

HIST 4990 Assessment Survey (13 responses)
Fall 2017

1. When did you begin your bachelor's degree?

Aug 2009
Aug 2010
Aug 2012 (3)
Jan 2014
Aug 2014 (5)
Aug 2015
Aug 2016

2. When is your scheduled graduation date?

Dec 2017 (4)
May 2018 (9)

3. Are you completing a BA or BS?

BA (9)
BS (4)

4. What is your minor? Additional Major?

Political Science (3)
English (3)
Classic Civilizations, Economics
Sociology (2)
Folklore
Economics
Anthropology & Religious Studies (double minor)
Criminal Justice & Sociology (double minor)

5. What are you doing after graduation?

Grad school (8)
Don't know (3)
Stay in current job and look for additional work
Get a 3rd bachelor's degree

6. The USU history degree is designed to provide students with competency in three areas, which are our stated learning outcomes. Please discuss the courses, experiences, or assignments that you think epitomized each goal. If you feel there is a major weakness in one area, please explain.

A. Historical knowledge (e.g. content-area knowledge, understanding of continuity/change)

- I felt all of my classes contributed to my knowledge and understanding of history. Each course achieved its goal of creating a base for further knowledge.
- Pretty good, many classes emphasize more on historical skills more than historical knowledge. Sometimes there could be more historical knowledge that isn't more general education knowledge.
- I have taken and been a UTF for a variety of survey courses. I feel that each course has done a good job at establishing a solid base for students and convey a sense of understanding different themes over time.
- Overall, I feel like I have a pretty good knowledge now of world and American history. Regarding gaps, I would say the entire southern hemisphere was not covered, but that may have been my class choices. The only class that really left a gap was Modern European History, which was taught theoretically, but I learned other things there.
- I gained a lot of historical knowledge in all of my classes in the major, both lower and upper division. Reading and research papers, as well as in class learning, all contributed to this outcome.
- I feel that with the focus on teaching historical thinking and skills sometimes knowledge gets overlooked. I feel some classes were so focused on one book or topic that sometimes we need to step back and cover background info and some prefaces are better than others.

- I felt the curriculum challenged me to take a variety of different history classes and this felt like I gained a substantial historical knowledge throughout time.
- What comes to mind is Professor Brunstedt's courses (History of Russia and WWII) knowledge gained through readings, lectures, and assignments really allowed for better understanding and use of historical knowledge.
- Very strong in this area. All of my classes focused on this area.
- I gained much much more historical knowledge from my Religious Studies classes than my History classes. In particular, Intro to Religious Studies and Buddhism in the West, as well as Intro to Christianity, were the most beneficial.
- I feel like each course I've taken has provided me with good historical knowledge.
- The survey courses provided a solid foundation of historical knowledge. Their basic knowledge helped for success in upper division courses.
- Course content in all of the history classes was excellent. Texts were well chosen for each area of study.

B. *Historical Thinking (e.g. competing interpretations, complexity of perspective)*

- Professor Brunstedt's courses of WWII and Soviet history are great because he takes historical arguments and pits them against each other to have students evaluate their strengths and weaknesses.
- Historiography could be better incorporated in presentations.
- There have been a variety of exercises that have helped me develop historical thinking. The most common is writing analytical papers, usually based on a primary source. I also enjoyed Dr. Grieves contemporary America and the digital exhibit we created.
- I certainly have a better understanding of this than I did. There are lots of ways to look at any given topic. I would have liked to explore what different views looked like a little more, though Dr. Bulthuis did a good job with this in History 3000.
- Some teachers were very good at highlighting different perspectives and interpretations of historical data. Dr. McInerney in particular really helped me expand my historical thinking in my civil war class.
- I feel that as a whole every professor I had did a wonderful job on getting the student and myself to think and not just read the dates and facts but to interpret these into new ideas.
- I felt this is probably where I come up the shortest. Some classes were so outlined that at times it did the teaching for me.
- I do believe most if not all my courses demonstrated that there are alternative answers to historical questions and different angles and perspectives.
- Historiography. Overall taught history with some competing interpretations and complicity of perspective.
- My classes with Dr. Jones and Dr. Gossard helped me improve my historical thinking the most.
- Reformation Britain and Medieval Europe history I think were both good classes where I had to think more.
- Upper division courses provided a depth of perspective and really dived into the nuances and complexities of the past.
- All of my courses challenged me in this area. I especially enjoyed many of the supplemental new days which provided additional interpretations of historical events.

C. Historical skills (e.g. research skills, critical thinking/writing/oral presentations)

- Hist 3000, Hist 3600, Hist of black America and Hist 4990 all had components of original research and were helpful.
- Very heavily focused on. Helps students improve writing skills. But very little focuses on oral presentation.
- My classes have also helped with research, writing, and oral presentation skills. Most classes have had at least one substantial writing assignment and many future presentations or some group work.
- I feel like my classes have really helped with my critical thinking, writing, and oral presentation skills. Research I think has been heavier. I've been taught how to look for and gather sources, but I feel like I have often wondered how to best engage sources, take notes, etc. Luckily just going through the program and trial and error have helped with this.
- Many courses helped with this. Research papers in all my classes helped with this. Creating a digital exhibit in Dr. Grieves Contemporary US History class was exceptionally helpful. Everything in History 3000 and 4990 really stretched and improved my historical skills.
- I fell some professor do this better than others. Some just give you the knowledge while others make you learn to find the knowledge. Professor Bulthuis is one of the best at this from my experience and I learned the best through his teaching style.
- I wrote a lot. This was a skill I very much enjoyed strongly to develop. Still not the most competent writer, but definitely improved through the years with substantial feedback. Critical thinking was another skill I felt. I was able to gradually require. Did not do enough oral presentations to rate improvement a not.
- I feel that the course stressed this in particular. It felt like the course was more focused on this than on the other two...knowledge, thinking. But I did appreciate using all my skills previously learned, although writing style is a little different than in political science. I do wish the rough draft would have been graded more lenient seeing as it is a rough draft.
- I would have liked more practice in research skills and critical thinking. In the 3000 class this was addressed but was still not fully developed implemented and past classes did not fully explain or use it in the class.
- I've never felt as incompetent or underprepared to do anything with my history major as I have since beginning HIST 4990. This class has taught me I'm a failure at research, critical thinking, and communication.
- HIST 3000 and HIST 4990 both taught me better research and writing skills. Would like to have had more of that on smaller levels in other classes.
- History 3000, 4990 and other upper division courses helped to develop research, writing, thinking, and presenting. All of my courses helped to develop different aspects of these skills.
- This is an area where I gained a great deal of knowledge and improved my writing skills tremendously. History 4990 in particular challenged and greatly strengthened my research skills.

7. Please evaluate how helpful HIST 3000 is to your work in HIST 4990 and other upper division courses. If you did not take, HIST 3000, please indicate that here.

- HIST 3000 was a huge help. Since I stuck with the same topic for both courses, much of my paper was already outlined.
- It was helpful, but I feel like it could have been more helpful. Like they need to relate more closely together.
- HIST 3000 and HIST 4990 should really be one course.
- N/A
- I thought that it was helpful, but I feel when I took the class it was under construction and it could have been better. Both the professor and the students did not know what to expect.

- The workload in HIST 4990 is immense. That being said HIST 3000 helped better organize that workload and demonstrated how HIST 4990 would function. Overall HIST 3000 was a very helpful course.
- N/A
- HIST 3000 from Professor Bulthuis taught me what being a history major is and how to do valuable research and was instrumental in me accomplishing HIST 4990 and other history classes. It even weeded out topics so I could make a good topic for 4990.
- Extremely helpful. No other class did anywhere near as much to prepare me for 4990 and for other research projects. Dr. Bulthuis also helped us improve our writing and oral presentation skills. The class really helped me deepen my understanding of what being a historian is all about.
- History 3000 was useful in that it allowed me to learn how to fail gloriously. I had a meltdown at the end of it because I had not really done what I should have. This was a much needed training guide because by the time I got to the capstone, I knew what not to do in order to be successful.
- I feel HIST 3000 was very helpful. For my class we worked towards a project proposal doing research and creating an annotated bibliography. I feel the most difficult part of both HIST 3000 and 4990 though was choosing a topic because you have to explore the sources quite a bit before you really understand what you are asking. I think it would be helpful to have HIST 3000 be more about exploring a variety of topics for question and having you do bibliographies and start proposals on more than one.
- History 3000 was very helpful. It was basically a mini capstone. It was more helpful to the capstone than any other classes. Most history classes do not focus on doing research.
- HIST 3000 was a nice introduction about how and what historians actually do. I liked the class because it encouraged you to start thinking on your own and emphasizes that history is not just memorizing facts, but it's about creating a narrative and interpreting the past. 3000 provides the opportunity for students to work closely with a professor and learn the methods. Great course!

8. Evaluate the pre-major, which is designed to help sequence your history major experience from large introductory surveys to upper-division courses. Was this helpful to you in your major? Why or why not?

- The pre major was very helpful. As onerous as survey courses may be, they introduced me to the faculty which played a major role in my upper division course selections. They also helped me to narrow down what time and area of history I wanted to study.
- They were helpful, but I feel like most history majors already have a good understanding of the history covered in the survey classes. If history is your major, I think it would be more beneficial to take more upper division course work. So maybe make them optional?
- My pre major classes didn't help me prepare much at all for my upper division classes.
- Each step in the process was progressively challenging, building on a previous foundation. Overall, I think the program is very well constructed.
- I was able to see some of the history professors as a pre major and get a taste of how they look at papers, but I did not feel like it was a transition class to upper division courses.
- For me not really. The subjects taught seemed like things learned in middle school and high school. Overall the classes had too many students and at times felt like the instructor wasn't interested in courses also.
- Loved the pre major. I felt that it facilitated basic historical skills. It helped me prepare for my upper division courses. I felt like there was even more in my pre major courses.
- I was a transfer from engineering and did some pre major while taking upper division so this is not a question I could comfortably contribute to.
- These classes were helpful but there were so many non-majors in these classes that the professor's abilities to help prepare us with historical skills and thinking were somewhat limited. Still helpfully but these classes did not always feel much targeted to majors.

- I think the pre major is useful in that it gives you a grand work for history which you build on in the upper division classes but it is also misleading in that survey courses are not necessarily similar to upper divisions. I wouldn't change anything there though.
- Yes, the surveys were pretty helpful. I honestly can't really remember how many you take or the specific focuses though.
- The pre major was helpful but most of the time it felt unorganized. It was more difficult to learn history because the courses jumped all over the place from different areas and different time periods. Some sections were much; more in depth than others but it often felt like some important parts were missing.
- Kind of. I feel the survey courses could be pretty broad. The upper division courses were good because some of them required original research which I know some students took into the capstone. Sometimes I felt the courses I wanted to take were not available.

9. If you could make one change to the history major curriculum, what would it be and why?

- I would add a writing workshop component to 3000, explaining how to write with active voice and other best practices.
- I really wish my professors would have sat me down, told me I was bad at history and likely won't get a job in the field, and were honest with me. I feel as though four years of hard work have all been a waste.
- None
- I would like to include more historiography. The 3000 level class is a nice intro and was the only time it was really addressed.
- None, fine as is.
- Too much variation in teaching style. I understand the concept of the tough, but I did take advantage of learning. That is ultimately on my goal.
- I would change the requirement for a minor because I feel that history majors don't always need to be defined and I feel the history department is challenging enough and puts out good students that a minor isn't necessary.
- Require History 3000 earlier. I wish I had taken it before taking any other upper division courses.
- I know resources are limited but the more topics the better. I would have also liked more time in 3000 to cover how to engage sources. That would be my one suggestion.
- I can't think of one, my experience has been great.
- I think focusing on sections more in depth and letting the students explore their interests more through writing research papers. Classes should not try to cram everything about the subject but the most important parts. I also often wished classes and lectures were more organized and coherent.
- My only suggestion would be like an upper level survey course that kind of summarizes all the history you should have learned during your college experience.