

Liberal Studies Program

Learning Outcomes and Writing Expectations

UNDERSTANDING THE PAST

Approved by the Liberal Studies Council, Autumn 2010

Learning Outcomes:

The central U. P. learning goal is to help students become literate about the past and the methods used to understand and interpret the past. We consider that Liberal Studies and Domain learning goals are achieved if students are able to:

1. Describe and explain knowledge of prehistoric or historical events, themes, and ideas;
2. Examine and assess historical evidence and interpretations through analysis, evaluation, and/or synthesis of a range of primary and secondary source evidence;
3. Recognize that there are different perspectives on the past, whether those be historical or methodological in nature;
4. Compose written work that expresses knowledge and an ability to reason effectively in writing.

Writing Expectations:

Instructors of UP courses should assign at least six pages of written work that students complete outside of class. Such writing assignments should be designed to evaluate both content-based knowledge and skills in critical thinking, reading, and writing; they should not be limited to “opinion” or “response” pieces. In lower-division courses, instructors are encouraged to favor shorter, more frequent writing assignments over long end-of-term papers, to create more opportunities for students to practice writing and to receive comments and writing instruction from faculty. Revisions of papers are especially encouraged and will be counted toward fulfilling the page requirement above (i.e., a 4- to 6-page paper that is graded separately as a rough draft and as a revised paper would constitute 8 to 12 pages total outside writing).