• Program SLOs & Assessment
  1. Program SLO -
     Students will demonstrate knowledge of and assess the significance of the cause and effect relationship among various issues, groups, and events; key social, political, and economic forces; and major concepts and theoretical perspectives in history and/ or political science.

     a. Indicate program assessment strategies used.
        i. Other
           All faculty include as part of their final exams in their courses an essay or short answer question that is cumulative and requires the student to engage the “why study the past” or "change over time" question with specific course content. At the end of spring 2012 we will track how many students in our three major survey courses--History 117A, History 117B, and History 105--taught by tenured faculty passed the change over time essay question on the final exam. We will use the pass rate in these courses to assess this program level SLO.

     b. Describe the criteria and standards used to appraise student work.
        As mentioned above, each faculty member includes a "cause and effect" or "change over time" type essay or short answer question as part of their final exam. These questions are cumulative and require the student to engage the questions with specific course content. Faculty evaluate the student answers to this question as part of the course grading. This allows faculty to determine at the end of the semester which students have mastered this SLO. Faculty also informally assess the mastery of this SLO by students during group discussions and group work. Lastly, faculty devote at least one lecture or discussion to the discipline of history or political science. See SLO and Assessment attachment.

     c. Enter assessment results and analyze student success in achieving this program SLO.
Students cannot pass history and political science course exams without mastering this SLO. Thus we use the successful completion rates for each course as our quantitative data. Starting in 2012 we've introduced a closer analysis for the three major survey courses--History 117A, History 117B, and History 105--taught by tenured faculty. We will track how many students passed the change over time essay question on the final exam. We will use the pass rate in these courses to assess this program level SLO. We use the informal in classroom assessments, the essay exam answers, and the overall pass rate of courses as the qualitative data. See SLO and Assessment attachment.

d. **Describe revisions in curriculum or teaching strategies implemented to promote student success.**

Course and program SLOs were re-written and updated in 2005, and were formally reviewed in spring 2012 by the remaining members of the department -- Heather McCarty and Darren Bardell. We decided that we liked the spirit of the Program SLOs, but thought they were too verbose. As a result, we streamlined the current Program SLOs. We also rewrote the SLOs for all of our courses to be certain that they properly aligned with the Program SLOs.

Here are the old Program SLOs:

i. Students will develop an appreciation for the importance of historical and social science scholarship by: gaining a comprehension of both continuity and change over time as they position themselves and their country, especially its institutions, within the larger historical narrative.

ii. Students will develop an understanding of the specific strengths, limitations, and biases of historical and social science scholarship by: (a) describing what historians and political scientists do through a recognition of the kinds of sources they rely on and the types of questions they ask; (b) identifying the difference between primary and secondary sources; (c) and critically thinking about course content to formulate their own interpretations.

iii. Students will develop effective communications skills by: (a) reading secondary and primary source material; (b) discussing course content with the instructor and among their classmates; (c) writing basic essay arguments using historical and social scientific evidence.

e. **Future Action (Improvements)**

Maintain current student learning plan

Describe changes you will make to promote improved student learning

The changes we are making involve improving our assessment process. Once we have additional data, we can evaluate if additional change needs to be made.
Implementation Plan

Timeline:
New data is being collected during the 2012-13 academic year, and any proposed changes will be included in the next program review.

Key/Responsible Personnel:

2. Program SLO -

Students will understand the interpretive nature of the fields of history and political science by analyzing, interpreting, and differentiating between primary and secondary sources used by each discipline.

- Indicate program assessment strategies used.
  i. Culminating project
  ii. Department Testing
  iii. Other

All faculty assign primary and secondary sources in the courses. Faculty devote at least one lecture or discussion to the topic of sources and the craft of the historian or political scientist. Faculty also conduct pre and post surveys in History 117A, 117B, and 105. See attachment. This assessment has been modified for Spring 2012 and will use the new modified form for 2012-2013 academic year.

a. Describe the criteria and standards used to appraise student work.

Surveys of students at the beginning and end of the semester in History 117A, 117B, and 105 (our highest enrolled courses) allow the department to survey students at least once as they complete their required courses for the Ohlone transfer plans to CSU and UC. Some of the key questions asked on this document are, "What is a primary source? What is a secondary source?" The faculty in our department assess the material gathered from the initial surveys to see how many students can successfully answer the questions at the beginning of the semester. The students also fill out an exit survey in which they are again asked to answer the same questions. The responses of these surveys are compared with the initial surveys to see how many students understand this SLO by the end of the semester. See SLO and Assessment attachment.
We now ask two additional questions prior student completion of courses taught by tenure faculty. We are doing this to assess the long-term retention of this specific SLO.

b. *Enter assessment results and analyze student success in achieving this program SLO.*

The success rates in the pre and post survey conducted in the 2008 - 2009 academic year revealed that 92% of students successfully answered the survey questions at the end of the semester. The pre surveys were not quantified, but in general the overwhelming majority of students could not answer the questions.

In the 2010-2011 academic year we modified the form so that students place their names on the form. This way we can track individual mastery of the material, and disqualify any student that did not complete the course from the data set. The results produced similar rates. At the beginning of the course only 9% of students know what a primary source is and only 3% know what a secondary source is. At the end of the semester 98% knew what a primary document was, and 93% know what a secondary source is. We tried the new modified form in Heather McCarty's H105 course to assess its effectiveness prior to wider implementation.

The results cumulative results for the 2011-2012 academic year are as follows: of the students that had previously completed a course with Heather McCarty 89% knew what a primary source was at the start of the semester, but only 65% knew what a secondary source was.

Collectively, what this data tells us is that at the start of each semester almost all students start our survey courses without prior knowledge of primary or secondary sources. At the end of the semester, they have mastered
what primary and secondary sources are. Unfortunately, it appears as though the mastery of these import disciplinary sources is short-lived. In particular, students seem to struggle with long-term mastery of secondary sources.

Heather McCarty and Darren Bardell discussed these results, and have agreed that we need to increase the amount of time spent on primary and secondary source materials. We have begun implementing a regular source discussion each time course readings are discussed. We believe regular conversations about source types will help students achieve long-term mastery.

We will continue to use the assessment tool to evaluate students in the core courses of Fall 2012 to see if there is improvement in long-term mastery of primary and secondary materials has improved or if additional modifications need to be made in instruction.

See SLO and Assessment attachment

c. Describe revisions in curriculum or teaching strategies implemented to promote student success.
   Current course and program SLOs were re-written 2005, and then again in summer 2012. They were created by the members of the department, and reviewed by outside colleagues in both the humanities, social sciences, and counseling division for feedback. The revised SLOs bring consistency across the department and in our courses. Heather McCarty revised the pre and post survey in 2008, and then Heather redesigned the survey in January of 2012 for use in the spring 2012 semester.

d. Future Action (Improvements)
   Describe changes you will make to promote improved student learning
   We are in the midst of implementing the new survey device described above.
   Implementation Plan
   Timeline:
We are in the midst of implementing the new survey device described above.
Key/Responsible Personnel:
Heather McCarty

3. Program SLO -
   Students will construct hypotheses demonstrating critical thinking, reading, and writing skills.
   a. Indicate program assessment strategies used.
      i. Other
         All faculty have an essay component to their final exam that require students to develop an argument/hypothesis. All faculty have class discussions in their courses that focus on critically thinking about the assigned primary and secondary readings, and that require students to develop and forward their own hypotheses.

Starting in 2012 we've introduced a closer analysis for the three major survey courses--History 117A, History 117B, and History 105--taught by tenured faculty. We will track how many students passed the change over time essay question on the final exam. We will use the pass rate in these courses to assess this program level SLO. We use the informal in classroom assessments, the
essay exam answers, and the overall pass rate of courses as the qualitative data.

Faculty also informally assess the mastery of this SLO by students during group discussions and group work. See SLO and Assessment attachment.

b. *Enter assessment results and analyze student success in achieving this program SLO.*

Students cannot pass history and political science course exams without mastering this SLO as exams require mastery of this SLO. Thus we use the successful completion rates for each course as our quantitative data. We use the informal in classroom assessments and the essay exam answers as the qualitative data. Lastly, after the Fall semester 2012 concludes we will have data from the three survey courses. See above and see SLO and Assessment attachment.

c. *Describe revisions in curriculum or teaching strategies implemented to promote student success.*

Current course and program SLOs were re-written 2005, and then again in summer 2012. They were created by the members of the department, and reviewed by outside colleagues in both the humanities, social sciences, and counseling division for feedback. The revised SLOs bring consistency across the department and in our courses. Heather McCarty revised the pre and post survey in 2008, and then Heather redesigned the survey in January of 2012 for use in the spring 2012 semester as a trial run and then full implementation in courses taught by tenured faculty in 2012-2013 academic year.

Lastly, please see above for a description of the new assessment technique we'll be employing in out three major survey courses to assess not just the successful mastery of this SLO at the course level, but also at the program level.
d. *Future Action (Improvements)*
Describe changes you will make to promote improved student learning
We are both maintaining our current learning plan as well as introducing a new assessment tool of student final exam essays. Please see above for details.