

# 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): PhD          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 6990 – Dissertation Research.</p>	<p>1. The direct measure artifact of student learning used to determine if students have achieved this outcome is the dissertation. 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. The indirect measure artifact will be administered by the graduate coordinator near the end of a student’s PhD.</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 dissertation committee and submitted at the time of the student’s dissertation 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 PhD program. 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 PhD students may also report on strengths and weaknesses they have</p>

				<p>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 5000- and 6000-level electives.</p> <p>Achieved: ASTD 6990 – Dissertation Research.</p>	<p>1. The direct measure artifact of student learning used to determine if students have achieved this outcome is the dissertation. 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. The indirect measure artifact will be administered by the graduate coordinator near the end of a student’s PhD.</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 dissertation committee and submitted at the time of the student’s dissertation 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 PhD program. 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 PhD 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,</p>

				<p>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 6990 – Dissertation Research.</p>	<p>1. The direct measure artifact of student learning used to determine if students have achieved this outcome is the dissertation. 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. The indirect measure artifact will be administered by the graduate coordinator near the end of a student’s PhD.</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 dissertation committee and submitted at the time of the student’s dissertation 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 PhD program. 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 PhD 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. SLO3 (and</p>

				all SLOs) will also be evaluated through an indirect measure, a student survey (also attached).
4	Students will effectively articulate arguments and information for an American Studies audience.	<p>Introduced: ASTD 5000 – Perspectives in American Studies.</p> <p>Developed: ASTD 6100 – Dissertation Colloquium and ASTD electives.</p> <p>Achieved: ASTD 6990 – Dissertation Research.</p>	<p>1. The direct measure artifact of student learning used to determine if students have achieved this outcome is the dissertation. 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. The indirect measure artifact will be administered by the graduate coordinator near the end of a student’s PhD.</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 dissertation committee and submitted at the time of the student’s dissertation 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 PhD program. 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 PhD 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 indirect measure, a student survey (also attached).</p>
5	Students will identify how their research extends, diverges from,	Introduced: ASTD 5000 – Perspectives in American Studies.	1. The direct measure artifact of student learning used to determine if students	1. A student’s primary advisor will implement the direct measure of the

<p>or speaks to prior American Studies scholarship.</p>	<p>Developed: ASTD electives, preliminary exams.</p> <p>Achieved: ASTD 6990 – Dissertation Research.</p>	<p>have achieved this outcome is the dissertation. 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. The indirect measure artifact will be administered by the graduate coordinator near the end of a student’s PhD.</p>	<p>artifact, which will be completed by the student’s entire 3-person dissertation committee and submitted at the time of the student’s dissertation 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 PhD program. 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 PhD 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>
<p>SLO6: Students will construct a portfolio of useable professional documents such as cover letters, CVs, sample syllabi, statements of teaching philosophy, conference proposals, or grant applications.</p>	<p>Introduced: ASTD 5000 – Perspectives in American Studies.</p> <p>Developed: Mentoring by faculty.</p> <p>Achieved: ASTD 5900 – The Practice of American Studies.</p>	<p>1. The direct measure artifact of student learning used to determine if students have achieved this outcome is the portfolio of professional documents. The indirect measure artifact of student learning used to determine if students have achieved this outcome is a student</p>	<p>1. The instructor of ASTD 5900 will implement the direct measure of the portfolio of professional documents. The instructor will give the measures to the department’s graduate coordinator, who will lead the graduate assessment process. The graduate coordinator will administer</p>

			<p>survey.</p> <p>2. The direct measure artifact is collected by the instructor of ASTD 5900. The indirect measure artifact will be administered by the graduate coordinator near the end of a student's PhD.</p>	<p>the indirect measure, a student survey, near the completion of the student's PhD program. 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 PhD 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. SLO6 will be evaluated by scoring the artifact of student learning on a rubric (attached) as a direct measure. SLO6 (and all SLOs) will also be evaluated through an indirect measure, a student survey (also attached).</p>
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### 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 SLO1-5 assessment rubric with the dissertation as artifact, and then submit the rater rubric to the graduate coordinator. The ASTD 5900 instructor will complete the SLO6 rubric with the portfolio of professional documents completed for the course and then submit the rated rubric to the graduate coordinator. The graduate coordinator will administer the student survey (for all SLOs) near the end each student's degree program. 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, mentoring, 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, mentoring, 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 six-year cycle. This means that we would evaluate the impact of assessment-informed changes for each learning outcome every six years. This seems like a long time, but it makes sense for our unit because our PhD numbers are small. To gather enough student artifacts to create meaningful assessment data, we need to accumulate PhD dissertations, portfolios of professional documents, 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 six-year cycle. It is notable, though, that one of the rubrics included here addresses each of the above learning outcomes (SLO1-5) and the entire rubric will be completed by dissertation committee by each student's defense. 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. The same will be true for the rubric use to assess the portfolio of professional documents in ASTD 5900, since no single faculty member teaches that course. 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 assess literature in three chosen fields and was assessed with a rubric applied to preliminary exams. First, the outcome was a vague charge, with what it meant to "assess" literature was left unclear in the outcome, although it was hinted at somewhat in the rubric. Second, since students develop their own fields, there was not necessarily a way to track whether we are falling short in training students in a certain subject area. Third, the rubric that was used for assessment did not define what constituted "excellent," "good," "acceptable," "poor," or "unacceptable" mastery of the outcome. Fourth, we did not provide much of description of what the artifact should be. Fifth, we would do better assessment about the efficacy of our PhD program as a whole if we were assessing work gathered from the end of a student's degree program.

As a result, we rewrote our learning outcomes for the PhD with, we hope, additional clarity. We limited our assessment to look at two of our most well-defined artifacts. We developed new assessment rubrics to be applied to the dissertation as an artifact for SLO1-5, and the portfolio of professional

documents generated in ASTD 5900 for SLO6. These rubrics, we hope, are clearer about what constitutes mastery of the relevant outcomes. Finally, by focusing primarily on the dissertation, we can measure our students' mastery of these outcomes at the end of their degree program, rather than earlier in it.

The PhD program will probably remain small due to student funding constraints; we will likely continue to have no more than 3 students each year who complete the degree. This means to create a meaningful data set it is necessary to accumulate artifacts over a period of years. As a result, when we revised this assessment plan, we also 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. For example, 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 PhD 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:**

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**American Studies PhD Assessment Rubric (Dissertation)**

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**Artifact Description:** The American Studies PhD culminates a dissertation that makes an original argument based in primary and secondary research and demonstrates the student’s knowledge of their field. It is typically 200-300 pages in length and composed of 4-6 chapters in addition to an introduction and conclusion. Typically, the introduction gives an overview of the dissertation topic, introduces the major problem or question the writer addresses, states the author’s argument, situates that argument as part of a scholarly dialogue, and provides a preview of how that argument proceeds across the dissertation’s chapters. The conclusion generally explains the stakes of the work that was done in the dissertation and suggests where research may proceed in the future.

<b>Learning Outcome</b>	<b>Exemplary (3)</b>	<b>Competent (2)</b>	<b>Developing (1)</b>	<b>Insufficient (0)</b>	<b>Rating</b>
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	The student provides a thorough, appropriate assessment of how American cultural practices,	The student thoroughly assesses how American cultural practices, expressions, or ideas shape or are shaped	The student mentions how American cultural practices, expressions, or ideas shape or are shaped by axes of power,	The student does not attend to how American cultural practices, expressions, or ideas shape or are	

by axes of power, such as race, gender, sexuality, class, nation, or ability.	expressions, or ideas 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.	by axes of power, such as race, gender, sexuality, class, nation, or ability, but the assessment is limited to sufficient attention to one of these frameworks.	such as race, gender, sexuality, class, nation, or ability, but how this occurs is not thoroughly addressed.	shaped by axes of 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 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	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	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	

	<p>The language, style, genre, and tone are appropriate for American Studies audiences. There are no problems with spelling, punctuation, grammar, or syntax. All sources are properly documented.</p>	<p>argument might not 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.</p>	<p>language, style, 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.</p>	<p>an academic 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.</p>	
<p>SLO5: Students will identify how their research extends, diverges from, or speaks to prior American Studies scholarship.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>The student engages dutifully with scholarship in their American Studies subfield and demonstrates how their work relates to it.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>The student does not endeavor to position their work in relation to American Studies scholarship.</p>	

**Student Name:**

**Rater Name:**

**Rating Date:**

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**American Studies PhD Assessment Rubric (Portfolio of Professional Documents)**

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**Artifact Description:** The American Studies PhD is the terminal degree in the field. It prepares students to enter academia or related professions in the public humanities. Professional development of doctoral students, then, is important for their career placement. In ASTD 5900 – The Practice of American Studies, students learn the norms, languages, and formats of professional documents such as cover letters, CVs, sample syllabi, statements of teaching philosophy, conference proposals, or grant applications. By the end of the course, they will have compiled a portfolio of these materials.

<b>Learning Outcome</b>	<b>Exemplary (3)</b>	<b>Competent (2)</b>	<b>Developing (1)</b>	<b>Insufficient (0)</b>	<b>Rating</b>
SLO6: Students will construct a portfolio of useable professional documents such as cover letters, CVs, sample syllabi, statements of teaching philosophy, conference proposals, or grant applications.	The student's portfolio is comprehensive, with a robust assortment of materials. The materials are appropriate for submission to jobs, journals, review committees, etc. The portfolio adheres to disciplinary norms in style, tone, and format. The writing is correct and clear. The materials are also unusually	The student's portfolio is comprehensive, with a robust assortment of materials. The materials are appropriate for submission to jobs, journals, review committees, etc. The portfolio adheres to disciplinary norms in style, tone, and format. The writing is correct and clear.	The student's portfolio has a sample of professional materials. The materials are likely to be appropriate for submission to jobs, journals, review committees, etc., with revision and faculty mentoring. The is portfolio largely adheres to disciplinary norms in style, tone, and format, but there may be some areas that	The student's portfolio contains a small number of professional materials. They are not appropriate for submission to jobs, review committees, etc. The portfolio makes no effort to adhere to disciplinary norms in style, tone and format. The writing is unclear or has	

	interesting and informed.		need improvement. The writing is correct, but it may lack some clarity due to jargon.	numerous mistakes in spelling, grammar, or mechanics.	
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**Student Name:**

**Survey Date:**

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**American Studies PhD Exit Survey**

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**Artifact Description:** This survey is provided to students graduating with an American Studies PhD in order to gather information about the American Studies doctoral curriculum, course offerings, pedagogy, and mentoring. 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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SLO 6: Students will construct a portfolio of useable professional documents such as cover letters, CVs, sample syllabi, statements of teaching philosophy, conference proposals, or grant applications.

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

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