

School Name University of North Carolina, Charlotte (Charlotte, NC)

Course Name US History Survey

Course Format Flipped/Traditional

Key Results Integrating a variety of MyHistoryLab assignments into my course helps students develop the ability to think analytically and critically about important historical topics. Through my “flipped classroom,” students do more work outside of class, allowing for a more interactive and engaging in-class experience.

Submitted by
David Goldfield, Ph.D.

Course Material
The American Journey, Concise Edition by Goldfield with MyHistoryLab

The US History survey course is taken mostly by freshmen, who often come into the class expecting to simply memorize a list of names and dates. My goal for this course is to help students appreciate that we cannot understand the present without understanding the past. I want students to develop a sense of humility and respect for the contingency of history (or, for the complexity of history) by analyzing people and events, not from today’s perspective, but from the perspective and by the standards of the time. This course is often the first time students are asked to analyze and think critically for themselves, a major emphasis of mine.

Implementation

When I first adopted MyHistoryLab in 2009, it counted for 20 per cent of my students’ overall grade. Over the years I have found it to be such a useful tool for enhancing the course that I now make it worth 65 per cent of their overall grade. In completing frequent, required assignments in MyHistoryLab, students learn to read and interact more deeply and thoughtfully with the material before coming to class. This allows us more freedom and flexibility in the classroom, which in turn makes our time together more valuable because we can now bring in current events and engage in lively debate and discussion.

Further, I believe good writing skills are essential for students. However, with large sections of approximately 100 students it was, in the past, logistically impossible to assign and grade frequent writing assignments. With MyHistoryLab, students have many opportunities not only to write but also to get immediate feedback on content and mechanics, making them both better writers and thinkers. There are a wide variety of assignments in MyHistoryLab—maps, images, videos, document analysis, writing, and chapter exams—which help students develop the ability to think analytically and critically about important historical topics.

Benefits

With MyHistoryLab I am able to cover all of the course material in a more thorough and engaging way—something much more difficult to achieve in the past. My students develop valuable writing skills, and they retain more and learn better from MyHistoryLab’s regular assessments accompanied by immediate feedback.

Assessments:

65 percent	MyHistoryLab (8 chapter exams, 4 writing assignments, and 35 media assignments)
15 percent	Midterm exam
10 percent	Final exam
10 percent	Christian Science Monitor

“MyHistoryLab has been so effective in improving my students’ grades, critical thinking skills, and engagement with the material that I have “flipped my class”, making MyHistoryLab worth 65 percent of students’ overall course grade.”

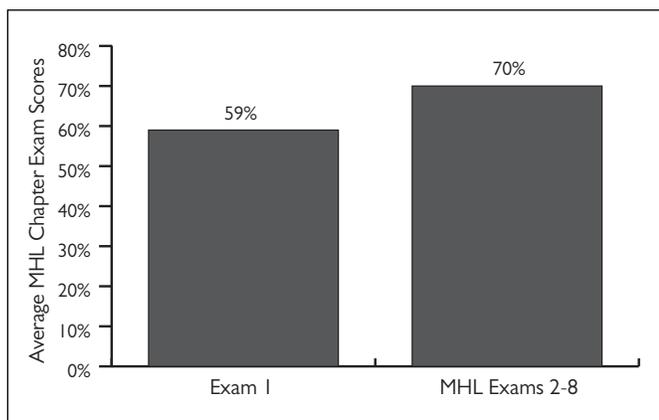


Figure 1. MyHistoryLab Chapter Exam Scores, Fall 2013. Does not include exam scores of “0”.

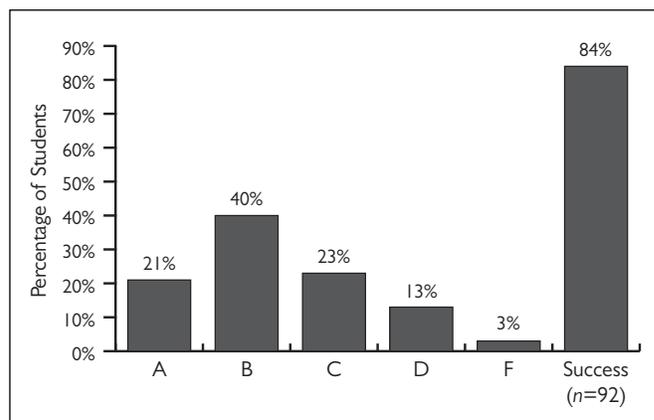


Figure 2. Student Success Rate, Fall 2013.

(Success rate = the percentage of students receiving a grade of A, B, or C in the course.)

Results

Rather than have students wait until the first in-class exam many weeks into the semester, I use MyHistoryLab’s chapter exams throughout the term so they can gauge where they are much earlier and adjust their efforts accordingly. I have seen my students use this early assessment to “get themselves in gear.” For example, this past semester average scores on the first MyHistoryLab chapter exam were below a passing grade—with students averaging just 59 percent. After students took note of this early feedback, average scores for the remaining seven MyHistoryLab chapter exams jumped to 70 percent (figure 1). In addition to the chapter exams, students complete interactive media assignments and writing assignments that provide auto-feedback. I believe these regular assessments and active, required use of MyHistoryLab increase student engagement and critical thinking, which manifest themselves in the course’s high success rates (figure 2).

The student experience

Students want to be measured on their performance throughout the term. They don’t want everything riding on just one or two exams, and they appreciate the opportunity to work on a variety of low stakes assignments throughout the semester. Without MyHistoryLab this would not be possible. Because students know where they stand and receive immediate feedback on their performance with MyHistoryLab, they are more motivated and do better on the chapter exams and other assignments.

Conclusion

As I’ve integrated increasingly more work in MyHistoryLab into the course over time, I feel I’ve been able to teach my students more and, at the same time, they are enjoying the course more. MyHistoryLab has been so effective in improving my students’ grades, critical thinking skills, and engagement with the material that I have “*flipped my class*”, making MyHistoryLab worth 65 percent of students’ overall course grade.