

Program Level Assessment: Annual Report

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| Program Name (no acronyms) | American Studies | Department: | American Studies |
| Degree or Certificate Level | Ph.D. | College/School | College of Arts and Sciences |
| Date (Month/Year): | 09/2021 | Assessment Contact: | Emily Lutenski, Chair (emily.lutenski@slu.edu) |
| In what year was the data upon which this report is based collected? | Spring 2018 | | Fall 2020 |
| In what year was the program's assessment plan most recently reviewed/updated? | The most recent assessment plan is dated 2020; the department will revise the Ph.D. assessment plan during the 2021 academic year, along with the Graduate Certificate, B.A. and M.A. assessment plans. | | |

1. Student Learning Outcomes

Which of the program's student learning outcomes were assessed in this annual assessment cycle? (Please list the full, complete learning outcome statements and not just numbers, e.g., Outcomes 1 and 2.)

Student Learning Outcome 4: Assess relevant literature or scholarly contributions in three chosen fields in American Studies.

2. Assessment Methods: Artifacts of Student Learning

Which artifacts of student learning were used to determine if students achieved the outcome(s)? Please describe and identify the course(s) in which these artifacts were collected. Clarify if any such courses were offered a) online b) at the Madrid campus or c) at any other off-campus location.

Written

written exam. Both rubrics are rated on the following scale: 5: Excellent, 4: Good, 3: Acceptable, 2: Poor, 1: Unacceptable.

4. Data/Results

What were the results of the assessment of learning outcomes? Please be specific. Do achievement differ by teaching modality (e.g., online vs. face-to-face) or on-ground location (e.g., STL campus, Madrid campus, other off campus site)?

This cycle, we compiled data from 18 rated rubrics submitted from Spring 2011-2020.

On the first point on the rubric, "Identifies major arguments and themes in listed texts," students ranged from 3 (Acceptable) to 5 (Excellent), with an overall average rating of 4.3.

On the second point in the rubric, "Demonstrates knowledge of scholarly debates or interpretive differences," students ranged from 2 (Poor) to 5 (Excellent), with an overall average rating of 4.1.

On the third point on the rubric, "Analyzes and synthesizes scholarship in chosen fields," students ranged from 3 (Acceptable) to 5 (Excellent), with an overall average rating of 4.

On the fourth point on the rubric, "Composes prose free of errors in grammar, mechanics, usage, and style," students ranged from 3 to 5, with an overall average rating of 4.2.

On the fifth point on the rubric, "Conveys complicated ideas clearly," students ranged from 3 to 5, with an overall average rating of 4.1.

The findings of this cycle of assessment were shared and discussed with all faculty at a routine department meeting near the beginning of the Fall 2021 semester; future meetings and conversations throughout the Fall 2021-Spring 2022 academic year will focus on refining assessment practices in tandem with an intensive focus on curriculum review and refinement within the department.

B. How

Furthermore, the current assessment plan calls for us to also use the oral exam to assess SLO 4. While we have rubrics available to do so, and have completed them, to also assess the oral exam for this particular outcome seems redundant if we can capture better data about student achievement from the written exam, as we did here. We might consider eliminating such redundancies in order to focus on assessment at appropriate points in order to gather data about the efficacy of our Ph.D. program. Streamlining the assessment process and making it more meaningful at the same time will both increase faculty investment in the process and the nimbleness with which we can make adjustments to our curriculum should our assessment findings warrant it.

On oral exams in particular: If oral exams have utility, they may be better employed to assess (in part) achievement of our Learning Outcome 4: Articulate arguments or explanations to a disciplinary professional audience and to a general audience, in both oral and written form. Throughout this academic year, the faculty should also consider whether this outcome could be better defined as two—or even four—different outcomes: To articulate arguments to a disciplinary audience in written form; to articulate arguments to a disciplinary audience in oral form; to articulate arguments to a general audience in written form; to articulate arguments to a general audience in oral form. The latter two about articulating arguments to a general audience should be discussed by faculty as an object of the Ph.D., and faculty must consider whether this is a necessary outcome of the degree or merely advantageous. If necessary, where in the degree program could it -7.2 (see p)-7(n)

In general, we think that the suggestion that we may be assessing too early is useful to consider as we revise our Ph.D. assessment plan and those of our other programs. It makes little sense to judge the efficacy of our programs as a whole at moments when

Appendix A: American Studies Ph.D. SLO 4 Assessment Rubric

Literature Review WRITTEN

*****Assessment Use Only*****

Student: _____

Date: _____

Field Topic: _____

LO 3: Articulate arguments or explanations to a disciplinary or professional audience in written form.