

2018 Student Learning Outcomes, Department of History, University of Massachusetts Amherst

The learning outcomes in the first column are the 2016 History Discipline Core from the American Historical Association’s Tuning Project (<https://www.historians.org/teaching-and-learning/tuning-the-history-discipline/2016-history-discipline-core>). In 2017-18, the department’s Undergraduate Studies Committee worked to align our curriculum with the outcomes.

History Students Can: (AHA)	100-Level History	200-Level History	300-Level History*	400-Level History†
<p>Build historical knowledge:</p> <p>A. Gather and contextualize information in order to convey both the particularity of past lives and the scale of human experience.</p> <p>B. Recognize how humans in the past shaped their own unique historical moments and were shaped by those moments.</p> <p>C. Develop a body of historical knowledge with breadth of time and place—as well as depth of detail—in order to discern context.</p> <p>D. Distinguish the past from our very different present.</p>	<p>Study an era, region, or historical theme with a broad stroke</p> <p>Recognize that there were different ways of thinking in the past</p> <p>Articulate basic historical continuities and changes</p>	<p>Study an era, region, or historical subject with a broad stroke</p> <p>Develop deeper understanding of the historical processes and actors involved</p>	<p>Study an era, region, or historical subject in depth</p> <p>Gain knowledge of a less familiar historical area or subject. Engage with more abstract historical concepts</p>	<p>Demonstrate mastery of a focused historical topic or period</p>
<p>Develop historical methods:</p> <p>A. Recognize history as an interpretive account of the human past—one that historians create in the present from surviving evidence.</p> <p>B. Collect, sift, organize, question, synthesize, and interpret complex material.</p> <p>C. Practice ethical historical inquiry that makes use of and acknowledges sources from the past as well as the scholars who have interpreted that past.</p> <p>D. Develop empathy toward people in the context of their distinctive historical moments.</p>	<p>Recognize the difference between primary and secondary sources</p> <p>Recognize that there is a difference between opinion and historical analysis</p>	<p>Develop skills that lead to independent research skills</p> <p>Understand the necessity to read secondary literature in order to interpret primary sources and contextualize findings</p>	<p>Work independently on a limited research project following clear guidelines</p> <p>Engage in debates, role-playing, or other related exercises, using historical resources, to foster empathy and use of evidence</p>	<p>Engage a wide variety of historical interpretations at an advanced level</p>

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<p>Recognize the provisional nature of knowledge, the disciplinary preference for complexity, and the comfort with ambiguity that history require:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Welcome contradictory perspectives and data, which enable us to provide more accurate accounts and construct stronger arguments. B. Describe past events from multiple perspectives. C. Explain and justify multiple causes of complex events and phenomena using conflicting sources. D. Identify, summarize, appraise, and synthesize other scholars' historical arguments. 	<p>Recognize the value of different kinds of sources</p> <p>Complete guided exercises with selected primary sources.</p> <p>Use evidence and basic citations to support historical arguments. (Usually from materials provided by instructor.)</p>	<p>Recognize the value of different kinds of primary sources</p> <p>Develop arguments based on a predefined document set of sources</p>	<p>Recognize and interpret diverse primary source materials</p> <p>Develop an awareness of history as contested knowledge</p>	<p>Locate, organize, and interpret diverse primary source materials including: texts, images, media, film, material culture, and more</p>
<p>Apply the range of skills it takes to decode the historical record because of its incomplete, complex, and contradictory nature.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Consider a variety of historical sources for credibility, position, perspective, and relevance. B. Evaluate historical arguments, explaining how they were constructed and might be improved. C. Revise analyses and narratives when new evidence requires it. 	<p>Engage in guided exercises comparing different interpretations of events.</p>	<p>Develop basic understanding of historiographical interpretations and arguments</p>	<p>Recognize and evaluate intermediate historiography</p> <p>Productively critique historical writing by peers</p>	<p>Analyze primary sources materials and scholarly monographs within broader social contexts that makes one aware of potential bias</p> <p>Evaluate the accuracy and veracity of primary sources</p>

History Students Can: (AHA)	100-Level History	200-Level History	300-Level History*	400-Level History†
<p>Create historical arguments and narratives.</p> <p>A. Generate substantive, open-ended questions about the past and develop research strategies to answer them.</p> <p>B. Craft well-supported historical narratives, arguments, and reports of research findings in a variety of media for a variety of audiences.</p>	<p>Articulate possible questions about class readings or themes</p> <p>Identify different ways history can be presented.</p>	<p>Generate short historical narratives based on primary sources</p> <p>Actively participate in class discussions and debates</p>	<p>Generate longer and more sophisticated historical narratives and analyses</p> <p>Practice basic public speaking skills including research presentations, debates and leading class discussions</p> <p>Discuss how different media relate to historical interpretation or presentation</p>	<p>Formulate and execute an advanced research project of significant scope and depth. Utilize both primary and secondary source materials</p>
<p>Use historical perspective as central to active citizenship.</p> <p>A. Apply historical knowledge and historical thinking to contemporary issues.</p> <p>B. Develop positions that reflect deliberation, cooperation, and diverse perspectives.</p>	<p>Participate actively in class discussion, often with prompts or guidance</p>	<p>Participate actively in class discussions and attempt to interpret primary documents within a given historical context</p>	<p>Participate actively in class discussions with minimal prompting. Apply historical knowledge to an analysis of contemporary events</p>	<p>Participate actively in class discussions and demonstrate ability to articulate complex historical arguments</p>

* There are separate University guidelines for “Integrative Experience” courses (numbers beginning with 394).

† There are separate guidelines for History 450, the Junior Year Writing Seminar, available on the department website.

Appendix: 2018 Course Work Guidelines for Undergraduate History Courses

These guidelines are intended to assist faculty in preparing courses and to convey our departmental expectations to students.

History Students Can Expect	100-Level History	200-Level History	300-Level History	400-Level History
Types of Reading	Basic and intermediate primary sources Narrative histories (including textbooks) and introductory accounts Possible multimedia sources	Basic and intermediate primary sources. Academic textbooks and journal articles. Some historical monographs Possible multimedia sources	Intermediate primary sources. Academic journal articles. Narrative histories and some use of academic monographs Possible multimedia sources	Advanced primary sources Monographs Journal Articles Possible multimedia sources
Quantity of Reading (weekly)	50-75 pages a week	75-125 pages a week	100-150 pages a week	150-250 pages a week
Types of Writing	Short interpretative essays Reaction papers Essays on exams	Short interpretive essays Reaction papers Book reviews Essays on exams	Reaction Papers and reflections Book reviews Shorter Research essays	Historiographies Research Essays Scholarly Book Reviews Reflections
Quantity of Writing	Average 10 pages of graded writing; may be divided into smaller assignments	Average of 15 pages of graded writing; divided various lengths and genres	Average of 20 pages of graded writing; divided various lengths and genres	Average of 30 pages of graded writing; divided various lengths and genres
Assessment Tools	Exams, quizzes, writing assignments, and discussion participation..	Exams, quizzes, writing assignments, and discussion participation	Essay assignments Class engagement Student Presentations Exams	Essay Assignments Class Discussion Student Presentations Annotated Bibliographies Exams