

MSU HISTORY

“We prepare graduates to appreciate, craft, and practice history.”

HISTORY MAJOR PORTFOLIO MANUAL

(Revised for accessibility April 2026)

History Department webpage:

<http://www.minotstateu.edu/history/>

The History Major Portfolio

Overview

Minot State University's history program uses a portfolio to assess student learning goals and outcomes. This portfolio consists of a student's collection of work from their career as a history major at MSU, together with self-assessments that discuss how this work demonstrates their achievement of the history program's student learning goals and outcomes. History majors are introduced to the portfolio in HIST 280: Practice and Method and create the material that comprises the portfolio over the course of their history classes.

Why Require a Portfolio?

- The portfolio offers students the opportunity to see their progress over the course of their program of study, and it reveals students' strengths, accomplishments, and mastery of the learning goals and outcomes that structure the history major.
- It complements other assessment instruments, particularly those employed by the teacher education program, to ensure that relevant state and national standards are met.
- It gives each graduate a compilation of their best work to showcase in graduate school or law school applications and in job interviews.
- It provides history faculty with direct and indirect measures of student performance, including both student work and students' self-assessment of their own work. Faculty meet on Assessment Day each fall semester to review and compare these portfolios with the history program's stated student learning goals and outcomes. In that meeting, trends are openly discussed, and faculty consider possible changes, corrections, or other responses to this assessment data to improve the history program.

The final reason to complete the portfolio is that timely submission of a completed portfolio is a graduation requirement for everyone who earns a History B.A., History B.S.Ed., or Social Science B.S.Ed. degree from Minot State University. The Social Science B.S.Ed. portfolio is discussed in a separate Social Science B.S.Ed. Portfolio Manual.

Required Enrollment in HIST 097: History/Social Science Portfolio

As part of completing their portfolios, each student must register for this course in the semester they intend to submit their portfolio for their History BA, History BSEd, or Social Science B.S.Ed. degree. Successfully completing and submitting your portfolio by the stated due date will result in your earning a grade of S (Satisfactory) in this course.

What Papers or Projects are Required for the Portfolio?

The portfolio must include at least six pieces of evidence. These will be the major papers or projects from most courses. All students must include the assignment documents provided by the course instructors for each of these pieces of evidence.

All History B.A. majors should include the following items in the portfolio:

- at least four pieces of evidence from 200–300 level history classes, but *not* from history survey classes (HIST 103, HIST 104, HIST 105, HIST 106 or HIST 215H). This evidence may be multimedia projects or independent study projects, particularly if these were the major projects undertaken in a non-survey history course.
- One 400-level seminar paper (if you have taken more than one seminar/internship, you may replace the second one with a 300-level paper).

- the major paper written in HIST 301 (formerly HIST 401): Historiography

In addition, History B.S.ED. majors should *also* include the following items in the portfolio:

- the historical origins of a contemporary/controversial issue paper, which also is produced in HIST 301
- lesson plans from their methods course or student teaching to demonstrate knowledge of North Dakota history *or* a paper or project from HIST 220: North Dakota History

How to Save Materials for your Portfolio

To prepare this portfolio, each semester you must save electronic copies of the major papers you write or projects you produce for each non-survey history course as well as copies of the formal assignment documents you receive for each paper or project. Do not “pre-select” work by saving work from qualifying class and not another; instead, save your major paper or project from *each* non-survey history class. Consistent experience has shown that students who do not save papers and assignment documents and do not create secure back-ups of those files each semester struggle to successfully complete their portfolios.

With the rapid evolution of technology, there are now many ways to save electronic files, some better than others. We recommend that you save word-processed files as PDFs. REMEMBER: if we cannot open the files you submit, we cannot evaluate or give you credit for your portfolio.

We also recommend that you do not rely on the hard disk in your computer as the only way of saving your files. Use at least one of the following backup methods in addition to saving files to your computer:

- Most recommended: save your files to the One Drive folder that the History Department creates in your university-provided Microsoft Office 365 account. This is the **best** way to save your files because this is where you ultimately will put them to complete your portfolio.
- Save your files to another cloud service such as iCloud or Dropbox.
- Use a portable USB flash drive that you dedicate only to storing your papers and assignments.

Do not save work exclusively on the hard drive of your primary computer or save work on a friend’s, roommate’s, or relative’s computer.

What Work to Include

To facilitate your selection of appropriate works to include in the portfolio, save every major paper or project that you produce for an MSU history course along with the original course assignment sheet. When you select the final pieces of work for the portfolio, you should include work that required research, not work that only required the use of a course textbook.

What to include:

- essays, papers, take-home examinations that require the use of multiple sources, independent study projects, and multimedia projects
- work from 200–400 level non-survey courses that covers all three geographic regions (American, European, and non-western)
- work produced for as many faculty across the department as possible
- work that enables you to address the history program’s student learning outcomes—for example, the HIST 301 major paper and (for History B.S.Ed. students) the HIST 301 (formerly HIST 401) contemporary/controversial issues paper and either a lesson plan in North Dakota history or a paper or project from HIST 220: North Dakota History

What not to include:

- *in-class work*, such as examinations in any format or in-class writing
- *book reviews or reaction papers* that focus on and use a single source
- *work completed for classes other than history classes* taught by MSU history faculty
- *work completed at institutions other than MSU*. If you are a transfer student and are concerned about completing enough work to fulfill the portfolio requirement, please talk with your advisor.

All majors should regularly review the progress of their portfolio with their advisor.

Other Pieces: Cover Sheet, Table of Contents, Unofficial Transcript, and Self-Assessment

Along with copies of your work and assignment documents, your portfolio must include a cover sheet that gives your academic and contact information, a table of contents, a copy of your unofficial transcript, and your self-assessment for each of the history program's student learning outcomes. You can save a PDF copy of your unofficial transcript from your Campus Connection Student Center. All items must be saved in the One Drive folder created by the department for your portfolio.

Deadlines for Submitting the Portfolio

History B.A. and B.S.Ed. majors will enroll in HIST 097, finalize the contents of their portfolios, and complete the final self-assessment the semester that they graduate. They should meet with their advisors to review the portfolio and verify its completeness before submitting it. For fall semester graduates, the deadline for turning in the completed portfolio to the advisor will be November 1. For spring semester graduates, the deadline for turning in the completed portfolio to the advisor will be April 1. The registrar's office will not post your degree until you submit your portfolio and that submission is verified by your receiving a grade of S in HIST 097.

Frequently Asked Questions about the History Portfolio

When is the portfolio due?

- Fall semester graduates: November 1.
- Spring semester graduates: April 1.
- Summer graduates should contact their advisor about the portfolio deadline.

When should I submit my portfolio to my advisor for review?

- Fall semester graduates: October 15
- Spring semester graduates: March 15

Can materials from courses other than history or courses taken at other institutions be included in the portfolio?

Because the purpose of the portfolios is to assess the history program, all materials included must be products of MSU history courses.

Can I refer to more than one paper or project as indication that I have achieved a particular goal?

Yes, you may. In fact, we recommend that you refer to more than one paper or project as evidence that you have achieved particular learning outcomes throughout your self-assessment.

Can I include media projects in my portfolio?

Yes, any project that requires an amount of work equivalent to a paper is suitable for inclusion.

Can I include papers/projects originally produced for an MSU history class, but then reworked for a conference or other public presentation?

Yes, this is perfectly acceptable.

Can I include more than one piece of work from any one class?

History B.S.Ed. students *should* include both the Contemporary/Controversial Issue paper and the major research paper from HIST 301 (formerly HIST 401): Historiography. Otherwise, you should not include more than one piece of work from a class unless you have discussed this with your advisor and he or she agrees that you should do so.

What types of work should I not include in the portfolio?

Do not include in-class examinations, book reviews, short reaction papers, or any in-class writing assignments.

How long does my self-assessment need to be?

For each of the student learning outcomes, you should write 1–2 double-spaced pages or about 300–600 words of self-assessment. Explain to what level you think that you have successfully demonstrated achievement of each outcome, and support this by referring to the particular papers that you have chosen to include.

If you have any other questions or concerns about the portfolio requirements, discuss them with your History Department advisor or refer to <http://www.minotstateu.edu/history/>.

Checklist of Required Contents for History Major Portfolios

History Portfolio Cover Sheet, including the following information:

Academic information:

Your full name

Your MSU ID number

Your advisor's name

Semester of graduation

Major(s) (History B.A. or History BSE)

Minor(s) if any

Concentration(s) if any

Date you are submitting portfolio

Local contact information:

Your e-mail address

Local address

Daytime phone

Evening phone

Address where you can always be contacted even after you graduate (parent, relative, etc.):

Address

Daytime phone

Evening phone

Table of contents, listing all materials included in the portfolio, in the order in which they are included. For each paper/project, identify the course, instructor, and semester that you produced the work.

An unofficial MSU transcript.

The completed numerical self-assessments and completed narrative self-assessments for each of the student learning outcomes. History B.A. majors complete self-assessments for seven student learning outcomes, while B.S.Ed. majors complete assessments for an additional two outcomes for a total of nine.

At least six pieces of work as described in the section "What Papers and Projects are Required for the Portfolio?" above. Make sure to include the notes and bibliography for each item as well as the assignment sheets that spell out the requirements for each paper or project.

History B.A. and History B.S.Ed. Student Learning Goals and Outcomes

History B.A.

Student Learning Goals	Student Learning Outcomes
SLG 1: Describe historical content and processes.	SLO 1.1: Relate historical content for a variety of periods and places. SLO 1.2: Explain chronology, change, and continuity as they pertain to history.
SLG 2: Identify relevant and high-quality historical information.	SLO 2.1: Select relevant historical material from both primary and secondary sources SLO 2.2: Demonstrate the ability to become informed on historiographical issues through the use of history journals, books, and reviews.
SLG 3: Craft analytical and persuasive historical writing.	SLO 3.1: Demonstrate command of the mechanics of historical writing. SLO 3.2: Analyze and interpret primary and secondary sources in the service of historical analysis. SLO 3.3: Employ perspectives such as globalism, multiculturalism, gender, or ethnicity to perform historical analysis. SLO 3.4: Demonstrate advanced critical and analytical thinking, including the ability to present and support an argumentative thesis.

History B.S.Ed.

Student Learning Goals	Student Learning Outcomes
SLG 1: Describe historical content and processes.	SLO 1.1: Relate historical content for a variety of periods and places. SLO 1.2: Explain chronology, change, and continuity as they pertain to history.
SLG 2: Identify relevant and high-quality historical information.	SLO 2.1: Select relevant historical material from both primary and secondary sources SLO 2.2: Demonstrate the ability to become informed on historiographical issues through the use of history journals, books, and reviews.
SLG 3: Craft analytical and persuasive historical writing.	SLO 3.1: Demonstrate command of the mechanics of historical writing. SLO 3.2: Analyze and interpret primary and secondary sources in the service of historical analysis. SLO 3.3: Employ perspectives such as globalism, multiculturalism, gender, or ethnicity to perform historical analysis. SLO 3.4: Demonstrate advanced critical and analytical thinking, including the ability to present and support an argumentative thesis.
SLG 4: Meet North Dakota ESPB History teaching standards.	SLO 4.1: Demonstrate knowledge of North Dakota history. SLO 4.2: Explain the relationship of the past to the present, especially when addressing controversial issues.

Student Learning Outcomes – Self-Assessment Rubrics

Here are the student learning outcomes and the rubrics that you will follow when completing your self-assessment. These same outcomes and rubrics are found in the *Reflect* tool. Use that tool to select the numerical rating and to write your one to two-page reflection on your achievement of each outcome.

The work that you choose to include as evidence in your portfolio should demonstrate your achievement of these student learning outcomes. You will discuss that work as well as your other history coursework when writing your self-assessment. Remember that you can and should draw upon more than one of the works you have included as evidence for each outcome in your self-assessment. While each item in your portfolio does not have to relate to every outcome, your completed portfolio should provide full evidence that you have achieved all outcomes.

Student Learning Outcome 1.1: Relate historical content for a variety of periods and places. All majors must take survey courses and courses in American, European, and non-Western history. These courses variously address culture, society, government, change and continuity across time. You should reference your coursework over time as well as selected paper/projects to demonstrate that you have met this student learning outcome.

1	2	3	4
Coursework reflects the minimum geographic distribution (at least one EU, US, and NW course). Selected papers/projects are only from one geographic area and deal with similar historical topics.	Coursework reflects the minimum geographic distribution (at least one EU, US, and NW course) with other coursework largely focused on one geographic area. Selected papers/projects are mainly from two geographic areas and deal with similar historical topics.	Coursework and portfolio reflect engagement with US, EU, and NW areas. Selected papers/projects are distributed across two or more geographic areas and display several different historical topics.	Coursework and portfolio reflect engagement with US, EU, and NW areas. Selected papers/projects are representative of US, EU, and NW areas and display a variety of historical topics.

Student Learning Outcome 1.2: Explain chronology, change, and continuity as they pertain to history. History courses emphasize the importance of student understanding of the dimension of time and change in human existence. A sense for the crucial relationship of the past to the present is emphasized in each course.

1	2	3	4
Selected papers/projects draw no connections between historical events and/or periods.	Selected papers/projects draw few reasonable and appropriate connections between historical events and/or periods.	Selected papers/projects draw some reasonable and appropriate connections between historical events and/or periods.	Selected papers/projects clearly draw reasonable and appropriate connections between historical events and/or periods.

Student Learning Outcome 2.1: Select relevant historical material from both primary and secondary sources. The evidence presented should use a variety of secondary sources such as historical monographs and research articles and primary sources such as government documents, newspapers, diaries/memoirs, photographs, annals, chronicles, or literary works in translation.

1	2	3	4
Papers/projects use one or two secondary sources. Secondary sources are encyclopedic or websites. No primary sources are used. The material used is broadly general or unrelated to the topics being discussed.	Papers/projects use few primary and secondary sources, i.e., most of the information comes from three or fewer sources. Secondary sources are general in nature. Few primary sources are cited or included. The selected material is not always relevant to the topics being discussed.	Papers/projects use more than three each of primary and secondary sources. Evidence includes both primary sources and specific secondary sources such as historical monographs or research articles. The selected material is generally relevant to the topics being discussed.	Papers/projects use many and varied primary and secondary sources. Secondary sources include a range of historical monographs and research articles. The historical material is closely relevant to and illuminates the topics being discussed.

Student Learning Outcome 2.2: Demonstrate the ability to become informed on historiographical issues through the use of history journals, books, and reviews. Students must be able to locate and use standard works of history. They must also be able to ascertain the trends in the profession by reading current books, book reviews, and professional journals. This student learning outcome is a central component of our practice and method course (HIST 280), and it also is firmly tied into all of our elective courses. Use your major historiography paper as evidence for this outcome. You can reference other papers/projects as well.

1	2	3	4
Papers/projects incorporate fewer than two standard and current journals, books, and reviews in advancing an historiographical study.	Papers/projects incorporate few standard and current journals, books, and reviews in advancing an historiographical study.	Papers/projects incorporate some standard and current journals, books, and reviews in advancing an historiographical study.	Papers/projects incorporate many standard and current journals, books, and reviews in advancing the full range of an historiographical study.

Student Learning Outcome 3.1: Demonstrate command of the mechanics of historical writing.

All students' work must effectively paraphrase and quote from the sources used, and students must incorporate the material they paraphrased and quoted into their own writing as evidence supporting historical arguments. All students' work must employ the most recent version of the Turabian/Chicago Notes and Bibliography style to cite the primary and secondary sources used. That work also must be written in clear, direct, and grammatical English with proper punctuation and capitalization, and it must be formatted according to the instructions given for each individual assignment.

1	2	3	4
<p>The citations are absent or so inaccurate as to prevent clear bibliographic identification of the sources used. Quotations stand as separate sentences or blocks of text without integration into the student's writing, and they do not act as evidence supporting an argument. The formatting does not match what was assigned. The writing contains more than a few grammar and spelling errors, and it lacks coherence or is inappropriate for academic work (vulgar, slangy, etc.).</p>	<p>The citations have errors but do give full bibliographic identification of the sources used. Quotations from sources are sparse or overused in places, and quotations and paraphrases are not always effectively employed as evidence. The work has minor formatting errors. The writing contains few grammar and spelling errors, and it is only occasionally unclear or not academic in style.</p>	<p>Almost all citations are correctly formatted and give full bibliographic identification of the sources used, with the few errors being minimal. The work balances quotation and paraphrasing used as evidence with the student's own writing. The work has no formatting errors. The writing is free of grammar and spelling errors, and it is effective and easy to follow.</p>	<p>Citations are correct in all particulars. Quotations are concise, and quotation and paraphrasing are used to provide strong evidence for the historical argument. The work is free of formatting errors, and its clear and compelling writing fully supports the historical argumentation made.</p>

Student Learning Outcome 3.2: Analyze and interpret primary and secondary sources in the service of historical analysis. Historians use material quoted and paraphrased from sources as the foundation of their own historical analysis and interpretation. That analysis and interpretation involves critically reading and comparing sources and understanding sources in their contexts. Historians use analysis and interpretation to forge material drawn from sources into *evidence*, and they use that evidence to craft an historical argument.

1	2	3	4
Material taken from sources is not analyzed or is not related to the paper's or project's historical interpretation. Sources are misinterpreted.	Analysis often consists of merely making general statements based on information drawn from sources or rewording material quoted or paraphrased from sources. Sources are often discussed in isolation from each other.	The analysis and interpretation of material drawn from sources is generally valid and specific. That analysis includes discussing sources in context and comparing sources with each other.	Material is critically, specifically, and convincingly analyzed and interpreted. The analysis draws insight from sources and uses that evidence and insight to advance an historical argument.

Student Learning Outcome 3.3: Employ perspectives such as globalism, multiculturalism, gender, or ethnicity to perform historical analysis. Department faculty include these themes throughout the history curriculum; history majors will encounter them continually in their academic career. The department also offers courses specifically focused on women's history, Native American history, and African American history. Selected papers/projects should cover at least two such perspectives.

1	2	3	4
The selected papers/projects do not incorporate such perspectives as globalism, multiculturalism, gender, ethnicity, etc. to analyze a historical problem.	The selected papers/projects incorporate one or two perspectives such as globalism, multiculturalism, gender, ethnicity, etc. but those perspectives are not used effectively to analyze a historical problem.	The selected papers/projects incorporate two perspectives such as globalism, multiculturalism, gender, ethnicity, etc. to analyze a historical problem, but not all perspectives are used effectively.	The selected papers/projects thoroughly incorporate two or more perspectives such as globalism, multiculturalism, gender, ethnicity, etc. to effectively analyze a historical problem and advance an argument.

Student Learning Outcome 3.4: Demonstrate advanced critical and analytical thinking and writing skills, including the ability to present and support an argumentative thesis. Persuasive writing is a primary objective of our department. Majors are introduced to critical thinking and writing as soon as they enter 100-level courses, and refine these skills in all successive courses, as they are called upon to render valid historical judgments in class discussions, oral presentations, examination essays, and research papers. Majors develop skills to present and support persuasive arguments and to synthesize historical interpretations. You should use the 400-level seminar paper or a comparable senior-level project to demonstrate that you have met this student learning outcome.

1	2	3	4
The selected papers/projects contain neither argumentative theses nor critical analysis based on evidence.	The selected papers/projects contain implied argumentative theses and some critical analysis based on evidence.	The selected papers/projects contain explicit argumentative theses explained over two or more sentences and critical analysis based on evidence.	The selected papers/projects contain explicit, clear, and one-sentence argumentative theses and sophisticated critical analysis based on evidence.

Additional Student Learning Outcomes and Outcomes for History B.S.Ed. Teacher Education candidates/North Dakota State Standards. Note that the history program and/or teacher education faculty contribute other assessment data to the Teacher Education Unit to measure full compliance with North Dakota State Standards. If you are a History B.A. major, you do not include materials or complete self-assessments for SLO 4.1 and 4.2.

Student Learning Outcome 4.1: Develop and demonstrate an understanding of North Dakota history. Although the history program provides students with the knowledge and skills necessary to content-area preparation, teacher education candidates must be able to demonstrate knowledge of North Dakota history specifically, as they will very likely be expected to teach in this area. You may use your North Dakota lesson plan from your Social Science Teaching Methods course or a project or paper from HIST 220: North Dakota History to demonstrate that you have met this student learning outcome.

1	2	3	4
The selected paper, project, or lesson plan demonstrates little understanding of North Dakota history.	The selected paper, project, or lesson plan analyzes some aspect of North Dakota history in a limited fashion.	The selected paper, project, or lesson plan analyzes some aspect of North Dakota history in a solid fashion.	The selected paper, project, or lesson plan analyzes some aspect of North Dakota history in a sophisticated fashion.

Student Learning Outcome 4.2: Develop and demonstrate an understanding of the relationship of the past to the present, particularly when addressing controversial issues.

History teachers frequently ask their students to analyze current events in light of their historical backgrounds. Therefore, it is important for teacher education candidates to be able to place current events into their historical context and similarly to understand the myriad ways that the past continues to affect the present. You must use your historical origins of a contemporary/controversial issue paper from HIST 401 as evidence for this outcome, although you can reference other papers or projects as well.

1	2	3	4
The selected paper provides little historical context for a controversial issue.	The selected paper provides a limited analysis of a controversial issue and its historical context. Relations between the past and the present are not fully drawn out.	The selected paper shows some analysis of a controversial issue and its historical context, showing some ways how the past and present interact.	The selected paper analyzes a controversial issue in historical context, showing how the past and present interact.