

History Program Assessment Plan Spring 2017

Mission Statement for the History Major

A cornerstone of a liberal arts education, history is the study of continuity and change over time. The history major at Wells College helps students to understand the richness, diversity, and complexity of the human experience over time and space. Students learn how to think historically and embrace new ways of knowing by recognizing connections between the past and the present. Historians think both critically and creatively. As students examine historical questions, they learn how historians have approached and interpreted the past, they gain an appreciation of the contested nature of historical knowledge, and they engage issues that raise ethical questions and provoke historical debate.

History Program Goals

The HIST program trains students to:

- Develop analytical skills in order to become well informed, critical, and active citizens.
- Think creatively and critically as they compose well-reasoned arguments and interpretations.
- Develop technological and research skills that enable them to access, critically evaluate, and utilize information effectively.
- Develop an appreciation of difference and diversity by cultivating a sense of shared humanity.
- Develop expertise in the discipline of history.

History Program Learning Objectives & Measureable Outcomes

I. GOAL: Develop analytical skills to enable students to become well informed, critical, and active citizens.

Objective: Students read primary and secondary sources actively and critically.

Outcomes:

- Reading reflections
- Discussion questions
- Informal writing exercises
- Quizzes

- o *Measurement Tools*
 - Locally developed rubrics
 - Answer keys

II. GOAL: Think creatively and critically to compose well-reasoned arguments and interpretations.

- Objective:* Students interpret source material, draw conclusions, and compose written arguments

- o *Outcomes*
 - Position papers and short critical responses
 - Medium-length interpretive essays
 - Research papers
 - HIST 401 (Senior Essay) & HIST 402 (Senior Seminar)
 - Formal peer-editing exercises

- o *Measurement Tools*
 - Locally developed rubrics

- Objective:* Students develop oral communication skills.

- o *Outcomes*
 - Classroom discussion & debate
 - Group work
 - Role-playing activities and simulation games
 - Formal presentations

- o *Measurement Tools*
 - Requirements and expectations explained in course syllabi
 - Locally developed rubrics

III. GOAL: Develop technological and research skills that enable students to access, critically evaluate, and utilize information effectively.

- Objective:* Students learn how to engage in original research.

- o *Outcomes*
 - Seminar papers
 - HIST 401 (Senior Essay) & HIST 402 (Senior Seminar)

- o *Measurement Tools*
 - Locally developed rubric
 - Requirements and expectations explained in course syllabi

IV. GOAL: Develop an appreciation of difference and diversity by cultivating a sense of shared humanity.

- Objective:* Students learn how to compare and contrast different peoples and cultures across time and space
 - o Outcomes*
 - Completion of coursework in the history of the United States, Europe, and at least one non-western area, and in various chronological periods (ancient, medieval, early modern, and modern)
 - Quizzes
 - Examinations
 - Interpretive Essays
 - Senior comprehensive examination
 - o Measurement Tools*
 - Major requirements identified in college catalog
 - Locally developed rubrics
 - Answer keys

V. GOAL: Develop expertise in the discipline of history.

- Objective:* Students learn how to think historically and learn the interpretative nature of historical scholarship.
 - o Outcomes*
 - Interpretive and historiographical essays
 - Success in HIST 375 (Writing History: Theory and Practice)
 - Success in HIST 401 (Senior Essay) & HIST 402 (Senior Seminar)
 - Internships in museums, historical societies, archives, and schools
 - Written senior comprehensive examination
 - o Measurement Tools*
 - Locally developed rubrics
 - Internship contracts