

Program-Level Assessment: Annual Report

Program Name (no acronyms): American Studies

Department: American Studies

Degree or Certificate Level: M.A.

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? 2019

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 M.A. assessment plan during the 2021-2022 academic year, along with the Graduate Certificate, B.A., and Ph.D. 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 2: Apply knowledge from the field(s) of study to address problems in broader contexts.

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.

The artifacts of student learning used to determine if student achieved the outcome were the final reflective papers produced in ASTD 5910: Internship by M.A. students in Summer 2019. These internships were completed in an in-person format, at two different internship sites, and with the on-campus mentoring of the department's Internship Supervisor. ASTD 5910: Internship is only offered on the St. Louis campus.

3. Assessment Methods: Evaluation Process

What process was used to evaluate the artifacts of student learning, and by whom? Please identify the tools(s) (e.g., a rubric) used in the process and **include them in/with this report document** (do not just refer to the assessment plan).

Each artifact of student learning was assessed by a faculty member at the beginning of the Fall 2021 semester after faculty were back on contract. The artifacts were assessed via a rubric included here (see Appendix A). The rubric is rated as follows: 5: Excellent Mastery, 4: Good Mastery, 3: Some Mastery, 2: Minimal Mastery, 1: No Mastery, and what each of those designations means is described in the rubric.

4. Data/Results

What were the results of the assessment of the learning outcome(s)? Please be specific. Does 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)?

Two internship papers were able to be assessed during this cycle, and both artifacts rated 5 on both points. The students showed a strong ability to make connections between their scholarship in American Studies and their work at their internship sites and were able to draw on their scholarly skills in discipline-specific ways to produce concrete products that benefitted their internship sites.

5. Findings: Interpretations & Conclusions

What have you learned from these results? What does the data tell you?

The work of our American Studies Internships Supervisor to revise our Internship Handbook and the assignments associated with the internship in recent years (see our sections on “Closing the Loop”) has served to make the learning goals of the Internship more transparent to students, and the work they produce in its aftermath has more concretely connected their field-level knowledge to practical applications in their service site.

While we are delighted that this work is paying off, this internship cycle also exposed a problem in our assessment plan for the M.A., which is that ASTD 5910: Internship provides the only artifacts available for direct assessment of this learning outcome, yet ASTD 5910: Internship, is an option, but not a requirement, for all M.A. students. While all of our recent M.A. students have opted to complete an internship, there is no guarantee of that in the future. Please see our section on “Closing the Loop” for our plans to adjust our curriculum and/or assessment plan as a result of this finding.

6. Closing the Loop: Dissemination and Use of Current Assessment Findings

- A. When and how did your program faculty share and discuss these results and findings from this cycle of assessment?

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 specifically have you decided to use these findings to improve teaching and learning in your program? For example, perhaps you’ve initiated one or more of the following:

Changes to the Curriculum or Pedagogies

- Course content
- Teaching techniques
- Improvements in technology
- Prerequisites

- Course sequence
- New courses
- Deletion of courses
- Changes in frequency or scheduling of course offerings

Changes to the Assessment Plan

- Student learning outcomes
- Artifacts of student learning
- Evaluation process
- Evaluation tools (e.g., rubrics)
- Data collection methods
- Frequency of data collection

Please describe the actions you are taking as a result of these findings.

As I mention above, the internship directives have been revised due to our assessment work in prior years, and the changes that were made as a result of these assessments (which in this case were course-level adjustments to assignment instructions and the Internship Handbook) seem to have been effective.

The assessment plan, however, was found to have a problem, which is that not all M.A. students are required to take an internship and therefore delivery of this outcome could be uneven. This means that over the course of the Fall 2021-Spring 2022 academic year, the department faculty should have discussions about whether they want to make the Internship mandatory for M.A. students as a way to consistently deliver this outcome, or whether this outcome can be delivered in another way for students who do not elect to complete an

internship. The assessment plan for the M.A., and for this outcome in particular, should be revised in light of this conversation and any curricular changes that happen as a result of it.

This conversation also needs to take into account graduate student funding limitations (in particular, that graduate student funding packages do not usually cover summer tuition), as well as the fact that there is no compensation for Internship Supervisors of graduate internships in the summer according to SLU's profit-sharing model, even as summer is the period of time when many M.A. students would most like to complete an internship.

If no changes are being made, please explain why.

N/A

7. Closing the Loop: Review of Previous Assessment Findings and Changes

A. What is at least one change your program has implemented in recent years as a result of assessment data?

Our internship was last assessed in 2018, but at the undergraduate level. At that time, we discovered that students were not clearly articulating how their classroom knowledge interfaced with that obtained in their internships, and they were not making as strong connections between American Studies as a field and the work they were doing in their internship sites as we hoped that they would.

Although that data was only generated from undergraduate assessment, after that cycle our Internship Supervisor undertook a series of revisions to our Internship Handbook and internship course assignments that applied to all of our programs. These adjustments clarified the goal of applying American Studies knowledge to broader contexts, and these revisions seem to have encouraged our M.A. students to articulate and apply their field-level learning to public-facing problems in more meaningful and transparent manners, and to report back on these connections in their papers throughout the term.

B. How has this change/have these changes been assessed?

In effect, the assessment of those changes were performed during this assessment—although we should soon do another assessment of the internships at the undergraduate level to ensure the same strides are being made there. This should be considered in our revision to our assessment plans that we are undertaking during the Fall 2021-Spring 2022 academic year.

C. What were the findings of the assessment?

The findings of that assessment were that—at least at the graduate level—the changes to our internship requirements and guidelines have served our students well, allowing them to enter their internships with transparently articulated goals to use their field-level knowledge to serve their internship sites, and then to articulate how they did so throughout their coursework.

D. How do you plan to (continue to) use this information moving forward?

The transparent application of our learning outcomes to assignments at course-levels can be applied in a series of courses at graduate and undergraduate levels in order to foster course-embedded assessments and streamline our overall assessment processes—this should be an insight we carry with us as we revise our assessment plans this academic year.

IMPORTANT: Please submit any assessment tools (e.g., rubrics) with this report as separate attachments or copied and pasted into this Word document. Please do not just refer to the assessment plan; the report should serve as a stand-alone document.

Appendix A: American Studies M.A. SLO 2 Assessment Rubric

American Studies M.A. SLO 2 Assessment Rubric

Student Name: _____

Evaluator Name: _____

Date: _____

American Studies Student Learning Outcome 2

Apply knowledge in the field(s) of study to address problems in broader contexts.

	5: Excellent Mastery	4: Good Mastery	3: Some Mastery	2: Minimal Mastery	1: No Mastery	Score:
Student connects knowledge and skills from American Studies with experience in internships or community-based research projects.	Student's connections between American Studies and community engagement are detailed specifically, comprehensively, and meaningfully.	Student's connections between American Studies and community engagement are clearly stated; there are not serious omissions or inaccuracies, but the student's work may be more descriptive than analytical.	Student's connections between American Studies and community engagement are stated, but there may be omissions or inaccuracies in the student's articulation of these connections.	Student's connections between American Studies and community engagement are alluded to rather than clearly stated; there are serious omissions or inaccuracies in the student's articulation of these connections.	Student does not make connections between American Studies and community engagement.	
Student work demonstrates the use of American Studies theories, ideas, or methods to solve problems and make contributions to their internship or community site.	Student uses American Studies theories, ideas, or methods in the service of their internship or community site in concrete ways, such as producing reports or other materials for the site.	Student uses American Studies theories, ideas, or methods in the service of their internship or community site to contribute to projects but did not produce reports or other materials for the site.	Student expresses how American Studies theories, ideas, or methods help solve public-facing problems, but only speaks abstractly about putting field level knowledge into practical application.	Student articulates the possible alliances between American Studies theories, ideas, or methods and solving public-facing problems, but does not apply their knowledge to these problems in a discernable way.	Student does not demonstrate use of or thinking about American Studies theories, ideas, or methods in solving public-facing problems.	