

Program-Level Assessment Plan

<p>Program: American Studies Department: American Studies Date (Month/Year): 09/2022</p>	<p>Degree Level (e.g., UG or GR certificate, UG major, master’s program, doctoral program): MA College/School: College of Arts and Sciences Primary Assessment Contact: Emily Lutenski, Chair</p>
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Note: Each cell in the table below will expand as needed to accommodate your responses.

#	Student Learning Outcomes What do the program faculty expect all students to know or be able to do as a result of completing this program? Note: These should be measurable and manageable in number (typically 4-6 are sufficient).	Curriculum Mapping In which courses will faculty intentionally work to foster some level of student development toward achievement of the outcome? Please clarify the level at which student development is expected in each course (e.g., introduced, developed, reinforced, achieved, etc.).	Assessment Methods	
			Artifacts of Student Learning (What) 1. What artifacts of student learning will be used to determine if students have achieved this outcome? 2. In which courses will these artifacts be collected?	Evaluation Process (How) 1. What process will be used to evaluate the artifacts, and by whom? 2. What tools(s) (e.g., a rubric) will be used in the process? Note: Please include any rubrics as part of the submitted plan documents.
1	Students will explain the contexts—such as historical, political, geographic, literary, artistic, social, or intellectual—that shape American cultural practices, expressions, or ideas.	<p>Introduced: ASTD 5000 – Perspectives in American Studies.</p> <p>Developed: ASTD electives.</p> <p>Achieved: ASTD 5990 – Thesis Research or Portfolio Paper.</p>	<p>1. The direct measure artifact of student learning used to determine if students have achieved this outcome is the MA project, whether a thesis or a portfolio paper. The indirect measure artifact of student learning used to determine if students have achieved this outcome is a student survey.</p> <p>2. The direct measure artifact is collected by a student’s primary advisor for the MA project, whether in ASTD 5990 or for the portfolio paper deadline typically in the Spring semester. The indirect measure artifact will be administered by the graduate coordinator near the end of a student’s MA.</p>	<p>1. A student’s primary advisor will implement the direct measure of the artifact, which will be completed by the student’s entire 3-person MA thesis or portfolio paper committee and submitted at the time of the student’s oral defense. The primary advisor will give the measures to the department’s graduate coordinator, who will lead the graduate assessment process. The graduate coordinator will administer the indirect measure, a student survey, near the completion of the student’s MA program, typically in the Spring semester. The graduate coordinator will report the results of both the direct and indirect measures—highlighting students’ strengths and weaknesses—to the faculty during an annual department meeting dedicated to assessment in the early Fall semester. This will provide a starting point for discussions with all faculty, where faculty who have supervised MA students may also report</p>

				<p>on strengths and weaknesses they have observed in their work. Careful notes will be taken as a supplemental assessment artifact. By the end of the meeting, faculty will determine an action plan to make necessary changes to curriculum, pedagogy, or assessment plan.</p> <p>2. SLO1 will be evaluated by scoring the artifact of student learning on a rubric (attached) as a direct measure. SLO1 (and all SLOs) will also be evaluated through an indirect measure, a student survey (also attached).</p>
2	<p>Students will assess how American cultural practices, expressions, or ideas shape or are shaped by axes of power, such as race, gender, sexuality, class, nation, or ability.</p>	<p>Introduced: ASTD 5000 – Perspectives in American Studies.</p> <p>Developed: ASTD electives.</p> <p>Achieved: ASTD 5990 – Thesis Research or Portfolio Paper.</p>	<p>1. The direct measure artifact of student learning used to determine if students have achieved this outcome is the MA project, whether a thesis or a portfolio paper. The indirect measure artifact of student learning used to determine if students have achieved this outcome is a student survey.</p> <p>2. The direct measure artifact is collected by a student’s primary advisor for the MA project, whether in ASTD 5990 or for the portfolio paper deadline typically in the Spring semester. The indirect measure artifact will be administered by the graduate coordinator near the end of a student’s MA.</p>	<p>1. A student’s primary advisor will implement the direct measure of the artifact, which will be completed by the student’s entire 3-person MA thesis or portfolio paper committee and submitted at the time of the student’s oral defense. The primary advisor will give the measures to the department’s graduate coordinator, who will lead the graduate assessment process. The graduate coordinator will administer the indirect measure, a student survey, near the completion of the student’s MA program, typically in the Spring semester. The graduate coordinator will report the results of both the direct and indirect measures—highlighting students’ strengths and weaknesses—to the faculty during an annual department meeting dedicated to assessment in the early Fall semester. This will provide a starting point for discussions with all faculty, where faculty who have supervised MA students may also report on strengths and weaknesses they have observed in their work. Careful notes will be taken as a supplemental assessment artifact. By the end of the meeting, faculty</p>

				<p>will determine an action plan to make necessary changes to curriculum, pedagogy, or assessment plan.</p> <p>2. SLO2 will be evaluated by scoring the artifact of student learning on a rubric (attached) as a direct measure. SLO2 (and all SLOs) will also be evaluated through an indirect measure, a student survey (also attached).</p>
3	<p>Students will synthesize two or more disciplinary approaches in analyses of American cultural practices, expressions, or ideas.</p>	<p>Introduced: ASTD 5000 – Perspectives in American Studies.</p> <p>Developed: ASTD electives.</p> <p>Achieved: ASTD 5990 – Thesis Research or Portfolio Paper.</p>	<p>1. The direct measure artifact of student learning used to determine if students have achieved this outcome is the MA project, whether a thesis or a portfolio paper. The indirect measure artifact of student learning used to determine if students have achieved this outcome is a student survey.</p> <p>2. The direct measure artifact is collected by a student’s primary advisor for the MA project, whether in ASTD 5990 or for the portfolio paper deadline typically in the Spring semester. The indirect measure artifact will be administered by the graduate coordinator near the end of a student’s MA.</p>	<p>1. A student’s primary advisor will implement the direct measure of the artifact, which will be completed by the student’s entire 3-person MA thesis or portfolio paper committee and submitted at the time of the student’s oral defense. The primary advisor will give the measures to the department’s graduate coordinator, who will lead the graduate assessment process. The graduate coordinator will administer the indirect measure, a student survey, near the completion of the student’s MA program, typically in the Spring semester. The graduate coordinator will report the results of both the direct and indirect measures—highlighting students’ strengths and weaknesses—to the faculty during an annual department meeting dedicated to assessment in the early Fall semester. This will provide a starting point for discussions with all faculty, where faculty who have supervised MA students may also report on strengths and weaknesses they have observed in their work. Careful notes will be taken as a supplemental assessment artifact. By the end of the meeting, faculty will determine an action plan to make necessary changes to curriculum, pedagogy, or assessment plan.</p>

				<p>2. SLO3 will be evaluated by scoring the artifact of student learning on a rubric (attached) as a direct measure. SLO 3 (and all SLOs) will also be evaluated through an indirect measure, a student survey (also attached).</p>
4	<p>Students will effectively articulate arguments and information for an American Studies audience.</p>	<p>Introduced: ASTD 5000 – Perspectives in American Studies.</p> <p>Developed: ASTD electives.</p> <p>Achieved: ASTD 5990 – Thesis Research or Portfolio Paper.</p>	<p>1. The direct measure artifact of student learning used to determine if students have achieved this outcome is the MA project, whether a thesis or a portfolio paper. The indirect measure artifact of student learning used to determine if students have achieved this outcome is a student survey.</p> <p>2. The direct measure artifact is collected by a student’s primary advisor for the MA project, whether in ASTD 5990 or for the portfolio paper deadline typically in the Spring semester. The indirect measure artifact will be administered by the graduate coordinator near the end of a student’s MA.</p>	<p>1. A student’s primary advisor will implement the direct measure of the artifact, which will be completed by the student’s entire 3-person MA thesis or portfolio paper committee and submitted at the time of the student’s oral defense. The primary advisor will give the measures to the department’s graduate coordinator, who will lead the graduate assessment process. The graduate coordinator will administer the indirect measure, a student survey, near the completion of the student’s MA program, typically in the Spring semester. The graduate coordinator will report the results of both the direct and indirect measures—highlighting students’ strengths and weaknesses—to the faculty during an annual department meeting dedicated to assessment in the early Fall semester. This will provide a starting point for discussions with all faculty, where faculty who have supervised MA students may also report on strengths and weaknesses they have observed in their work. Careful notes will be taken as a supplemental assessment artifact. By the end of the meeting, faculty will determine an action plan to make necessary changes to curriculum, pedagogy, or assessment plan.</p> <p>2. SLO4 will be evaluated by scoring the artifact of student learning on a rubric (attached) as a direct measure. SLO4 (and all SLOs) will also be evaluated through an</p>

				<p>indirect measure, a student survey (also attached).</p>
5	<p>Students will identify how their research extends, diverges from, or speaks to prior American Studies scholarship.</p>	<p>Introduced: ASTD 5000 – Perspectives in American Studies.</p> <p>Developed: ASTD electives.</p> <p>Achieved: ASTD 5990 – Thesis Research or Portfolio Paper.</p>	<p>1. The direct measure artifact of student learning used to determine if students have achieved this outcome is the MA project, whether a thesis or a portfolio paper. The indirect measure artifact of student learning used to determine if students have achieved this outcome is a student survey.</p> <p>2. The direct measure artifact is collected by a student’s primary advisor for the MA project, whether in ASTD 5990 or for the portfolio paper deadline typically in the Spring semester. The indirect measure artifact will be administered by the graduate coordinator near the end of a student’s MA.</p>	<p>1. A student’s primary advisor will implement the direct measure of the artifact, which will be completed by the student’s entire 3-person MA thesis or portfolio paper committee and submitted at the time of the student’s oral defense. The primary advisor will give the measures to the department’s graduate coordinator, who will lead the graduate assessment process. The graduate coordinator will administer the indirect measure, a student survey, near the completion of the student’s MA program, typically in the Spring semester. The graduate coordinator will report the results of both the direct and indirect measures—highlighting students’ strengths and weaknesses—to the faculty during an annual department meeting dedicated to assessment in the early Fall semester. This will provide a starting point for discussions with all faculty, where faculty who have supervised MA students may also report on strengths and weaknesses they have observed in their work. Careful notes will be taken as a supplemental assessment artifact. By the end of the meeting, faculty will determine an action plan to make necessary changes to curriculum, pedagogy, or assessment plan.</p> <p>2. SLO5 will be evaluated by scoring the artifact of student learning on a rubric (attached) as a direct measure. SLO5 (and all SLOs) will also be evaluated through an indirect measure, a student survey (also attached).</p>

Use of Assessment Data

1. How and when will analyzed data be used by program faculty to make changes in pedagogy, curriculum design, and/or assessment practices?

As noted above, each student's primary advisor will have a student's entire committee complete the assessment rubric with either the MA thesis or Portfolio paper as an artifact. The graduate coordinator will administer the student survey near the end each student's degree program, which is typically in the Spring. Early in Fall semester, the entire faculty will meet to discuss the assessment data for one outcome and develop an action plan for making any necessary changes to pedagogy, curriculum, or assessment practices based on that data. The action plan may include further steps to gather data and make decisions (student focus groups, additional meetings), but these should be carried out by the end of the Fall semester. Any changes should be implemented in the subsequent Spring semester to allow time for any curriculum changes to be finalized. These should go into place by the subsequent Fall semester. Overall, this plan proposes one calendar year from the discussion of assessment data to changes being enacted in pedagogy, curriculum, or assessment practices.

2. How and when will the program faculty evaluate the impact of assessment-informed changes made in previous years?

The assessment plan proposed here includes assessing one outcome per year for a five-year cycle. This means that we would evaluate the impact of assessment-informed changes for each learning outcome every five years. This seems like a long time, but it makes sense for our unit because our MA numbers are small. To gather enough student artifacts to create meaningful assessment data, we need to accumulate MA projects and surveys for a length of time.

Additional Questions

1. On what schedule/cycle will program faculty assess each of the program's student learning outcomes? (Please note: It is not recommended to try to assess every outcome every year.)

The assessment plan proposed here includes assessing one outcome per year for a five-year cycle. It is notable, though, that the rubric included here addresses each of the above learning outcomes (SLO1-5) and the entire rubric will be completed by MA project committees each Spring; this is so we have numerous faculty members involved in the assessment process over a period of years, during which we will be compiling enough student artifacts to provide meaningful data. However, the assessment plan articulated here envisions only compiling and disseminating the data for one outcome per year; this is so that our small number of faculty can do focused work to envision and enact any action plan to change pedagogy, curriculum, or the assessment plan without significant workload hardships.

2. Describe how, and the extent to which, program faculty contributed to the development of this plan.

Throughout AY21-22 the entire faculty discussed the need to streamline our assessment plan. As our assessment report feedback from AY20-21 indicated, we had areas of our plan that could be improved. We determined to rewrite our assessment plans to submit in Fall 2022. This work was completed over Summer 2022. In early Fall 2022 the entire faculty met to discuss the plans before they were submitted to the College of Arts and Sciences and the Provost's Office. What follows is a summary of the feedback we received and our efforts to offer corrective action in this plan:

The outcome we assessed last year required students to apply their academic knowledge in broader contexts than academia. This outcome and its curriculum map, the committee pointed out, had two problems. First, the outcome was a vague charge. Second, there wasn't a required place in the curriculum where this could be measured. MA students had an option to take an internship, where this outcome could be measured, but it wasn't a requirement for the degree, which meant it could never be assessed for all students. As a result, the faculty needed to decide whether this was, indeed, an outcome all MA students should achieve (which would mean that the internship should become a requirement for every student), or whether this was *not* a necessary outcome for a MA in American Studies. We determined that while the internship is incredibly useful for students who want to enter museum studies, nonprofit organizing, or other fields, for students who plan to move ahead to the PhD—which is most of our MA students—this was not a necessary outcome. As a result, we rewrote our learning outcomes for the MA to emphasize disciplinary achievements and habits of mind and retained the internship as an option for the degree, but not a requirement.

The assessment report we received in Spring 2022 also commented on the small number of students completing the MA, and how that meant we weren't able to produce meaningful data. Due to student funding constraints, the size of our MA program is unlikely to change, and we will likely continue with only 2-4 students per year who complete the degree. Instead, to create a meaningful data set, we must accumulate artifacts over a period of years. As a result, when we revised this assessment plan, we extended the length of our assessment cycle to enable the accumulation of more artifacts.

This revision to our assessment plan also has additional advantages that were not highlighted by the feedback we received on our 2021 report. It ensures that we will also be focusing on the most advanced work produced by our students when we only use the culminating MA project, whether portfolio paper or thesis, as an artifact for direct measure. Although our MA students have a portfolio paper or thesis option, the major difference between these artifacts is length—both are pieces of original scholarship that will be able to be measured successfully, we believe, using the same rubric. We believe that this is a step forward for more effective assessment of our MA program as a whole.

Finally, this revision to our assessment plan also solves a problem that faculty members were concerned with—how complex and time-consuming the data collection and assessment process was. By streamlining the assessment process, we will ensure more accurate record-keeping and increase faculty involvement in the process.

Taken together, we hope this revision to our MA assessment plan will result in improvements in our students' experience and aid us in delivering the best possible graduate education in American Studies.

IMPORTANT: Please remember to submit any rubrics or other assessment tools along with this plan.

Student Name:

Rater Name:

Rating Date:

American Studies MA Assessment Rubric

Artifact Description: The American Studies MA culminates in a major written project, either a *portfolio paper* or a *thesis*. A *portfolio paper* is a research article, 20-30 pages in length, that makes an original argument based in primary and secondary evidence and demonstrates the student’s knowledge of their field. It is typically a revised and expanded seminar paper. A *thesis* is a more extensive project, typically 60-80 pages in length, that makes an original argument based in primary and secondary research and demonstrates the student’s knowledge of their field.

Learning Outcome	Exemplary (3)	Competent (2)	Developing (1)	Insufficient (0)	Rating
SLO1: Students will explain the contexts—such as historical, political, geographic, literary, artistic, social, or intellectual—that shape American cultural practices, expressions, or ideas.	The sources or ideas addressed by the student are thoroughly and appropriately contextualized and the student cogently explains why these contexts matter to the overall argument.	The sources or ideas addressed by the student are contextualized, but the student does not make the connection between why these contexts matter to the overall argument.	The student attempts to contextualize the sources or ideas addressed in the thesis, but these contexts are inadequately researched and why they matter to the overall argument remains opaque.	The student does not endeavor to contextualize the sources or ideas in the thesis.	
SLO2: Students will assess how American cultural practices, expressions, or ideas shape or are shaped by axes of power,	The student provides a thorough, appropriate assessment of how American cultural practices, expressions, or ideas	The student thoroughly assesses how American cultural practices, expressions, or ideas shape or are shaped by axes of power,	The student mentions how American cultural practices, expressions, or ideas shape or are shaped by axes of power, such as race, gender,	The student does not attend to how American cultural practices, expressions, or ideas shape or are shaped by axes of	

such as race, gender, sexuality, class, nation, or ability.	shape or are shaped by axes of power, such as race, gender, sexuality, class, nation, or ability—including nuanced attention to how two or more of these frameworks are interlocking.	such as race, gender, sexuality, class, nation, or ability, but the assessment is limited to sufficient attention to one of these frameworks.	sexuality, class, nation, or ability, but how this occurs is not thoroughly addressed.	power, such as race, gender, sexuality, class, nation, or ability.	
SLO3: Students will synthesize two or more disciplinary approaches in analyses of American cultural practices, expressions, or ideas.	The student thoroughly integrates two or more disciplinary approaches to analyze of American cultural practices, expressions, or ideas.	The student uses the approaches of two or more disciplines to analyze American cultural practices, expressions, or ideas, but these approaches are not integrated.	The student competently uses a single disciplinary approach to analyze American cultural practices, expressions, or ideas.	The student's analysis is not transparently derived from disciplinary knowledge.	
SLO4: Students will effectively articulate arguments and information for an American Studies audience.	The student has a clearly stated argument that proceeds logically with strong transitions. The argument is sufficiently supported by primary and secondary source evidence and the stakes of the argument are clear. The language, style,	The student has an argument and a logical organizational structure, but there may be points where transitions could be more effective. The argument is sufficiently supported by primary and secondary source evidence, but the stakes of the argument might not	The student's argument is less clear than it could be, and the organization of the paper could be improved. There are places where the evidence that is meant to support the argument is described rather than interpreted. There are rare places where the language, style,	The student does not have an argument. The essay is disorganized. The evidence presented does not support the argument. The essay's language, style, genre, and tone is inappropriate for an academic	

	genre, and tone are appropriate for American Studies audiences. There are no problems with spelling, punctuation, grammar, or syntax. All sources are properly documented.	be transparent. The language, style, genre, and tone are appropriate for academic audiences, but perhaps not for American Studies in particular. There are rare errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, or syntax. All sources are documented, but the documentation may have subtle formatting errors.	genre, and tone may not be appropriate for academic audiences. There are errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, and syntax that may occasionally impede reading. Most sources are cited but there may be some information missing in the documentation.	audience. There are frequent errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, and syntax that make portions of the student's work unintelligible. The sources are not cited.	
SLO5: Students will identify how their research extends, diverges from, or speaks to prior American Studies scholarship.	The student commandingly engages with scholarship in their American Studies subfield, and convincingly positions their own work in relation to what has come before in a generative manner.	The student engages dutifully with scholarship in their American Studies subfield and demonstrates how their work relates to it.	The student draws on scholarship in their American Studies subfield, but what their own work contributes to the scholarly conversation in American Studies is unclear or somewhat unconvincing.	The student does not endeavor to position their work in relation to American Studies scholarship.	

Student Name:

Survey Date:

American Studies PhD Exit Survey

Artifact Description: This survey is provided to students graduating with an American Studies PhD in order to gather information about the American Studies PhD curriculum, course offerings, and pedagogy. Student feedback delivered here will help us to consistently revise our practices to deliver the best possible graduate education in American Studies.

1) How well did you achieve each of the following student learning outcomes?

SLO1: Students will explain the contexts—such as historical, political, geographic, literary, artistic, social, or intellectual—that shape American cultural practices, expressions, or ideas.

Extremely Well (3)	Very Well (2)	Adequately (1)	Insufficiently (0)
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SLO2: Students will assess how American cultural practices, expressions, or ideas shape or are shaped by axes of power, such as race, gender, sexuality, class, nation, or ability.

Extremely Well (3)	Very Well (2)	Adequately (1)	Insufficiently (0)
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SLO3: Students will synthesize two or more disciplinary approaches in analyses of American cultural practices, expressions, or ideas.

Extremely Well (3)	Very Well (2)	Adequately (1)	Insufficiently (0)
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SLO4: Students will effectively articulate arguments and information for an American Studies audience.

Extremely Well (3)	Very Well (2)	Adequately (1)	Insufficiently (0)
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SLO5: Students will identify how their research extends, diverges from, or speaks to prior American Studies scholarship.

Extremely Well (3)	Very Well (2)	Adequately (1)	Insufficiently (0)
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2) What aspects of your MA education in American Studies helped you with your learning, and why were they helpful?

3) What might American Studies do differently in its MA program to help you learn more effectively, and why would these actions help?