

1. **CRITICAL THINKING AND QUESTIONING**
2. **HISTORICAL WRITING**
3. **PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCE ANALYSIS**
4. **ANALYSIS OF CULTURAL TEXTS (LITERATURE, FILM, ART, ETC.)**
5. **ORAL PARTICIPATION (CLASS PARTICIPATION AND FORMAL PRESENTATION)**
6. **HISTORICAL RESEARCH**

The original undergraduate curriculum report stipulated that the aforementioned skills would be emphasized in all classes throughout our curriculum. After a careful review of our syllabi, attending a workshop on developing effective assignments and assessment, and reading materials on curriculum mapping, I submit, for your review, a series of templates or guidelines in which the aforementioned skills have been framed in terms of the various levels of our curriculum. **We already emphasize many of the skills in our courses. Therefore, this report essentially documents what we have achieved and asks each of us to evaluate our own courses in light of these skills with an eye to creating or fine-tuning already existent multi-skills assignments.** This report is designed to encourage discussion and record suggestions in regards to the many ways that we may systematically organize our curriculum around these goals/skills. I cannot emphasize enough that *the templates are not mandatory rules but rather are merely guidelines.* I am mindful that in addition to introducing and strengthening these skills in regards to our students, much of our job as educators is to impart basic historical information and insight to our students. **Therefore, please keep in mind that, although each skill is listed separately in the following templates,**

**the implementation of creative multi-skills assignments will allow us to accomplish our goals without necessarily having to increase greatly the number of assignments.**

### **100 LEVEL - INTRODUCTORY CLASSES**

HIST 101, 102, 105, 106

Our 100-level classes introduce students to the important trends, movements, events, and individuals of United States and European History. These classes are by their very nature broad, overview courses. In this respect, much of the purpose of such courses has been to emphasize and test declarative knowledge. However, a number of critical skills can be and are introduced at this basic level. Nonetheless, we must be mindful that these classes tend to carry a larger enrollment.

Although in theory we wish to introduce all of the skills to students at this basic level, we surely want to emphasize the following skills in all 100 level courses:

**\*\*Critical thinking and questioning of selected primary source(s);**

**\*\*Critical thinking and questioning of at least one secondary source;**

*(both of the above are in order to introduce our students to the nature of the historian's craft i.e. the documents we look at, the questions we ask to those documents, and how we write about those sources and our analysis of them)*

**\*\*Smaller historical writing projects (most likely in conjunction with the above tasks?)**

*(in order to introduce our students to how historians write, in mechanical terms, and in terms of language utilized to discuss primary and secondary sources).*

Other skills such as **small historical research projects or library assignments, critically analyzing and writing about cultural texts, and oral presentations**

(individually or as a group) are *strongly encouraged* at this 100 level.

## 200 LEVEL INTRODUCTORY CLASSES

The 200-level courses in our curriculum are limited in number (at this writing) and consist of non-United States and non-Western European surveys such as HIST 243 and 244 (History of East Asia) and very specific thematic or topical courses in United States and European history, namely 281 (Introduction to the History of Science) and 217 (Nevada History).

Many of these courses service a large constituency of students in that they fulfill requirements for several majors across the university other than history. In addition, they usually are large classes in terms of enrollment. Therefore, although they are not listed at the 100 level, they function in many respects like introductory classes for a majority of the students enrolled in them. Consequently, the skills emphasized at this level are essentially those emphasized at the 100 level. However, students apparently assume a difference between 100- and 200-level courses. *Perhaps* at the 200 level, the assignments might be greater in number, more lengthy or slightly more complex than those presented at the 100 level.

Again, although in theory we wish to emphasize all of the skills to students at this level, we surely wish to emphasize the following skills:

**\*\*Critical thinking and questioning of selected primary source(s);**

**\*\*Critical thinking and questioning of at least one secondary source;**

**\*\*Smaller historical writing projects (most likely in conjunction with the above tasks);**

Other skills such as **small historical research projects or library assignments, critically analyzing and writing about cultural texts, and oral presentations** (individually or as a group) are *greatly encouraged* at the 200 level.

### 300 LEVEL COUNTRY AND TOPICAL SURVEY COURSES

Courses at this level still present rather broad topics but tend to focus on specific countries such as HIST 347 (Mexico) or HIST 394 (England from 1688 to the present) or specific chronological periods such HIST 373 (Medieval History). However, there are several more specific topical/country courses at this level such as HIST 320 (Latinos in the United States) and HIST 384 (Italian Renaissance). *Please be mindful that we engage the largest number of students at this level and the 400 level (in terms of history classes).*

Courses at this level would emphasize and strengthen all the skills introduced at the 100 and 200 levels and would introduce students to some additional skills from the master list. For example:

**\*\*Critical thinking and questioning of several (perhaps) related primary sources;**

**\*\*Critical thinking and questioning of more than one secondary source;**

**\*\*Historical writing about the above as separate entities or in relation to each other;**

**\*\*Analysis of cultural texts;**

*(to introduce our students to the concept of and modes of analysis for art, literature, film, etc. as social and/or historical documents)*

**\*\*Historical research of limited nature (perhaps connected to primary, secondary or cultural text referenced above?) which would include familiarity with major bibliographic and research engines on the internet as well as standard library resources;**

**Oral participation** should certainly be encouraged especially in terms of the discussion of primary, secondary and cultural texts in class. However, as these courses are usually heavily enrolled, formal presentations regarding the primary, secondary, or cultural texts may be problematic but certainly such presentations would be a laudable goal.

## 400 LEVEL

The majority of courses that we offer are at this level. Many of the courses explore a particular topic in depth and, for example, include HIST 418 (United States Government-American Indian Relations), HIST 475 (the City in American History), HIST 441 (Religion in Contemporary Latin America), HIST 484 (History of the Book in European Society), and HIST 493 (Pathologies of Daily Life in Modern China). Many other courses are country surveys or chronological surveys. Courses at this level have medium to small enrollment although some of the country and chronological surveys are more heavily enrolled. Many of the students in these courses are history majors and minors or students majoring in related fields such as international affairs, education, and anthropology. Almost all of the students are juniors and seniors.

*These courses represent the culminating experience for our students in terms of the skills-based curriculum.* It is within these courses that students will elect to fulfill their requirement of two research papers for the history degree. Taking all of this into consideration, I recommend that at this level, we make every effort to strengthen student performance in all the skills. A series of successfully completed 400-level courses, in theory, should prepare our students to pursue careers in which sophisticated critical analysis of texts and effective writing and oral articulation are prized.

Therefore, 400-level courses should attempt to emphasize the following skills:

- \*\*Critically analyze primary sources in depth;**
- \*\*Critically evaluate secondary sources and be aware of historiographical nature of these sources;**
- \*\*Critically analyze cultural texts;**
- \*\*Engage in historical research which synthesizes/integrates the aforementioned sources;**
- \*\*Write a well crafted research essay/paper of some length that incorporates the analysis of a variety of sources/texts; and,**
- \*\*Formally present the analysis of a text or research project either individually or in a group**
- \*\*Effectively utilize major bibliographic and research engines on the internet as well as standard library sources**

Many of the skills are best perfected in the process of **researching and writing an extensive paper** and the oral presentation of that work in class. *However*, some

classes are very large in size or do not lend themselves readily to large research paper assignments. ***Smaller multi-task assignments certainly would accomplish the goals of a 400-level***