

Academic Program Details

Department/School: History & Political Science

Degree: Bachelor of Arts

Major/Program: History; Social Science

Assessment Period: 2009-2010 Academic Year

Date Submitted: July 19, 2010

Outcome1

Program Intended Educational Outcome

1. History majors will be able to summarize three key history books.

Means for Assessment and Criteria for Success

1. In the oral exit interview, students will be asked "What are the three best assigned history books that you read while a student at PLNU? Please give one from each of the required areas: American, European, Non-Western.

Expectations in the answer: Student will be able to name three and describe what made them the best in his or her mind.

Second expectation: Student should be able to summarize the main argument of the book and remember something specific from the book.

Summary of Data Collected

Out of seven graduates in History and Social Science, four students (three history majors and one social science major) met with three professors for exit interviews. Given the smaller numbers, we decided it was best to do the two majors together. Each student named three books and all were able to describe something specific and give a quick description of the book. In addition, students were able to identify key arguments in secondary literature, including thesis that they disagreed with or found weak.

Use of Results

Students continue to express an appreciation for a variety of historical writing, including both primary and secondary sources, as well as faculty use of occasional works of literature to enhance the understanding of particular time periods.

Outcome2

Program Intended Educational Outcome

2. History majors will demonstrate their ability to write an analytical paper.

Means for Assessment and Criteria for Success

2. Students will submit by April 1 of their senior year two writing samples from PLNU history courses. Both papers will be assessed by departmental faculty for the following criteria. It will be expected that all students will be able to score at least an “acceptable” on four of the five criteria.

The following answered by either: *no, acceptable, or very much so.*

1. Does the paper have a clear and concise theme?
2. Does the student use evidence to support assertions?
3. Does the student use primary sources for evidence?
4. Does the student use a variety of secondary sources?
5. Does the student show ability to make inferences?

Summary of Data Collected

Each student submitted two papers for review. The samples were all deemed acceptable based on the criteria that we have employed. There was some evidence that this year’s pool was weaker than in the past, however, the sample size is very small to draw any conclusions.

Use of Results

While faculty have been please overall with our writing preparation carried out in HIS270 Research Methods, we have opened discussion regarding methods to motivate students in their final semesters to continue to produce good work.

Outcome3

Program Intended Educational Outcome

3. History majors will have an appreciation for the value of history and a desire for life-long learning of history.

Means for Assessment and Criteria for Success

3. Students in their senior year will be scheduled to meet with the history faculty for an oral interview. The student will be asked the following questions with the faculty taking notes according to a checklist

of expectations. Faculty will compare their assessments of the student answers. 70% of the students will be expected to meet all expectations.

E= Expectations in the answer.

1. Why is learning history important?

E: Student will say something about the usefulness of history for comparing and contrasting with the present.

E: Student will say something of lessons or models for application that come from history for the students own life and society.

2. Do you plan on continuing your study of history and if so how?

E: Student will answer “yes” while noting vocational or avocational goals.

E: Student will mention desire for future reading.

3. Can you give a specific example where in serious conversation outside of class you have used your historical knowledge?

E: Student will give an example.

4. Name and describe three history books that you read will an undergraduate that were not assigned in class—possibly vacation reading.

E: Student will be able to name and talk about three.

Summary of Data Collected

Students were all articulate and enthusiastic in their answers to our interview questions. All expressed a thoughtful understanding of how studying the past has enhanced their understanding both of themselves and of others.

The four students plan careers in archaeology, secondary teaching, law school, and library science.

Use of Results

While very satisfied with this groups answers, we all agreed that we must remain very intentional in articulating the value of historical study within our courses.