

CAS ASSESSMENT PLAN (2015 – 2016)

Department of Media Studies

June 20, 2016

This Assessment Plan has been edited to reflect (a) formal feedback received on January 22, 2016 and (b) meeting with June Madsen Clausen on January 28th to discuss feedback.

I. Mission Statement

The Media Studies major at USF is a liberal arts-based program that combines media theory and practice. We believe that understanding media is an essential component of modern citizenship. Creating media that should contribute positively to a multicultural, global, future is an equally important task. Consequently, we teach students to be both critical analysts of media genres, institutions, and texts, and to be creative and innovative storytellers in their own right.

The Media Studies Major works within, and is infused by, the USF Jesuit mission, which stresses ethical decision-making and promotes social justice goals. Students graduating from the program should not only demonstrate a deep understanding of media in contemporary society, and be able to create short works of media art, in the form of journalism, audio/video works, or web-based projects; they should also reflect the University's social justice mission in their concern about the ethical values of the media system and its role in serving human needs. Graduates of the program have gone on to careers in media writing, directing and producing; print and broadcast journalism; graduate study in media, communications, law, and politics; non-profit organizational research, management and media relations; corporate public relations, advertising and marketing; general business, and elementary and high school teaching.

II. Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

Five Program Learning Outcomes (1) History, (2) Theory, (3) Policy, (4) Research, and (5) Production (Video/Audio/Digital and Journalism) were generated by the department. Each PLO was then further specified into measurable components (below) by instructors in that area of the field, then reviewed and approved by the department as a whole. Assessment tools, locations for assessment, and an assessment schedule were developed (see "Assessment Plan"). Assessment rubrics for each PLO were developed (examples included).

Program Learning Outcomes

1. *PLO: History*
 - a. Students should be able to explain the key developments and social actors of media history, from the oral/aural era to the printing press to digital media.
 - b. Students should be able to explain how these key developments were and continue to be embedded within larger cultural, economic, political, and social conditions around the world.

- c. Students should be able to recognize and distinguish between key media history theories and terms.

2. *PLO: Theory*

- a. Students should recognize and be able to define key analytical concepts in Media Studies, including but not limited to: political economy, globalization, hegemony, culture, ideology, representation, aesthetics, rhetoric, reception, text, genre, myth, interpretation.
- b. Students should be familiar with at least three influential bodies of scholarship within media/cultural studies and be able to explain and mobilize these ideas in their papers. Example bodies of scholarship include but are not limited to: Public Sphere, Frankfurt School of Critical Theory, Birmingham School of Cultural Studies, Psychoanalysis, Feminist & Queer Thought, Critical Race Theories, Structuralism & Semiotics, Post-structuralism & Postmodernism, and Digital Media Scholarship.
- c. Students should understand what theorizing involves (making serious, and ideally testable, generalizations about the world based in deep understanding of social and cultural phenomena) and be able to synthesize and theorize from evidence and reading.

3. *PLO: Policy*

- a. Students should be able to describe the role of media in politics and give appropriate examples of the ways in which mediation affects core democratic processes—for example, the role(s) of media in elections, public policy making, public debate, social change movements, international/global relations, and other democratic political processes.
- b. Students should be able to describe the role(s) of government and the courts in regulating media institutions. Examples include, but are not limited to: First Amendment based laws structuring press freedoms; the historical and contemporary role of the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) in regulating media ownership, licensing and content; contemporary US and global policy making around internet administration and net neutrality.

4. *PLO: Research*

- a. Students should be able to: identify a significant research topic for a project; formulate the appropriate research question(s); state the project's relevance and contribution to knowledge and frame it within an appropriate theoretical context.
- b. Students should be able to conduct and write up a focused literature review-- i.e. they should know how to use the library, data bases, and reference lists in published works to find sources, know how to identify the most central sources in an area, and know how to write about other peoples' work in an ethical and useful way.
- c. Students should be able to select and use an appropriate media studies method – such as text analysis, interviewing, ethnography, historical analysis -- to answer their research questions.
- d. Students should be able to analyze and write up their original research into a coherent report, identifying key themes and patterns, and coming to a conclusion, thereby completing a significant and relevant research project.

5. *PLO*: Production

a. Audio/Video/Digital

- i. Students should have a basic understanding of the theories and techniques underpinning media production.
- ii. Students should be able to operate basic production equipment including video cameras, sound recording devices and computer editing software.
- iii. Students should be able to work collaboratively to create media projects that reflect their ability to work together and produce work that is greater than the sum of its parts.

b. Journalism

- i. Students should understand the difference between journalism and other types of writing, namely that the main ingredients in journalism are verified and attributed facts clearly presented for an audience.
- ii. Students should be able to gather, evaluate, prioritize and contextualize information from a variety of sources – direct observation, interview, and review of secondary and tertiary sources.
- iii. Students should be able to convey reported information in a fair, accurate and engaging manner, regardless of medium.

III. Assessment Plan

Rubrics for assessing PLOs through student exams, papers, and creative projects were developed. Assessment rubrics for all PLOs are below. Assessment locations include final exams, research projects, end of semester student project screenings, and production projects (films, videos, news stories). For specific locations and schedules for each PLO, see *PLO Assessment Locations* and *PLO Assessment Schedule(s)*.

Rubrics for Instructors Assessing Program Learning Outcomes

Instructors: Use this grid to track the success of each student (all students must be included) across each learning outcome. This can be done while grading papers or exams (add a hash mark for each student on each criteria to the grid as you grade and then total up each column) or as an independent assessment activity. Using this grid we should be able to track the % of students who are succeeding at each level, and overall, in the learning goal.

Grades represent:

- A – student has complete mastery
- B – student demonstrates good skills
- C – student has passing skills
- D-F – student is not passing this criteria

N = number of students in this category; % = percentage of the total accounted for by this column (e.g. % of A's in a, b, c)

Program Learning Outcome #1: History	A	B	C	D-F
a. Students should be able to explain the key developments and social actors of media history, from the oral era to the printing press to digital media.				
b. Students should be able to explain how these key developments were and continue to be embedded within larger cultural, economic, political, and social conditions around the world.				
c. Students should be able to recognize and distinguish between key media history theories and terms.				
Totals N (%)				

Program Learning Outcome #2: Theory	A	B	C	D-F
a. Students should recognize and be able to define key analytical concepts in Media Studies (see Program Learning Outcomes for list).				
b. Students should be familiar with at least three influential bodies of scholarship within media/cultural studies and be able to explain and mobilize these ideas in their papers (see Program Learning Outcomes for list).				

c. Students should understand what theorizing involves (making serious and ideally testable generalizations about the world based in deep understanding of social and cultural phenomena).				
Totals N (%)				

Program Learning Outcome #3: Policy	A	B	C	D-F
a. Students should be able to describe the role of media in politics and give appropriate examples of the ways in which mediation affects core democratic processes—for example, the role(s) of media in elections, public policy making, public debate, social change movements, international/global relations, and other democratic political processes.				
b. Students should be able to describe the role(s) of government and the courts in regulating media institutions. Examples include, but are not limited to: First Amendment based laws structuring press freedoms; the historical and contemporary role of the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) in regulating media ownership, licensing and content; contemporary US and global policy making around internet administration and net neutrality.				
Totals N (%)				

Program Learning Outcome #4: Research	A	B	C	D-F
a. Students should be able to: identify a significant research topic for a project; formulate the appropriate research question(s); state the project’s relevance and contribution to knowledge and frame it within an appropriate theoretical context.				
b. Students should be able to conduct and write up a focused literature review-- i.e. they should know how to use the library, data bases, and reference lists in published works to find sources, know how to identify the most central sources in an area, and know how to write about other peoples' work in an ethical and useful way.				
c. Students should be able to select and use an appropriate media studies method – such as text analysis, interviewing, ethnography, historical analysis -- to answer their research questions.				
d. Students should be able to analyze and write up their original research into a coherent report, identifying key themes and patterns, and coming to a conclusion, thereby completing a significant and relevant research project.				
Totals N (%)				

Program Learning Outcomes #5a: Production – Video & Audio	A	B	C	D-F
(a) i. Students should have a basic understanding of the theories and techniques underpinning media production.				
(a) ii. Students should be able to operate basic production equipment including video cameras, sound recording devices and computer editing software.				
(a) iii. Students should be able to work collaboratively to create media projects that reflect their ability to work together and produce work that is greater than the sum of its parts.				
Totals N (%)				

Program Learning Outcomes #5b: Production – Journalism	A	B	C	D-F
(b) i. Students should understand the difference between journalism and other types of writing, namely that the main ingredients in journalism are verified and attributed facts clearly presented for an audience.				
(b) ii. Students should be able to gather, evaluate, prioritize and contextualize information from a variety of sources – direct observation, interview, and review of secondary and tertiary sources.				
(b) iii. Students should be able to convey reported information in a fair, accurate and engaging manner, regardless of medium.				
Totals N (%)				

PLO Assessment Locations

Note: the following courses are not the only courses that address each PLO. As evident in Curricular Map #2 (PLOs X Courses), most courses address more than one PLO. However, the below assessment locations have been identified based on which PLO is most prominently addressed in each course.

PLO assessed: #1 History (a), (b) and (c)

- Introduction to Media Studies
- Media History
- Cultural Industries
- Media Theory & Criticism

PLO assessed: #2 Theory (a), (b), and (c)

- Media History
- Media Theory & Criticism
- Senior Seminars

PLO assessed: #3 Policy (a) and (b)

- Introduction to Media Studies
- Communication, Law & Policy
- Senior Seminar: Media and Politics

PLO assessed: #4 Research (a), (b), (c), and (d)

- Senior Seminars

PLO assessed: #5 Production (a) and (b)

- Multimedia Storytelling
- Audio Production
- Video Production
- Civic Media
- Journalism 1
- Journalism 2

PLO Assessment Schedule for 2015 – 2016

PLO assessed: #1 History

- Courses assessed, Fall 2015
 - Media Theory & Criticism (Arzumanova)
- Courses assessed, Spring 2016
 - Introduction to Media Studies (Silver)
 - Cultural Industries (Arzumanova)

PLO Assessment Schedule for 2016 – 2017

PLO assessed: #2 Theory

- Courses assessed, Fall 2016
 - Media History (Kaiser)
 - One of the following Senior Seminars:
 - Politics & the Media (Barker-Plummer)
 - Alternative Media and Social Change (Kidd)
- Courses assessed, Spring 2017
 - Media Theory & Criticism (Arzumanova)
 - One Senior Seminar (TBD)

REPORT & REVISIONS TO CAS ASSESSMENT PLAN (2015 – 2016)
Department of Media Studies
June 20, 2016

The following includes feedback provided to the Media Studies Department by the Assessment Office on January 22nd, 2016 (italics), the revisions we have implemented based on this feedback, as well as a report of how we have executed assessment during the 2015 – 2016 academic year.

1. Like most departments and programs, your mission statement and PLOs would be stronger and more easily assessed if they were more concise and (likely) fewer in number. For example, mission statements should be 2 to 3 sentences, rather than one page, in length.

We recognize the need to scale down our plan in order to make it both sustainable over time and flexible (in terms of future revisions and improvements). However, as discussed with June Madsen Clausen and Suparna Chakraborty, the Media Studies Department feels very strongly that the number of Program Learning Outcomes and a lengthier Mission Statement are both critical pieces of our department's assessment and therefore, cannot be easily reduced in number or length. Our department is unique in that it is interdisciplinary and includes several emphases and areas of study, all of which must be accounted for by our PLOs. Consequently, we have made our Mission Statement more concise (we cut it in half). Additionally, as you will see below, rather than simply cutting down the number of PLOs, we have scaled down our plan by revising (a) the location of implementation (how many courses will be assessed every semester), and (b) the width of implementation (how many PLOs will be assessed every semester). We believe that these revisions will yield the kind of streamlining that the Assessment Office is suggesting.

2. Each department must have a mission statement and program learning outcomes; departments may opt to also have program goals, which derive from the mission statement and are broader (and fewer in number) than the PLOs. You provide "learning goals" and "learning outcomes"; please use the terms "Program Goals" and "Program Learning Outcomes" instead, as this is the current convention in assessment and at USF.

We have changed the terms in order to comply with USF's current convention in assessment.

3. Your plan proposes to assess every student in your program across many different courses, with the course instructor grading each student on each PLO using a very general rubric. How will the instructors be calibrated to each other? How will you have confidence that the ratings, which are using rubrics that are not very specific or concrete, are reliable? Best practice is to have faculty other than the course instructor (or at least in addition to the course instructor) rate students using a rubric agreed upon by program faculty and after being calibrated to each other so that the ratings are consistent.

We have scaled down our assessment plan in a manner that will increase reliability from semester to semester. We will no longer be assessing "every student in [our] program, across

many different courses,” every semester. Instead, we are now assessing only one PLO per semester and therefore, assessing the students’ performance in only those courses that coincide with that particular PLO. We have already implemented this change. For example, for the Spring 2016 semester, we tested our first PLO – History. This PLO was assessed across two key courses where knowledge of media history is most prominent – Introduction to Media Studies and Cultural Industries. We believe that this narrowing of scope should contribute to a more reliable assessment mechanism moving forward. Additionally, per the suggestion of the Assessment Office, starting Fall 2016, we will incorporate a Reliability Rubric into our assessment plan. The practice will now be implemented as follows:

- PLO and relevant courses to be assessed for the following semester will be agreed upon by the department during the first faculty meeting of the semester
- Instructors responsible for the relevant courses (the courses to undergo assessment for that semester) will be notified and provided with the appropriate materials (Assessment Plan, Curricular Maps, Assessment Rubrics, etc.)
- Instructors who will be completing assessment for that semester will meet at the end of the semester (as soon as each instructor is in possession of final exams/projects) in order to calibrate their system of assessment. Each instructor will provide two examples of student work to be evaluated. The group of instructors will then review and discuss evaluation methods and grading.
- Ultimately, this meeting will yield a brief “Calibration Rubric” to be used for that semester and to be kept on file for future semesters (the latter will ensure a calibration system that is increasingly more reliable over time).
- After calibration, instructors will perform assessment of their courses and submit to the department.

4. This is a VERY ambitious plan; consider assessing just one or two PLOs (or perhaps the group of PLOs that fall under one Program Goal) each year across sections of one or two courses in an unbiased sample of your students (not necessary to assess all students in your program, unless the number of majors is small). Rotate which PLOs are assessed each year (they don't all have to be assessed every year) so that the faculty have time to understand and discuss the results, and then "close the loop" to make any needed curricular changes.

We have made the requested changes (see Question 3 above). As of Spring 2016, we will assess only one PLO per year. That PLO will be assessed only in those courses where it is most prominent and therefore, most important to evaluate. This will typically mean that two or three courses are assessed per semester. The PLO identified for assessment will rotate from year to year. See Assessment Plan for more details, rubrics, and schedules.

During the 2015-2016 academic year, we assessed PLO #1: History. This included the following courses: Media Theory & Criticism, Introduction to Media Studies, and Cultural Industries. During the coming year, 2016-2017, we plan to assess PLO #2: Theory. This includes the following courses: Media History, Media Theory & Criticism, and several 400-level Senior Seminars (exact seminars TBD, pending final course enrollment).

Learning Outcome #1: History

Assessment completed by David Silver (Course: Introduction to MS, 2 sections)

Spring 2016

Grades represent:

A – student has complete mastery

B – student demonstrates good skills

C – student has passing skills

F – student is not passing this criteria

N = number of students in this category; % = percentage of the total accounted for by this column
(e.g. % of A's in a, b, c)

Learning Outcome #1: History	A	B	C	D-F
a. Students should be able to explain the key developments and social actors of media history.	15/66	30/66	13/66	8/66
b. Students should be able to explain the context.	15/66	30/66	13/66	8/66
c. Students should be able to recognize and distinguish between key media history theories and terms.	29/66	25/66	4/66	8/66
Totals N(%)	29.8%	42.9%	15.2%	12.1%

Learning Outcome #1: History

Assessment completed by Inna Arzumanova (Course: Cultural Industries)

Spring 2016

Grades represent:

A – student has complete mastery

B – student demonstrates good skills

C – student has passing skills

F – student is not passing this criteria

N = number of students in this category; % = percentage of the total accounted for by this column
(e.g. % of A's in a, b, c)

Learning Outcome #1: History	A	B	C	D-F
a. Students should be able to explain the key developments and social actors of media history.	9/22	11/22	2/22	
b. Students should be able to explain the context.	13/22	9/22	0/22	
c. Students should be able to recognize and distinguish between key media history theories and terms.	8/22	11/22	3/22	
Totals N(%)	45.5%	47%	7.5%	

Learning Outcome #1: History

Assessment completed by **Inna Arzumanova (Course: Media Theory & Criticism)**

Fall 2015

Grades represent:

A – student has complete mastery

B – student demonstrates good skills

C – student has passing skills

F – student is not passing this criteria

N = number of students in this category; % = percentage of the total accounted for by this column
(e.g. % of A's in a, b, c)

Learning Outcome #1: History	A	B	C	D-F
a. Students should be able to explain the key developments and social actors of media history.	9/22	10/22	3/22	
b. Students should be able to explain the context.	13/22	9/22	0/22	
c. Students should be able to recognize and distinguish between key media history theories and terms.	9/22	11/22	2/22	
Totals N(%)	46.9%	45.5%	7.6%	