

Learning Objectives

Learning objectives and outcomes are the skill sets, competencies, and knowledge students should acquire in their discipline before graduation. The following criteria are for history majors and involve the acquisition and mastery of historical knowledge, historical thinking, and historical skills. For assessment purposes, faculty in each history course choose objectives from each broad category and indicate in their syllabi how students demonstrate their competencies.

Historical Knowledge

Goal: Understand a wide range of historical information

- identify the key events which express/define change over time in a particular place or region
- identify how change occurs over time

Goal: Explain historical continuity and change

- describe the influence of political ideologies, economic structures, social organization, cultural perceptions, and natural environments on historical events
- discuss the ways in which factors such as race, gender, class, ethnicity, region and religion influence historical narratives

Historical Thinking

Goal: Recognize the pastness of the past

- explain how people have existed, acted and thought in particular historical periods
- explain what influence the past has on the present

Goal: Emphasize the complex nature of past experiences

- interpret the complexity and diversity of situations, events and past mentalities
- compare eras and regions in order to define enduring issues

Goal: Emphasize the complex and problematic nature of the historical record

- recognize a range of viewpoints
- compare competing historical narratives
- challenge arguments of historical inevitability
- analyze cause and effect relationships and multiple causation

Historical Skills

Goal: Develop skills in critical thinking and reading

- evaluate debates among historians
- differentiate between historical facts and historical interpretations
- assess the credibility of primary and secondary sources

Goal: Develop research skills

- formulate historical questions
- obtain historical data from a variety of sources
- identify gaps in available records

Goal: Develop the ability to construct reasonable historical arguments

- construct in writing a well organized historical argument
- support an interpretation with historical evidence from a variety of primary and secondary sources