



Annual Assessment Report for Academic Programs

The University Assessment Team advocates for the enhancement of student learning through purposeful, meaningful, and feasible student-outcomes assessment practices. The Assessment Team seeks to collaborate with programs, departments, and units to ensure that effective assessment of student learning occurs across the University. To assist in meeting this goal, the Team requests that you complete this Annual Assessment Report form to document student learning in your program. A PDF version of this completed form will be posted to the Academic Affairs Assessment website. Please note that this Annual Assessment Report form should only be completed after you have an Assessment Plan for Academic Programs forms on file with the University Assessment Team. The plan is completed once and only updated when revisions have been made to components of the plan.

1. **Degree Level and Program Name:** BA History
2. **College/School:** College of Humanities, Arts & Social Sciences
3. **Assessment Overview** - Briefly share how student learning outcomes assessment is conducted within your program/department (e.g. number of outcomes, examples of assignments used, and frequency of assessment).

We assess seven learning outcomes annually via reviews of course work and exit interviews with graduating seniors.

4. **Student Learning Outcomes & Benchmarks** -Which student learning outcome(s) from the assessment plan filed with the University Assessment Team is/are being reported on in this report? Include the corresponding benchmark(s) for each outcome.
 1. A broad content knowledge of major periods, themes, issues, personalities, movements, and events in the human past. Benchmark: Student surveys, exit interviews, or focus groups of senior majors and minors are conducted annually.
 2. A comparative perspective on major historical periods, themes, issues, personalities, movements, and events that incorporates more than one world region. Benchmark: student surveys, exit interviews, or focus groups of senior majors and minors are conducted annually.
 3. The ability to engage in an informed way in a historical debate on a particular period, theme, issue, personality, or movement in the human past. Benchmark: The instructor(s) of methos course (HIST 2910) report to the department on student performance in that class annually. In the senior seminar course (HIS 4990), students complete an original research paper, based on primary and secondary sources, and make an oral presentation to the class. The instructor(s) use explicit criteria to evaluate student work.
 4. The ability to locate, collect, and assemble historical evidence from primary and secondary sources. Benchmark: The instructor(s) of the methods course (HIST 2910) report to the department on student performance in that class annually. In the senior seminar course (HIS 4990), students complete an original research paper, based on primary and secondary sources, and make an oral presentation to the class. The instructor(s) use explicit criteria to evaluate student work.



5. The ability to develop original interpretations from historical evidence. Benchmark: The instructor(s) of the methods course (HIST 2910) report to the department on student performance in that class annually. In the senior seminar course (HIS 4990), students complete an original research paper, based on primary and secondary sources, and make an oral presentation to the class. The instructor(s) use explicit criteria to evaluate student work.

6. Ethical behavior in the use of historical evidence. Benchmark: The instructor(s) of methos course (HIST 2910) report to the department on student performance in that class annually. In the senior seminar course (HIS 4990), students complete an original research paper, based on primary and secondary sources, and make an oral presentation to the class. The instructor(s) use explicit criteria to evaluate student work.

7. The ability to communicate historical findings in a clear, concise, organized, and documented fashion. Benchmark: The instructor(s) of methos course (HIST 2910) report to the department on student performance in that class annually. In the senior seminar course (HIS 4990), students complete an original research paper, based on primary and secondary sources, and make an oral presentation to the class. The instructor(s) use explicit criteria to evaluate student work.

5. Institutional Outcomes - For which institutional outcome(s) do the reported student learning outcome(s) align?

SLO Outcome Alignment	Institutional Outcome
Yes	I. Jesuit & Mercy Values
Yes	II. Diversity & Cultural Awareness
Yes	III. Critical Thinking & Problem Solving
Yes	IV. Communication
Yes	V. Professionalism
Yes	VI. Lifelong Learning

6. Assessment Period: Select the academic year for which you are reporting results (i.e. when data were collected):

2025-2026

7. Program Assessment Results -Briefly summarize the assessment results and how they relate to benchmark(s).

Outcomes 1-2

What do you think are the strengths of the History Department?

I really appreciate the small size of the classes as well as the accessibility of the faculty and staff. Having the same few professors over and over again allowed me to form deeper connections with my professors and allowed them to watch me grow over time. I also appreciate the smaller class sizes because it challenged me to participate more often and engage in content on a deeper level.



What are its weaknesses?

I think there is more opportunity for diversity and inclusion in the courses offered. For example, I think classes specifically centering on women's history in certain eras or different ethnic groups could be really critical, as these groups tend to be left out in broader survey courses.

Which courses did you find most valuable for the major and why?

I think Historical Methods was super valuable, as it demonstrates the necessary skills historians engage with.

Outcomes 3-7

Students read, analyzed, and evaluated two books: *All That She Carried: The Journey of Ashley's Sack, a Black Family Keepsake* by Tiya Miles and *Death of an Overseer: Reopening a Murder Investigation from the Plantation South* by Michael Wayne. Students responded very positively to *All That She Carried* in terms of their engagement in historical debate over the subject matter and the methodology utilized by Miles to reconstruct the past. Writing assignments (3-4 pages) indicated an overall ability on the part of students to evaluate the historian's use of sources and her construction of a historical argument.

Overall, students responded negatively to *Death of an Overseer*. Discussions focused on Wayne's utilization of primary sources and a broad contextual background. Writing assignments (3-4 pages) asked students to analyze and evaluate Wayne's methodology. The students who actually read the book found it to be difficult to read and follow. However, they did engage in spirited discussion and debate concerning Wayne's use of sources and his interpretations. Their mostly negative reaction was surprising, as the book usually receives positive responses from students. Some of the students openly recommended no longer using *Death of an Overseer*. Completed assignments varied in quality, ranging from outstanding to poor. AI usage became a problem to some extent. Frankly, attendance issues negatively affected the utilization of the book.

Research Paper

Students completed research papers on Civil War-era topics (10-13 pages). Students began by examining primary sources found in the Valley of the Shadow online archive (University of Virginia) and then asked research questions. Students formed working hypotheses, produced working bibliographies, outlines, rough drafts, revised rough drafts, and final drafts. In addition to the book *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, students were provided with examples of bibliographies, outlines, and final drafts from previous years. Class sessions included time spent on methods for identifying and avoiding plagiarism. I spent several class sessions covering research papers, and I held individual meetings with students to discuss and develop research plans.

Six of the seven students enrolled in the course completed research papers. Two papers demonstrated impressive interpretations of primary sources, use of secondary sources, and writing. The remaining papers demonstrated varying degrees of success in terms of research, interpretations of evidence, writing, and documentation. Source materials were to be cited in accordance with the Chicago Manual of Style. Each research paper did include source citations and bibliographies. However, as is the case every year, some students resisted using Chicago Style when citing sources and completing bibliographies.



8. **Planned Actions and/or Actions Taken in Response to Assessment Results** - Briefly summarize how you are using the assessment results to enhance student learning and improve program quality.

The department is having wide-ranging discussions on how to tackle some of the issues raised by the recent increases in the unethical use of AI.