

**Latin American Studies Program 2015-2016 Yearly Assessment Report
College of Arts and Sciences**

1. Identifying Information

Name of Program: Latin American Studies (LAS)

Type of Program: Major and Minor

College of Arts and Sciences Division: Social Sciences

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2. Mission Statement:

The Latin American Studies Program embodies the University of San Francisco's mission to provide a rigorous, world-class education to a new generation of leaders, who will work to create a more humane and just world. The Latin American Studies major prepares students for a global and transnational "America" by providing sophisticated, hands-on, innovative courses. With its emphasis on interdisciplinary studies, immersion experiences, and second-language proficiency, the Program enables students to understand the historical, cultural, economic, political and social conditions that shape contemporary Latin America.

NOTE: This statement has not been revised in the last few years.

3. Program Goals

Students who complete the B.A. in Latin American Studies will be able to:

1. Integrate perspectives from multiple disciplines to understand the diversity of the Latin American region and its peoples.
2. Understand and critically analyze the major economic, social, and political processes that have shaped the lives of Latin Americans using a variety of research tools and methodologies.
3. Communicate effectively in Spanish and/or Portuguese and demonstrate familiarity with the region's cultural and literary production.
4. Communicate knowledge about the Latin American region and be able to generate independent knowledge.
5. Be socially responsible citizens of the Americas

NOTE: These goals have not been revised in the last years.

4. Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

- 1a. Students can describe and contrast patterns of geographic and sociocultural diversity in the region.
- 2a. Students can identify, classify and analyze the main historical periods of Latin American development.
- 2b. Students can define, differentiate and assess the central economic and political models that have been used in the region, including their impact on the social relations of power.
- 2c. Students can describe and analyze the complex relationships between the United States and Latin America, including how Latin Americans and Latin@s have influenced different aspects of American society and culture.
- 3a. Students can read advanced texts; write about daily activities; and communicate with native speakers about everyday topics and personal opinions.
- 3b. Students can describe, appraise and criticize major literary and other cultural works from the region, including how they reflect their historical period and illuminate systemic inequalities.
- 4a. Students can craft a well-organized and clearly written multi-page essay.
- 4b. Students can express themselves clearly, coherently and thoughtfully in discussions and presentations.
- 4c. Students can demonstrate the research skills necessary to make original contributions to the study of Latin America.
- 5a. Students can summarize and critically assess current social, political, and economic issues in the region.
- 5b. Students can describe and critically appraise their academic and extra-curricular experiences in Latin America.
- 5c. Students can promote understanding of Latin America in educational, service, social, or employment contexts.

NOTE: The language of these PLOs was slightly revised in the last year.

5. Brief Summary of Most Recent Assessment Plan

The last Program's assessment report was submitted in December 2012 by then LAS Chair, Professor Susana Kaiser. The report related to the 2011-2012 academic year.

The report presented a summary of the assessment conducted that year as follows:

"This academic year we followed up with the three-year assessment plan drafted in 2008. This included a detailed curriculum map and rubrics for assessing each program goal's learning outcomes. We focused on embedded assignments for objective evaluation. We haven't been able to secure participation in a senior exit survey for subjective evaluation (see attached). Under the leadership of the Program Chair, with substantial administrative support from program assistant Marissa Litman, we undertook an assessment of the following two program goals: #1 (a) and #2 (a, b, and c); see details below. Note: goals were assessed only when applicable and feasible, depending on the course (not all the 32 students were assessed in both goals.)"

The report concluded that,

"- Overall, LAS students are performing well.
- There is no major weakness in the program.
- We will continue to work in specific ways, appropriate to each course that we teach, to improve the performance of the students and reduce the percentage of students that score in medium level C (@25% and consistent in all goals assessed) so we can have higher percentages in levels D and E."

6. Academic Program Review

The most recent Academic Program Review's External Reviewer Visit took place in Spring 2010. After the Program received the external reviewers' letter, the Advisory Board members met with the Associate Dean in Spring 2010. Although there was no written "action plan" at the time, the Advisory Board discussed the external reviewers' recommendations during several meetings over the following academic year.

7. Methods

For Spring 2016, the Latin American Studies Program focused on the Program Goal # 3 and on the PLO # 3b. This outcome refers to the Program's requirement for all majors to take one required language/cultural competency course.

We selected one literature course that meets this requirement: Spanish for Bilinguals (SPAN 222). This is a fourth year Heritage Language course in Spanish. We assessed students' learning outcomes at end of the Spring 2016 semester.

Our aim was to assess students' ability to communicate effectively in Spanish about the

Latin American cultural and literary production. This goal and outcome were not assessed in the last assessment plan that was submitted in 2012.

We used the following rubrics to assess the PLO # 3b.

Outcome / Rubrics	Very Poor Achievement of Outcome	Poor Achievement of Outcome	Average Achievement of Outcome [Benchmark Standard]	Good Achievement of Outcome	Very Good Achievement of Outcome
3b. Students can describe and appraise major literary and other cultural works of the region, including how they reflect their historical period and illuminate systemic inequalities.	a. Students can summarize the plot of major literary texts.	b.	c. Students can summarize and offer basic analysis of literary texts and the content of other cultural works, including reflection of their historical context and systemic inequalities.	d.	e. Students can go beyond summary to offer original critique, informed by secondary sources, of literary and other cultural production, including reflection of their historical context and systemic inequalities.

The assessment methods were mainly direct, but also included indirect methods.

Direct methods (final essay exam): The tool used to assess the PLO # 3b was a **final essay written** in Spanish. This exam was assigned by Professor Karina Hodoyán, Associate Professor in Modern & Classical Languages, in the course SPAN 222-01 taught in Spring 2016. The essay was five to six pages in length. Professor Hodoyán graded the fifteen students enrolled in this course.

Professor Hodoyán designed the final essay assignment in a way that embedded the rubrics for the PLO # 3b. Students were required to analyze a literary work by a Latina/o or Chicana/o author by applying literary tools of analysis and contextualizing the work within the broader literary and socio-political history of this community.

Indirect methods (in-class discussions and individual meetings with students): Before turning in the final draft, the students and professor discussed the assignment in class, learned the basic tools of literary analysis, analyzed and discussed literary work, had in-

class writing exercises, finished two-peer reviews, and met with an instructor-tutor to discuss their draft. Some students met with the professor to go over grammatical issues, as well.

8. Results

Of the fifteen enrolled students, the rubrics were the following:

One student (6.66%) met all of the requirements of the assignment and demonstrated a “higher ability” (E) to go beyond the presentation of a summary of the work by offering an original critique and analysis of his/her chosen work supported by appropriate secondary sources. The student’s use of grammar and syntax had minor errors appropriate at his/her level of proficiency.

Four students (26.66%) accomplished a “good” achievement of outcome (D).

Nine students (60%) demonstrated an “average” achievement of outcome (C), where they complied with the requirements of the assignment, but did not go beyond its expectations, while having a larger number of appropriate errors of syntax.

One student (6.66%) received a “poor” achievement grade (B) due to grammatical errors and inability to produce an effective thesis and analysis, despite being able to provide a general summary of his/her chosen literary work.

These results were not surprising for an upper-division, highest level and demanding course taught in Spanish.

Compared with the results of the assessment report submitted in 2012, the percentage of students scoring an “average” achievement of outcome (C) was more than double. On the other hand, contrary to the previous assessment, there was no student scoring a “very poor” achievement of outcome. However, because the sample was small in Spring 2016 and the Program did not assess the PLO # 3b in the previous years, it is not possible to compare and make sense of the implications of the data collected in Spring 2016.

9. Closing the Loop

The assessment results described above are important for showing that the large majority of students’ learning outcomes in the PLO # 3b is at or above average. These results do not seem to indicate a need to revise the Program Goals, the PLOs, the curriculum, and the course used for the assessment in question.

However, to fully assess the PLO # 3b and the PLO # 3a, which correspond to the Program Goal # 3, the Program will need to assess additional language/literature

competency courses. Based on the feedback received on this assessment report, an assessment plan for Spring 2017 or Fall 2017 will be discussed with the Program's Advisory Board.