

**2004 Annual Academic Assessment for History
Schreiner University
(Fall, 2003 and Spring, 2004)**

1. State the educational purpose of the assessment program.

Students majoring in history should progress well beyond the historical outcomes designated for all Schreiner University graduates. In addition to serving the basic roles of producing historically literate individuals and enabling these individuals to participate effectively in a democratic society, completion of a history major should prepare for more specialized roles. Such students should be leaders in helping other citizens discover their historical roots. In other words, a major in history should prepare students to communicate their historical knowledge to others. Furthermore, history graduates should be well-prepared for the job market, law school, graduate and professional studies, and government service. Toward these ends, the history curricula at Schreiner University emphasizes communication skills, historical and analytical skills, and the variety of skills and knowledge that will allow students to be successful in the work force, graduate school, and in law and professional careers. In order to fulfill this mission and in order to comply with the requirements set forth by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the history major has developed the following Outcomes Assessment Plan.

2. Educational goals, assessment for each goal, performance standards, and findings:

Upon graduating with a major in history, a student will be able to:

Goal Number 1: Think critically about historical perspectives, eras, events, and figures.

Assessment: Tests and/or papers in advanced-level classes, student portfolios, and testing (departmental or state certification testing)

Assessment Findings: Total tests with grade of 75 or better: fall, 2003 and spring, 2004 (75/92=81.52%). Total papers with grade of 75 or better; fall, 2003 and spring, 2004 (12/13=92.30%). The total number of papers is lower in this coverage cycle than in prior ones because Zarychta's take home written assignments, previously counted as papers, have been reassessed and reclassified as tests and the results of History 3301 (Social Studies for Elementary Certification), counted in prior assessments, have been deleted since History 3301 is a course history majors generally do not take. Student portfolios: one graduating senior portfolio was deemed satisfactory in December, 2003 and three graduating senior portfolios were deemed satisfactory in May, 2004. Assessment testing: For the first time in several years of assessing our majors, one of our graduates, the December 2003 graduate, did not take the assessment test. This occurred because the student took HIST 4360 before assessment was made a requirement in that course. He then finished with his upper division history classes and subsequently elected to continue to take courses for two additional semesters in a field outside the Liberal Arts. The student then went through the December recognition ceremony, introduced by a faculty member outside the discipline of history. To avoid similar scenarios, that is why the HIST 4360 and 4399 capstone experiences now have assessment testing as a requirement in the course. The three May graduates did take the History Department Assessment Examination with a mixed outcome, scoring 81, 74, and 70. The graduate scoring 81 is currently in the master's program in history at Texas State University, the graduate scoring a near passing 74 passed the ExCET teacher certification examination and is currently employed at Floresville High School, and the graduate who scored a 70, an LSS student with severe learning disabilities, is currently in the master's program in history at the University of Texas at San Antonio. While our own assessment testing results were mixed, the fact that one passed her certification testing and the other two were accepted into graduate school implies a high level of competency.

Curriculum: All advanced history courses place strong emphasis on historical thinking and

analysis. All require extensive writing or research papers, a major component of which is the ability to think historically.

Faculty Development: All history faculty build historical thinking into their assignments and projects in advanced courses. A prime goal of the HIST 4360 course (Discourses in History) is to refine skills in this area.

Out-of-class experience: Internship experiences can provide students the opportunity to refine this skill in “real Life” historical experiences, but no internships were utilized in the fall 2003 or spring 2004.

Goal Number 2: Manifest historical knowledge and show familiarity with important historical scholars and their works.

Assessment: HIST 4360 papers, oral defense of their senior theses/projects, and graduate self-assessment.

Assessment findings: Total papers in HIST 4360 with a grade of 75 or above in spring, 2004 (9/9=100%). No senior theses were successfully completed and defended either in the fall 2003 or in the spring, 2004. Only one graduate self-assessment was received from the three graduates in May, 2004 despite all three being asked to submit documentation. The one student reported that he felt that he was adequately trained, especially in the ability to write, since he has experienced little difficulty making the transition from BA to graduate studies in history. While gratifying, this is too small a sample to draw any valid conclusions.

Curriculum: All advanced history courses focus on this area, but HIST 4360 is the capstone educational experience that affirms whether this educational goal has been adequately reached. In addition, relative to this goal, the history department has adopted a readings seminar in American history and has converted the History of Mexico course into a reading seminar so that the students receive a broader exposure to the works of the field. In addition, we periodically ask our students to write us about the history curriculum, asking for input about the types of classes that we need to offer to satisfy student needs. It was in response to these student comments that topic courses in diplomacy and the American South have been offered in the past, and the readings course in American history was created as a direct result of these student inquiries concerning the history curriculum.

Faculty development: All faculty build this goal into their courses and attend workshops, conferences, and seminars, when possible, to refine their skills and keep abreast of the latest historical scholarship.

Out-of-class experiences: Students are encouraged to enroll in internships and other projects that highlight this goal.

Goal Number 3: Prepare well-organized cogent oral presentations.

Assessment: Oral participation and/or presentation included in most advanced history courses; defense of senior thesis.

Assessment findings: Oral participation and/or presentations or reports were utilized in three of six courses in fall, 2003 and spring, 2004 with 12/13=92.3% acceptable.

Faculty development: All faculty try, at some time, during their advanced courses to assess student oral communication skill.

Out-of-class experiences: Currently the history faculty is exploring opportunities for allowing students to utilize and enhance this skill.

Goal Number 4: Write history papers based on sound and current research methodologies.

Assessment: Papers in most advanced history courses; written assignments in HIST 4360, senior theses/projects and student portfolios.

Assessment findings: Total acceptable papers and written assignments for fall, 2003 and spring, 2004 were 12/13= 92.30%. While no senior theses were completed or defended during these semesters, ??? student portfolios were maintained on upper division history students.

Curriculum: For the fall 2003 and spring 2004 three of six advanced history courses contained at least one research assignment; the other three advanced classes utilized take home tests which required extensive writing but for statistical purposes are counted in this report as tests rather than papers.

Faculty development: Faculty attend conferences, conventions, seminars, workshops, etc. to keep abreast of their fields and to learn the latest research methodologies, particularly as they relate to the internet and other current advances in cyberspace.

Out-of-class experiences: As our student population grows, the history department still hopes to affiliate with a social science fraternity or history society. This should provide a forum for our students to showcase their research and communication skills.