

1. What strategies, methods, materials, and/or assignments did you employ to create a positive learning environment and to assist students in achieving the course outcomes? How well did your students attain these outcomes? How do you know?

History 151/152: In fall 2013, I used a variety of strategies, assignments and activities to encourage class participate and engagement, to encourage a positive learning environment, and to help students achieve the course outcomes.

- Quizzes: One of the primary changes I made since first teaching History 151 in spring 2013 was to use periodic quizzes instead of taking attendance to encourage students to not only attend class but to review their notes from the previous class and to keep up with the daily readings. Rather than having a quiz every class, I informed the students at the beginning of the semester that there would be twelve quizzes over the course of the semester and that they should come to every class prepared for a quiz. I also gave them the opportunity to drop their two lowest quiz scores at the end of the semester to give them a bit of leeway for emergencies and any unexpected circumstances. Overall, I think the quizzes helped keep attendance up and encouraged students to review their notes throughout the semester rather than waiting for the exams. This semester at UHWO, I have been better about also including the readings in the quizzes as well (e.g., one question on the previous lecture and one question on the reading due for that day). I think that has also helped students keep up with the readings a bit more.
- Student presentations: In fall 2013, I had students do “concept presentations” on some of the major concepts we were addressing throughout the semester (e.g., capitalism, triangular trade, imperialism, socialism, etc.). Overall, I liked giving the students the opportunity to present in front of the class. However, the presentations were kind of hit or miss (some were on the mark while others were not) and didn’t give students the opportunity to work together (these were individual presentations). In my student evaluations (both at KCC and UHWO), students asked for more opportunities to work with their peers. As such, in my classes at UHWO this semester, I changed the individual concept presentations to group presentations on the various books we are reading. Most of the students seem to like having the opportunity to work together and to get to know each other better. With this in mind, I plan to do a similar group project/presentation assignment next time I have the opportunity to teach History 151 or 152 at KCC. Since I don’t assign as many books at KCC, I might need to revise the subject of the presentation. I am playing with the idea of doing something focused on “food in family and world history” for History 151, but I haven’t sorted out the details as of yet.
- Exams: Last semester, I added a third exam to my History 151 and 152 line ups. I got feedback from my student evaluations in the previous semester that there was simply too much material to learn in a midterm and final exam, so I changed to two midterms and a final. This seems to work much better both for the students and for the structuring of the course (three sections with an exam at the end of each). I also started provided the students with two essay question they could prepare ahead; I then put one essay on the exam. That way, they were required to study and prepare the material for both questions but only had to produce one essay for the exam itself. I also started devoting the entire class period prior to each exam to exam prep; these session focus not just on the material itself but also how to write successful short answers and essays as per my exam format.

This semester at UHWO, we spent the first review session on essay writing, as feedback from the previous semester told me that I should not presume that students know how to write a successful essay in an exam situation. The second review session focuses more on the short answer format, and the third will offer more games and fun activities to help the students prepare for the final exam. I plan to maintain this basic format for future sections of History 151/152 at KCC as well.

- Books in addition to the text book: During both semesters, I assigned two books in addition to the *Traditions and Encounters* textbook. For 151, I assigned *Gilgamesh: A Verse Narrative* by Herbert Mason and *Genghis Khan and the Making of the Modern World* by Jack Weatherford. For 152 I assigned *The History of Mary Prince* by Mary Prince and *Maus I* by Art Spiegelman. I also required students to write a reading response on one of the books (their choice). The reading responses told me that students generally liked *Mary Prince* and *Maus I* because they gave them a personal insight/perspective on some of the larger themes we consider in class. They especially liked *Maus I* and actually expressed that I should have also assigned *Maus II* so they could have seen how things turned out. They also really liked the “graphic novel” approach used in the *Maus* books and were very surprised at how the illustrations were used to tell a “true story.” They also enjoyed how “easy” it was to read and connect with the book and to see the real effects of the Holocaust through graphics. I think it really changed their perspective on what it can mean to read and write history. For future semesters of History 152, I plan to assign *Maus I & II* together as one text. I also plan to continue to use *Mary Prince* because I think it gives students a perspective on slavery (i.e., a woman from the Caribbean) that they have not encountered before. I will likely use *Gilgamesh* again for History 151, but I would like to reconsider what second book to assign in place of the *Genghis Khan* book (a bit long and tedious).
- Reading Responses: Last semester, I asked students to write a two page reading response on one of the books assigned (*Mary Prince* or *Maus I*). For the assignment, students were required to give a brief summary of the reading, demonstrate how the reading addresses/speaks to some of the larger themes raised in class, and offer their own personal reflection on the book. Overall, this assignment has been successful and gives student the opportunity to engage with a reading that offers a personal perspective on larger historical themes, which the students seem to enjoy for the most part. This semester at UHWO, I have required students to also incorporate at least one direct quote into their own writing, to cite the source/page number, and to include the source in a bibliography at the end (even if the only source is the book itself). This has proved to be a good exercise for most students and I plan to expand on this requirement in future semesters teaching 151/152 at UHWO and KCC. In the future, I will spend more time teaching students how to use direct quotes, use various citations styles, cite page numbers, and format a bibliography. I think it was my (incorrect) assumption that students already know how to do this and I have already learned this semester that in the future I need to spend more time modeling this for them before requiring them to do it on their own.
- Research Paper: In my first semester teaching History 151, I assigned a research paper. I decided at the end that the students were not quite ready for that and that I did not do enough to “scaffold” the assignment in a way that gave them the skills they needed to do well. With that in mind, I did away with the research paper in subsequent semesters

teaching 151 and 152 and have been focusing instead on helping students improve their writing skills through the reading responses and exam essays. I plan to incorporate the research paper component into higher level courses such as History 288 in future semesters.

2. What do your peer evaluation and the data from eCAFE tell you about your teaching? What would you like to see your students take away from your class?

- The main concern/comment that comes up in my eCAFE that I have tried and continue to try to address is that students think my lectures are too long and not interactive enough. I think this is primarily on account of me being a new teacher and sometimes not all that comfortable with the material as a result (which some students suspect). I feel that as I gradually get more comfortable with the material, I am able to engage the students a bit more and ask them to contribute during lectures, which breaks things up. This is something that I will continue to work on as I know it is one of my weakness.
- I also continue to work to have more diverse and engaging class sessions that include more discussion, activities, film clips, etc. This also breaks things up and helps reduce the boredom and distractions that can come with too much lecture.
- I have also tried to lighten up a bit with the students—tell more jokes, be a bit funnier and light hearted rather than so serious—which I have also found easier to do as I have gotten more comfortable with the material and with myself as a teacher. I think at first I was very concerned about not knowing the material or being worried that students would ask questions I don't know they answer to. This caused me to put up a kind of stoic defensive personality that I think I am starting to break down as I get more comfortable with teaching and engaging with the students.
- In terms of what I would like students to take away from my class, I am starting to see that I would like students to have more opportunities to improve their writing in my classes, even when they are not writing intensive. I am a very good writer, and I have a lot to offer beyond the course material. The trick is for me to find effective ways to pass these skills along to the students, which I have started doing more through exam preparation activities, reading response requirements, and the like. I would like to expand on this aspect of what I do in History 151/152 in the future. I learned a lot from the writing application I submitted for History 288, and I would like to incorporate some of what I learned into my 151/152 classes, as appropriate.

3. What changes, if any, would you like to make to improve the course for you and your students should you be assigned the course again?

- I have highlighted some of the changes/improvements I would like to make throughout this document, so I will just reiterate them here:
  - Less lecture, more interactive discussions/activities
  - Include a group project/presentation assignment, perhaps something to do with food in family and world history for History 151 (I still need to think of something here for History 152)
  - “Scaffold” writing assignments a bit better (e.g., provide instruction on how to quote and cite sources in reading responses, how to make a bibliography, and

- how to reference readings in exam essays)
  - Continue to cut down on details and focus in on big themes that students need to understand for future courses
  - Try to bring in more current events and ask students to relate them to the themes and topics we are considering in class
4. If you submitted a self-assessment the previous year, how have you implemented any improvements you, your peer evaluator, or your department chair suggested?
- Streamlined syllabi: Following my peer evaluator's suggestions, I have streamlined my syllabi and stopped using color photos. My syllabi are now much shorter (general length of my 151/152 syllabi is now 6-7 pages rather than 11) and more concise and not as large in terms of their digital size. I hope these changes have made the syllabi more accessible and less overwhelming for the students.
  - Map test instructions: In order to avoid any confusion on the students' part, I have made every effort to ensure that map tests and other assignment instructions are more clear.
  - "Wait time": The peer evaluator made a very good observation and suggested that I try to increase my "wait time" after posing questions to the class. This was a great suggestion that I have been able to improve on as I have become more comfortable with teaching. I think that, at first, I was uncomfortable with the silence of students not answering questions and I tended to jump in with my own answers too quickly to fill in the void. These days, I am much more comfortable waiting for students to answer after giving them more time to think about the questions I pose. The result is that I get a lot more student feedback and participation than I did previously.
  - Primary source discussions: The peer evaluator also suggested that I ask the students to read materials for group discussion ahead of class. This can be challenging since many students do not read before coming to class—hence my giving them time to read in class. This semester, I have started incorporating daily readings into my periodic quizzes to help ensure that students to read before class. This has cut down a bit on how much time they need to read in class, especially in terms of primary sources, although there will always be those students to don't do the reading. With this in mind, I try to gear the discussions a bit more by posing a question about the reading to the class and then giving them a few minutes to discuss the question with a classmate or small group. That way, those students who have not done the reading have a chance to quickly do so (in the case of short primary source readings), whereas those who read ahead can jump right to the discussion questions with their peers.
  - Lecture time: I continue to try to cut down my lectures wherever possible and to include more discussion, activities, film clips, and the like. I think this helps keep the students more engaged. It is challenging with World History, however, as I always feel like there is so much material to cover and like I don't have enough class time to get to everything. With this in mind, I have really tried to focus my lectures for 151/152 on some of the "big themes" I feel the students need to grasp (e.g., agricultural revolution, development and spread of world religions, trade, epidemic disease, industrial revolution, imperialism/colonialism, etc.)