

Mission Statement

History

The Bachelor of Arts degree in history provides rigorous, deliberate, and directed study that prepares graduates for careers in the discipline of history and the social sciences. Hopefully, these graduates will establish community partnerships to help resolve problems and promote best efforts to raise the quality of life for all citizens in the San Joaquin Valley and wherever our graduates apply their acquired skills.

The Department of History has offered a Master of Arts degree since 1958. The Master of Arts program in History offers graduate student seminars on a wide range of historical periods and approaches. The program also provides the conscientious student with the requisite research skills to ensure success in future academic or related pursuits. An energetic community of graduate students has developed with our department, and our graduates have become successful teachers at the high school and community college level. Many have moved on to pursue their career at the doctoral level.

Since its inception in 1958, the history M.A. program has hoped to serve the University and the community by concentrating on these tasks: 1.) Providing post-baccalaureate professional training for teaching in secondary schools and community colleges; 2) preparing students for graduate work at the doctoral level; and 3) meeting the needs of interested students for further intellectual development and personal enrichment in the field of History. In order to accomplish this goal, the department has developed a rigorous and well-rounded program that enables students to obtain a broad-based education at the master's level.

History Department Student Outcomes Assessment Plan
Voted on and approved by the department on April 20, 2007

Goal 1: To provide students with a foundational historical literacy.

Objective 1.1 Students will demonstrate knowledge of broad historical eras, including key events and peoples, as well as defining attributes and experiences of historically-determined societies and cultures.

Objective 1.2 Students will demonstrate specific content knowledge related to various area of concentration.

(Assessed through pre- and post-tests in 11, 12, 20, 21, and selected lower and upper-division courses)

Goal 2: To provide student with the skills necessary to communicate their historical knowledge through discipline-specific writing assignments.

Objective 2.1 Students will identify primary and secondary sources.

Objective 2.2 Students will identify historical controversies through the use of primary and secondary sources.

Objective 2.3 Students will demonstrate knowledge of standard historical research methods.

Objective 2.4 Students will identify important historians and historical theories, as well as their roles in shaping current understanding of past events.

(Assessed through pre- and post-tests in 4 and 100, and perhaps also through portfolio)

Goal 3: To provide students with higher-order critical thinking skills in the analysis of historical phenomena.

Objective 3.1 Students will formulate independent research projects, identifying a relevant historical problem or question.

Objective 3.2 Students will identify, analyze, and critically evaluate pertinent primary and secondary sources.

Objective 3.3 Students will synthesize their research results in an analytical essay which meets discipline standards.

(Assessed through a final research project in 100 to be part of their portfolio and through a critical thinking test)

The History Major Portfolio:

One of the most important tasks that falls to the Department of History is that of outcomes assessment. In other words, the department is vitally concerned about both reaching and measuring its effectiveness in reaching its stated goals and objectives. In terms of objectives, the department aims to provide students with a foundational historical literacy, promote students' ability to communicate their historical knowledge through discipline-specific writing assignments, and develop among its students higher-order critical thinking skills in the analysis of historical phenomena. Furthermore, the department is dedicated to measuring its effectiveness in reaching these goals in order to improve, on a consistent basis, the education it can offer history majors. And, perhaps the most effective means of assessing the effectiveness of the department in reaching its objectives is through the evaluation of student written work over time.

In that spirit, the department will initiate a program called the History Major Portfolio. Each undergraduate history major will be responsible for maintaining a select portfolio of written work of his or her coursework in the department. The History Major Portfolio will consist of the following components:

1. A written assignment from History 4
2. A written assignment from an upper division history course of the student's choosing
3. A second written assignment from an upper division history course of the student's choosing (ideally from a different semester)
4. The student's research paper from History 100
5. A short exit survey to be completed in the semester of graduation

Samples of Written Assignments (4)

The logic for including these elements in the portfolio is self-evident. History 4, "Introduction to Historical Skills," is a mandatory course that introduces history majors to the varieties of writing they will encounter in the discipline of history. The written assignment in the portfolio from this class, therefore, will serve as a baseline to help gauge future development and improvement of historical, writing, and critical thinking skills in the upper division coursework.

The two assignments from upper division elective courses will further help the department trace the progress of its majors and assess its effectiveness in reaching its goals. In these classes history majors will encounter more complex historical problems requiring them to apply the historical and critical thinking skills they have accumulated and sharpened from previous courses taken.

The research paper from History 100 represents, in a sense, a final examination for history majors. In this paper, students must demonstrate high levels of achievement in historical criticism, writing, argumentation, and documentation. The research paper must also demonstrate a grasp of the discipline's broader theoretical and methodological concerns. In short, the research paper from History 100 will provide countless measures as to how effectively the department has met its prime objective, namely, to provide students with a solid foundational education in the discipline of history.

The Exit Survey

This brief exit survey is intended to capture students' evaluation of their experience as history majors at California State University, Fresno. The questions are broad, and they will require students to reflect on not only what they have learned, but how they have grown as history students. The questions will also inquire into how students may have approached their major differently from the outset, given what they now know. Finally, suggestions will be solicited regarding how students gauge the quality of the education in history they have received at Fresno State.

History Department Goals/Objectives and Assessment Measures Matrix

Objectives	Measures		
	Pre/Post Tests	Portfolio	Exit Interview
1.1 – Students will demonstrate knowledge of broad historical eras including key events and peoples, as well as defining attributes and experiences of historically determined societies and cultures	X	X	
1.2 —Students will demonstrate specific content knowledge related to various area of concentration	X	X	
2.1 —Students will identify primary and secondary sources		X	
2.2 —Students will identify historical controversies through the use of primary and secondary sources		X	
2.3 —Students will demonstrate knowledge of standard historical research methods		X	
2.4 —Students will identify important historians and historical theories, as well as their roles in shaping current understanding of past events		X	
3.1 — Students will formulate independent research projects, identifying a relevant historical problem or question		X	
3.2 —Students will identify, analyze, and critically evaluate pertinent primary and secondary sources		X	
3.3 —Students will synthesize their research results in an analytical essay which meets discipline standards		X	

History Department Student Learning Outcomes Course Matrix

Objectives	Lower Division 1,2,3,6,7,8,9	History 4	History 11,12	History 20, 21	Upper Division Electives	History 100
1.1 – Students will demonstrate knowledge of broad historical eras including key events and peoples, as well as defining attributes and experiences of historically determined societies and cultures	R	R	I	I	E	R
1.2—Students will demonstrate specific content knowledge related to U.S., Europe, and world regions	R	R	I	I	E	R
2.1—Students will identify primary and secondary sources	R	E	I	I	E	E
2.2—Students will identify historical controversies through the use of primary and secondary sources	R	E	I	I	E	E
2.3—Students will demonstrate knowledge of standard historical research methods	R	E	I	I	R	E
2.4--- Students will identify important historians and historical theories, as well as their roles in shaping current understanding of past events	I	I	I	I	E	E
3.1-- Students will formulate independent research projects, identifying a relevant historical problem or question	I	I	I	I	R	E
3.2—Students will identify, analyze, and critically evaluate pertinent primary and secondary sources	I	I	I	I	R	E
3.3—Students will synthesize their research results in an analytical essay which meets discipline standards	I	I	I	I	R	E
I---Introduced	E---Emphasized			R---Reinforced		

History Department Assessment Measures and Year Timeline

Measures	Years				
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Pre/Post Tests			X	X	
Portfolio/Samples of Written Assignments	X	X			
Exit Interview					X