Liberal Arts Essentials Assessment Plan

Course: History 211—United States History Since 1877
LAE Category: American Experience
Instructor: Kerrigan
Goal 3: Muskingum students will acquire multiple and integrative approaches to life-long learning
Learning Objective 1: Students will demonstrate the ability to engage effectively in the lifelong learning
skills of acquiring, evaluating, synthesizing, and applying knowledge.
Writing Unit: No
Methods: Primary Source Analysis Assignment and Geography/Chronology Quiz

Student work examined
List the tasks used to measure the objective (e.g., exams, research project/paper assignments,
presentation or class assignment) and attach a copy of each along with the Departmental plan.

Students complete a series of primary source evaluation assignments. Upon completing their reading of
a source, students are asked to discuss the provenance, perspective, and bias of the document, and
place each one in a broader historical context. Students are provided with definitions of these concepts
at the beginning of the semester, and use worksheets in their analysis of primary sources early in the
semester, to guide them toward mastery.

Provenance: the fundamental facts about the document’s creation. Answers the “who what
when where how” questions.
Perspective: the relationship between the author/creator and the event described or
represented.
Bias: prejudices and assumptions of the document’s creator which color the way s/he views the
events being described.
Historical context: the relevant social, political and cultural conditions of the time and place of
the document’s creation which are essential to understanding it.

A second stream of evidence measures student improvement in general geographical and chronological
knowledge across the term. Students are given a map and chronology quiz on the first day of class, and
a similar one during the last week. I compare individual score improvements over the term.

Scoring Criteria. Briefly explain the criteria used to evaluate student performance in relation to the
learning objective (i.e., what constitutes advanced, proficient, partially proficient, not proficient, etc.)
Attach copies of measurement instrument or rubric.

The criteria for Stream One are explained above. The assignments are graded in a traditional manner,
but I also use a simple yes/partially/no rubric to assess whether the student effectively employed each
of the four concepts (provenance, perspective, bias, historical context) in their answers. I repeat this
exercise at least twice in the class, on the first and last exam. For each I count the number of students
who successfully employed each concept in their evaluation of the assigned primary source. (The
primary sources are topic specific, so they are different for each exam, but evaluated with the same
guidelines.) I do this because my interest is in measuring student improvement over the course of the
term. The Assessment committee’s current model is not to measure student learning across a class, but
to measure faculty expectations of students. I will therefore only report the data for my final evaluation
to the committee, as the “exceeds,” “meets” and “does not meet” framework that the Assessment

Approved 9/6/12
committee has imposed does not lend itself to assessing progress across the course. My criteria for determining what "exceeds/meets/does not meet" my expectations is completely arbitrary. My aspiration is that all students master this basic model for evaluating a primary source. Experience tells me that all students won't.

"Exceeds expectations": student effectively employs all four concepts in their answer
"Meets expectations": student effectively employs at least three of the four concepts
"Does not meet expectations": student effectively employs none, one, or two of the four concepts.

Stream Two measures students' chronological and geographic knowledge of early American History. For my purposes, I administer the quiz at the beginning and end of the semester, so that I might have evidence that taking the course increased students' fundamental knowledge of early American history. For the purposes of the Assessment Committee, I will only report data on the final quiz.

My arbitrary definitions for use by the Assessment committee:

"Exceeds expectations": 90% or higher on the quiz
"Meets expectations": 65-89%
"Does not meet expectations": less than 65%
Part Two: Short Essay. 25 points. Analyze the following primary source. Discuss its provenance, perspective, bias and content. Place it in its proper historical context, and tell me what it reveals about the time and place in which it was created.

The Hunters of Kentucky:

The Battle of New Orleans

Once you complete this portion of the exam, bring it to the front of the room. You will then be given the next portion of the exam, which is open book.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Partially</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student identified the <strong>provenance</strong> of the source.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student identified the <strong>perspective</strong> of the source.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student identified the <strong>bias</strong> of the source.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student explained the relevant historical context needed to interpret the source.</td>
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History 211
Day one pretest.

This short quiz is intended to test your foundational knowledge of American History. How you perform on this short test will not be factored into your final grade. It will be used to provide me with a benchmark of your foundational knowledge of American History and to measure progress across the semester.

Number these events, from 1 to 10, in the order they occurred.

____ Declaration of Independence signed.
____ Mexican War begins.
____ Stamp Act protests.
____ Emancipation Proclamation issued.
____ Cherokee nation removed to the West.
____ Jamestown Colony founded.
____ French and Indian War (Seven Years War).
____ Battle of Gettysburg.
____ Andrew Jackson elected to the Presidency

On the map below, write the number of each place roughly where it belongs.

1. The Plymouth Colony
2. The Mississippi River
3. The Battle of Gettysburg
4. New Orleans
5. The Erie Canal
6. The Gold Rush of 1849
7. Kansas
8. Santa Fe
9. Florida
10. The Chesapeake Bay