

Capstone Signature Assignment Development in a History BA Program

History Department at UHM

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Previous Achievement

The History department has engaged in systematic inquiry into student learning at the program level since 2015. The department provides a culminating learning experience for majors through a two-course capstone sequence: HIST 396: Historical Theory and Methods and HIST 496: Senior Tutorial in History (thesis-writing). Previously the assessment committee collected and evaluated student writing in the thesis course. The assessment results led the committee to investigate how historiographic skills (PLO #4) was developed in HIST 396.

Purpose of this project

To develop a common assignment to be used across different sections and instructors who teach HIST 396.

HIST BA Program Learning Outcomes

- 1) Students can explain historical change and continuity.
- 2) Students can write clear expository prose and orally present their ideas according to disciplinary conventions.
- 3) Students can identify, interpret and evaluate primary sources and other relevant information.
- 4) Students can identify the main historiographical issues in a specific area of concentration.



Signature Assignment: Annotated Bibliography

- Assemble all the primary and secondary sources you have collected for your project.
- List your sources alphabetically, using the Chicago bibliographic style.
- For each source, write a brief paragraph describing who the author is and what type of source it is. In a sentence or two, explain what the subject is and how it relates to your topic.
- For each of your three most important secondary sources, write a one-page synopsis of that source in three paragraphs as follows:
 - 1) Who is the author and what is the basis for his or her authority? What is the topic of the source?
 - 2) Summarize the source's main argument, and give an overview of the type of evidence used.
 - 3) Explain how this source relates to and/or compares with the other sources on this topic.

Signature assignment aligns with PLO #4

Signature Assignment Development

1

- Chair met with capstone course instructors to discuss PLO and compare existing assignments

2

- Instructors identified common assignment aligned with PLO for assessment purposes

3

- Instructors use common assignment with eye towards future assessment work

Faculty Engagement Strategies

Faculty are encouraged to continue to use similar assignments to ensure comparison of student writing in assessment work. Not all assignments given to the students may be identical, but faculty collaboration encourages continuity.

Challenges

As additional faculty teach the course, they may not be aware of ongoing assessment work for this project and will need to be given support and encouraged to participate.

Next Steps

Faculty will continue to work with assessment committee to ensure at least one assignment per semester provides desired student writing that helps investigate how PLO is developed in the course. Suggestions will be made to help faculty better teach students PLO's.