

**Tennessee State University**  
**Major Field Assessment Pilot**  
**B.A. in History**

Time Duration: 120 minutes

In full essays of at least five paragraphs each, respond to **three** of the following with **specific reference to courses completed as a part of the History major curriculum**.

At least one essay should address a topic in U.S. history, and at least one should address a topic outside the history of the U.S.

**1. Periodization**

Identify and discuss a question of historical periodization. Why have historians identified the era in question as a distinct historical period, and what perspectives or considerations suggest alternative patterns of continuity and change?

**2. Causation**

Identify and discuss a significant event or development attributed by historians to multiple short-term and long-term causes. What approaches to understanding historical change (political, economic, social, cultural, etc.) does each factor represent, and how do you rank their relative importance?

**3. Context**

Identify and discuss a historical subject for which you believe considerations of context are especially important in forming value judgments.

**4. Primary Evidence**

Identify and discuss an instance in which the examination of a primary source (or sources) has significantly challenged or changed your interpretation of a historical subject.

**5. Historiography**

Identify and discuss a historical interpretation that has changed significantly over time. What factors, internal and external to the discipline of history, contributed to this change?

## Assessment Rubric

The purpose of this assessment is to evaluate the quality of the History major curriculum.

Responses to each of the three items selected will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

### 1. Historical Knowledge

4	Excellent	The essay demonstrates comprehensive and accurate knowledge of the historical subject selected. The response exhibits broad familiarity with the topic, awareness of context, and mastery of relevant factual detail.
3	Good	The essay demonstrates thorough knowledge of the historical subject but may include factual errors or omissions of some importance.
2	Satisfactory	The essay demonstrates satisfactory, general knowledge of the historical subject but includes significant factual errors or omissions.
1	Deficient	The essay demonstrates basic knowledge of the historical subject but would require further development to meet degree program expectations.
0	Unsatisfactory	The knowledge of the historical subject demonstrated in the essay falls significantly short of minimal degree program expectations.

### 2. Historical Thinking and Method

4	Excellent	The essay demonstrates advanced historical thinking and method. The response reflects a clear understanding of questions and approaches specific to the discipline of history and applies these to the development of original and cogent historical arguments.
3	Good	The essay demonstrates a solid grounding in historical thinking and method. The arguments advanced in the essay may reflect minor weaknesses of analysis or lack in originality, but the essay reflects well on the student's intellectual development as a historian.
2	Satisfactory	The essay demonstrates a satisfactory, general understanding and application of historical thinking and method.
1	Deficient	The essay demonstrates a basic understanding of historical questions and concepts at a level below degree program expectations.
0	Unsatisfactory	The essay does not demonstrate historical thinking and method at a level approaching degree program expectations.

### 3. Writing Style, Grammar, and Mechanics

4	Excellent	Writing quality exemplifies degree program goals. Writing is clear, compelling, and legible. Grammar and mechanics are completely or almost completely correct.
3	Good	Writing quality substantially meets degree program goals. The essay contains some errors of grammar and mechanics but is generally well written.
2	Satisfactory	Writing quality basically satisfies degree program expectations, but the essay contains a significant number of writing errors that detract from its overall achievement.
1	Deficient	Writing quality falls short of degree program expectations. Grammar, mechanics, and/or legibility require serious attention.
0	Unsatisfactory	Writing quality falls significantly short of minimal degree program expectations.