

Department of American Studies
Assessment of Student Learning Plan
University of New Mexico

A. College, Department and Date

1. College: *Arts and Sciences*
2. Department: *American Studies*
3. Date: *December 23, 2008*

B. Academic Program of Study*

M.A. American Studies

C. Contact Person(s) for the Assessment Plan

Alex Lubin, Chair, alubin@unm.edu

D. Broad Program Goals & Measurable Student Learning Outcomes

[*Attach Cover Sheet for Student Learning Outcomes and associated materials.*]

OR

[List below:]

1. Broad Program Learning Goals for this Degree/Certificate Program

A. Students will develop a working knowledge of the history and methods of the field(s) of American Studies.

2. List of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for this Degree/Certificate Program

A.1 Students will demonstrate expertise in two teaching/research fields of American Studies.

B.1. Students will learn about the academic profession of American Studies

* Academic Program of Study is defined as an approved course of study leading to a certificate or degree reflected on a UNM transcript. A graduate-level program of study typically includes a capstone experience (e.g. thesis, dissertation, professional paper or project, comprehensive exam, etc.).

E. Assessment of Student Learning Three-Year Plan

All programs are expected to measure some outcomes annually and to measure all priority program outcomes at least once over two consecutive three-year review cycles. Describe below the plan for the next three years of assessment of program-level student learning outcomes.

1. Student Learning Outcomes

[Insert at least 2-5 priority learning outcomes that will be assessed by the unit over the next three years. Each unit will select which of its learning outcomes to assess.]

Relationship to UNM Student Learning Goals (insert the program SLOs and check all that apply):

University of New Mexico Student Learning Goals				
Program SLOs	Knowledge	Skills	Responsibility	Program SLO is conceptually different from university goals.
<i>A1. Students will demonstrate expertise in two (MA) or three (PhD) teaching/research fields of American Studies approaches to the study of culture in the United States.</i>	XX	XX		
<i>B1. Students will learn about the academic profession of American Studies</i>		XX		

2. How will learning outcomes be assessed?

A. What:

- i. We will assess SLO A.1 by: 1) evaluating the written ACS exam, which is conducted at the end of year one and; 2) evaluating committee responses to the comprehensive exam or MA Thesis. We will assess SLO B1. by ensuring that students take a professionalization workshop hosted by the graduate director.
- ii. The written work assessed are direct measures.
- iii. Criteria for success will include the following outcomes: 1) The ACS exams should show a basic understanding of the history of American Studies fields. Moreover, students should be able to synthesize a historiographical argument about fields of study and; 2)students completing the MA comprehensive exam should show an in-depth knowledge of at least two fields in American Studies. In addition to being able to write authoritatively about fields of scholarship, students should also be able to develop a useful framework within which to discuss a wide range of secondary sources; and 3) Student theses should show an original contribution to the field of American Studies. Moreover, students should have a solid grasp on the American Studies methodology as

well as in the conventions of research drawing on primary and secondary sources. We hope to see “very good” to “excellent” on most of the grey sheets.

B. Who: The program’s assessment will include the ACS exam instructor’s evaluation of all essays as well as all MA committee grey sheets and evaluations.

3. When will learning outcomes be assessed? When and in what forum will the results of the assessment be discussed?

At the end of Spring 2009, the graduate director will survey the results of the assessment tools and describe how well students achieve our desired outcomes. The Director will collect a report from the instructor of the ACS exam, reports of all comprehensive exams, and grey sheets from thesis defenses. This data will be used as the basis for assessing whether students are obtaining the knowledge and skills valued by the department.

During the first faculty meeting of Fall 2009, the graduate director will present her report and the faculty will consider how best to address areas of weakness. If changes are to be made to instruction or mentoring, the graduate director will coordinate with appropriate faculty.

At the end of Spring 2010, the graduate director will survey the results of the graduate assessment tools and describe how well students achieve our desired outcomes. Moreover, the graduate director will compare outcomes from the previous years in order to measure how well the department is responding to outcomes assessment data.

During the first faculty meeting of Fall 2010, the graduate director will present her report to the faculty and the faculty will consider how best to address areas of weakness. The graduate director will coordinate with appropriate faculty on the best way to implement changes.

At the end of Spring 2011, the graduate director will survey the results of the graduate assessment tools and describe how well students achieve our desired outcomes. Moreover the graduate director will compare outcomes from the previous two years in order to measure progress.

During the first faculty meeting of Fall 2011, the graduate director will report to the entire faculty the results of assessment. By this time, we hope to have worked out any problems with the delivery of our curriculum. However, if there continue to be areas that need improvement, we will continue to use our outcomes assessment process.

4. What is the unit’s process to analyze/interpret assessment data and use results to improve student learning?

1. The entire faculty will consider the results of outcomes assessment. The graduate director will analyze data and prepare an annual report for the faculty.

2. The department's outcomes assessment committee will evaluate the assessment mechanisms. The faculty will recommend appropriate changes to the curriculum design and pedagogy in response to the assessment report.

3. Recommendations for curricular and pedagogic change will be generated at the Fall faculty meeting in which we discuss the assessment report. In addition the outcomes assessment committee will meet each semester to evaluate the assessment mechanism.