

### **Assessment Plan for Latin American Studies**

The Latin American Studies (LTAM) program services majors and concentrators, in addition to all other students with an interest in Latin America. The focus of our assessment is two-fold: (1) majors and (2) concentrators, though we are more interested in assessing our majors at this time. Majors are required to develop competence in Spanish, complete sixty-six credits of coursework in an interdisciplinary selection of offerings, and satisfactorily finish an independent research project during their senior year (i.e., their comps). Concentrators must complete nine courses and participate in the annual *Foro Latinoamericano*. As with majors, concentrators must develop a working knowledge of Spanish equivalent to SPAN 204 or beyond.

All majors and concentrators must take a sequence of core courses including HIST 170 Modern Latin America, LTAM 200 Issues in Latin American Studies (the gateway), and a set of electives requiring mostly an even distribution between social sciences and history on the one hand and literature on the other.

#### *Student Learning Outcomes*

The LTAM faculty identified two learning goals for *majors* as primary and the focus of our assessment. They are (a) the ability to communicate an argument in written and oral form based on original research focused on Latin America and (b) develop disciplinary depth and interdisciplinary breadth of knowledge of Latin America based on course-work (on- and off-campus) and independent research.

In the 2008-2009 academic year, the LTAM faculty began to assess our majors at the comps level, since this stage represents the culmination of their work and it is where we expect to see the most complete data available regarding our students' achievements of our expectations.

#### *Assessment Measures*

During the initial phase of assessment in 2008-2009 and most recently in 2009-2010, our program has evaluated our students based on their written and oral presentations of comps. To make our assessment more systematic and comparable across time, the program has adopted a rubric for assessing the work similar in scope and focus to the one used in the Spanish department. We believe that this rubric, though modified for LTAM, serves our assessment purposes. The rubric is below. Each comps student has two readers, one of which is the main advisor in the primary discipline. Each reader uses the rubric to evaluate the work and progress of the student. Responses are coded on an ordinal scale from 1 to 5 points, with '5' indicating generally excellent work and '1' representing generally unsatisfactory work. Each student thus receives an aggregate raw score ranging from 7 to 35 (5-point scale x 7 dimensions of evaluation), which can be rescaled 1-5 for ease of interpretation.

#### *Short-term and Long-term Plans for Use of Assessment Measures*

Since our scale is quantitative, we can compare students within cohort years but also across years. This will allow us to develop a time-series of student performance. We even anticipate that other aspects of the student's profile might be added to our emerging dataset on majors over time, allowing us to evaluate how our curriculum and how other experiences (e.g., off-campus studies, direct enroll programs abroad, on-campus social and intellectual activities, etc.) are serving our majors.

**Assessment Rubric for Comps**

As part of our assessment of the major, we have chosen to focus on the issue of research and use of secondary sources in our senior comprehensive exercise. We will use the following criteria in the assessment of our students' research and incorporation of secondary resources in their essay.

The student...	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Adequate	Good	Exceptional
	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Selection</b>					
Demonstrates use of appropriate search engines.					
Locates sources specific to topic or goal.					
Incorporates significant number of resources in Spanish (and/or Portuguese) and from original texts.					
<b>Format</b>					
Generates properly formatted bibliography.					
Quotes and cites sources correctly in the body of the text.					
<b>Application</b>					
Incorporates sufficient research effectively to support a central argument or thesis.					
Selects and integrates pertinent evidence, including quoted material, quantitative data, narratives, etc.					

Aggregate Raw Score:

(Please sum all seven scores).