SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY.

# Program-Level Assessment: Annual Report

Program:  Women's and Gender Studies M.A.            Department:  Women's and Gender Studies

Degree or Certificate Level: Master's                College/School: College of Arts and Sciences

Date (Month/Year): May 2020                          Primary Assessment Contact: Amanda Izzo

In what year was the data upon which this report is based collected? 2019–2020

In what year was the program's assessment plan most recently reviewed/updated? Reviewed 2020

## 1.  Student Learning Outcomes
Which of the program's student learning outcomes were assessed in this annual assessment cycle?

1. Assess relevant literature or scholarly contributions in women's and gender studies.
5. Evidence scholarly and/or professional integrity in women's and gender studies.

## 2.  Assessment Methods: Student Artifacts
Which student artifacts were used to determine if students achieved this outcome? Please 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.

#1: Feminist Epistemologies (partially online): original research paper; and Feminist Theories: original research paper
#5 Program Evaluation: group project; Internship (off-campus): final reflection paper

## 3.  Assessment Methods: Evaluation Process
What process was used to evaluate the student artifacts, and by whom? Please identify the tools(s) (e.g., a rubric) used in the process and include them in/with this report.

The relevant projects were reviewed by WGS faculty and assessed according to the attached rubrics. The results were discussed collectively in a May 2020 assessment meeting.

## 4.  Data/Results
What were the results of the assessment of the learning outcomes? 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)?

Course materials used to measure Outcome #1, the assessment of relevant literature or scholarly contributions in the field of women's and gender studies, demonstrate that in each of the classes, which are required of all students in the graduate MA and minor programs, students are successful at critically engaging the discipline's literature. The work of all 12 students in Feminist Theories at least met expectations; 7 of these 12 performed above expectations. In Feminist Epistemologies, which was adversely affected by the pandemic as it transitioned into an online course, each of the 7 student papers likewise met expectations, and 2 of these 7 performed above expectation. Comments about the epistemologies projects include: that these papers "were not up to their usual standard, given the move to online

teaching and stressors in student's lives. Nonetheless,...all of the students developed a degree of competence and facility in using the tools of this subfield."

The two internship reflections used to measure Outcome #5, evidence scholarly and/or professional integrity in women's and gender studies, showed students meeting expectations, with one student drawing high praise from their site supervisor for the integrity and skills set they brought to their off-site work.

A group final project authored by all students in the Program Evaluation class was also used to measure outcome #5. Comments included: "students were very sensitive to issues of race, class, gender, and sexuality, and how they potentially affected the students' relationship with the program participants and staff. They fully understood the potential imbalance of power that research creates between the 'researchers' and the 'object being studied' ...[and] they did what they could to mitigate this imbalance... and appropriately prioritized what the staff wanted to get out of the evaluation." The project was ultimately assessed as meeting expectations.

## 5. Findings: Interpretations & Conclusions

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

Core courses are accomplishing their fundamental purpose. There are no major deficiencies in the content the courses address or the methodological tools they cultivate. General discussion regarding written assignments underscored the value of incrementally building research assignments into a final paper over the course of the semester; future instructors will take this recommendation under consideration when planning courses.

## 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?

An online assessment meeting was held among all department faculty in May 2020.

**B.** How specifically have you decided to use 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
- Student artifacts collected
- 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 the findings.

We will implement recommendations regarding incremental research assignments when appropriate.

If no changes are being made, please explain why.

## 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?

Calibrating course content to accomplish learning outcomes and implementing more effective data collection plans are consistent outcomes of assessment discussions.

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

Collective discussion for these small scale adjustments.

**C.** What were the findings of the assessment?

No fundamental changes to plan or process.

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

The department will update its assessment plan next year, as the assessment cycle will have been completed with all outcomes having undergone review. This will offer the opportunity to reflect more generally on using lessons from the first four years of this program to chart future plans.

**IMPORTANT: Please submit any assessment tools and/or revised/updated assessment plans along with this report.**

## Assessment rubric
## Feminist Theories

| Learning outcome | Below expectations (BE) | (BE/ME) | Meets expectations (ME) | (ME/EE) | Exceeds expectations (EE) | Artifacts used |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Assess relevant literature or scholarly contributions in women's and gender studies. | Fails to engage the intellectual genealogy of feminist analysis | | Original analysis is well-supported by reference to authoritative scholarship | | Synthesizes perspectives from multiple bodies of theory | Original review essay or research paper |
| | | | | | | |

## Assessment rubric
## Feminist Epistemologies

| Learning outcome | Below expectations (BE) | (BE/ME) | Meets expectations (ME) | (ME/EE) | Exceeds expectations (EE) | Artifacts used |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Assess relevant literature or scholarly contributions in women's and gender studies. | Paper fails to give a coherent picture of the problem or how to address it, as discussed so far in existing literature. No original analysis. | | Paper shows how existing literature defines and addresses the relevant issues. Moves beyond piece-by-piece approach to understanding it. Offers some original analysis. | | Uses multidisciplinary resources in evaluating current approaches to the problem being discussed. They are understood thematically rather than article-by-article. Original analysis may be publishable. | Research paper |
| | | | | | | |

## Assessment rubric
## Graduate Internship

| Learning outcome | Below expectations (BE) | (BE/ME) | Meets expectations (ME) | (ME/EE) | Exceeds expectations (EE) | Artifacts used |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5. Scholarly and/or professional integrity | • Student fails to take ethical issues into account<br>• In any group work, student does less than their fair share<br>• Student fails to meet commitments when working with community partners | | • Student takes ethical issues into account<br><br>• In any group work, students do their fair share<br>• Student meets commitments when working with community partners | | • Student goes above and beyond expectations to assist community partners | Process of carrying out internship projects, as indicated by project proposal, short reports, final paper, and site supervisor feedback |

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Assessment rubric

## Research methodologies courses (Research Design; Program Evaluation)

| Learning outcome | Below expectations (BE) | (BE/ME) | Meets expectations (ME) | (ME/EE) | Exceeds expectations (EE) | Artifacts used |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **5. Scholarly and/or professional integrity** | • Students fail to take ethical issues into account<br>• In group work, students do less than their fair share<br>• Students fail to meet commitments when working with community partners |  | • Students take ethical issues into account<br><br>• In group work, students do their fair share<br>• Students meet commitments when working with community partners |  | • Students go above and beyond expectations to assist community partners | Process of carrying out group/individual final projects, as indicated by class discussions and feedback from other students and/or community partners |