

Course Assessment Report
Washtenaw Community College

Discipline	Course Number	Title
History	225	HST 225 05/30/2017- World War II
Division	Department	Faculty Preparer
Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences	Social Science	David Fitzpatrick
Date of Last Filed Assessment Report		

I. Assessment Results per Student Learning Outcome

Outcome 1: Describe the events of the inter-war period that lead to the outbreak of WWII.

- Assessment Plan
 - Assessment Tool: Departmentally-developed essay exam question.
 - Assessment Date: Winter 2016
 - Course section(s)/other population: all
 - Number students to be assessed: all
 - How the assessment will be scored: Departmentally-developed rubric
 - Standard of success to be used for this assessment: 70% of students assessed will score 70% or higher on assessment question.
 - Who will score and analyze the data: department faculty

1. Indicate the Semester(s) and year(s) assessment data were collected for this report.

Fall (indicate years below)	Winter (indicate years below)	SP/SU (indicate years below)
	2017	

2. Provide assessment sample size data in the table below.

# of students enrolled	# of students assessed
18	17

3. If the number of students assessed differs from the number of students enrolled, please explain why all enrolled students were not assessed, e.g. absence, withdrawal, or did not complete activity.

One student did not take the Mid-Term Exam.

4. Describe how students from all populations (day students on campus, DL, MM, evening, extension center sites, etc.) were included in the assessment based on your selection criteria.

It was a one-section course taught on-campus.

5. Describe the process used to assess this outcome. Include a brief description of this tool and how it was scored.

The Mid-Term Exam for HST 225 asked the following question:

By the end of 1941 all of the world's great powers were at war and one—France—had been knocked out of the conflict. Selecting Germany and either Great Britain or the United States, explain how the experience of the Great War shaped both their understanding of the world in the 1920s and 1930s as well as the military developments they undertook in the interwar period. What role had those military developments played in the conduct of the conflict to early-1942? What accounted for those developments' successes and/or failures?

This exam question was scored using a departmentally-developed rubric.

6. Briefly describe assessment results based on data collected for this outcome and tool during the course assessment. Discuss the extent to which students achieved this learning outcome and indicate whether the standard of success was met for this outcome and tool.

Met Standard of Success: Yes

The results of this assessment suggest several problems, mostly with the tool itself, but also with the Outcome.

The question focused students solely on European developments and therefore few said anything about those in Asia. Moreover, it becomes clear that, in the next revision of the Master Syllabus, an outcome needs to be added that requires students to show an understanding of inter-war military developments and how they played out on the war's battlefields.

The standard for success (70% of students receiving 70% or higher) was met (14/17). One of the failures was a student who cheated.

7. Based on your interpretation of the assessment results, describe the areas of strength in student achievement of this learning outcome.

It is clear that students have a good understanding of events in Europe that led to the conflict.

8. Based on your analysis of student performance, discuss the areas in which student achievement of this learning outcome could be improved. If student met standard of success, you may wish to identify your plans for continuous improvement.

The assessment question was a poor one where Asia is concerned, and it therefore is not clear regarding student performance in that area. The assessment will need to be modified the next time the course is taught.

Outcome 2: Describe the progress of the war in Europe and in the Pacific from 1937 to 1945.

- Assessment Plan
 - Assessment Tool: Departmentally-developed essay exam question.
 - Assessment Date: Winter 2016
 - Course section(s)/other population: all
 - Number students to be assessed: all
 - How the assessment will be scored: Departmentally developed rubric
 - Standard of success to be used for this assessment: 70% of students assessed will score 70% or higher on assessment question.
 - Who will score and analyze the data: department faculty

1. Indicate the Semester(s) and year(s) assessment data were collected for this report.

Fall (indicate years below)	Winter (indicate years below)	SP/SU (indicate years below)
	2017	

2. Provide assessment sample size data in the table below.

# of students enrolled	# of students assessed
18	15

3. If the number of students assessed differs from the number of students enrolled, please explain why all enrolled students were not assessed, e.g. absence, withdrawal, or did not complete activity.

Three students did not take the final exam.

4. Describe how students from all populations (day students on campus, DL, MM, evening, extension center sites, etc.) were included in the assessment based on your selection criteria.

The course was taught in a single section on campus.

5. Describe the process used to assess this outcome. Include a brief description of this tool and how it was scored.

The Final Exam for HST 225 asked the following question:

In May 1945 Germany surrendered unconditionally to the Allies. That September Japan surrendered under all but unconditional circumstances, its sole condition being the maintenance of the institution of the Emperor. With these two events the most destructive war in human history ended in complete Allied victory—the Allies had utterly destroyed the Axis Powers’ war-making capacity and had occupied those nations. And yet there quickly arose a sense that the United States and Great Britain might have won the war militarily but had lost it politically.

What factors led to the Allies’ overwhelming military victory? Your answer ought encompass more than military issues. Why might contemporary observers have concluded that the United States and Great Britain had lost the peace? Do you agree with their assessment? Why?

This exam question was scored using a departmentally-developed rubric.

6. Briefly describe assessment results based on data collected for this outcome and tool during the course assessment. Discuss the extent to which students achieved this learning outcome and indicate whether the standard of success was met for this outcome and tool.

Met Standard of Success: Yes

Students, in general, did an excellent job identifying and explaining the major military events of the war and putting them in the context of explaining the course the war took. Critical events such as the invasion of the Soviet Union, American entry into the war, turning points such as the Battle of Midway and the Normandy Invasion, and the Combined Bomber Offensive appeared in virtually every essay. Students also successfully explained the critical role of technological developments.

Critical economic and diplomatic events (e.g., decisions at the Casablanca Conference) were less frequently mentioned.

The standard for success (70% of students receiving 70% or higher) was met (14/15).

7. Based on your interpretation of the assessment results, describe the areas of strength in student achievement of this learning outcome.

It seems clear that students have a very good grasp of the conflict's major battlefield events and of their role in shaping the conflict's outcome.

8. Based on your analysis of student performance, discuss the areas in which student achievement of this learning outcome could be improved. If student met standard of success, you may wish to identify your plans for continuous improvement.

I was disappointed that students' essays were so thin on economic issues and on the role diplomacy and strategic decision-making played in the coming of the war. I can honestly say that I don't think it was due to problems with the course structure—both were addressed at length.

I suspect there are two issues here. First, for many of my students, war is about battle and little else. My courses—and this course in particular—ask that they expand their understanding of war. But, come assessment time, they slip back into what they are comfortable with.

Second, the prompt in the question was not satisfactory, especially given the above.

As with Outcome #1, this shortcoming is likely more indicative of a problem with the assessment itself rather than student learning.

Outcome 3: Describe the effect(s) of the immediate post-war period on Europe, Asia, and the United States.

- Assessment Plan
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 - Assessment Date: Winter 2016
 - Course section(s)/other population: all
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 - Standard of success to be used for this assessment: 70% of students assessed will score 70% or higher on assessment question.
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Three students did not take the final exam.

4. Describe how students from all populations (day students on campus, DL, MM, evening, extension center sites, etc.) were included in the assessment based on your selection criteria.

Course was taught in a single section on campus.

5. Describe the process used to assess this outcome. Include a brief description of this tool and how it was scored.

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What factors led to the Allies’ overwhelming military victory? Your answer ought encompass more than military issues. Why might contemporary observers have concluded that the United States and Great Britain had lost the peace? Do you agree with their assessment? Why?

This exam question was scored using a departmentally-developed rubric.

6. Briefly describe assessment results based on data collected for this outcome and tool during the course assessment. Discuss the extent to which students achieved this learning outcome and indicate whether the standard of success was met for this outcome and tool.

Met Standard of Success: Yes

The “lost peace” part of the question referred to the Soviet occupation of Eastern Europe, to the Communist victory in the Chinese Civil War, and to the outbreak of the Cold War. The course ends with the events of 1948-49 (the Berlin Blockade and Airlift, and the formation of NATO), and this portion of the question was designed to get at the issues and events that arose between the end of the war and that timeframe.

Despite the semi-oblique reference (“lost the peace”), about which some students needed explanation, all did quite well on this outcome.

The standard for success (70% of students receiving 70% or higher) was met (14/15).

7. Based on your interpretation of the assessment results, describe the areas of strength in student achievement of this learning outcome.

As with other areas of this course, students excelled in describing and explaining events in Europe.

8. Based on your analysis of student performance, discuss the areas in which student achievement of this learning outcome could be improved. If student met standard of success, you may wish to identify your plans for continuous improvement.

As implied above, students displayed a less than full sense of events in Asia. Again, I suspect this might be solved with a better prompt in the assessment.

II. Course Summary and Action Plans Based on Assessment Results

1. Describe your overall impression of how this course is meeting the needs of students. Did the assessment process bring to light anything about student achievement of learning outcomes that surprised you?

Combining the individual outcomes' numbers, students successfully completed 42 out of 47 assessments (89.3%). I can only conclude that students' needs are being met.

Additionally, reviewing written comments on the SOQs, while there are several comments that pop up once (e.g., need better PowerPoints), there is nothing there that suggests a systemic problem.

The major point that the assessment process brought to light is the need for better assessment tools.

- Describe when and how this information, including the action plan, was or will be shared with Departmental Faculty.

The results will be shared with members of the department in written form at our first meeting in Fall 2017.

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Intended Change(s)

Intended Change	Description of the change	Rationale	Implementation Date
Outcome Language	There needs to be an outcome added that requires students to describe the major military developments of the interwar period.	The period between the wars was one of intense military innovation, one in which different nations often moved down wildly different paths, and those paths played out very differently on the conflict's battlefields. There needs to be an outcome that addresses this.	2018
Assessment Tool	The assessment tools need to be more carefully written in order to prompt students to provide broader answers to the assessment questions. In particular, the assessments need to prompt students to include Asian and Pacific events to their answers, and to address strategic/diplomatic and economic issues in their	Based on student assessment results	2018

	understanding of the conflict's course.		
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4. Is there anything that you would like to mention that was not already captured?

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III. Attached Files

Faculty/Preparer: David Fitzpatrick **Date:** 06/08/2017

Department Chair: Gregg Heidebrink **Date:** 06/22/2017

Dean: Kristin Good **Date:** 06/26/2017

Assessment Committee Chair: Michelle Garey **Date:** 10/18/2017