Jeffrey R. Young
Principal Senior Lecturer, Department of History, GSU
Nominee for the Regents' Felton Jenkins, Jr. Hall of Fame Faculty Award

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Georgia State
University.

November 27, 2017

Selection Committee
Regents Teaching Excellence Awards
University System of Georgia
Atlanta, GA 30334

Dear Selection Committee members:

I am writing to nominate Georgia State faculty member Dr. Jeffrey Young for the Felton Jenkins, Jr. Hall of Fame Faculty Award. Dr. Young joined the GSU in 2006 and is currently Principal Senior Lecturer in the Department of History. His instructional contribution has centered on ensuring student success and provide a compelling model for how individual instructors can support the institutional mission of improving graduation and student success rates. Specifically, Dr. Young's U.S. History survey course (History 2110) is now the gold standard in for how this course should be taught and many of his resources and instructional modules form the foundation of the US History curriculum adopted by the Atlanta-campus faculty. His teaching approach has also influenced the revision of the World History curriculum (History 1111 and 1112). While much of what is described in this packet focuses on online instruction, Dr. Young is an equally effective instructor in face to face classes as he is in online courses, and his inventive approach is applicable to both modes of delivery. Please allow me to elaborate.

A central tenet of Dr. Young's philosophy is that all students can be successful in his courses so he rejects the idea that some students "just aren't there to learn" or "can't learn." He designs his courses to provide each student with the tools they need to learn and move forward. An example of this is his use of early low-stakes assessments. Dr. Young has found that students who receive feedback from a low-stakes quiz by the third week of the semester improve their performance and are less likely to earn a grade of D, F or W. Thus, after reviewing these early quiz grades Dr. Young and his teaching assistant contact all students who did not receive a passing grade offering feedback and support. This is an effective and easy strategy that directly engages students in their own learning and success.

Other examples of tools designed by Dr. Young are an effective and easy to use interactive digital textbook that he provides for free to all his students and a bank of hundreds of learning

modules in U.S. and World History that can organized in multiple ways to develop custom courses. These modules include short videos, readings, quiz questions and interactive materials that students can engage with in a variety of ways that support and facilitate critical thinking.

Another hallmark of Dr. Young's classes are capstone assignments designed to challenge critical thinking. His philosophy is that capstone courses or assignments should not be reserved just for upper-division students. Instead, he includes a series of capstone assignments in which students are challenged to carefully read the historical evidence, utilize strategies to understand historical data through maps and graphs, and challenge themselves to use the information they have learned to make well-reasoned arguments regarding important historical questions. As part of these assignments they write essays and develop and present their work in timelines and other digital formats. It is clear from the student comments how valuable these assignments are for his students.

In summary, Dr. Young is an exemplar of a gifted and engaged instructor whose focus on student learning and success has been part of Georgia State's own success in this area. He is just the type of instructor that the Felton Jenkins, Jr. Hall of Fame Teaching Award should honor, and I forward this nomination to you with my own enthusiastic endorsement.

Sincerely,

Risa Palm

Risa I. Palm
Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
College of Arts and Sciences

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15 October 2017

Dear Colleagues,

I write today to nominate Dr. Jeff Young for the Felton Jenkins, Jr. Hall of Fame Award. Dr. Young is Principal Senior Lecturer in the Department of History on the Atlanta Campus of GSU, where he has taken the leading role in building the online curriculum. I write today as the associate chair and departmental scheduler.

Dr. Young was an accomplished classroom teacher who over time became frustrated with the limited impact he felt he was having on what he sagely calls the "back third of the classroom:" those reluctant learners who for whatever reason disappeared partway into a semester and who therefore were in danger of not doing well in the class. Dr. Young first attempted to mitigate this problem through a variety of pedagogical methods, perhaps most significantly authoring an online textbook that could be shared with students and which would therefore be tailored to the GSU population. Perhaps most important to students at GSU, the text was free, allowing students who might not purchase a textbook to have access to vital course materials. Over time, this online text grew into an entire online course on US History.

Dr. Young's online Survey of US History thus had its origins in his attempts to seek the keys to student success in online pedagogies. If he could reach even a portion of the "back third" of the classroom, and give them the tools necessary to succeed, it would be possible to dramatically improve student-learning outcomes. His online course is therefore geared toward smoothing a path to graduation for some of our students most at risk of not completing a required class and who therefore come closer to the precipice of withdrawing from GSU altogether. Dr. Young's solution to the dilemma posed by reluctant learners was to employ his imagination and creativity. He developed the coding skills necessary to build a learning environment tailored to the needs of our students. This strikes me as being nothing less than the digital equivalent of designing and building one's classroom in a way that makes it organically connected to the content and assessments. In short, Dr. Young saw the opportunity to reimagine what a freshman survey in US History could be, how it could function, and what it could teach our students. As he rebuilt the survey from the ground up, he also began to shift the logic of the survey from one oriented purely around content acquisition to one that also provided fundamental training in key skills: critical thinking, critical reading, quantitative analysis, and an understanding of how history has unfolded within geographical coordinates. These skills – fundamental to a liberal arts education – are also the ones perhaps most important to the overall development of GSU students. Dr. Young's online US history survey, then, is not just about learning the basic contours of the American story (although it is that); it is also training that can benefit most those students he first sought to reach. His online class is thus tailored to the GSU student population and was designed
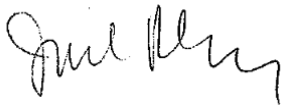
in a way to connect with (and to reassure, reinforce, and encourage) first-generation college students, many of whom are Pell eligible, or who are new or recent Americans.

The US History survey is sometimes usefully understood as a canary in the coal mine of student success. The student who has difficulty in History 2110 is often one who is at risk of losing Hope funding and ultimately of leaving the University without a degree. Dr. Young's online class has already generated data that is allowing him to identify students signaling academic distress at a very early point in the semester, as early as 5 days into the course. When he is able to identify those students indicating that they are at risk of failure, Dr. Young is able to initiate s a series of early interventions – what he calls the "shoulder tap" of a face-to-face meeting to go over content, learning strategies, or whatever else for which the student demonstrates a need – in which students can be diverted and put back on the path to student success. Dr. Young's online course, in other words, is not just a way to make the core curriculum more convenient for students and their schedules, and it is not just a way for the department of history to move students through a core-curriculum hoop, but it is something much more significant: a chance to impart critical skills to an at-risk population and to measure student learning in novel ways.

Dr. Young's Survey of US History has developed (and, as you will see in his materials, *continues* to develop) into the gold standard of freshman survey online education. Indeed, his approach has been so successful that the department is creating online versions of the World History sequence (History 1111 and 1112, also part of the core curriculum) based on Dr. Young's successful model.

In closing, Dr. Young's US History survey has become a foundation of the history department's efforts to reach those students most at risk at GSU. If we can also make it easier and more convenient for students to move through the core curriculum, that is all to the good, but the signature accomplishment of Dr. Young's class has been his innovative search for ways to find and quickly divert reluctant learners, keeping them on the path towards graduation. His class, in short, is fundamental to the mission of the history department and the university, and I can think of no better person to be considered for this prestigious award. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide further details in support of my nomination of Dr. Jeff Young for the Felton Jenkins, Jr. Hall of Fame Award.

All my best,

Jared Poley, Ph.D.
Professor | Associate Chair
History Department
Georgia State University

jpoley@gsu.edu / 404.413.6383

Jeffrey Robert Young
Principal Senior Lecturer, Department of History, Georgia State University
jryoung@gsu.edu

EMPLOYMENT:
Principal Senior Lecturer, Department of History, GSU, Fall 2017
Senior Lecturer, Department of History, GSU, 2012-17
Lecturer, Department of History, GSU, 2006-12
Lecturer, Department of History, Emory University, 2003-2006
Assistant Professor, Department of History, Georgia Southern University, 1998-2003
Assistant Professor, Department of History, Illinois State University, 1996-1998

EDUCATION:
Ph.D., Department of History, Emory University, 1996
M.A., Department of History, Emory University, 1993
B.A., Yale University, 1989

AWARDS, GRANTS and PRESENTATIONS related to TEACHING:

STEM Adaptive Learning Initiative grant from the University System of Georgia (funding
awarded to GSU's CETL to create survey course content for the learning platform
developed by Acrobatiq for testing in online History 1111 and 1112 classrooms, 2016-17,
Summer/Fall 2017), member of four-person team of history faculty ($92,400)

College of Arts and Sciences Travel Grant (funding my participation in Emory University's
Oxford College Institute for Pedagogy in the Liberal Arts where I participated in sessions
focused on teaching and learning through technology, May 2017, $1,000)

Endeavor Foundation Grant (funding GSU faculty participation in the Reacting to the Past
pedagogical conference exploring the use of educational games in academic settings,
University of Georgia, January 2017), co-author of grant application and conference
participant ($7,500)

NEH Next Generation Humanities PhD Planning Grant (funding planning sessions to explore
new methods of training doctoral students to better prepare them for a range of
professional opportunities, 2016-17), co-investigator ($25,000)

"Predictive Modeling of Student Outcomes in Introductory History Courses," presentation made
at the Southeast Educational Data Symposium, Atlanta, June 2016

"Predictors of Student Outcomes in Survey History Courses," poster presented at the SoTL
Commons Conference, Georgia Southern University, March 2016

Resident Scholar, GSU Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (2015 to 2016)--was selected from a pool of GSU applicants to receive support for my a project exploring learning outcomes generated by digital course elements and to take part in creating and overseeing programming for CETL ($15,000)

Governor's Teaching Fellowship, Institute of Higher Education, University of Georgia, (Summer 2015)--was selected from pool of faculty applying from campuses throughout the University System of Georgia to participate in a two-week workshop emphasizing digital methods and best pedagogical practices to improve curriculum ($1,500)

"The Department of History at Georgia State University's Digital Resources for Hybrid U.S. Survey History Courses," paper co-presented with Robert Baker at conference on "Digital Humanities in the Southeast," Georgia Tech and Georgia State University, Atlanta, October 2014

Scholarship on Teaching and Learning Grant, Georgia State University, Office of the Provost, 2013-14 ($39,960)

Writing Across the Curriculum Program, Georgia State University, Course Development Grant, 2010 ($1,500)

Distinguished Honors Teaching Award, Georgia State University, 2007

PUBLICATIONS:
Books:

Proslavery and Sectional Thought in the Early South, 1740-1829: An Anthology, University of South Carolina Press, 2006.

Domesticating Slavery: The Master Class in Georgia and South Carolina, 1670-1837, University of North Carolina Press, 1999

Articles and Chapters:

"To 'Venerate the Spot' of 'Airy Visions': Slavery and the Romantic Conception of Place in Mary Telfair's Savannah," in *Slavery and Freedom in Savannah*, eds. Daina Ramey Berry and Leslie M. Harris, University of Georgia Press, 2014, 69-92

"ProSlavery Ideology," 8,000-word chapter in Robert L. Paquette and Mark M. Smith, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Slavery in the Americas*, Oxford University Press, 2010, 399-423

"Ideology and Death on a Savannah River Rice Plantation, 1833-1867: Paternalism amidst 'A Good Supply of Disease and Pain,'" 7,500-word chapter in J. William Harris, ed., *The Old South: New Studies of Society and Culture*, Routledge Press, 2008
Originally published in the *Journal of Southern History*, 59 (November 1993), 673-706

"Slavery in Antebellum Georgia," 2,000-word entry in the John Inscoe et al., eds., *The New Georgia Encyclopedia*, 2003 http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/nge/Article.jsp?id=h-1019

"Eisenhower's Federal Judges and Civil Rights Policy: A Republican 'Southern Strategy' for the 1950s," *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, 78 (Fall 1994), 536-65

AWARDS for SCHOLARSHIP:

George C. Rogers Jr. Book Prize, South Carolina Historical Society, best book published on the history of South Carolina, 1999

E. Merton Coulter Award, Georgia Historical Society, best article published in the *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, 1994

Award for Excellence in Graduate Research, Emory University, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, 1994

McLean Prize, Emory University, Department of History, best essay written by a graduate student, 1991

SERVICE to GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY:

Member, Departmental Committee on Undergraduate Instruction (2013 to present)

Member, Departmental Committee on Assessments of Learning Outcomes in Survey Courses (2015 to present)

Member, University Committee on Learning Management System Analytics (2015)

Member, College Lecturer Review Committee (2015)

Member, Center for Instructional Innovation Advisory Committee (2014 to 2015)

Chair, Departmental Committee overseeing Graduate Teaching Assistants in the classroom (2014 to 2015)

Faculty Advisor, GSU chapter of Phi Alpha Theta (2013)

Panelist, Session on Tips for Effective Teaching, New Faculty Orientation, College of Arts and
    Sciences (2012, 2016)

Statement of Teaching and Learning Philosophy

As a scholar who has examined the interplay between social and political practice in America and Europe from the 16th through the 21st centuries, I am qualified to teach the American and world survey courses (History 2110 and 1112), upper-level courses on early American history and the history of Georgia (History 3200, 4310, and 8065), and the graduate course on pedagogy (History 7050). Whether my courses are exploring the early modern period or the 21st century, I design them to foster students' understanding of the key events and overarching patterns by which historical periods are defined. Tasking students, even at the introductory level, to work directly with primary sources and to approach evidence through a range of historical methods, I seek to make history come alive as a discipline that empowers them to answer the most meaningful questions in their lives.

While my commitment to these principles has not wavered throughout my career, I began five years ago to redesign my courses to engage the possibility that emerging technologies could enable me to dramatically improve my students' learning outcomes in the introductory history courses that almost every GSU student must take as part of the general education requirements. To provide students with a curriculum expressly designed for one-semester coverage of American history from colonization to the present, I authored in 2013 a 400-page textbook to serve as the anchor of their online learning experience. I made a very conscious decision *not* to pursue the possibility of having this text published by a commercial or academic press. Doing so would have denied me the ability to make it available to my students without cost to them. It also would have complicated my efforts to rework the format of the text as I gained feedback from students and reviewed data on learning outcomes over subsequent semesters. Instead, I engaged

in online training to learn how to use Adobe InDesign to create a professional visual layout for the textbook which I then distributed through our campus learning management system.

Three years ago, I trained to use professional video production software which enabled me (and several faculty partners) to create a library of three hundred instructional videos and a test bank of multiple-choice questions keyed to those videos. I worked towards this end because I believe that online learning works best for GSU students when they are assigned resources featuring the very same faculty with whom students can engage with questions on campus. In addition, over the past two years, I have trained to write code in PHP, SQL, and a variety of JavaScript libraries in order to architect and to deploy online history assignments that push students to conceptualize history as an exercise in critical thinking rather than as the rote memorization of facts. These higher-level assignments (referred to as "capstone assignments" in the introductory online curriculum) involve close textual analysis of primary sources, the organization of evidence to reveal patterns in time and space, and the use of historical evidence in well-reasoned arguments answering big historical questions.

My ongoing work to improve these assignments aligns with my department's commitment to assist all of our students in achieving the learning objectives associated with our survey courses. I am confident that we can continue to refine our deployment of digital resources in a variety of teaching environments. Working with colleagues at GSU, I am already tracking the ways that students and faculty might use the online resources to maximum advantage in hybrid and traditional face-to-face sections of the introductory courses. One very exciting possibility opened up by the development of the online history curriculum is that the modular components of this curriculum can be assigned in face-to-face course sections in a manner that liberates faculty in those sections from old routines of lecturing and testing. This semester, for

example, some survey students in a face-to-face section of History 2110 are spending classroom time engaged in dynamic role-playing exercises (the "Reacting To The Past" curriculum developed by a consortium of faculty over the past two decades). Online assignments using the digital resources that I have built are preparing these students to make the most of their time in the classroom (and are enabling their instructor to feel confident that they are completing necessary readings and mastering key concepts prior to assembling for in-class activities).

Equally exciting is the fact that this same curriculum which energizes students to become self-motivated learners can be organized in a manner that provides faculty and administrators with real-time data on problems that particular students are experiencing as they complete their work. Beyond providing data for the obvious metrics of missed deadlines and low successful completion rates for multiple-choice questions, the digital resources already in use in our classrooms are tracking such data as the fine-grained details of the students' video consumption habits and the time spent on particular learning challenges prior to student mastery of a given skill. With the application of the right kinds of algorithms, this increasingly dense dataset can be potentially utilized directly by administrators working throughout the academic year on student success initiatives. As I continue to shape the online resources with an eye towards these possibilities, I already take great satisfaction from the positive experiences reported by the thousands of students who have already used these online resources and I look forward to the ongoing work to make the digital curriculum even more effective.

<u>Summary of Innovative Teaching Practices</u>

The creation of digital teaching resources:

      I authored a digital textbook designed specifically for use in the introductory American history course taken by 5,000 GSU Atlanta campus students every academic year (https://historyassess.org/textbook/textbook.html). Working with several faculty partners, I created 130 instructional videos that align with the structure of the digital text as well as a bank of associated quiz questions. Since rollout in Spring 2014, several thousand students have been taught using parts of this curriculum (saving them collectively from $100,000 in textbook costs had they been assigned commercially produced texts costing $50/person). Direct control over this curriculum enables me to revise it to meet the needs of GSU students; and the fact that students see their own faculty's hands in the creation of their curriculum reinforces a message of student accountability as well as encourages them to communicate with their faculty when they experience trouble mastering the material. Over the past six months, this initiative has been expanded to create several hundred more instructional videos in order to roll out a digital curriculum for our online sections of world history (https://vimeo.com/200869883).

The design of data-gathering digital environments for presenting the curriculum:

      Committed to an evidence-based strategy of designing and revising the curriculum, I perceived a need for access to data that would permit real-time analytics of how students were using the resources that I had created. Towards this end, I learned to code in a number of languages and gained experience architecting web environments in which to host the curriculum. These environments track student clickstreams and report them to a series of structured query language tables that provide a foundation for real-time inquiries into the performance of individual students or student cohorts. This kind of data has already led to significant revisions in how I structure the curriculum. For example, detailed analytics on video-viewing habits of individual students led me to shorten the video lengths and to create a tier of immediate low-stakes assessments after each video screening. This data-driven approach also led me to shift my strategies for managing student progress through the curriculum. Identifying the patterns of student use of the materials that correlated with poor student outcomes, I am now able to search for these patterns in the very first week of the term, opening the door to initiatives to reach struggling students early enough to improve their odds for success by the end of the semester. Such reporting also offers a foundation for a broader communication strategy that regularly reminds all students throughout the semester of upcoming and missed deadlines, ideal strategies for approaching particular assignments, and opportunities for assistance.

The creation of digital assessments that go beyond quiz questions:

      The online curriculum that I have designed includes a series of "capstone" assignments that guide students through close readings of evidence, expose students to strategies of making sense of historical data through maps and graphs, and challenge them to align that evidence with coherent arguments in order to answer big historical questions. In addition to writing traditional essays, students working in the digital environment learn to present their conclusions in such digital formats as timelines (used to chronicle their own family histories) and interactive map journals (in which they narrate the history of civil rights in 20th century America (https://history2110.org/PHP/week14/sampleStorymap.php).

Student Statements of Support

Letter of Recommendation from Adesuwa Ihanuwaze

My name is Adesuwa Ihanuwaze and I am going to write on behalf of Professor Jeffrey Robert Young.

I had Survey of US History last semester, which was also my first semester as my course. The first class I went to for Survey of US history, we were welcomed with a test. I had just moved from Nigeria and honestly had no idea of anything regarding American History. I felt really intimidated and dropped that class, that was when I picked an online class and I was blessed to have met and had Jeffery Young as my professor. Firstly, I was welcomed with videos and audios. The videos had him actually explaining the materials we were going to read right below us before the chapter questions and he was so detailed. It was like he was there and at the same time he wasn't. He explained things detailed you and it was easy to understand. Sometimes I got stuck, but he was always up and ready to meet and explain whatever had to be explained. I remember when I told him I had just moved. He said to me "I know this is new to you but the aim of this course is to help you know the background of this country and this state and city that is now yours." That calmed me down and he was also ready to help me in other courses too. Personally, I feel like Jeffery put the needs of his students first, if he could do this for an online class, I can only imagine what he does for the infamous lectures. He takes everything one step at a time to ensure that students are in the right path on their way to success and achieving their goals. I can proudly say that due to the detailed explanations, an understanding professor and hard work, I got an A+ in that class. Best experience of my life, who knew today would come. I personally feel Professor Jeffery Robert is the best professor for this reward. Thank you.

(sent via email, Oct 2017)

(Excerpted from end-of-semester student evaluations and student emails)

"The external website used is just perfect. It walks you through the learning process in such an interesting and intuitive way. I never thought anyone could make me enjoy learning history the way this professor did. What a terrific course."

"I must say that this was the best online course that I've taken since my time here at Georgia State. The course challenged me to think, opened me to think and see this world in a whole new way! Thank you so much for your expertise!"

"Considering the fact that this class was online, I was able to learn a lot. Dr. Young is a great professor! He did a good job at relaying the material to us, and would always respond to my emails in a timely fashion. I really enjoyed this course, and am happy I decided to take it online with Dr. Young!"

"Dr. Young's online course was incredibly organized and integrative. He is ahead of the game and I truly enjoyed taking this class."

"I really enjoyed the online class! My favorite part was the diverse capstone projects! It was really insightful and I learned a lot! Keep up the good work Mr. Young!"

"The online, project-based learning was wonderful. I thoroughly enjoyed the class and my instructor's willingness to answer questions via email quickly and completely."

"This was one of my favorite courses so far. The material and the way the material was laid out was perfect. I appreciate the regular and easy to follow schedule and the capstones were a great way to increase my memory and understanding of the material. Even though the courses were online I could tell through the material and videos that the instructor is passionate about the materials being taught. Thank you for sparking my interest in studying history!"

"Was an awesome teacher! I had his online class and he set up his website perfectly. He responds to any questions you might have and if you are having trouble with the website he will help you out and not penalize you for it. Loved this class!"

"Truly enjoyed this online course. Was very immersive and he presented the information in a way that didn't overwhelm me with information. The construction of the storymap final is great as well! Takes the intimidation out of it being an essay and makes it fun to work with."

"This was by far the best history class that I have ever had. I was worried before taking the class, however this class was great and so was the professor."

"I loved that the textbook was online and the course offered through a website. Simple to use and cost friendly"

"Dr. Young made me look forward to learning about History even though the course was online. Appreciated the capstones and Dr. Young's willingness to help and give advice. Thank you!"

"The online course was well explained from the syllabus to the weekly reading to the queenly capstones. If any confusion, the professor always responded in a timely fashion clearing any doubts. The online text allowed me to have a deeper understanding of U.S. history and more specifically Atlanta's history."

"Relearning US history with the help of Dr. Young was pretty amazing. I truly enjoyed the way he structured the class. It was great to learn the history with a focus on the issue of race. I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Young for this special perspective he provided for this class."

"I really enjoyed taking this as an online course with Dr. Young. The online lectures were interesting, the homework was relevant to lecture, and the other assignments were interesting as well. This is a great way to take the course for students are motivated enough to follow along with the syllabus independent of class meetings. I would absolutely recommend taking an online course with Dr. Young."

"Professor Young was a great instructor even thought the course was online - he made a point to include videos, audio, etc. to ensure we had everything we needed to succeed in an online course,

along with plenty of office hours. The website we used for all of the course was very well designed and I had no issues with the class whatsoever. I would recommend it to anyone."
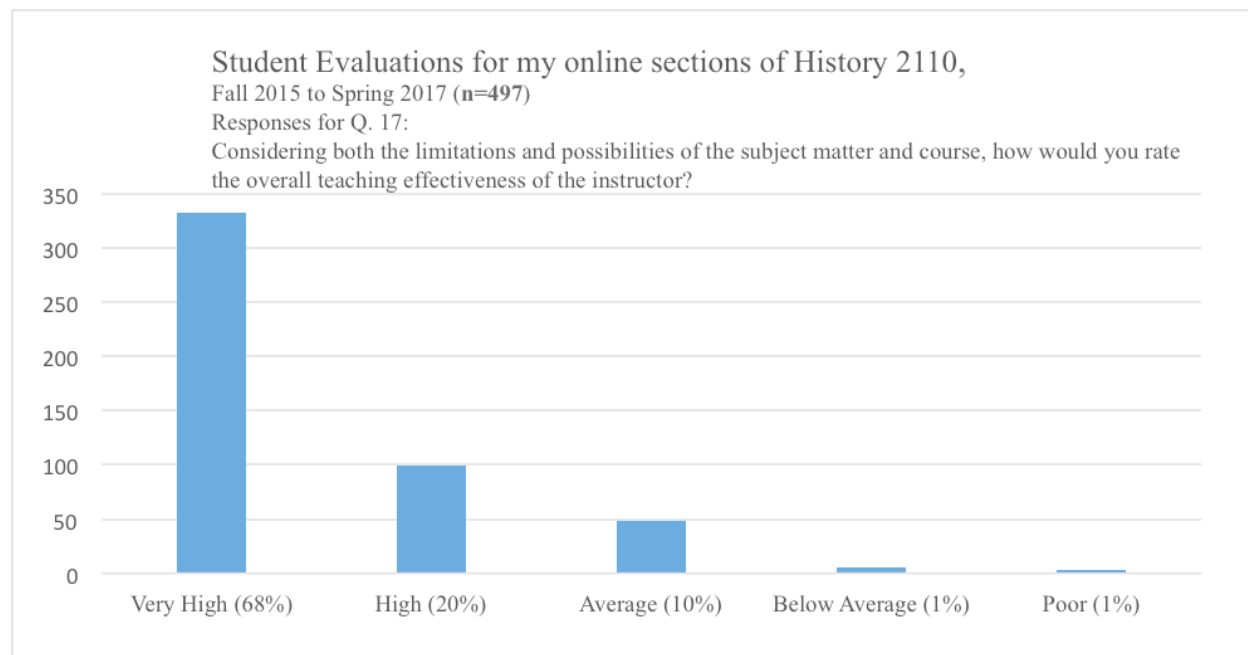
"One of the greatest professors I never had the privilege of meeting. He was very understanding when it came to complications with assignments, and gave a reasonable amount of time to correct those mistakes. Responded fast and effectively to all my emails, and I never felt cheated out of a grade. Overall wonderful."

"Dr. Young really cares about his students and makes sure that everyone is on track with their weekly assignments. He also makes sure if there are any questions, to email him. He's always available for help and responds immediately as well. I'd recommend this professor to anyone who needs to take a HIST 2110 course and for other History courses as well. He's an excellent professor."
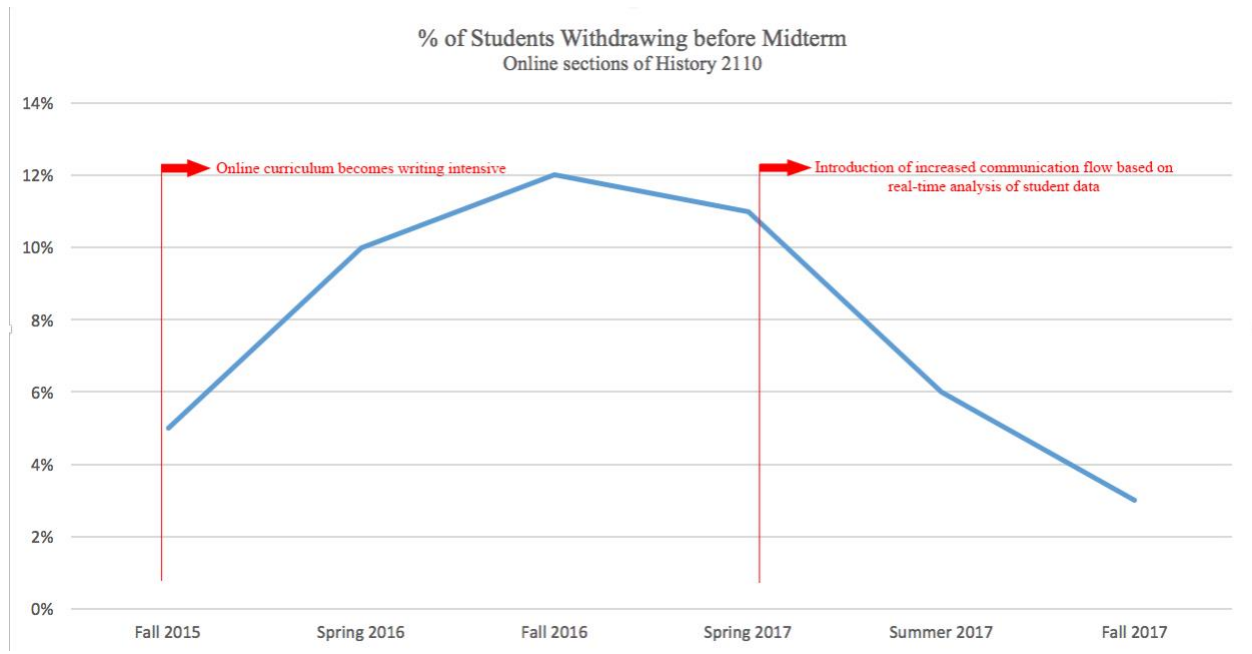
"I thoroughly enjoyed the class...even the more time-demanding Capstones. The course took me on a journey through my own ancestors yet also gave bitter reminders of Georgia's dysfunctional history. Most of all I appreciated your availability to engage for discussion and guidance throughout the term."

"I just wanted to let you know that this was, by far, the best online course I've ever taken. History is my least favorite subject. The website lays everything out in such an immersive, linear fashion, that I end up just understanding the material and its effects on our culture. Even with the essays built in, the website breaks it down and guides you, alleviating any stress with essay writing. While I know some professors enjoy putting the burden of an essay on the student as a real-life example of hard work, but the way you do it actually accomplishes the goal: learning the actual content."

<u>Summary of Student Evaluation Data</u>

Student Evaluations for my online sections of History 2110, Fall 2015 to Spring 2017 (**n=497**)
Responses for Q. 17:
Considering both the limitations and possibilities of the subject matter and course, how would you rate the overall teaching effectiveness of the instructor?

Summary of Data on Student Withdrawals prior to Midterm

% of Students Withdrawing before Midterm
Online sections of History 2110

Online curriculum becomes writing intensive

Introduction of increased communication flow based on real-time analysis of student data

Grade Distribution, Hist 2110 online
Fall 2015 to Summer 2017 (n=1087)
DFW rate: 19%

Legend:
- A — 453
- B — 312
- C — 120
- D — 22
- F — 78
- W — 102
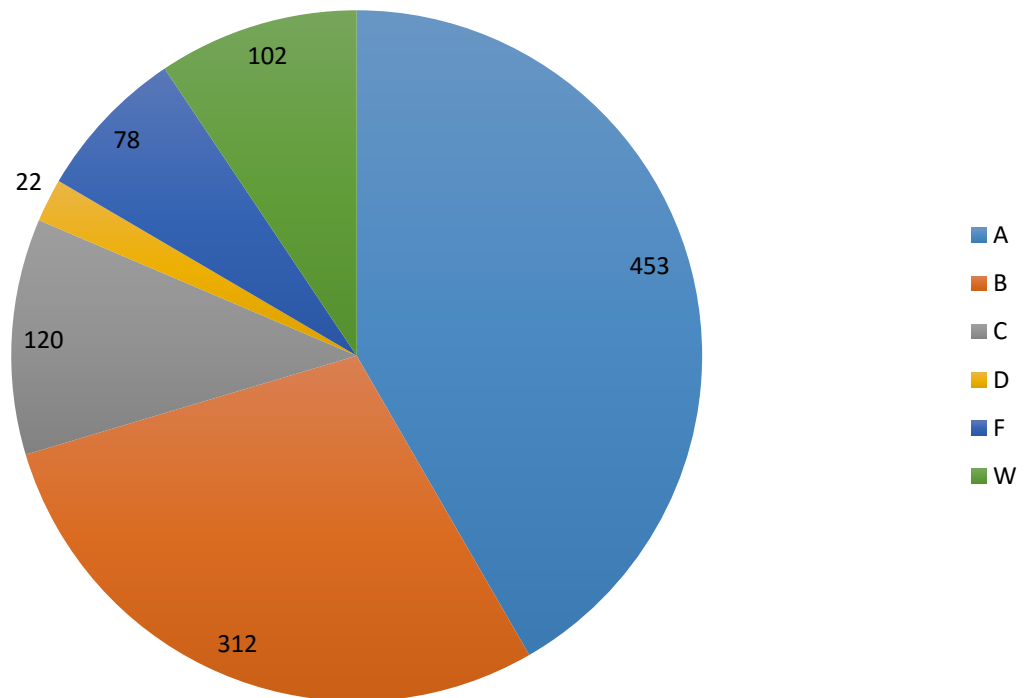
Examples of Course Assignments aligned with Learning Objectives for History 2110

Objective 1: *Students will be able to differentiate primary and secondary sources and to establish a critical perspective on historical evidence.*

Capstone 1 of the online curriculum provides students with a video tutorial exploring this topic. It then presents them with primary and secondary sources that enable students to explore the extent to which racial assumptions impacted the initial contact between Native Americans and European explorers. Students then demonstrate their mastery of these issues by answering a series of questions tiered to different degrees of competency with respect to this objective.

Objective 2: *Students will be able to recognize historical patterns across time and/or space.*

Capstone 6 of the online curriculum presents students with a series of maps depicting the extent to which slaveholding states supported or opposed secession during the period 1860 to 1865, the extent to which slavery was present in those states and, at the county level in Georgia, the stance of individual counties with respect to secession as well as the extent of slaveholding in those counties. After answering questions that probe their ability to read the data conveyed by these maps, students are challenged to make deeper connections between the historical relationship (or lack thereof) between slavery and the Civil War.

Objective 3: *Students will be able to recognize cause-and-effect arguments made by historians.*

In Capstone 9, students review a cause-and-effect argument from their digital textbook concerning the factors contributing to the growing acceptance in the United States of the cause of woman's suffrage during the World War I era. They then review a series of primary sources ranging from newspaper coverage of women activists engaging in protests at the White House to a speech made by President Woodrow Wilson concerning the issue of women voting. Once again, students answer a series of questions tiered to different degrees of competency with respect to this objective.

General Course Objective: *Students will be able to effectively analyze the complexity of human behavior and to understand how historical, economic, political, social, and/or spatial relationships develop, persist, and/or change and to demonstrate understanding of the United States and its related political, social, and/or institutional developments."*

The Final Capstone challenges students to construct a larger historical argument with respect to the complex question of shifting responses to racism in the U.S. in the 20th century. Having already been challenged to make sense of the broader historical context necessary for making sense of this question, students closely review a series of primary sources connected to specific events that contributed to shifting racial dynamics. Students then connect the dots between these events by establishing the map points in which they occurred and, in written entries that attend to the evidence, lift up the patterns that emerge across time and space. Their completed entries are organized by the course website into a "storymap," a narrative format that a reader engages by clicking through a map interface. (https://history2110.org/PHP/week14/sampleStorymap.php).

Ongoing Development of New Formats for Assessment

I am continuing to experiment with new digital frameworks for instruction and assessment with an eye towards moving students farther away from a steady diet of multiple-choice questions. My aim has been to create learning modules that report meaningful data with respect to individual student understanding of complex cues and tasks. This term, I have rolled out a new capstone that presents data on mortality during WWII in the form of a data visualization dashboard:

The format for this new capstone was inspired by a number of pedagogical goals.

First, it exposes students to a skill that is highly relevant in numerous sectors of our economy: the ability to manipulate variables within an interactive data visualization in order to tell a meaningful story about what has happened.

Second, this capstone collapses the distinction between instruction and assessment. Data from the online sections of 2110 has long suggested to me that instruction tends to be more effective when followed almost immediately by assessment (hence the editing of instructional videos into shorter chunks that can be followed up by questions that serve as gateways to the subsequent video). The advantage of the dashboard framework for this capstone is that the students respond to a series of specific cues that involve the potential manipulation of multiple

controls on the dashboard. Because the dashboard and cues are created dynamically on the webpage using an open source Javascript library (D3.js), the students' interactions with every element of the dashboard are trackable. How they set up the controls and how long they delay before taking each step and how many bars are hovered over with the mouse before the student finally makes a choice by clicking on a bar all become datapoints that reflect their developing grasp of the issues at hand. In this first manifestation of the capstone, the algorithms that I created for offering remedial suggestions are fairly primitive; yet, even still, my "presence" in this assignment is more persistent (and I hope more helpful) than in other assignments. Cues at the top of the webpage challenge the students to begin a new task; if their movement through the dashboard suggests that they are falling off course, they can be alerted and hinted to move in different directions before they take the formal step of submitting an answer:

Finally, the fact that the capstone dashboard is built as the page loads based on parameters defined by algorithms means, in practical terms, that there is a never-ending series of variations that can be introduced into the cues to which the students are responding. Not only would this frustrate even the most determined crowd-sourced efforts by students to share answers, but it also sets the stage for introducing competency-based learning pathways. Competency algorithms, built upon multiple variables, can act as gatekeepers that graduate students to the next task as they master old ones or immerse them in remedial pathways as they illustrate their confusion.

If the data from the initial rollout of this new capstone show promise, I intend to rebuild many other capstone assignments to reflect these same dynamics. On the other hand, should this approach disappoint, in terms of student outcomes, I will revise it and, if necessary, abandon it in favor approaches that help the students learn best. In the end, I am thrilled to be taking part in online education exactly because it carries the potential of unlocking ever-more-effective strategies for instruction and student learning.