

**2005 Annual Academic Assessment for History
Schreiner University
(Fall, 2004 and Spring, 2005)**

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 2004 and spring 2005 (55/56= 98.21%). Total papers with grade of 75 or better; fall 2004 and spring 2005 (73/89= 82.02%). Student portfolios: five graduating senior portfolio were deemed satisfactory in May, 2005. Assessment testing: The five May graduates did take the History Department Assessment Examination with a mixed outcome, scoring from the 40th percentile to the 91st percentile. The graduate scoring 91 currently is not in graduate school, the graduate scoring an 84 is employed by Schreiner University as the administrative assistant to the dean of the Liberal Arts while taking on-line graduate courses in history, the graduate who scored a 65 (an LSS student) is, ironically, now in law school, the graduate who scored a 59 (an LSS student) is employed an a Schreiner University recruiter, and the graduate who scored the lowest, at the 40th percentile, has “dropped off the radar screen” since graduating. This student was a senior transfer student to SU who came to complete his baseball eligibility and did not seriously apply himself toward his studies or the history assessment test. While our own assessment testing results were mixed, the fact that one is in law school, two are now employed by Schreiner University, and one is currently taking on-line, graduate courses speaks well of these students.

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 2004 or spring 2005. It should be noted that one senior student, Tom D’Amore did complete

an internship at the Museum of the Pacific War at Fredericksburg, Texas, during the 2005 summer term. The student is in the fall 2005 semester completing his HIST 4399 senior project, based on his summer internship experience.

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 2005 (17/24= 70.83%). No senior theses were successfully completed and defended either in the fall 2004 or in the spring 2005. Only one graduate self-assessment was received from the five graduates in May 2005 despite all five being asked to submit documentation. The one student reported that she felt that she was adequately trained, especially in the ability to write. 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, as well as a readings course in American history have been offered in the past. In the spring 2006 an upper division course in medieval history will be offered as a direct response to these student inquiries. The teaching faculty within the history discipline believe it important that we communicate with our students relative to course offerings, and the variety of course offerings resulting from this communication will help to resolve a major deficiency, relative to the alleged lack of course offerings, as noted on the Noel-Levitz student satisfaction test.

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. In the last academic year, two of the three history professors attended conferences, and all three professors are committed to attending conferences in the current academic year.

Out-of-class experiences: Students are encouraged to enroll in internships and other projects that highlight this goal. As noted above, in the summer of 2005, one history student who is a senior completed an internship at the Museum of the Pacific War in Fredericksburg, Texas.

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 all seven upper division, history courses in fall 2004 and spring 2005 with 21/30= 70% acceptable (attaining a grade of 75 or above).

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 2004 and spring 2005 were 43/57= 75.44%. While no senior theses were completed or defended during these semesters, 16 student portfolios were maintained on upper division history students. In the current fall 2005 semester, the history department maintains portfolios on 15 students (minus five May graduates, one junior student who left SU for family-related reasons, plus five new junior history majors).

Curriculum: For the fall 2004 and spring 2005 five of seven advanced history courses contained at least one research assignment; the other two 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. In the last two weeks students have approached this writer about a history club at SU, and we are currently pursuing this effort in conjunction with student services. This should provide a forum for our students to better showcase their research and communication skills.