

Capstone I AY16 Program Review: Program Outcomes and Capstone Assignment Alignment

HISTORY

Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The History Program introduces the student to the world that was and is and the student's relationship to that world. It stresses the continuity of culture by providing a historical background for the study of other disciplines and for responsible citizenship. It also helps prepare students for careers in teaching, public service, consulting, research, museums, archives, and libraries, and provides a liberal education as a basis for entering a variety of careers such as public administration, business, and law.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- *Content Knowledge:* Achieve the ability to synthesize and discuss selected historical experiences in the Americas, Europe, and the world.
 - *Communication:* Attain a wide-ranging understanding of the core concepts, events, and historiographical trends in selected areas of American, European, and World history, demonstrated through written and oral work.
 - *Applied and Integrated Learning:* Achieve a thorough understanding of the methodologies and professional ethics practiced by historians, demonstrated through the completion of a history capstone thesis.
 - *Critical Thinking:* Master skills in historical research, critical thinking, reading and writing, and polished oral presentation of scholarly work.
 - *Civic Engagement:* Demonstrate an understanding of the role of historical knowledge in shaping the narratives of a nation and a world, demonstrated through a critical understanding of how the use/misuse of history contributes to political, social, and cultural interpretations, and how multiple historical discourse communities make history public (i.e., historical societies, archival repositories, museums).
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Capstone Assignment

HIST 403: CAPSTONE

The culmination of the History degree is the capstone, which can take several forms. It is a major research and writing project which demonstrates a mastery of historical methodologies and sources.

1.) THE THESIS OPTION

This option is considered the traditional capstone for History. Students who choose the thesis option develop their topic, formulate their argument, and build their bibliography in previous academic terms. In HIST 403 the thesis is actually crafted. Theses must be at least 30 pages in length (excluding the bibliography) and incorporate footnotes and an extensive bibliography of primary and secondary sources.

2.) THE PUBLIC HISTORY OPTION

For the Public History capstone students complete a faculty-approved project. Examples of such projects can be found on our public history webpage. In addition to completing the project, which may include digitization, museum and/or archival work, or work that is local, state, or regional in scope, students doing this option must write an essay of at least 25 pages about their project, linking it to current scholarship in the field.

3.) THE TEACHING OPTION

The teaching capstone is a blend of pedagogical and disciplinary research. Students taking this option

typically intend to become elementary or secondary teachers, and they work to develop an extensive curriculum unit. Generally this curriculum is at the secondary or undergraduate level and it takes into consideration state standards where appropriate. In addition to developing the curriculum, students must craft an essay on pedagogy and scholarship related to the topic (12-15 pages in length), a set of lesson plans and rubrics (8-15 pages in length), and accompanying written descriptions of the teaching materials (5-10 pages in length).

[Closing the Loop Statement](#)

Sixteen students completed the History capstone in 2016. Of those, 14 (87.5%) demonstrated significant proficiency across all Program Outcomes assessed for the History Capstone. Two students (12.5%) did not meet the outcomes. Of those, one student failed to complete the capstone, though he is currently enrolled in the 2017 Capstone. The second student was completing a double major in English and History, and clearly was unable to dedicate sufficient time and attention to both major capstones. That student received a 'D' in the History capstone.

Overall, the History faculty are pleased with students' capstone performance. Eight students presented their work at Spring Symposium and two were accepted to graduate programs. Several of the capstones were outstanding in their demonstration of content knowledge, applied and integrative knowledge, and critical thinking. This was evident in both teaching capstones and traditional thesis capstones.

One area of assignment design we are reviewing is Oral Communication. The faculty feel it would be beneficial to incorporate opportunities for informal and formal oral presentations of student work throughout the term.

The History Department Learning Outcomes of Critical Thinking, Content Knowledge, Integrative and Applied Learning, and Communication align effectively with the Capstone. The capstones require two terms of original research, extensive reading in the field, and then synthesis of material and application of historical methodologies in the production of written work no less than 35 pages. While we do not include the PLO of Civic Engagement in the capstone assessment, archival or teaching capstones by their very nature align with this PLO.

[Action Plan:](#) N/A