

Department of History Texas State University

History 1310 / 1320 / 2310 / 2320 Examinations for Credit

Nature of the Examination

Candidates for credit for HIST 1310, 1320, 2310, and/or 2320 will first take the relevant CLEP multiple choice exam:

To earn credit in the Texas State course:	Begin with the CLEP exam titled:
HIST 1310 History of the United States to 1877	History of the United States I: Early Colonization to 1877
HIST 1320 History of the United States, 1877 to Date	History of the United States II: 1865 to the Present
HIST 2310 Western Civilization to 1715	Western Civilization I: Ancient Near East to 1648
HIST 2320 Western Civilization, 1715 to Date	Western Civilization II: 1648 to the Present

If the candidate passes the CLEP exam, he/she will take an essay exam covering the subject matter of the applicable history course. The essay exam has a three-hour time limit. Because a full semester of course credit for the applicable history course rests on these brief essays, those taking the test must demonstrate quickly and conclusively both:

- superior knowledge of the subject matter covered in the applicable history course, and
- superior college-level academic writing ability.

Those who pass the essay exam receive credit (CR) for the course. No letter grade is recorded.

Evaluation Standards for the Examinations

The faculty who grade the CLEP essays expect the same level of comprehension, analysis and writing skill that they expect of students taking a final exam for the course in question. They expect *analytical* essays with *cogent arguments* providing thorough answers to the questions asked, **not** lists of facts, names, dates, or simple descriptions of events. It is very unlikely that a thorough enough understanding of the material can be acquired from Wikipedia. Interested candidates are encouraged to conduct a significant amount of self-directed study from *multiple academic sources* before attempting this exam.

A faculty committee from the Department of History evaluates the essays. Essays earn credit only if they clearly meet or exceed the following standard:

The "CR" (credit) essay demonstrates not only superior knowledge of the applicable course subject matter, but also superior writing ability by persuasively developing a significant main idea, using ample and effective supporting detail. It shows complexity of thought and development, while sustaining clarity in expression. The language and sentence structure demonstrate a mature command of English well beyond mere competence. The essay has very few or none of the common errors in the use of conventional written English.

The committee's evaluation of an essay is final and cannot be discussed or appealed.

American History CLEP Exam Supplemental Essay - Suggestions for Study

To do well on the supplemental essays for the American History CLEP exams, you need a comprehensive understanding of the major themes in American history. The questions on the exam will ask you to think about change over time in broad areas like political ideology, civil rights, labor relations, racial sentiment, immigration, reform, foreign policy, the government, economic growth, western expansion, war, etc.

In order to write effective essays, you need to think about the course content broadly, see the connections between individual details and the larger themes, and practice the kind of thinking needed in order to craft thoughtful, organized essays under a time constraint. A well-written essay exhibits a balance between general observations and specific, factual support. The following process will help you prepare for your exam:

- 1) Procure several texts for the class for which you are testing and look for the major themes that they have in common. Make a list of these themes.
- 2) Create a "detail study sheet" for each theme or topic you identify. Write down all the details that you should know for that topic. (For example, if the topic is the Civil Rights Movement, your detail list should include things like *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Montgomery Bus Boycott, and Freedom Summer among other important events.)
- 3) Determine the relevant information about each of the items on your detail list. For each item, ask yourself why it is important to the larger theme. Doing this will help you to learn not only the facts but the significance of each item. Study this information carefully.
- 4) After you have determined the supporting details for each topic, brainstorm possible questions that may be asked for each one. Your questions should ask you to go beyond rote memorization and think critically. Essay questions usually ask you to do things like compare/contrast, trace a major development, synthesize complex information, analyze a situation or policy, etc.
- 5) Using your detail lists, outline a possible answer for each of your sample questions. Practice writing sample answers to some of your questions to make yourself more comfortable with the process. Essays should have a clear introduction and conclusion with supporting paragraphs that elaborate the details of your answer. In college, essays consist of more than three paragraphs. Between the introduction and conclusion there should be paragraphs for each of the major elements you consider to be part of your answer. Again, in an essay about the Civil Rights Movement you might have separate paragraphs for *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Montgomery Bus Boycott, and the Freedom Summer if each illustrated a distinct part of the answer.

History CBE Testing for Texas State University Students

To earn credit-by-exam for HIST 1310 (US History I), HIST 1320 (US History II), HIST 2310 (Western Civilization I), or HIST 2320 (Western Civilization II), a Texas State University student must:

1. pass the relevant CLEP exam with a minimum score of 50, and then
2. complete the relevant essays to be scored by the Texas State History Department.

Additionally:

- For credit to be earned in the fall semester, both portions must be completed no later than November 15. Any essays submitted after November 15 but before the beginning of the spring semester will not be scored until the spring semester.
- For credit to be earned for spring semester, both portions must be completed by April 15. Any essays submitted after April 15 but before the onset of the summer semester will be scored during the summer session.
- For credit to be awarded for summer session, the essay portion must be completed by July 15. Any essays submitted after July 15 but before the fall semester will be graded during the fall semester.

Acknowledgement of the No Appeal Policy for History CLEP Supplemental Essays

I understand that the evaluation of my essay for credit-by-examination in the applicable history course _____ is final and that I have no option to appeal the evaluation or to discuss the results with any member of the Department of History.

Name (print) _____

Signature _____

Date _____

