

<NAME OF YOUR PROGRAM/DEPARTMENT/MAJOR OR MINOR>

ASSESSMENT REPORT
ACADEMIC YEAR 2018 – 2019
REPORT DUE DATE: 11/01/2019

- **Who should submit the report? – All majors, minors (including interdisciplinary minors), graduate and non-degree granting certificate programs of the College of Arts and Sciences.**
- **Programs can combine assessment reports for a major and a minor program into one aggregate report as long as the mission statements, program learning outcome(s) evaluated, methodology applied to each, and the results are clearly delineated in separate sections**
- **Undergraduate, Graduate and Certificate Programs must submit separate reports**
- **It is recommended that assessment report not exceed 10 pages. Additional materials (optional) can be added as appendices**
- **Curriculum Map should be submitted along with Assessment Report**

Some useful contacts:

1. Prof. Alexandra Amati, FDCD, Arts – adamati@usfca.edu
2. Prof. John Lendvay, FDCD, Sciences – lendvay@usfca.edu
3. Prof. Mark Meritt, FDCD, Humanities – meritt@usfca.edu
4. Prof. Michael Jonas, FDCD, Social Sciences – mrjonas@usfca.edu
5. Prof. Suparna Chakraborty, AD Academic Effectiveness – schakraborty2@usfca.edu

Academic Effectiveness Annual Assessment Resource Page:

<https://myusf.usfca.edu/arts-sciences/faculty-resources/academic-effectiveness/assessment>

Email to submit the report: assessment_cas@usfca.edu

Important: Please write the name of your program or department in the subject line.

For example: FineArts_Major (if you decide to submit a separate report for major and minor); FineArts_Aggregate (when submitting an aggregate report)

I. LOGISTICS

1. Please indicate the name and email of the program contact person to whom feedback should be sent (usually Chair, Program Director, or Faculty Assessment Coordinator).

Tanu Sankalia, Associate Professor, Program Director Urban Studies
tssankalia@usfca.edu

2. Please indicate if you are submitting report for (a) a Major, (b) a Minor, (c) an aggregate report for a Major & Minor (in which case, each should be explained in a separate paragraph as in this template), (d) a Graduate or (e) a Certificate Program

Major – Urban Studies

2. Please note that a Curricular Map should accompany every assessment report. Has there been any revisions to the Curricular Map?

NO.

II. MISSION STATEMENT & PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Were any changes made to the program mission statement since the last assessment cycle in October 2018? Kindly state “Yes” or “No.” Please provide the current mission statement below. If you are submitting an aggregate report, please provide the current mission statements of both the major and the minor program

Mission Statement (Major/Graduate/Certificate):

USF’s interdisciplinary program in Urban Studies provides its students with an all-round understanding of cities. The program in urban studies explores the past and present of cities from political, economic, social and cultural perspectives. It provides students with the knowledge, hands-on experience, and communication skills necessary to make a positive impact on people’s lives in cities across the world.

3. Were any changes made to the program learning outcomes (PLOs) since the last assessment cycle in October 2017? Kindly state “Yes” or “No.” Please provide the current PLOs below. If you are submitting an aggregate report, please provide the current PLOs for both the major and the minor programs.

Note: Major revisions in the program learning outcomes need to go through the College Curriculum Committee (contact: Professor Joshua Gamson, gamson@usfca.edu). Minor editorial changes are not required to go through the College Curriculum Committee.

PLOs (Major/Graduate/Certificate):

NO.

Program Learning Outcomes

1. Students recognize, define and articulate the social, economic, political, cultural and environmental issues and challenges facing cities locally and globally.
2. Students understand, discuss, and explain the histories and theories related to the complex forces that shape cities.
3. Students develop research methods and tools to analyze and interpret urban phenomena.
4. Students communicate effectively in graphic, written and oral form, and provide solutions to specific urban issues and problems in professional settings.

4. State the particular Program Learning Outcome(s) you assessed for the academic year 2018-2019.

PLO(s) being assessed (Major/Graduate/Certificate):

- Students understand, discuss, and explain the histories and theories related to the complex forces that shape cities

III. METHODOLOGY

Describe the methodology that you used to assess the PLO(s).

For example, “the department used questions that were inputted in the final examination pertaining directly to the <said PLO>. An independent group of faculty (not teaching the course) then evaluated the responses to the questions and gave the students a grade for responses to those questions.”

Important Note – WSCUC advises us to use “direct methods” which relate to a direct evaluation of a student work product. “Indirect methods” like exit interviews or student surveys can be used only as additional complements to a direct method.

For any program with fewer than 10 students: If you currently have fewer than 10 students in your program (rendering your statistical analysis biased due to too few data points), it is fine to describe a multi-year data collection strategy here. It would be important to remember that every 3 years, we would expect you to have enough data to conduct a meaningful analysis.

Important: Please attach, at the end of this report, a copy of the rubric used for assessment.

Methodology used (Major/Graduate/Certificate):

Assessment Plan

The goal is to use a direct assessment method, to assess the final presentation and paper that students completed for the course URBS 230-01 Urban Planning and Design (Fall 2018), which is a required course for the Urban Studies major. This assignment is directly tied to an Urban Studies Program Learning Outcomes (PLO), and will assess how students fared with respect to developing mastery of that learning outcome.

In two previous assessment cycles, 2016-2017 and 2017-2018, we assessed the PLO – “Students understand, discuss, and explain the histories and theories related to the complex forces that shape cities.” The goal, as we pointed out in earlier assessment reports, was to analyze this same PLO across different course assignments, and across different courses.

For instance, we have assessed this PLO now with two courses: URBS 100 – 01 Introduction to Urban Studies, and ARCD 204 – 01 History of Architecture IV. For both courses, we used a direct assessment tool; for URBS 100, we used response papers, for ARCD 204, we used a mid-term essay. While URBS 100 mostly consisted of first-year students (freshmen), ARCD 204 consisted of third-year students (juniors). The PLO was far more successful at the third-year level than at the first-year level. Moving forward, it may be worthwhile seeing how this particular PLO can be assessed for a third class. In this way, we will have a clear understanding of how this particular PLO is being met across a wide-range of courses.

In response to this approach, as Prof. Michael Jonas pointed out to us in feedback on the 2017-2018 report, "...your willingness to consider assessing this PLO over a third class, adding breadth to your process. This is an excellent approach, and again shows your dedication to the process of assessment, not for its own sake, but for achieving better results for our students."

Following up on this, we have again chosen ONE course and ONE assignment – this time a final presentation and paper to assess the same PLO assessed before: "Students understand, discuss, and explain the histories and theories related to the complex forces that shape cities."

Course content leading to the final presentation and paper:

The course URBS 230-01 was designed with weekly modules. The modules were based on historical, theoretical/conceptual, and thematic approaches to urban planning and design, and comprised of readings, class discussions, and lectures.

The weekly modules were as follows: 1) What is Urban Planning and what does it seek to accomplish? 2) Some challenges facing urban planning and design; 3) The origins of modern town planning; 4) Urban land and urban planning: institutions and values; 5) Zoning and land use; 6) Open space; 7) Urban form; 8) Housing; 9) The urban image; 10) Race, culture, and diversity; 11) Streets and public space; 12) Transportation and intelligent infrastructure; 13) Participatory Planning; 14) Sustainable Planning and Design; 15) Eco-urbanism.

The goal with the final assignment was to determine whether students were able to synthesize course content through a research paper and presentation by picking a specific topic we had covered or referenced in class during the semester.

The goal in this assessment cycle is to then see how the PLO identified above fared in this particular assignment and in this particular course. Precisely, did the students' final papers and presentations display a grasp of "the histories and theories related to the complex forces that shape cities?"

Assignment directions

The final assignment was divided into three parts – an abstract (for a research paper), in-class presentation (20 points), and final research paper (20 points). This three-part process for the final assignment did not lend itself, all that well, to a specific rubric that could be used for grading papers. However, detailed instructions were given on how to write an abstract, requirements for the presentation, and directions for the final paper.

The feedback was cumulative. Students uploaded their abstracts on Canvas, and then were provided feedback on the abstract which guided their research and presentations. Feedback on the presentations was then incorporated into the final papers, which were due a few days after the presentations. This two-fold approach to providing feedback substantially improved the final papers.

IV. RESULTS & MAJOR FINDINGS

What are the major takeaways from your assessment exercise?

This section is for you to highlight the results of the exercise. Pertinent information here would include:

- a. **how well students mastered the outcome at the level they were intended to,**
- b. **any trends noticed over the past few assessment cycles, and**
- c. **the levels at which students mastered the outcome based on the rubric used.**

To address this, among many other options, one option is to use a table showing the distribution, for example:

The Results

There were only ten (10) students in the class, and therefore a small sample. Out of the ten students, two did not submit an abstract, and one did not submit an abstract or a final paper. That leaves us with only nine (9) actual submissions to base this assessment on.

Instead of a rubric, I will base my assessment on the following three-stage process–

- a. Clarity of abstract
- b. Quality of presentation (students clearly demonstrate having incorporated feedback)
- c. Quality of final papers – how they incorporated feedback from the presentation and their ability to synthesize the “historical and theoretical forces that shape cities.”

Detailed results were as follows:

- a. Clarity of Abstract
 - Eight (8) students submitted abstracts.
 - Out of the eight (8), seven (7) had complete well-written abstracts that clearly indicated their topics of research.
 - Out of the eight (8), only (4) included some indications of the “historical and theoretical” factors they would cover in their projects. These were included either as footnotes, bibliography/references, of refence to authors and their works in the text of the abstract.

b. Quality of presentations

- Nine (9) students made final Powerpoint presentations, conference style, all about 15 minutes with q & a.
- Out of the nine (9) students, two (2) students had very good presentations and received an A grade. Out of these two students, one had not presented an abstract, and the other had significantly improved on a somewhat weak, and incomplete abstract
- Seven (7) of the nine (9) students had good presentations, and they received an A- letter grade.

c. Quality of final papers

- In the final papers, four (4) students submitted very good papers receiving an A grade. The papers covered “historical and theoretical aspects of forces that shape cities.” However, given the nature of the topics selected for the final papers, students were able to do more justice to the “theoretical” than the “historical.”
- Three (3) students had good papers and received an A- grade.
- One (1) student went from having a better presentation to not writing a very good paper. Here the grade went down to a B+. (This was probably the result of a lack of time, and not student ability as such because the student had earlier submitted a fairly clear abstract, and made a good presentation)
- Two (2) student did not submit final papers.

Summarizing the results

- The overall level of the abstracts, presentations, and papers was good.
- Students clearly understood the assignment and what was expected of them.
- Students were able to connect history and theory with specific case studies; however, they were more successful when it came to theory than to history. The research topics they selected were more aligned with contemporary issues facing cities, which in turn were more suited to be framed in terms of theoretical discourses in urban studies, and not as easily historicized.
- Overall, the three-stage process helped students improve on their final product.
- The students in the class were mostly second, and third year students, and therefore quite well prepared, in terms of reading and writing skills, to successfully complete this assignment.

What I learned from the assignment

- Giving clear instructions in the assignment prompt is key to ensuring success in such an assignment
- The three-stage process for the final assignment, as a way to ensure student learning, worked well.
- This particular assignment worked better in terms of “theory” related to urban studies than for “history.”
- Students were able to successfully synthesize the course content in their final assignment and research paper.

Level	Percentage of Students
Complete Mastery of the outcome	55%
Mastered the outcome in most parts	22.2.3%
Mastered some parts of the outcome	11.1%
Did not master the outcome at the level intended	11.1

Some changes that I might consider for the course going forward

- I will try and ensure that students select topics with a strong historical and theoretical component

II. CLOSING THE LOOP

- 5. Based on your results, what changes/modifications are you planning in order to achieve the desired level of mastery in the assessed learning outcome? This section could also address more long-term planning that your department/program is considering and does not require that any changes need to be implemented in the next academic year itself.**

We have assessed this PLO now with for three course: URBS 100 – 01 Introduction to Urban Studies, ARCD 204 – 01 History of Architecture IV, and URBS 230-01 Urban Planning and Design. For all three courses, we have used a direct assessment tool; for URBS 100, we used response papers, for ARCD 204, we used a mid-term essay; and for URBS 230 we used a final presentation and paper. While URBS 100 mostly consisted of first-year students (freshmen), ARCD 204 consisted of third-year students (juniors), and URBS 230 had a mix of sophomores, juniors and seniors. The PLO was far more successful at the upper level courses.

The PLO selected for this round of assessment has now been assessed across three different courses and three different assignments.

Moving forward, we will assess a different outcome.

V. CLOSING THE LOOP

1. Based on your results, what changes/modifications are you planning in order to achieve the desired level of mastery in the assessed learning outcome? This section could also address more long-term planning that your department/program is considering and does not require that any changes need to be implemented in the next academic year itself.

Closing the Loop (Major/Graduate/Certificate):

In general, it appears that this PLO is being quite successfully met across courses and across assignments. Some minor changes can be made to assignments to ensure that this learning outcome is being met more successfully, but major changes are not necessary.

2. What were the most important suggestions/feedback from the FDCD on your last assessment report (for academic year 2017-2018, submitted in October 2018)? How did you incorporate or address the suggestion(s) in this report?

Suggestions (Major/Graduate/Certificate):

One of the suggestions was to assess the same PLO as we had assessed in the two previous years, for a third course, so that we could achieve breadth in our assessment process. This is what we have done in this round of assessment, and learned that the PLO is being met quite successfully across courses and across assignments.