

# History Peer Observation Protocol

(Adapted from the UTeach Observation Protocol, UTOP<sup>1</sup>)

Thanks for completing a peer observation for a History faculty member for inclusion in their reappointment, comprehensive review, promotion, tenure, or post tenure review case. The guidelines below are intended as a way to help you and the instructor being observed to establish the criteria for evaluating the course. Used across the department, they will also enable more consistent and transparent evaluations over time. Please see the History Peer Course Evaluation Plan (on the Faculty Resources section of the Department website) for full instructions on the peer evaluation process.

Observers can use the optional “History Peer Observation Form” to take notes, or they can take notes as they see fit.

## *1. Review of Syllabus and Other Material(s)*

a) If you were to assume the role of a student in this course, what would you identify as the strengths of the syllabus? Are there details about the course that you would like to see covered more in the syllabus? What other comments and/or questions do you have for the instructor?

b) If you requested other materials to review (e.g., class handouts/exams, access to the course management system, prior FCQs, etc.), what comments and/or questions do you have for the instructor?

## *2. In-person Consultation*

a) Discuss **learning goals** for the course and/or the class meeting you will be observing.

b) Discuss **syllabus and other course materials** relevant to classroom observation.

c) Determine the **number and timing** of classroom observations.

d) Select the **observation criteria**.

## *Observation Criteria*

Below are suggested criteria for the classroom observation. It is important to note that these criteria are not intended to prescribe any particular teaching method or style - a wide variety of classroom approaches tailored to different course types can address any of the selected criteria. Together, the instructor and observer should choose three (or more) of the criteria that best reflect the instructor’s needs/concerns and/or the class meeting structure. If the instructor/observer would like the observation to focus on an area not reflected in the following criteria, an additional criterion can be of your own creation. The agreed upon criteria will serve as the primary focus of the classroom observation.

- **Learning goals.** In what ways did the instructor convey the purpose of lecture topics, class activities, and/or assignments to students? In what ways did the instructor work to achieve the goals discussed during pre-consultation and/or communicated during class?
- **Organization and clarity.** How did the instructor structure the lecture/class session? How did the instructor communicate historical content, instructions, materials, tasks, discussion, etc. to students?
- **Historical subject matter.** How did the content and examples the instructor chose support the themes and concepts of the class meeting?

- **Classroom environment.** In what ways did the instructor establish a classroom environment that was respectful, cooperative, and conducive to learning?
- **Students' intellectual engagement.** In what ways did the instructor make efforts to engage students and/or foster interest in the course material during the lecture/class session?
- **Connections to prior learning.** In what ways did the instructor encourage students to draw upon materials from previous class sessions to help them understand new materials in this lecture/class session?
- **Formative assessment.** In what ways did the instructor check in on/gauge student learning during the lecture/class session? In what ways did the instructor adjust their teaching to address student comprehension, learning needs, and academic progress during the lecture/class session? In what ways did the instructor provide opportunities for students to build comprehension and skills in preparation for future assessments?
- **\*Interactive pedagogies.** In what ways did the instructor engage students in doing, sharing, thinking, writing, or other forms of interactive involvement in their learning during the lecture/class session? In what ways did the instructor provide students with the opportunity to engage with the course material, on their own or in small groups, during the lecture/class session? (*see examples below*)
- **Optional additional criteria of individual design**

**\*Additional examples of interactive pedagogies include, but are not limited to:** think-pair-share; making time for students to discuss with peers; active writing (e.g., minute papers) or speaking (e.g., in class presentations); working through problems, scenarios, and/or arguments with students; group work; routinely asking for and welcoming student input and questions; fielding questions in a way that encourages further discussion; group image analysis; debates; clicker concept questions. For more information, see the HTLP Canvas site.

1. Adapted from the UTeach Observation Protocol (UTOP): retrieved March 2018 from <https://utop.uteach.utexas.edu/> and developed in partnership with the Teaching Quality Framework Initiative (<https://www.colorado.edu/teaching-quality-framework/>) with sponsorship by the National Science Foundation (DUE-1725959) - any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the NSF.