

Seaver College General Education (GE) Assessment – American Experience Academic Year 2011-2012

You will find the [Office of Institutional Effectiveness web site](#) and the [Program Review Guidebook](#) to be valuable resources when assessing the General Education program.

I. Program Learning Outcome

Students identify and explain significant political and historical developments that have shaped America’s democracy and its diverse society and apply that knowledge to develop a personal vision about its meaning.

II. Institutional Educational Outcomes (IEOs)

The GE Program Learning Outcome aligns with the following IEOs.

Knowledge & Scholarship

Service

Apply knowledge to real-world challenges.

Community & Global Understanding

Purpose

Develop and enact a compelling personal and professional vision that values diversity.

III. Student Learning Outcome(s)

Indicate the student learning outcome (SLO) or outcomes for this component of the General Education program. See the OIE [website](#) for instructions on how to develop quality SLOs.

SLO 1 Students identify and explain significant political and historical developments that have shaped America’s democracy and its diverse society in the context of the discipline of political science.

SLO 2 Students identify and explain significant political and historical developments that have shaped America’s diverse society in the context of the discipline of history

SLO 3 Students apply their knowledge by developing a personal vision regarding diversity.

IV. Curriculum Map

For each SLO, indicate the course(s) where the outcome is **I**ntrouced (I), where students will **D**evelop their skills, knowledge, abilities, etc. related to the SLO (D), and where students will demonstrate **M**astery of the SLO (M) by entering I, D or M in the appropriate cell(s) of the following table. You may add or delete columns or rows as required. An exemplar curriculum map is found [here](#).

	SLO 1: Students identify and explain significant political and historical developments that have shaped America’s democracy and its diverse society in the context of the discipline of political science	SLO 2: Students identify and explain significant historical developments that have shaped America’s diverse society in the context of the discipline of history	SLO 3: Students apply their knowledge by developing a personal vision regarding diversity
POSC 104	Introduced		Introduced
HIST 304		Introduced and Developed	Developed

V. Assessment Plan

Complete the following table to indicate how you will gather both direct and indirect evidence to assess student achievement for each SLO. For each assessment, be certain to fully detail the methodology that will be used to conduct the assessment.

	Direct Evidence	Indirect Evidence
SLO 1	<p>Short answer and/or essay questions will be developed and required in each section of POSC 104. These will ask students to identify and explain significant political and historical developments that have shaped the development of the American political system. Students will answer the question for SLO 1 (and 3) in late March in each section of POSC 104. We will collect student papers from all sections and randomly choose ten responses from each section of the course (20 for the big Elkins class). That will result in a sample of approximately 40 papers. A committee of political scientists will evaluate student learning using rubrics. Eighty percent of papers should receive an acceptable or excellent (see rubrics for number values). The papers and data collected will be scanned to PDF documents and archived on a Political Science or American Experience or GE page in Courses (Sakai).</p> <p>The answers will be evaluated using rubrics. See Appendices A and B for more information.</p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>
SLO 2	<p>Instructors in each of the History 304 sections were required to choose at least one essay question from a list of ten questions specially prepared for this assessment (See Appendix A). The essay requires students to identify and explain significant historical developments that have shaped America's diverse society. Students answered the question for SLO 2 (and 3) in late April (and/or in the Final Exam timeslot if that is what instructors preferred) in each section of HIST 304. Instructors collected student papers from all sections and randomly choose five responses from each section of the course. A committee of historians then evaluated student learning using rubrics. Eighty percent of papers should receive an acceptable or excellent (see rubrics for number values). The papers and data collected will be scanned to PDF documents and archived on a History or American Experience or GE page in Courses (Sakai).</p> <p>See Appendices A and B for more information.</p>	
SLO 3	<p>The essay in each section of HIST 304 will require students to explain how what they've learned in the classroom has affected their personal views on diversity.</p> <p>The answers will be evaluated using a rubric. See above and Appendices A and B for more information</p>	<p>Students at Seaver College who have completed the American Experience requirement will complete a survey that answers questions about how they integrated knowledge of historical diversity in the co-curriculum</p>

		and in their lives.
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Provide a copy of each assessment tool (or a detailed explanation) in Appendix A.

VI. Rubrics

For the assessments identified in the Section V., provide the rubrics that will be used to evaluate the obtained evidence (data). Place the rubrics in Appendix B. Additional information on rubrics is found [here](#).

VII. Criteria for Student Achievement / Success

For each assessment SLO, list the criterion or criteria established as an acceptable standard of student achievement. Enter this information in the blank cells of the following table.

	Criterion (Criteria)
SLO #1	80% of the papers should receive an 'acceptable' or higher according to the rubric.
SLO #2	80% of the papers should receive an 'acceptable' or higher according to the rubric.
SLO #3	80% of the papers should receive an 'acceptable' or 'excellent' according to the rubric. Survey on whether/how students integrated a historical understanding of diversity in their lives should show 80% did.

VIII. Evidence / Data

For each SLO, present in summary form the evidence/data gathered and indicate your findings based upon the evidence. If necessary, use Appendix C to report raw or original data necessary to support your findings. *Repeat the following section for each SLO.*

SLO #2

Evidence/Data

On Tuesday, May 1, 2012, a committee of four History 304 instructors (Darlene Rivas, Stewart Davenport, Phil Chase, and Ilana Miller) evaluated 35 randomly chosen essay exams using the attached rubric. We analyzed the exams independently, assigning a score from 0-5, and then compared results in teams of two (Rivas and Chase, Davenport and Miller). We were pleased to find that with only a few exceptions, the two evaluating professors in each team were only one point off in their scores. We then averaged the scores, or when separated by more than one point, revisited the exam with the assistance of a historian from the other team.

Results:

Identification of Historical Diversity: 77.14% achieved an "acceptable" or higher.

Explanation of Historical Diversity: 62.86% achieved an "acceptable" or higher.

Findings

The original criteria established as an acceptable standard of student achievement was 80% “acceptable” or higher for both “**Identification** of Historical Diversity” and “**Explanation** of Historical Diversity.” This year’s assessment reveals that students are falling short in both categories. They are very close to 80% in regard to “identification”—77.14%; but much further from 80% in regard to “explanation”—62.86%.

SLO #3

Evidence/Data

Application of knowledge to personal vision: 85.7%.

Findings

We are happy to report that students are exceeding the criteria of 80% “acceptable” or higher.

Indirect Evidence

In addition to assessing students according to SLO 2 and 3, the History 304 instructors issued a survey to the students taking the class in the Spring semester, 2012. A copy of the survey is attached in Appendix B.

The results are as follows.

1. Students taking the survey 179

Sophomores	29 (16.2%)
Juniors	83 (46.37%)
Seniors	67 (37.43%)

2. It is important to have Political Science 104 as a prerequisite for History 304.

Strongly Agree	4 (2.23%)
Agree	35 (19.55%)
Neutral	50 (27.93%)
Disagree	67 (37.43%)
Strongly Disagree	23 (12.85%)

3. It is important to have History 304 be a 300 level (upper division) course.

Strongly Agree	14 (7.95%)
Agree	44 (25%)
Neutral	56 (31.81%)
Disagree	49 (27.84%)
Strongly Disagree	13 (7.39%)

4. I would have preferred to have taken History 304 earlier in my Pepperdine career.

Strongly Agree	17 (9.5%)
Agree	49 (27.37%)
Neutral	67 (37.43%)
Disagree	35 (19.55%)

Strongly Disagree 11 (6.14%)

IX. Summary

Based on the evidence and findings reported in the previous section, summarize the findings in narrative form. In the summary, be certain to address the following questions for this area of the GE program.

1. Are the goals being achieved?
2. Are the SLOs achieved at the established standard of achievement?
3. What are the strengths and weaknesses?
4. What areas need improvement?
5. What are the future one, three and five year goals for this component of the General Education program?

In summary, the data paints a mixed picture. In regard to SLO 2, History 304 is not meeting the 80% threshold for “acceptable” or higher (77.14% for Identification of historical diversity; 62.86% for Explanation of Historical Diversity). The class is succeeding, however, with SLO 3—encouraging students to apply their knowledge of diversity by developing a personal vision (85.7% “acceptable” or higher). The obvious strength of the course, therefore, seems to be that students find its attention to diversity applicable to their lives. The weaknesses, frankly, are in instructing students about the facts of diversity in American history (identification at 77.14%); and especially in comprehending more complex historical concepts such as context, causality, and change over time (explanation at 62.86%). In terms of what needs improvement, clearly it would be good to bring up the numbers in both Identification and Explanation. However, we recommend three changes in conceptualizing the class:

- (1) A more realistic understanding of what can be accomplished in a one-semester, diversity-focused American history survey class. Correspondingly,
- (2) Lower the expectation that significant historical events and personalities that have shaped America’s diverse society can be both introduced **and** adequately developed (by the instructors), identified **and** adequately explained (by the students), in a single class.
- (3) Instead, focus on and improve the strengths and possibilities of the class that this assessment highlights: application of diversity to students’ lives; identification of historical developments; and laying a foundation for a more sophisticated understanding (i.e. “explanation”) of complex historical concepts, especially related to the development of diversity in American society.

X. Closing the Loop & Quality Improvement Program

Based upon your analysis, what actions are necessary to correct weaknesses and improve this area of the General Education program? For each action item, provide the following information. *You may propose as few as one or as many as four (or more) action items. However, acting on fewer changes is likely more realistic than acting on numerous changes at one time. For this reason, prioritize all action items in order of importance and limit action items to those supported by compelling evidence.*

- **Action Item #_1_:** Make the History component of the GE curriculum a lower division course. In other words, turn History 304 into History 204.
- **Evidence to support this proposed action:** There are simply too many expectations and responsibilities loaded into this one class as it is currently conceptualized. In terms of the content of the class (the entirety of American History, 1492-present), while the instructors are very capable, it is simply not realistic to expect them in a single semester both to both “Introduce” and “Develop” adequately the significant historical events that have shaped America’s diverse society. The evidence bears this out. 77.14% of students can “identify” these historical developments, while only 63.86% of them can really “explain” them.
- Two other points bear mentioning on this topic. First, the other upper division classes in the GE curriculum at Pepperdine (HUM 313 and REL 301) both have classes that “Introduce” students to the discipline and the subject (HUM 111 and 212, and REL 101 and 102)—a foundation upon which the upper division classes can then adequately “develop” a more sophisticated understanding of their subjects, one that can truly be labeled “explanation.” History 304 has no such class, and Political Science 104 is not an effective introduction (see Action Item #2).
- Second, Pepperdine is frankly out of step with other academic institutions in making its mandatory American History class an upper division course. At every other college and university we have investigated, the introductory American History class is precisely that—introductory—and appropriately placed at either the 100 or 200 level. Again, we have not found a single other college or university in the nation that structures the History component of its GE in this way. In this instance, Pepperdine is not unique because it is creative or excellent, but because no other institution thinks this is a good idea. Having the one History GE class at the 300 level is simply not in accordance with best practices.
- It is very gratifying, however, that a full 85.7% of students assessed can apply their knowledge of diversity in a personal vision. This kind of application is a value—a Christian value—that we believe should be introduced and cultivated at an earlier stage of a Pepperdine student’s academic career. It should therefore be placed earlier in the GE curriculum.
- Finally, the survey we administered to students in the 2012 Spring semester yielded the following data on this question. In response to the statement “It is important to have History 304 be a 300 level (upper division) course” most of the students (35.23%) responded either “Disagree” or “Strongly Disagree.” This is slightly higher than the 32.95% who responded “Strongly Agree” or “Agree,” with the final 31.84% of respondents being “Neutral.” These numbers are very

close, with the students being divided roughly into thirds, although the plurality of students believe that it is not important for the History GE class to be at the 300 level. Also, based on the comments on the surveys, many of those who believed that History 304 should remain at the 300 level did so because they believed the current readings and assignments for the class were so demanding that the work load would be inappropriate for a lower level class. In other words, they did not want to see such a challenging class at the 100 or 200 level. If the class were to be made History 204, however, we would adjust the level of rigor in assignments proportionately.

- In response to the related prompt of “I would have preferred to have taken History 304 earlier in my Pepperdine career,” 36.87% responded with “Strongly Agree” or “Agree,” while only 25.69% responded “Disagree” or “Strongly Disagree.” These numbers paint a more compelling picture. A full 37.43% of students, however, were neutral.
- Although not overwhelming, the data from this survey suggest that students would prefer to have the American History GE class earlier in their career, or at the very least would not mind (i.e. be “neutral”) if the class’s placement were changed.
- **Expected outcome (if the action item is implemented):**
- The main impact is that there would be no required number of units to take before registering for History 204, and POSC 104 would no longer be a prerequisite (see Action Item #2).
- It is also possible that more transfer students will have fulfilled this requirement at their prior institution. We will then have to make the decision about whether this previous course meets Pepperdine’s diversity requirement. While this might result in fewer students having to take Pepperdine’s History GE class, it correspondingly will mean a reduced reliance on adjunct professors. For instance, of the nine sections of History 304 taught in the 2012 Spring semester, only one of them was taught by a full time faculty member. This also does not seem to be best practice.
- It could be determined at a later date as to whether or not students with a score of 4 or 5 on the U.S. History AP test would be required to take History 204.
- **Expected timeline:** We hope to get this changed in time for the 2013-2014 academic year.
- **Type of Action:** **Resource Neutral** **Resources Required**
- **Resource Detail:** *If resources are required, provide information on the type and nature of the resources requested (e.g., cost, resource implications, source of resource / funds, etc.).*

The number of History 204 instructors would be roughly the same as the number currently teaching History 304. If the number of students taking the class declines, so will Pepperdine’s reliance on adjuncts.

- **Action Item # 2 :** That Political Science 104 no longer be a prerequisite for the History GE class.
- **Evidence to support this proposed action:** From an instructor’s standpoint, there is no pedagogically sound reason to make an introduction to American Political Science a prerequisite for an introduction to American History. They are separate disciplines and employ different methodologies. A student can learn just as much from taking American History before taking American Political Science as from the reverse. And there is especially no reason why a student *must* take Political Science first. The results from the survey we administered during the 2012 Spring semester bear this out. Of the 179 students responding, a full 50.28% either “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed” with the statement “it is important to have Political Science 104 as a prerequisite for History 304.” This is the most clear and compelling result of the survey. Only 21.78% either “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that POSC should be a prerequisite, while 27.93% were neutral.
- **Expected outcome (if the action item is implemented):**
- Zero disruption to the current GE program, and indeed a streamlining of course registration for students. In other words, they will be able to take the History component or the Political Science component in whatever order they choose, and according to what best fits their schedule.
- **Expected timeline:** Again, we hope to get this change implemented in time for the 2013-2014 academic year
- **Type of Action:** Resource Neutral Resources Required
- **Resource Detail:** *If resources are required, provide information on the type and nature of the resources requested (e.g., cost, resource implications, source of resource / funds, etc.).*

[Click here to enter text.](#)

XI. Contributors

Assessment of this area of the General Education program was performed by the following individual(s).

Committee Chairperson	Position Title	Academic Division
Megan Francis	Assistant Professor of Political Science and Professor of History	Social Science and Humanities and Teacher Education
Darlene Rivas	Associate Professor of History	
Stewart Davenport		
Committee Members	Position Title	Academic Division
Phil Chase	History 304 adjunct	
Ilana Miller	History 304 adjunct	

XV. Educational Effectiveness Indicators

Upon completion of the program review, the committee chairperson is required to complete the form at <http://services.pepperdine.edu/oie/resources/educational-effectiveness-indicators.aspx> and submit the document to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

APPENDICES

Appendix A - Assessment Details

The following assessments were used to assess Student Learning Outcomes.

HISTORY 304 Knowledge of American Diversity Essay

The theme of this course has been the historical development of the diverse American peoples, including ethnic/racial (e.g. European, African, Hispanic, Asian, and Native Americans) and other forms of diversity (religion/ideology, gender). For our assessment of this class, please choose one of the following essay questions. Be sure to identify the significant people, events, and ideas required to answer the question, and to explain their significance to the development of diversity in American history.

A. Historical Developments that have shaped America's diverse society (SLO 2)

Choice of Questions:

1. Characterize the relationship between European settlers and Native American populations of North America in the colonial era. How did relations change over time? How did the development of an independent American nation impact the lives of Native Americans?
2. William Penn's "Holy Experiment" is in many ways the exception to the rule when it comes to English/Indian relations. What was the rule, what was the exception in Pennsylvania, and why was Pennsylvania the exception?
3. Compare and contrast slavery in the United States with slavery in either the Caribbean or Brazil.
4. Explain how slavery in North America developed and became race based in the colonial era. What was the impact of slavery on slaves, masters, and society? In what ways did slavery change after 1800?
5. What were the impulses behind the idea of "Manifest Destiny?" Who benefitted most as American settlers and the federal government spread westward between 1845 and 1890, and which peoples paid the greatest price? How did westward expansion affect the development of American ethnic/racial and religious diversity?
6. Between the Civil War and World War I, immigration to America changed dramatically. Who are considered America's "old immigrants"? Who were some of these "new immigrants," how did they impact American society, and how did American

society impact them? Finally, how did those in American society whose relatives came before 1865 respond to the influx of new immigrants?

7. Describe and explain the causes and consequences of at least two important waves of migration in the United States in the first half of the twentieth century. Choices: Great Migration of African Americans, Mexican American migration, rural migration to cities, migration to the West Coast (especially California), or another major migration of your choice.

8. Identify, describe and explain the goals and methods of the various Civil Rights groups and their leaders during the 1950s and 1960s. Explain change over time in American race relations and the development of a more inclusive and democratic society between 1950 and 1970, with particular attention to what you consider to be the Civil Rights Movement's most important turning points.

9. Identify and explain significant events that shaped the experiences of a particular group (choose one racial/ethnic and/or religious minority group) in American history in the twentieth century. What are some ways that group has contributed to American diversity and democracy?

10. Describe how and explain why American society has grown more diverse since 1965.

B. Application of knowledge by developing a personal vision regarding diversity. To be graded for completion, or non-completion only. (SLO 3)

Prompt: In what way(s) has emphasizing diversity in the study of America's past affected your understanding of diversity in America today? In your response please use specific examples from what you have learned in class.

POSC 104: KNOWLEDGE OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY ESSAY

The focus of this course has been the development of the American political system over time and describing how our current political system operates. Please choose one topic below and write an essay that identifies the significant institutions, features, events, and theories associated with that topic.

Potential Topics Include (but are not limited to):

1. How are the Virginia Plan, the New Jersey Plan, and the Connecticut compromise related and how did they shape the Constitution?
2. What were the main concerns of the Anti-Federalists? How did they change the Constitution? How did the Federalist respond to some of their concerns?
3. Identify, define, and give an example of the two different forms of "political participation".

4. What does electoral realignment mean? Give an example of a realigning election and explain why it was such.
5. Provide three reasons why Parties are helpful to democracy and two reasons why some scholars consider Parties harmful to democracy.
6. Are third parties good for American democracy? Why/why not?
7. In Federalist #78, Alexander Hamilton referred to the Supreme Court as the “least dangerous branch” – explain why and detail how much the Court has changed over the years.
8. There are two dominant theories of presidential power in the literature. Define and describe the “power to persuade” and the “power to go public”.
9. What is a filibuster? How can a filibuster be stopped? Why do some proponents argue the filibuster is a protection of minority interests?

Appendix B - Rubrics

The following rubrics were used to analyze the evidence gathered in assessment of Student Learning Outcomes. The first assesses both SLO 2 and 3. The second, SLO 1.

HISTORY 304 Assessment Rubric

Standard	Unacceptable 0-1	Acceptable 2-3	Excellent 4-5	Score
Identification of Historical Diversity	Shows only basic knowledge of history; Misidentifies or lacks relevant historical evidence (events, people, concepts, dates) related to topic	Accurately identifies relevant historical evidence (events, people, concepts dates) related to topic; may lack some relevant details or make minor errors	Accurately and thoroughly identifies relevant historical evidence (events, people, concepts, dates) related to topic	
Explanation of Historical Diversity	Offers rote or simplistic explanations; Fails to explain the historical development of American diversity and/or mischaracterizes it; lacks awareness of or shows simplistic historical thinking; lacks understanding of the relationship of the past to the present	Makes clear explanations about the development of diversity in American society; may be more summary and descriptive than analytical; demonstrates understanding of historical context and the role of change over time and makes reasonable connections between the past and the present	Makes clear and sophisticated interpretive explanations for the development of diversity in American society; is clearly analytical; demonstrates understanding of historical context, the role of change over time, and makes thoughtful connections between the past and the present	
Application of knowledge to personal vision	Is unable to visualize how knowledge of America’s historical	Offers a personal vision that integrates newly learned historical	Offers a compelling personal vision that integrates newly	

	diversity could have a personal impact or offers mundane explanation for how such knowledge matters; shows lack of interest in developing respect or understanding of other people	knowledge about American diversity; expresses interest in ongoing development of respect and understanding for diverse people	learned historical knowledge about American diversity and expresses commitment to respect and gain and promote further understanding of diverse people	
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Total _____

0-5 = Unacceptable

6-11 = Acceptable

12-15 = Excellent

Additional Indirect Evidence for History 304.

The following survey was administered in the Spring semester, 2012 to all students taking History 304.

Assessment Survey for History 304

1. I am a (circle one):

Sophomore

Junior

Senior

2. It is important to have Political Science 104 as a prerequisite for History 304. Circle one:

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Comments:

3. It is important to have History 304 be a 300 level (upper division) course. Circle one:

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Comments:

4. I would have preferred to have taken History 304 earlier in my Pepperdine career. Circle one:

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Comments:

{Repeat and edit the above text as necessary for each rubric.}

POSC 104 Assessment Rubric

Standard	Unacceptable 0-1	Acceptable 2-3	Excellent 4-5	Score
Identification of Political Developments in Shaping America's Democracy	Shows only basic knowledge of political science; Misidentifies or lacks relevant evidence (events, people, concepts, dates) related to topic	Accurately identifies relevant political developments (events, people, concepts dates) related to topic; may lack some relevant details or make minor errors	Accurately and thoroughly identifies relevant political developments (events, people, concepts, dates) related to topic	
Explanation of Political and Historical Events	Offers simplistic explanations; Fails to explain the political and historical development of American democracy and/or mischaracterizes it; lacks awareness of or shows simplistic political science thinking; lacks understanding of the relationship of the past to the present	Makes clear explanations about the American political system; may be more summary and descriptive than analytical; demonstrates understanding of historical context and the role of change over time and makes reasonable connections between the past and the present	Makes clear and sophisticated descriptions to explain different features of American Politics; is clearly analytical; demonstrates understanding of historical context, the role of change over time, and makes thoughtful connections between the past and the present	

Total _____

0-3 = Unacceptable

4-7 = Acceptable

8-10 = Excellent

Appendix C - Evidence /Data

The following evidence was gathered in assessment of Student Learning Outcome # ____.

SLO #2

Identification of Historical Diversity: 77.14% achieved an “acceptable” or higher.

Explanation of Historical Diversity: 62.86% achieved an “acceptable” or higher.

SLO #3

Evidence/Data

Application of knowledge to personal vision: 85.7%.

Appendix D - Chronology

The committee met and performed activities in support of this assessment as indicated below. Please add additional rows as necessary.

Date	Members Participating (Initials)	Action
9/20/11	MF, DR	Wrote Program SLO, Developed Curriculum Map and Assessment Plan
10/19/11	MF, DR	Developed responses to possible revisions to the document
11/17/11	MF, DR	Met with Michael Feltner and Nathan Klemp to discuss revisions
12/2/11	DR	Revised SLOs, developed draft rubrics, etc.
12/8/11	MF	Revised Appendix A & B for political science
3/28/12	SD	Met with Michael Feltner to take over the assessment from Darlene Rivas
4/1/12	SD, DR, Phil Chase, Ilana Miller	Met to assess the essay questions according to the Rubrics.