**THE MASTERS DEGREE IN HISTORY AT SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY**

**WRITTEN COMPREHENSIVE EXAM EVALUATION INSTRUMENT**

After completing the necessary coursework for an MA in History, each student at SHSU must pass both a written and an oral comprehensive exam. The written exam is a three-hour test that focuses on three historical fields selected by the student. Each field is represented by a different faculty member on the student's comprehensive exam committee. Each faculty member will judge the essay(s) submitted for his or her field of the exam according to the following instrument.

Student Name _____

Faculty Member Name Charles Heath

Field _____

☐ **(A) HIGH PASS** | A grade of High Pass is awarded to a student response that

- ○ (1) offers a skillful and polished answer to the question or questions presented and follows the guidelines provided by the faculty member;
- ○ (2) demonstrates an exceptional knowledge of the relevant historical content, including numerous specific references to individuals, groups, trends, or events that shaped the period or topic;
- ○ (3) demonstrates an outstanding understanding of the historiographical subtleties of the field, while also comparing and contrasting specific works and authors;
- ○ (4) demonstrates an ability to make significant and sophisticated arguments about the historical subject, while also presenting those arguments in a clear, logical, and concise manner.

☒ **(B) PASS** | A grade of Pass is awarded to a student response that

- ◉ (1) offers a direct and proficient answer to the question or questions presented and follows the guidelines provided by the faculty member;
- ○ (2) demonstrates an adequate knowledge of the relevant historical content, including specific references to individuals, groups, trends, or events that shaped the period or topic;
- ○ (3) demonstrates a competent understanding of the historiographical issues in the field, while also comparing and contrasting works and authors;
- ◉ (4) demonstrates an ability to make general arguments about the historical subject, while also presenting those arguments in a logical manner.

☐ **(C) FAIL** | A grade of Fail is given to a student response that

- ○ (1) neglects to adequately address the question or questions presented or follow the guidelines provided by the faculty member;
- ◉ (2) fails to demonstrate graduate-level knowledge of relevant historical content, or makes no mention of key individuals, groups, trends, or events that shaped the period or topic;
- ◉ (3) fails to demonstrate a competent understanding of the historiographical issues in the field, or makes no mention of works and authors;
- ○ (4) is incoherent, poorly organized, or fraught with construction, grammar, and usage problems.

A student who fails an area or areas is allowed one opportunity to retake the examination in the failed section(s).

Comments:

Acceptable, but disappointing. When asked to cover but one monograph, the program might expect a more comprehensive and organized response. Lacks details, proper nouns that bring life to response. Should be stronger given that the question was fed and outlined in advance. Not sure how rigorous written exams are when taken in three hours, but that is a program issue, not a candidate issue. The time constraint limits any probe of the candidate's ability to discuss more than one theme in one hour per professor. Seems like it should