8	6	7	6.4
Form	7	8	6	2	4	4	3	7	8	7	8	8	5	7	8	7	7	6.2
Overall rating	8	9	8.5	2	5	5	2	8	9	8	8.5	8	5	7	6	8	7	6.7

Jarbel Rodriguez Spring 2009

Argument	7	7	6	4	8	7	7	7	8	6	6	7	7	6	8	5
Evidence/Analysis	6	7	4	6	9	7	7	5	6	5	4	8	7	6	9	5
Historical Sensibility	6	8	6	6	9	8	7	6	7	7	6	9	8	7	9	6
Historiography	7	9	7	6	9	8	7	7	7	3	6	9	7	7	9	8
Expression	6	8	6	3	9	6	6	7	8	5	6	8	8	5	8	6
Form	7	8	4	4	9	7	6	6	8	5	6	8	7	6	9	5
Overall Rating	7	8	6	5	9	7	7	7	8	6	6	9	8	6	9	6

cont.

Arg.												9	8	8	8	7
Ev./Anal.												9	8	7	7	6.6
Sens.												8	9	9	7	7.4
Histo.												8	9	9	7	7.5
Exp.												7	7	8	7	6.7
Form												8	9	7	7	6.8
Overall Rating												9	9	9	7	7.4

One finding is worth stressing immediately. In an earlier assessment, the department was uniformly unhappy about the historiographic component of student papers, and we made improvement in that area a high priority. Professor Sherry Katz had been more successful than many of us in developing historiographic skills in her Hist. 300 students, and a number of us adopted her assignments for our own sections of the course. These efforts appear to have paid off, and the ratings no longer reveal a dramatic drop-off on question #4, regarding historiography. Only nineteen, or 10 percent, of students were judged to have presented an inadequate historiography or command of the secondary literature in their topic. (In 1998-99, fully 66 percent of Hist. 300 papers were deemed inadequate in this matter.) This is a very significant improvement. Still, historiographical thinking and writing is a hard genre to master, and a scattering of student essays with stronger rankings overall had low numbers for question #4. We need

to continue to train students to think historiographically, to identify and analyze authors' varying interpretations. However, we have progressed considerably in making up for early gaps in the training we provided.

The ratings also reveal that students in these courses are performing quite well and their instructors are evaluating them favorably. By far the predominant scores fell into the "highly satisfactory" (7-9) or "satisfactory" (4-6) range. Only a mere handful of students turned in papers that were deemed "inadequate."

Starting in fall 2008, we collected assessment sheets for students in the proseminars, using the same rubrics that we utilized for the Hist. 300 papers. We have results from eight classes.

Anthony D'Agostino Pro Fall 2008

Argument	8	6	9	7	8	8	8	8	9	6	7	9	8	9	8	8	7.9
Evidence/Analysis	7	5	9	8	7	8	9	9	9	5	6	9	9	9	8	7	7.8
Historical Sensibility	7	6	9	9	7	7	8	9	9	6	6	8	8	9	7	7	7.6
Historiography	7	5	8	8	8	8	8	9	9	5	7	8	9	9	8	9	7.8
Expression	7	5	9	9	7	6	8	9	9	6	6	9	9	9	7	8	7.7
Form	6	5	8		8	5	7	9	9	7	2	9	8	9	7	8	7.1
				na													
Overall Rating	8	6	9	9	8	8	8	9	9	6	7	9	8	9	8	8	8.1

Phil Dreyfus Pro Fall 2008

Argument	8	7	8	9	7	8	9	7	7	7	7	7	7	6	8	7.5
Evidence/Analysis	9	6	8	8	7	7	8	7	4	8	7	7	7	4	6	6.9
Historical Sensibility	9	8	7	9	7	8	9	6	7	8	7	7	7	6	8	7.5
Historiography	9	7	4	8	7	3	7	3	5	7	6	7	7	4	8	6.1
Expression	8	7	8	9	7	8	9	7	7	6	7	7	7	5	8	7.3
Form	9	8	8	8	7	7	9	6	7	9	8	7	7	6	8	7.6
Overall rating	9	7	8	9	7	7	9	5	6	8	7	7	7	4	8	7.2

Jessica Elkind Pro Fall 2008

Argument	9	9	7	9	8	8	9	7	9	6	9	9	8	8	9	8
Evidence/Analysis	8	9	3.5	8	9	7	9	7	8	6	8.5	7.5	6	8	8	9
Historical Sensibility	9	9	4	8	9	7	9	4	8.5	6	9	8	7	7	9	8
Historiography	8	9	3	8	8	8	8	7	8	5	9	7	6	7	8	8
Expression	9	9	5	9	8	8	9	6	9	5	8.5	9	8	7	9	9
Form	9	9	7.5	9	9	7	9	8	9	5	8	9	9	9	7	9
Overall Rating	8.5	9	4	8.5	9	7	9	7	9	6	9	8	7	8	9	9

cont.

Arg.																	9	7	8.2	
Ev./Anal.																		9	6	7.6
Sens.																		9	5	7.5
Histo.																		9	5.5	7.3
Exp.																		9	8	8
Form																		9	6	8.2
Overall Rating																		9	6	7.9

Anthony D'Agostino Pro Spring 2009

Argument	8	9	7	9	8	9	6	7	8	7	6	9	8	7	9	9	7	7.8
Evidence/Analysis	6	9	8	9	7	7	7	9	8	6	7	7	6	7	8	9	5	7.4
Historical Sensibility	7	9	7	8	7	8	7	7	7	7	6	8	8	7	8	9	7	7.5
Historiography	6	9	7	9	7	7	7	7	7	6	6	8	6	7	7	9	5	7.1
Expression	7	9	8	9	7	8	6	7	7	7	6	8	7	7	8	9	7	7.5
Form	8	9	7	8	8	8	8	7	7	6	6	8	7	7	8	9	7	7.5
Overall Rating	8	9	8	9	8	9	7	7	7	7	6	9	8	7	9	9	6	7.8

Pi-ching Hsu Pro Spring 2009

Argument	7	6	9	2	9	9	8	8	7	7	8	9	7	7.4
Evidence/Analysis	7	6	9	2	8	9	7	8	7	6	8	9	8	7.2
Historical Sensibility	6	5	9	4	8	9	7	9	7	7	7	9	7	7.2
Historiography	6	4	9	2	8	9	8	8	7	7	7	9	7	7
Expression	6	5	9	7	8	8	6	9	6	9	8	8	7	7.4
Form	8	5	9	8	8	7	9	9	6	9	9	8	6	7.8
Overall rating	6	5	9	5	8	9	8	9	7	7	8	9	7	7.5

Paul Longmore Pro Spring 2009

Argument	4	9	5	9	9	8	4	7	9	8	8	9	9	9	6	7	7.5
Evidence/Analysis	4	9	5	9	9	8	4	7	9	7	8	9	9	9	7	6	7.4
Historical Sensibility	4	9	5	9	9	8	4	7	7	8	7	9	9	9	6	6	7.3
Historiography	7	9	6	6	9	8	4	8	8	8	8	9	8	9	6	6	7.4
Expression	6	9	6	9	9	8	4	8	7	9	5	9	9	9	8	8	7.7
Form	6	9	5	9	9	7	4	8	7	7	6	9	8	9	6	7	7.3
Overall rating	5	9	5	8	9	8	4	8	8	8	7	9	9	9	7	7	7.5

Dawn Mabalon Pro Spring 2009

Argument	1	9	8.5	9	7	7	1	6	6	7	7	9	7	9	8	6.8
Evidence/Analysis	2	9	9	9	7	9	5	7	8	6	5	9	6	8	8	7.1
Historical Sensibility	4	9	9	9	5	9	5	7	8	7	7	9	8	8	9	7.5
Historiography	4	9	9	9	8	9	7	9	8	6	7	9	7	8	9	7.9
Expression	6	9	9	9	7	9	8	9	7	6	7	9	7	9	9	8
Form	9	9	9	9	8	9	8	9	9	1	7	9	9	9	9	8.2
Overall rating	6	9	9	9	7.5	9	6	8	8	6	7	9	7	8.5	9	7.9

Ben Martin Pro Spring 2009

Argument	8	9	6	8	9	7	6	8	9	7.8
Evidence/Analysis	9	8	6	8	8	8	8	9	9	8.1
Historical Sensibility	8	8	7	8	8	8	7	9	8	7.9
Historiography	9	9	7	8	9	8	7	9	8	8.2
Expression	7	8	5	9	9	7	9	7	9	7.8
Form	8	9	7	9	9	8	8	8	9	8.3
Overall rating	9	9	6	9	9	8	6	8.5	9	8.2

Here, one discovery is especially important to note, since it does not stand out from the pattern revealed in these tables. A number of students in the proseminars (seventeen in all) were graduate students. Some of these students had been asked to take a proseminar as part of their conditions for acceptance into the graduate program; the graduate advisors believed that a remedial round of skill- building in writing and research would be helpful. Other graduate students enrolled in the proseminars because they were particularly interested in the topic or the approach of the class. These varying motives help to explain the range of graduate student rankings; graduates did not monopolize the highest rankings in the classes but instead occupied an expansive area in the upper third of the scale.

Two conclusions emerge from this evidence: graduate students do not necessarily stand out from the rest of the undergraduates, intimidating them with their greater skill; and our graduate advising has been quite successful in identifying students who will benefit from additional development of writing skills before they undertake work in graduate seminars. At the same time, it is worth noting that many of the undergraduate students who receive the highest ratings in their assessment--a solid series of "nines"--are often students who are opting to continue in our M.A. program. The evidence suggests that a strong rating on the proseminar paper is an excellent indicator of future success in a graduate history program.

In general, the final essays in the proseminars received better scores than the final papers in Hist. 300, and we are hopeful that this is evidence of genuine improvement in students' work as they advance through the history major. Furthermore, the range of scores had narrowed in the proseminar samples. This statistic probably indicates a degree of improvement and development of skills over time, although other factors may be influencing the scores as well. An element of weeding out may be involved. The rankings might indicate the "survival of the fittest," with students who found that they lacked the necessary writing skills changing majors or dropping out after completing Hist. 300. We need to find a way to analyze our retention patterns: who completes the major, and why? What factors increase students' chances for success in the major? The rankings might also reflect the different personalities and priorities of the instructors--an artifact of allowing instructors, rather than a neutral evaluator, to do the assessments. However, in a resource-scarce environment, the plan to have instructors evaluate their own students seems to be the only feasible option. And the basic trend shows significantly higher scores for the proseminar papers.

**Average ratings in each category, by instructor
Hist. 300**

	Steven s	1Katz 08	2Katz 08	Hoffma n	Peard 08	1Katz F08	2Katz F08	Loomis	Peard 09	Katz 09	L- Wagne r	Rodrig uez
Arg	5.4	6.7	7	5.8	6.2	6.8	6.5	6.1	6.6	6.6	7.3	7
Ev./Anal	5.2	6.5	7.1	5.3	6.1	7	6.6	6.1	6.4	6.6	6.7	6.6
Sens	5.3	6.9	7.4	6.6	6.1	7	6.5	6.1	6.7	7	7.2	7.4
Histo	4.9	6.7	7.1		5.4	6.4	6.2	7	6.2	6.6	4.9	7.5
Exp	6.7	6.7	7.5	na	6.2	5.7	6.6	6	6.4	6.4	6.8	6.7
Form	5.7	7.3	8.1	4.4	6.2	7.4	6.5	7.1	6.2	7	8	6.8
Overall	6.7	6.9	7.3	6	6.3	7	6.7	6.5	6.7	6.6	7	7.4

**Average ratings in each category, by instructor
Proseminars**

	Dreyfus	Hsu	Longmore	D'Agost9	D'Agost8	Mabalon	Elkind	Martin
Arg	7.5	7.4	7.5	7.8	7.9	6.8	8.2	7.8
Ev./Anal.	6.9	7.2	7.4	7.4	7.8	7.1	7.6	8.1
Sens.	7.5	7.2	7.3	7.5	7.6	7.5	7.5	7.9
Histo.	6.1	7	7.4	7.1	7.8	7.9	7.3	8.2
Exp.	7.3	7.4	7.7	7.5	7.7	8	8	7.8
Form	7.6	7.8	7.3	7.5	7.1	8.2	8.2	8.3
Overall	7.2	7.5	7.5	7.8	8.1	7.9	7.9	8.2

As a comparison of the two tables shows, the ratings tend to form a continuum, with the scores for Hist. 300 at the lower end of the spectrum and the proseminar scores overlapping slightly with the high end of the Hist. 300 ratings and then rising considerably above that point. So, for example, in the use of evidence and analysis, Hist. 300 students' scores ranged from 4.9 to 7.1; proseminar students' rating for this category began at 6.9 and topped out at 8.1. In the category "expression," (indicating the skillful use of language), the sections of Hist. 300 ranged from 5.7 to 7.5, while the proseminar sections ranged from 7.3 to 8.0.

The trends suggested in the general comparison of Hist. 300 papers to proseminar papers become even clearer when individual students' work is evaluated. The comparison of a student's work in the two courses is probably a better marker of improvement and enhanced skills than looking at the course output more generally. Since we began collecting these assessment sheets in fall 2008, we have acquired completed records for forty-four students. (This number will undoubtedly increase when we add in the papers collected in fall 2009, a semester with six fully enrolled proseminars.)

Mice



One surprising pattern immediately stands out from comparing the dates of enrollment on these student records. Our vision of Hist. 300 places the course as the gateway to the major, and we imagine students taking it in the fall of their junior year. We think of the proseminar as the culmination of the history undergraduate major, and we envision students completing it in their final semester. But the students in our data set who completed both courses did not fit this pattern even half of the time. Twenty-five of the forty-four (59 percent) took the two classes in quick succession, without an interval between them. Only fifteen allowed time to pass between the completion of Hist. 300 and their enrollment in a proseminar. And four students slipped through our advising process and took both classes at the same time. All four of these cases were disasters, and they reveal the importance of insisting on the successful completion of Hist. 300 as a prerequisite for enrollment in a proseminar. Their work was extremely uneven, because they concentrated on one class (usually the proseminar) at the expense of Hist. 300. And, in one case, the assessment forms reveal what the instructors did not know at the time: one of the students turned in the same paper in both classes.

The following table compares the work of students in their Hist. 300 class and their proseminar; the ratings from Hist. 300 appear first, followed by the ratings for the proseminar papers. The third column demonstrates the improvement in ratings (provided as a positive number, except in the few cases where the ratings went down for the second paper).

Student #	A			B			C			D			E		
Arg	5	8	3	8	8	0	7	9	2	4	7	3	6	7	1
Ev/Anal	4	6	2	9	9	0	5	9	4	4	7	3	2	8	6
Sens	4	7	3	9	9	0	7	9	2	4	6	2	7	9	2
Histo	3	6	3	9	9	0	6	8	2	4	6	2	7	8	1
Exp	4	7	3	8	8	0	7	9	2	4	6	2	6	9	3
Form	4	8	4	9	9	0	6	8	2	3	8	5	5	n/a	-5
Overall	5	8	3	9	9	0	6	9	3	4	6	2	4	9	5
Ave.	4.1	7.1	3	8.7	8.7	0	6.3	8.7	2.4	3.9	6.6	2.7	5.3	8.3	3
Student #	F			G			H			I			J		
Arg	7	9	2	6	9	3	8	9	1	7	8	1	6	6	0
Ev/Anal	6	9	3	7	9	2	6	8	2	6	7	1	7.5	6	-1.5
Sens	6	9	3	6	9	3	7	8	1	6	7	1	7	7	0
Histo	5	9	4	7	9	2	3	8	5	8	8	0	7	7	0
Exp	7	9	2	7	9	2	7	9	2	7	7	0	7	5	-2
Form	6	9	3	8	9	1	7	9	2	7	8	1	8	7	-1
Overall	7	9	2	7	9	2	7	8.5	1.5	6.5	8	1.5	8	6	-2
Ave.	6.3	9	2.7	6.9	9	2.1	6.4	8.5	1.9	6.8	7.2	0.4	7.2	6.3	-0.9

Student #	K			L			M			N			O		
Arg.	8	7	-1	6	2	-4	7	9	2	7	8	1	6	8	2
Ev/Anal.	9	9	0	5	2	-3	5	8	3	7	8	1	5	8	3
Sens.	9	7	-2	8	4	-4	7	8	1	6	8	2	6	8	2
Histo	9	7	-2	n/a	2	2	5	8	3	6	8	2	5	8	3
Exp	9	7	-2	6	7	1	7	8	1	7	9	2	6	8	2
Form	8	7	-1	3	8	5	5	8	3	7	9	2	8	7	-1
Overall	9	7	-2	6	5	-1	8	8	0	7	9	2	6	8	2
Ave.	8.7	7.3	-1.4	5.7	4.3	-1.4	6.3	8.1	1.8	6.7	8.4	1.7	6	7.9	1.9

Student #	P			Q			R			S			T		
Arg.	5	4	-1	6	8	2	6	7	1	8	9	1	7	8	1
Ev./Anal.	5	4	-1	6	8	2	4	7	3	8	8	0	7	6	-1
Sens.	5	4	-1	7	9	2	6	7	1	9	8	-1	7	7	0
Histo.	5	4	-1	4	8	4	6	7	1	n/a	9	9	7	6	-1
Exp	6	4	-2	6	9	3	3	6	3	9	9	0	7	8	1
Form	7	4	-3	7	9	4	7	6	-1	8	9	1	9	9	0
Overall	5	4	-1	6	9	3	5	7	2	7	9	2	7	7	0
Ave.	5.4	4	-1.4	6	8.6	2.6	5.3	6.7	1.4	8.2	8.7	0.5	7.3	7.3	0

Student #	U			V			W			X			Y		
Arg.	7	7	0	7	8	1	7	8	1	8	9	1	7	7	0
Ev/Anal.	7	7	0	8	8	0	6	8	2	8	9	1	7	6	-1
Sens.	7	7	0	7	7	0	7	7	0	8	9	1	7	7	0
Histo.	7	6	-1	6	7	1	7	8	1	8	9	1	n/a	7	7
Exp.	7	7	0	7	7	0	5	5	0	8	9	1	8	9	1
Form	8	8	0	8	9	1	7	6	-1	8	9	1	8	9	1
Overall	7	7	0	8	8	0	7	7	0	9	9	0	7	7	0
Ave.	7.1	7	-0.1	7.3	7.7	0.4	6.6	7	0.4	8.1	9	0.9	7.3	7.4	0.1

Student #	Z			AA			BB			CC			DD		
Arg	7	9	2	7	8	1	6	9	3	7	9	2	6	8	2
Ev/Anal	6	9	3	6	8	2	6	9	3	7	7	0	7	9	2
Sens.	6	9	3	7	7	0	6	9	3	9	8	-1	7	9	2
Histo	6	9	3	6	8	2	5	9	4	8	8	0	7	9	2
Exp	7	9	2	6	7	1	6	9	3	9	8	-1	5	7	2
Form	7	9	2	7	7	0	6	9	3	7	8	1	8	8	0

The comparison of student essay scores reveals, in an onerwhelming number of cases, that students' historical abilities—researching, arguing, writing, putting their findings into historiographical context, and crafting appropriate citations, all improved over time. This evidence confirms the history department is successful in teaching the central skills of our discipline, and we are achieving our desired student learning outcomes.

Appendix A.

ESSAY ASSESSMENT RATING FORM:
Undergraduate

- | | | |
|----------------------------|-------|--|
| 1. Argument | _____ | Does the essay propound a thesis? Does the writer support it with an adequate argument? Is the argument coherent? Convincing? |
| 2. Evidence/Analysis | _____ | Does the writer make accurate use of a wide range of primary and secondary sources to support his or her argument? Does the writer demonstrate analytical and critical skills in using these sources? Does the writer take proper note of their biases? Does the writer demonstrate a command of the topic and its historical context? |
| 3. Historical Sensibility: | _____ | Does the writer display a sense of historical process? Does the paper address an historical question? Does it place the topic in historical context? Does it address change over time? |
| 4. Historiography | _____ | Does the writer use other historians' work appropriately to frame his or her argument? Does the writer take account of interpretations that diverge from his or her own? Does the writer demonstrate critical skills in the use of secondary sources? |
| 5. Expression | _____ | Does the writer use language skillfully? |

6. Form _____ Does the writer adhere to the normal rules of citation in footnotes, bibliography, etc.? Are the citations adequate to allow the reader to form a critical opinion of the range and use of sources?

7. Overall Rating _____ Bear in mind that this is a summary judgment of the paper's quality, and need not reflect an average of the categories above. Such factors as creativity and originality should be considered in this category.

Use the Following Numerical Scale to Rate the Final Seminar Paper:

1	F/D-	
2	D	(Inadequate)
3	D+/C-	
<hr/>		
4	C	
5	C+	(Satisfactory)
6	B-	
<hr/>		
7	B	
8	B+	(Highly Satisfactory)
9	A/A-	

Instructor:

Date: