Assurance of Student Learning 2018-2019	
Potter College	History Department
MA History **078**	

Use this page to list learning outcomes, measurements, and summarize results for your program. Detailed information must be completed in the subsequent pages.			
Student Learning Outcome 1: Graduates will showcase broad knowledge of historical events/periods and their significance.			
Instrument 1	Direct: Comprehensive Exams (each graduate must pass three exams)		
Instrument 2	Direct: Thesis (for those opting for thesis-track MA)		
Instrument 3	n/a		
Based on your results, circle or highlight whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 1.		Met	<mark>Not Met</mark>
Student Learning Outcome 2: Graduates will effectively and accurately interpret primary sources and historical data.			
Instrument 1	Direct: Comprehensive Exams (each graduate must pass three exams)		
Instrument 2	Direct: Thesis (for those opting for thesis-track MA)		
Instrument 3	n/a		
Based on your results, circle or highlight whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 2.		Met	<mark>Not Met</mark>
Student Learning Outcome 3: Graduates will identify and describe the contours and stakes of conversations among historians within defined historiographical fields.			
Instrument 1	Direct: Comprehensive Exams (each graduate must pass three exams)		
Instrument 2	Direct: Thesis (for those opting for thesis-track MA)		
Instrument 3	n/a		
Based on your results, circle or highlight whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 3.		Met	<mark>Not Met</mark>

Program Summary (Briefly summarize the action and follow up items from your detailed responses on subsequent pages.)

Overall, the results from this assessment indicate what the department has observed two years ago: that while our students perform very well in coursework, they are not as well prepared for the comprehensive exams. While all the students who sit for comprehensive exams pass with at least

a low pass, the graduate faculty share the conviction that the averages for each of the learning outcomes should be higher and that low passes should be more of a rarity among the program graduates as we would like our graduates to meet the highest of professional and academic standards.

Since we had anecdotal evidence on our students not performing as well during exams as well as oral defenses, the graduate faculty have begun to institute the following changes:

- Examine learning outcomes for all courses, making sure that the course learning outcomes align with those of the program. Where necessary/appropriate, adjust course-specific leaning outcomes to match/dovetail program learning outcomes.
- Consider establishing a more comprehensive rubric to measure learning evident in the comprehensive exam and/or thesis.
  - A three-point scale seemed appropriate for the graduate program given that MA graduates are supposed to exhibit a consistently high level of mastery. However, it is also challenging to reflect on the nuance in ability as would be possible on a 4 or 5-point scale. Moreover, with a small sample size, one person underperforming makes a statistically significant difference of 10-20 percentage points.
- Ensure that students have the ability to practice for comprehensive exams while completing coursework throughout their studies so that they are more prepared for the comprehensive exams when the time comes.
- Since not all graduate students write a thesis, in subsequent cycles we will collect an additional direct measure; likely an essay the graduates write in their final semester of graduate school.

Student Learning Outcome 1	
Student Learning Outcome	**Graduates will showcase broad knowledge of historical events/periods and their significance.**
Measurement Instrument 1	**Direct**: The purpose of the comprehensive exams is to give students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery in three areas of historical inquiry. Students must take comprehensive exams in their major field (geographic and/or temporal). One minor field must be distinct in space or time from the major field, and is usually thematic in nature. These exams are proctored written examination, taken over 6 hours. Both thesis and non-thesis students must sit for the three comprehensive exams.
Criteria for Student Success	The program used two measures of success. The first was achieving at minimum a Low Pass, i.e. passing each of the three comprehensive exams in the first go-around. The second was to achieve no less than an average of 2 (i.e. Pass). While all of our students met the lower threshold, only 71% of students earned an average that would place them in the Pass to High Pass territory.

Program Success Target for this Measurement	80-85% (Average score of pass)	Percent of Program Achieving Target	71% (Pass)

Methods	**Direct**: o The artifacts were the three comprehensive exams ($N = 7$) and all identifiers removed (student name, course numbers, faculty name). The papers were split among three full-time faculty so that each comprehensive exam was read thrice by three different reviewers. o The rubric was divided into three categories: low pass, pass, and high pass. One (1) point was earned for a low pass, two (2) points for a pass, and three points for a high pass. No fractions were permitted in the assignment of points. o In the event there was a difference in score greater than $1\pm sd$, another faculty member was asked to review - the average of all three was used as the final score.
Measurement Instrument 2	**Direct:** o The M.A. Thesis is a culminating research project which will demonstrate the student's mastery of historical research methods. o It should present an original argument that is carefully documented from primary and secondary sources. o The thesis should represent a contribution to the field and be of a quality suitable for submission to an academic publication.
Criteria for Student Success	The program used two measures of success. The first was achieving at minimum a Low Pass. The second was to achieve no less than an average of 2 (i.e. Pass) for this LO. Both of the students earned an average of 3 for this LO. In effect, the program met both of our measure of success.

Program Success Target for this Measurement	80-85%	Percent of Program Achieving Target	71%

Methods	**Direct:** o The artifact is the MA thesis ($N = 2$) and all identifiers removed (student name, course numbers, faculty name). The theses were split among three full-time faculty so that each thesis was read thrice by three different reviewers. o The rubric (same as the one for the comprehensive exams) was divided into three categories: low pass, pass, and high pass. One (1) point was earned for a low pass, two (2) points for a pass, and three points for a high pass. No fractions were permitted in the assignment of points. o In the event there was a difference in score greater than $1\pm sd$, another faculty member was asked to review - the average of all three was used as the final score.

Actions (Describe the decision-making process and actions planned for program improvement. The actions should include a timeline.)

It's potentially significant that thesis scores were consistently higher than those seen in comprehensive exams. While thesis students could naturally be more motivated and inclined to excel, it is also true that they are much more closely mentored. Therefore, it is likely that more attention paid to non-thesis track graduates and preparing all students for the specific requirements of the three comprehensive exams will improve the average scores for this learning outcome.

The department thus proposes to do the following:
- Examine learning outcomes for all courses, making sure that the course learning outcomes align with those of the program. Where necessary/appropriate, adjust course-specific leaning outcomes to match/dovetail program learning outcomes.
- Ensure that students have the ability to practice for comprehensive exams throughout their studies as part of their regular coursework so that they are more prepared for the actual qualifying exams.

Follow-Up (Provide your timeline for follow-up. If follow-up has occurred, describe how the actions above have resulted in program improvement.)

A meaningful follow-up will be possible in two cycles once the department's graduate faculty have had the opportunity to review the program's learning outcomes, evaluate the current rubric, and evaluate the alignment between course-specific learning outcomes and the program's learning outcomes. In the meantime, we have already begun including course assignments that more closely dovetail the format and skills necessary to perform well on the comprehensive exams.

Student Learning Outcome 2	
Student Learning Outcome	**Graduates will effectively and accurately interpret primary sources and historical data.**
Measurement Instrument 1	**Direct**: The purpose of the comprehensive exams is to give students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery in three areas of historical inquiry. Students must take comprehensive exams in their major field (geographic and/or temporal). One minor field must be distinct in space or time from the major field, and is usually thematic in nature. These exams are proctored written examination, taken over 6 hours. Both thesis and non-thesis students must sit for the three comprehensive exams.
Criteria for Student Success	The program used two measures of success. The first was achieving at minimum a Low Pass, i.e. passing each of the three comprehensive exams in the first go-around. The second was to achieve no less than an average of 2 (i.e. Pass). While all of our students met the lower threshold, 71% of students (5 out of 7) earned an average that would place them in the Pass/High Pass territory.

Program Success Target for this Measurement	80-85% (Average score of pass)	Percent of Program Achieving Target	43% (Pass)

Methods	Direct: o The artifacts were the three comprehensive exams (*N* = 7) and all identifiers removed (student name, course numbers, faculty name). The papers were split among three full-time faculty so that each comprehensive exam was read thrice by three different reviewers. o The rubric was divided into three categories: low pass, pass, and high pass. One (1) point was earned for a low pass, two (2) points for a pass, and three points for a high pass. No fractions were permitted in the assignment of points. o In the event there was a difference in score greater than $1\pm sd$, another faculty member was asked to review - the average of all three was used as the final score.
Measurement Instrument 2	**Direct:** o The M.A. Thesis is a culminating research project which will demonstrate the student's mastery of historical research methods. o It should present an original argument that is carefully documented from primary and secondary sources. o The thesis should represent a contribution to the field and be of a quality suitable for submission to an academic publication.
Criteria for Student Success	The program used two measures of success. The first was achieving at minimum a Low Pass. The second was to achieve no less than an average of 2 (i.e. Pass) for this LO. Both of the students earned an average of 3 for this LO. In effect, the program met both of our measure of success.

Program Success Target for this Measurement	80-85% (Average score of pass)	Percent of Program Achieving Target	43% (Pass)

Methods	Direct: o The artifact is the MA thesis (*N* = 2). All identifiers were removed (student name, course numbers, faculty name). The theses were split among three full-time faculty so that each thesis was read thrice by three different reviewers. o The rubric (same as the one for the comprehensive exams) was divided into three categories: low pass, pass, and high pass. One (1) point was earned for a low pass, two (2) points for a pass, and three points for a high pass. No fractions were permitted in the assignment of points. o In the event there was a difference in score greater than $1\pm sd$, another faculty member was asked to review - the average of all three was used as the final score. There were **no** standard deviations greater than $1+ sd$.

		Met	Not Met
Based on your results, circle or highlight whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 2.		**Met**	**Not Met**

Actions (Describe the decision-making process and actions planned for program improvement. The actions should include a timeline.)

It's potentially significant that thesis scores were consistently higher than those seen in comprehensive exams. While thesis students could naturally be more motivated and inclined to excel, it is also true that they are much more closely mentored. Therefore, it is likely that more attention paid to non-thesis track graduates and preparing all students for the specific requirements of the three comprehensive exams will improve the average scores for this learning outcome.

The department thus proposes to do the following:
- Examine learning outcomes for all courses, making sure that the course learning outcomes align with those of the program. Where necessary/appropriate, adjust course-specific leaning outcomes to match/dovetail program learning outcomes.
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Follow-Up (Provide your timeline for follow-up. If follow-up has occurred, describe how the actions above have resulted in program improvement.)

A meaningful follow-up will be possible in two cycles once the department's graduate faculty have had the opportunity to review the program's learning outcomes, evaluate the current rubric, and evaluate the alignment between course-specific learning outcomes and the program's learning outcomes. In the meantime, we have already begun including course assignments that more closely dovetail the format and skills necessary to perform well on the comprehensive exams.

Student Learning Outcome 3			
Student Learning Outcome	**Graduates will identify and describe the contours and stakes of conversations among historians within defined historiographical fields.**		
Measurement Instrument 1	**Direct**: The purpose of the comprehensive exams is to give students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery in three areas of historical inquiry. Students must take comprehensive exams in their major field (geographic and/or temporal). One minor field must be distinct in space or time from the major field, and is usually thematic in nature. These exams are proctored written examination, taken over 6 hours. Both thesis and non-thesis students must sit for the three comprehensive exams.		
Criteria for Student Success	The program used two measures of success. The first was achieving at minimum a Low Pass, i.e. passing each of the three comprehensive exams in the first go-around. The second was to achieve no less than an average of 2 (i.e. Pass) for this LO. While all of our students met the lower threshold, 57% of students (4 out of 7) earned an average that would place them in the Pass to High Pass territory.		
Program Success Target for this Measurement	**80-85% (Average score of pass)**	**Percent of Program Achieving Target**	**57% (Pass)**
Methods	**Direct:** - The artifacts were the three comprehensive exams ($N = 7$) and all identifiers removed (student name, course numbers, faculty name). The papers were split among three full-time faculty so that each comprehensive exam was read thrice by three different reviewers. - The rubric was divided into three categories: low pass, pass, and high pass. One (1) point was earned for a low pass, two (2) points for a pass, and three points for a high pass. No fractions were permitted in the assignment of points. - In the event there was a difference in score greater than $1\pm sd$, another faculty member was asked to review - the average of all three was used as the final score.		
Measurement Instrument 2	**Direct:** - The M.A. Thesis is an optional culminating research project which will demonstrate the student's mastery of historical research methods. - It should present an original argument that is carefully documented from primary and secondary sources. - The thesis should represent a contribution to the field and be of a quality suitable for submission to an academic publication.		
Criteria for Student Success	The program used two measures of success. The first was achieving at minimum a Low Pass. The second was to achieve no less than an average of 2 (i.e. Pass) for this LO. Both of the students earned an average of 3 for this LO. In effect, the program met both of our measure of success.		
Program Success Target for this Measurement	**85-90% (Average score of pass)**	**Percent of Program Achieving Target**	**57% (Pass)**

Methods	Direct:
	o The artifact is the MA thesis ($N = 2$). All identifiers were removed (student name, course numbers, faculty name). The theses were split among three full-time faculty so that each thesis was read thrice by three different reviewers.
	o The rubric (same as the one for the comprehensive exams) was divided into three categories: low pass, pass, and high pass. One (1) point was earned for a low pass, two (2) points for a pass, and three points for a high pass. No fractions were permitted in the assignment of points.
	o In the event there was a difference in score greater than $1 \pm$ *sd*, another faculty member was asked to review - the average of all three was used as the final score. There were **no** standard deviations greater than $1+$ *sd*.

Based on your results, circle or highlight whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 3.	Met	Not Met

Actions (Describe the decision-making process and actions planned for program improvement. The actions should include a timeline.)

It's potentially significant that thesis scores were consistently higher than those seen in comprehensive exams. While thesis students could naturally be more motivated and inclined to excel, it is also true that they are much more closely mentored. Therefore, it is likely that more attention paid to non-thesis track graduates and preparing all students for the specific requirements of the three comprehensive exams will improve the average scores for this learning outcome.

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Follow-Up (Provide your timeline for follow-up. If follow-up has occurred, describe how the actions above have resulted in program improvement.)

A meaningful follow-up will be possible in two cycles once the department's graduate faculty have had the opportunity to review the program's learning outcomes, evaluate the current rubric, and evaluate the alignment between course-specific learning outcomes and the program's learning outcomes. In the meantime, we have already begun including course assignments that more closely dovetail the format and skills necessary to perform well on the comprehensive exams.

Learning Outcomes	High Pass	Pass	Low Pass
1. Graduates will showcase broad knowledge of historical events/periods and their significance.	The overview of historical data is both comprehensive and strategically deployed as it demonstrates a firm grasp of historical events/processes as well as their interpretation.	The overview of historical data is informative, but struggles somewhat with which facts are/are not important to mention and occasionally neglects to identify the significance of historical data.	The overview of historical data provides insufficient information about the historical event/context/process, is largely descriptive, rather than analytical.
2. Graduates will effectively and accurately interpret primary sources and historical data.	The analysis of sources/data is sharp, sophisticated and insightful, reflecting both an understanding of specific documents and an ability to engage with the specifics of the document to advance the argument.	The analysis of the sources/data is solid and straightforward, showing a good understanding of the content of the document but does not advance the argument fully and/or misses key aspects of the sources/data.	The analysis of the document shows some insight, but is flawed in some way, because of either failure to properly understand primary sources or factual errors in understanding/applying historical data.
3. Graduates will identify and describe the contours and stakes of conversations among historians within defined historiographical fields.	*The variety of cited monographs and articles indicates an attempt to analyze a diverse number of historical interpretations. *When analyzing individual authors, the student consistently and accurately paraphrases the authors' interpretations.	*A heavy reliance on a select number of monographs and articles indicates an ability to recognize major trends in historical interpretations, but not the variety. * When analyzing individual authors, the student struggles once or twice with accurately summarizing the authors' theses.	*The student exhibits a heavy reliance on a small number of monographs and articles, indicating a difficulty in readily recognizing major trends in historical interpretation. *When analyzing individual authors the student consistently struggles to accurately summarize the authors' interpretations.