Southeastern Oklahoma State University
Department of Social Sciences
Bachelor of Arts in History
Program Assessment Plan

Revised 9/26/02

I. DEPARTMENT MISSION

The mission of the Department of Social Sciences is to provide traditional, liberal arts baccalaureate degree programs of study in the social sciences, provide the academic core curriculum for baccalaureate and masters degree programs of study in secondary social studies education, and provide required and elective social studies curriculum in support of general education and other degree programs.

II. DEPARTMENT VISION

By 2005, the Department of Social Sciences will become a leader within the University and among its peers in the improvement of teaching/learning, use of appropriate technologies, and provision of services to majors.

Goal: To improve teaching and learning among students and faculty.

Strategy: Develop a comprehensive assessment program that adds classroom assessment techniques, peer review, and student and faculty focus group discussions to the existing assessment methods. Expand faculty and student research/scholarship opportunities and funding sources.

Goal: To expand the integration of appropriate technologies into the teaching/learning process.

Strategy: Place all current course syllabi on-line, update software/hardware used by faculty in instruction and research, and establish departmental discussion groups for development of on-line activities and links for class use.

Goal: To provide students the opportunities and information necessary to make timely, rational choices.

Strategy: Develop program-tracking systems, long-term course sequencing plans, recruitment activities, links to employers and graduate schools, and mandatory meetings with advisors each semester.

III. CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Learning
Teaching
Assessment
Improvement
IV. PROGRAM GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

Program Goal:

The goal of the History program is to produce graduates whose knowledge and understanding of the past establishes the foundations for competence in the present and confidence in the future.

Program Objectives:

Graduates of the History program shall:

1. Exhibit knowledge of the role and importance of politics and political institutions to the development of American, European, and world societies, as well as the ability to analyze critically this knowledge and draw conclusions from it.

2. Exhibit knowledge of the role and importance of micro- and macro-economics to the development of American, European, and world societies, as well as the ability to analyze critically this knowledge and draw conclusions from it.

3. Exhibit knowledge of the role and importance of broad social, cultural and religious movements to the development of American, European, and world societies, as well as the ability to analyze critically this knowledge and draw conclusions from it.

4. Exhibit knowledge of the role and importance of international relations and diplomacy to the development of American, European, and world societies, as well as the ability to analyze critically this knowledge and draw conclusions from it.

5. Exhibit knowledge of the role and importance of ethnic and gender diversity to the development of American, European, and world societies, as well as the ability to analyze critically this knowledge and draw conclusions from it.

6. Exhibit skill in the basic tools and techniques of historical research.

7. Exhibit the ability to communicate well in written form in order to express one’s knowledge and conclusions.

8. Be able to enter a wide range of professional careers and a wide range of graduate schools.

V. ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS

A. ACAT History Exam

The ACAT exam in History will be used to assess student achievement in the program’s knowledge based objectives (objectives 1 through 6). The results will be used to measure the performance of current program graduates relative to national norms. The instrument will provide information about the level of student achievement and provide cumulative information about historical trends. Program graduates are expected to perform at or above national averages.

The exam will be administered to all program majors at the end of the semester in which the student has completed, or is currently enrolled in courses that complete, his or her program of study.
B. Pre-tests

American History Pre-test. The history faculty have designed a 100-question "pre-test" to be given near the beginning of all freshmen-level American history courses and at the end of the program in the capstone course. The "pre-test" is divided into five 20-question sections, relating respectively to the first five outcome objectives. Results of this exam will give an indication of the abilities and knowledge of incoming students and provide a measure of the student learning attributable to the program. A copy of this "pre-test" is provided in Attachment A. The first pre-test was administered in the Fall 2001 term.

World History Pre-test. The history faculty have also designed another 100-question "pre-test" to be administered in the entry-level European/World history classes and at the end of program in the capstone course. This test will serve the same purposes as the American History pre-test above. A copy of this "pre-test" is provided in Attachment B. The first in-house pre-test was administered in the Fall 2001 term.

ACAT Pre-test in History. An ACAT Pre-test in History was administered to 159 survey class students in the spring of 1999. The performance of this set of students will also be used as a baseline to measure the "value-added" by the History program over the first five program objectives. This baseline is currently relevant but will diminish over time, and its use will be phased out.

C. Student Opinion Surveys

The history faculty have designed a series of exit surveys. Each makes a series of statements about the class that directly relate to the new program objectives. Each question requires students to answer with a number 1-5, #1 indicating that the student strongly disagrees with the statement and #5 strongly agrees. Each exit survey provides a chance for the student to write comments or recommendations for improvements. Each, of course, is to be completed anonymously.

History 2001 Exit Survey. A student opinion survey emphasizing Historical research methods will be administered at the end of HIST 2001, Introduction to Research. A copy of this survey instrument is provided in Attachment C. The results of this survey will be used to assess student's perceptions of the course's contribution to program objectives 6 and 7. Students' responses are expected to average at least 4 on all questions.

Capstone Paper Exit Survey. A student opinion survey will be administered at the end of the program capstone course, HIST 4950. A copy of this survey instrument is provided in Attachment D. The results of this survey will be used to assess students' perceptions of the contribution of the course to program objectives 6 and 7.

SUMMA Evaluations. SUMMA student opinion surveys are administered to all History classes at least once every five years, as required by Program Review. When available, this information will also be used to assess students' perceptions of their educational experiences in program courses.

SUMMA Course Evaluation Supplement. A course evaluation supplement related directly to all 7 program objectives will be administered in all history courses. A copy of the instrument is provided in Attachment E. This information will be used to assess students' perceptions of course contributions to program objectives and to track historical trends in these perceptions. Students' perceptions are expected to average at least 3.5 on all questions. The modified instrument for soliciting student responses on topical objectives in the United States History survey courses are to be developed during the 2002-2003 academic year.

Program Exit Survey. The final exit survey, designed for the entire program, is distributed when students turn in their capstone paper, their last official major requirement. In addition to questions relating to the program, the survey asks personal data relevant to each student's progress, for example, the length of time to complete the degree, whether the student worked, and whether (s)he lived on or off campus for the majority of his/her college experience. This data will help explain in fuller detail the advantages and challenges facing history students, and thus, assist in possible future
modifications. A copy of this instrument is provided in Attachment F. This instrument was administered for the first time in the Fall 2001 term.

D. Program Curriculum-ACAT-Objective Matrix
   A program objective-curriculum matrix will be reviewed annually to assess the correspondence of program requirements with program objectives. A copy of this matrix is provided in Attachment G. Results of the annual review will be used to demonstrate the degree of correspondence of course to program objectives. There should be no gaps between the program objectives and aggregate objectives contained in any possible program of study.

E. Blind Evaluation of Research Papers
   The faculty will conduct a blind evaluation of research papers generated in upper-level course. Prior to being graded, the faculty will select 10 papers from upper-level courses and make copies with student names removed. Three history faculty will read and evaluate each paper on the basis of criteria that is to be developed during the 2002-2003 academic year.

F. Traditional Faculty Evaluation of Student Performance (GPAs)
   A rich source of information evaluating the level of student learning is available in the letter grades assigned to students in program courses. Program grade point averages should be discriminating and positively correlated to exit exam performance. Historical grade point information will also be used to filter out the effects of any trends in student quality from trends in student performance. The resulting trends, after accounting for any trends in the quality of program majors, are suggestive of non-student dependent trends in program quality.

VI. Assessment Mechanism
   All history faculty will meet at least once each year to review the information collected from the assessment instruments and summarized in the History Program Assessment Report, discuss opportunities for improving student learning among the history students, and provide recommendations for improving the Teaching/Learning/Assessment processes. Continuous faculty assessment of the program will occur informally and formally as special issues arise.