

Form E-1-A for Boston College Core Curriculum

Department/Program - May 29, 2019

Department of History/Core

- 1) Have formal learning outcomes for the department's Core courses been developed? What are they? (What specific sets of skills and knowledge does the department expect students completing its Core courses to have acquired?)

Over the past several years the History Department has developed two learning outcomes salient to all History Core courses, regardless of subject matter. Through the History Core, students will know how to:

- 1) use primary sources to interpret the past
- 2)

- 1) Please rate the student's ability to make meaningful connections between a variety of primary sources.
- 2) Please rate the student's ability to produce a written or verbal interpretive narrative of historical events.

After several years of collecting this data, the Core Committee has decided to pause the process and devise better and perhaps more holistic means of assessment. The results from our data gathering proved consistently similar (4.1 or 4.2 on a 5-point scale i.e. very good but not perfect). This more or less reinforced what we already knew. Accordingly, the Core Committee will be focusing in the coming year on developing a revised method for assessing students' experience with the History Core, encompassing both skills mastery and more fundamental questions of personal development and formation, centering on the development of a global perspective on the past. We anticipate data will still be collected, as we have collected it in the past, via Canvas Boston College's web-based learning management system). Whereas we relied exclusively for direct assessment in previous years on one final assignment (typically, a final exam or paper) of the instructor's choice, we are considering a slightly more detailed polling instrument. For students' indirect assessment we used an anonymous survey.

- 3) held more frequent meetings on the reasoning and methods behind assessment for Core faculty and TAs; and,
- 4) directly and indirectly assessed all Core courses.

Direct assessment data from 2016-18 suggested stability in successfully meeting learning outcomes. A vast majority of our students are performing at or above baseline competency for the learning outcomes listed above.

In 2016, the mean for student ability to make meaningful connections through primary sources was 3.97 (out of 5), and for student ability to provide an interpretive narrative was 4.1 (out of 5). While the overall score for change over time was higher than use of primary sources, this was not necessarily the case for individual classes. In 2017, the mean for student ability to make

Direct and indirect assessments were carried out in May 2018. The most recent external review of the Core came as part of the general external review of the History Department in 2011-12.