Please attach a narrative (not to exceed 4 pages, excluding appendices) addressing the following:

- What are the student learning outcomes? Please provide a numbered list.
- Which learning outcomes were assessed?
- How were they assessed? (Programs must use at least one direct assessment of student learning.)
- Undergraduate programs should assess at least one University Undergraduate Learning Outcome (UULO) each year, which may or may not overlap with a program learning outcome.
- Graduate programs should assess at least one outcome related to one of the following graduate level requirements each year:
  - student engagement in research, scholarship, creative expression and/or appropriate high-level professional practice.
  - activities requiring originality, critical analysis and expertise.
  - the development of extensive knowledge in the field under study.
- What was learned from the assessment results?
- How did the program respond to what was learned?

Please limit the narrative portion of your report to no more than four pages. You may attach appendices with data, tables, charts, or other materials as needed. Please explain the relevant conclusions from any appendices in your narrative. Please contact the Office of Academic Assessment if you have questions or need assistance.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES
Upon completion of the Ph.D. program in History, students should be able to:
1. Demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of the content and historiography of an extensive body of scholarly material in a major field defined by historical period, geographic region or regions, or theme, e.g. History and Memory.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the content and historiography of an extensive body of scholarly material in a minor field defined by historical period, geographic region or regions, or theme, e.g. History and Memory.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of the major theoretical and historiographical approaches to their major field.
4. Demonstrate an awareness of the role of historians in the construction of the past and the role of contemporary context in shaping the perspectives of historians.
5. Demonstrate the ability to formulate an original research project, identify pertinent sources, examine those sources thoroughly, efficiently, and even-handedly within the context of the existing scholarly literature in the field and construct a well ordered, well argued and well written paper of substantial length.
6. Demonstrate the ability to formulate a larger original research project in the form of a prospectus and its oral defense, which identifies pertinent sources and locates that project within the existing body of scholarship.
7. Produce a book-length dissertation that completes the project formulated in the prospectus and defend that work orally.
8. Demonstrate a reading knowledge of foreign languages pertinent to the student’s geographic fields of study.

2017 Assessment will focus on SLO 3, 4, 5 and 7 through review of completed dissertations over the past three years following a slightly revised plan as outlined in 2014 - 2015. Four dissertations chosen at random were reviewed out of a total of six completed. The titles of the dissertations are attached in Appendix 2.

DIRECT ASSESSMENT

The dissertations were assessed through a rubric adapted from that developed by the American Historical Association for capstone courses. The categories of the AHA rubric largely overlaps with the SLOs #3, 4, 5 and 7.

Review of dissertations written over the past three years shows that the History Department is doing a very good to excellent job of producing doctoral students who write dissertations that contribute to scholarship in the field of History. All dissertations were rated from very good (4+) to excellent (5) on the AHA rubrics.

It should be noted that the author of one of the dissertations included in the review was awarded a UNLV President’s Fellowship (Ian Baldwin), one of the most prestigious and competitive fellowships at UNLV, in 2015. Another author (Nicholas Pellegrino) has had
four articles published in peer-reviewed scholarly journals, as well as one book chapter in a book published by Rowman & Littlefield. One dissertation won the College of Liberal Arts Best Dissertation Award in 2016 (Margaret Huettl). Two dissertations won regional and national dissertation awards (Margaret Huettl won the W. Turrentine Jackson Award from the American Historical Association, Pacific Coast Branch and Ian Baldwin won the inaugural John D’Emilio LGBTQ History Dissertation Award from the Organization of American Historians). Margaret Huettl is now a tenure-track Assistant Professor of History and Ethnic Studies at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln and Ian Baldwin and David Christensen secured visiting assistant professor positions at Redlands College and Chadron College, respectively.

In addition, doctoral students have been finishing their degrees in approximately six years. This is a significant improvement in time to degree.

Three further observations emerged from the assessment process.

1) The dissertations reviewed demonstrated a very high level of research skills using a wide variety of primary sources, including manuscripts, newspapers, oral interviews, and local, state and federal government reports, as well as other texts, and secondary sources. All demonstrated an excellent ability to construct an historical narrative and explain the historiographical and historical context; all provided a clear rationale for the topic and approach; and all linked evidence and interpretation in a convincing and solid manner. All were well written. Dissertations overall received slightly higher ratings on rubrics #1, 3, 4, 5, and 6 than on rubric #2 but all achieved an average of at least a 4 and two had an average of 5.

2) All dissertations under review were in the field of American history. These dissertations reflected current and up-to-date trends in the field, which include a focus on local case studies and intersections of law, politics and social history.

3) There was room for improvement in two respects. One, more attention might be paid to the conclusion of the dissertation. Outside readers are likely to read the introduction and the conclusion before reading the entire dissertation. Therefore, special attention should be paid to ensuring that the conclusion is as substantive and clear as possible and is more than an epilogue. Secondly, more attention should be paid to the Abstract. Many more readers will read the Abstract than the entire dissertation. The review showed that, with several exceptions, the Abstracts did not represent the focus, approach and conclusions of the dissertation in the most effective way. More attention should be paid to ensuring that the Abstract is as effective as the dissertation itself in demonstrating the research, scholarly and writing accomplishments of the author.

It needs to be remembered that writing a dissertation is an extremely demanding task and requires a major commitment from both the student and the faculty on the student’s committee. The effort and time put into shepherding doctoral students through the
process of writing a dissertation by both individual faculty members and the Department as a whole should be recognized and rewarded.

The findings will be reviewed by the entire faculty of the Department, with special attention by the Graduate Committee. The Graduate Committee will consider whether changes below the level of program change are indicated and present their findings to the department as a whole during a Faculty meeting for consideration.

PROGRAM CHANGE

One new program change was considered for implementation. M.A. students must now all take their comprehensive exams during one week during the Fall semester and one week during the Spring semester. This change was implemented to ensure greater coherence in the program and eliminate stress on the part of students, faculty and administrative staff in scheduling multiple times for taking exams spread out over the entire semester. The Graduate Committee will consider whether this change should be also applied to Ph.D. students. The Graduate Committee and Department also voted to amend the language requirement in the program to allow graduate students to take a course in a department outside of history in order to foster interdisciplinary scholarship. One student took a course in American Indian literature and another is taking a course on literature and war (both courses are offered in the English Department). The Graduate Committee will consider the effectiveness of this goal.
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<th>Assessment Scores and Rubric</th>
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<td>Demonstrate knowledge of the major theoretical and historiographical approaches to their major field.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>Demonstrate an awareness of the role of historians in the construction of the past and the role of contemporary context in shaping the perspectives of historians.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>Demonstrate the ability to formulate an original research project, identify pertinent sources, examine those sources thoroughly, efficiently, and even-handedly within the context of the existing scholarly literature in the field and construct a well ordered, well argued and well written paper of substantial length.</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>Produce a book-length dissertation that completes the project formulated in the prospectus and defend that work orally.</td>
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List of Dissertations Reviewed for Assessment


