Liberal Arts Essentials Assessment Plan

Course: History 320: Twentieth Century Europe

Writing Unit: Yes

Instructor(s): Hilton

Methods: Writing Assignments (5 total) and Course Evaluation Form

LAE Category: Western Heritage (a)

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.

A. 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.

As an upper-level writing unit, one of the goals of this course is critical analysis of historical monographs and articles. To this end, there are a series of writing assignments, aimed at assisting students in developing and/or honing the lifelong learning skills of acquiring, evaluating, synthesizing, and applying knowledge. The means of assessing students’ abilities across these four lifelong learning skills are critical analyses of articles and books, structured to begin with easier-to-read sources and progressing to more difficult endeavors. These assignments will be graded in the traditional manner and in addition, the first, third and fifth will be assessed using the attached rubric, to best ascertain the development of the skills over the duration of the course. This course seeks to teach all students to critically read and evaluate historical sources and express their ideas effectively in a series of written assignments. These skills are directly linked to the goal of creating lifelong learners who can utilize them in various professional and personal endeavors.

A second stream of evidence that will be used is the Course Evaluation Form given to students during the final week of class. This form includes a question on how well the class did in providing students the tools to acquire multiple and integrative approaches to life-long learning. Using both a self-reported measure (the faculty evaluation form) and a measure assessed by the faculty member (the series of article and book reviews) ensures that multiple streams of data are being used to develop a sense of how well the course is meeting the goals of the LAE.
B. 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.

Effective will be defined as students being able to acquire appropriate evidence, evaluate that evidence and critically express their interpretation of that material in a well argued and clearly and cleanly presented written format.

Moderately Effective will be defined as students being able to use some evidence with less critical evaluation coupled with a vague thesis or argument. The final work may suffer from some grammatical and a few unclear or awkward expressions.

Ineffective will be defined as students being unable to adequately discern viable evidence, using incorrect or irrelevant information and wholly lacking a central thesis or argument. The final work suffers from numerous errors and is difficult to read.
C. Attachments (Rubrics, Checklists, Pre and Post tests, other evaluation methods, etc.) Score: +_____ /12

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Score 3</th>
<th>Score 2</th>
<th>Score 1</th>
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<td>Applying critical reading and writing skills</td>
<td>Work demonstrates original thought, a specific thesis, and demonstrates comprehensive learning.</td>
<td>Work contains a general thesis and discernible argument, but is vague or not explicit.</td>
<td>Work contains no thesis and/or clear defensible idea.</td>
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<td>Evaluating evidence critically</td>
<td>Work makes connections between evidence and uses persuasive reasoning to form a solid, thoughtful position.</td>
<td>Work shows some understanding of general ideas and evidence, but contains some factual errors or misinterpretation of meaning. Work tends to stray from the objective posed.</td>
<td>Work does not discuss the general topic or answer the question posed.</td>
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<td>Acquiring apt material to produce work</td>
<td>Work provides ample, well-chosen, and factually-correct evidence that supports a thesis or position.</td>
<td>Work does not directly support the thesis or is insufficient, contains little evidence and vague or incorrect information.</td>
<td>Work contains no relevant evidence to support ideas and place work in context.</td>
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<td>Synthesizing reading and writing seemlessly</td>
<td>Work is organized, with well-developed ideas which transition in a cohesive manner. It follows conventional rules of grammar, uses words correctly and contains few or no spelling errors</td>
<td>Work is underdeveloped and weak with awkward and unclear ideas, several grammatical errors, incorrect spelling and/or word choice. (Work may also contain citation errors.)</td>
<td>Work lacks paragraph, topic sentences and transitions. Work contains so many grammatical and spelling errors that it is difficult to understand.</td>
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Guidelines for assignments (as stated in course syllabus):

Article and Book Reviews:
All papers are due in hard copy form at the beginning of class on the specified due dates. I do not accept late papers unless you have asked for and received an extension 48 hours in advance. If you do receive an extension for an article or book review, you are not permitted to attend class the day the article or book is discussed. I will not accept email attachments unless you are unable to attend class due to illness or family emergency.

The purpose of a review is not to summarize all of the information contained in the article or book. A review is an overall critique of the assigned reading, its argument, its use of evidence and its contribution to historical understanding. It requires students to use analytical skills and pushes them to read and think about the reading in a deeper manner, moving beyond a “book report” approach. Being able to ascertain the author’s argument and offering a critique of his/her use of sources are extremely important parts of the process. Reviews should contain information about the author, provide an overview of the author’s main argument and major themes, critique the author’s evidence (his/her sources), and provide an explanation of how this work contributes to a deeper understanding of the historical topic. Article reviews will be 2 – 3 pages long and book reviews will be 3 – 5 pages long, both using twelve point type, double-spaced, and stapled. They will contain an introduction, including a thesis statement, a well-organized body and a conclusion. Under Course Information on the Blackboard course web site, you will find additional information about writing reviews. Please read this information carefully and speak with me if you have questions.