

## LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES \_AGGREGATE

### ASSESSMENT REPORT ACADEMIC YEAR 2017 – 2018 REPORT DUE DATE: 10/26/2018

**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.**

**Note:** Dear Colleagues: In an effort to produce a more streamlined and less repetitive assessment report format, we are piloting this modified template for the present annual assessment cycle. We are requesting an assessment report that would not exceed eight pages of text. Supporting materials may be appended. We will be soliciting your feedback on the report as we attempt to make it more user-friendly.

**Some useful contacts:**

1. Prof. Alexandra Amati, FDCD, Arts – [adamati@usfca.edu](mailto:adamati@usfca.edu)
2. Prof. John Lendvay, FDCD, Sciences – [lendvay@usfca.edu](mailto:lendvay@usfca.edu)
3. Prof. Mark Meritt, FDCD, Humanities – [meritt@usfca.edu](mailto:meritt@usfca.edu)
4. Prof. Michael Jonas, FDCD, Social Sciences – [mrjonas@usfca.edu](mailto:mrjonas@usfca.edu)
5. Prof. Suparna Chakraborty, AD Academic Effectiveness – [schakraborty2@usfca.edu](mailto:schakraborty2@usfca.edu)
6. Ms. Corie Schwabenland, Academic Data & Assessment Specialist- [ceschwabenland@usfca.edu](mailto:ceschwabenland@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](mailto: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 & PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

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).

Roberto Varea, Professor of Theater, and Director of the Latin American Studies Program,  
[varea@usfca.edu](mailto:varea@usfca.edu)

2. Were any changes made to the program mission statement since the last assessment cycle in October 2017? 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.

### LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES MAJOR MISSION STATEMENT:

*Note: There were no changes made to either mission statement since last assessment cycle.*

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.

### MINOR’S STATEMENT (while also covered by the MAJOR’S/PROGRAM statement):

The Latin American Studies Minor is designed for students interested in combining an understanding and appreciation of Latin America with another discipline or major. The minor enhances students’ professional training as it offers regional focus, direction, and coherence to complement their undergraduate education.

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](mailto:gamson@usfca.edu)). Minor editorial changes are not required to go through the College Curriculum Committee.

### LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAM PLOs:

Note: There were no changes to the MAJOR or MINOR PLOs since our last assessment cycle. As a reminder, the MINOR's PLOs were partially revised in the fall semester of 2017.

### LAS MAJOR:

- 1a. Students can describe and contrast patterns of geographic and sociocultural diversity in the region 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.

### LAS MINOR:

1. Students can describe and critically analyze the major historical, social, political, and economic processes that have shaped the lives of Latin Americans.

2. Students can individually and comparatively describe and analyze the diversity of the Latin American region and its peoples from at least two perspectives (social, **cultural**, historical, and/or religious and philosophical).

3. Students can read and write academic texts and express information in Spanish and/or Portuguese, and demonstrate familiarity with the region's cultural and/or literary production.

**4. Which particular Program Learning Outcome(s) did you assess for the academic year 2017-2018?**

We are assessing the MAJOR's PLO 3b., with an emphasis on *performance*:

*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.*

We also focused on the same sample of students to assess the MINOR's PLO 2, with an emphasis on the *cultural* perspective (and also with a *performance* focus).

*2. Students can individually and comparatively describe and analyze the diversity of the Latin American region and its peoples from at least two perspectives (social, **cultural**, historical, and/or religious and philosophical).*

## II. METHODOLOGY

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

For Spring 2018, the Latin American Studies Program focused on the Program Goal #3 and on the Major's PLO #3b and Minor's PLO #2 described above. These two PLOs will be referred to as "**PLOs 3b/2**" to represent both Major and Minor on this aggregate document. We concentrated on "...demonstrate familiarity with the region's cultural and literary production" from Program Goal #3, placing an emphasis on live and written performance works (as opposed to literary works, as we had done for the 2015 assessment. Explanation for the repeat on following section).

We selected one elective course within the required "Cultural Perspectives" cluster, namely, Latin/x America Performance & Culture (LAS/THTR 305-01). There were 40 students enrolled, with about a third of students in the class being LAS majors or minors. This course fulfills the Cultural Designation requirement for both Major and Minor. The course was taught by Professor Roberto Varea. This is also an elective course within the required "Performance & Culture" cluster offered by the Department of Performing Arts, covering the core F requirement.

The primary tool used to assess PLOs #3b/2 was the final, take-home course essay, focusing on questions partially designed to address this assessment. This exam was assigned by Professor Roberto Varea. An independent group of faculty which included Profs. Gonzalez and Gascon, and also Prof. Varea read the papers and conducted the assessment, using the rubrics included in “additional materials.”

The PLOs #3b/2 rubric states: “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.” We assigned 2 points to the papers that met that criteria, 1 point to the papers that did not, and 3 points to the papers that exceeded it. After sharing and comparing our scoring, we decided to allow for a half point rating to score papers that fell in between (considering a 1.5 and 2.5 rating).

Final Essay: The final essay was 6 to 8 pages in length. Students were required to pick 2 out of three questions/prompts designed to align with PLOs #3b/2. The essay had to include the main research questions, cite from at least three sources presented in class during the semester, and a bibliography including at least 2 scholarly sources not cited in the course outline. Students also had to write a similar length paper relating these themes to their Service Learning experience, but that portion of the final was not included as part of this assessment.

### III. RESULTS & MAJOR FINDINGS

#### 6. 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.

Using the criteria outlined in the point above, of the thirteen students evaluated, none of them fell into the “Does Not Meet = 1 pt.,” described as *Students can basically summarize but offer no significant analysis of performative / dramatic works, and/or other artistic and cultural production.*

Three students fell into “Meets = 2pts.,” described as *Students can summarize and offer basic analysis of performative / dramatic works, and/or other artistic and cultural production, including reflection of their historical context and systemic inequalities,* representing 23.07%.

Six students fell into the “between Meets and Exceeds category = 2.5 pts.,” representing our true median at 46.15%.

Finally, four students fell into the “Exceeds = 3pts.” described as *Students can go beyond summary to offer original critique, informed by secondary sources, of performative / dramatic works, and/or other artistic and cultural production, including reflection of their historical context and systemic inequalities*, representing 30.78%.

In general terms, students showed no problems with organization, writing skills, or argumentation, with the majority (76.93%) offering original and thoughtful arguments on the topic of their research including citations beyond the required bibliography or number of case studies required for analysis.

This represents a major improvement from our last assessment of similar PLOs during the 15-16 cycle, when we looked at 15 students in a Spanish Literature course. Of those, one student (6.66%) met all of the requirements of the assignment and demonstrated an “Exceeding ability” 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, and four students (26.66%) accomplished an “Exceeds partially” achievement of outcome. Nine students (60%) demonstrated an “Meets” achievement of outcome, where they complied with the requirements of the assignment, but did not go beyond its expectations, while one student (6.66%) received a “poor” achievement grade. The 2015/16 results were not surprising for an upper-division, highest level and demanding course which was also taught in Spanish, as opposed to the one reviewed this year, taught in English.

There is no comparable data for the Minor relating to this same PLO as we only evaluated the Major during that cycle.

These very positive results somehow exceeded our expectations for a demanding course, albeit one that supports the student’s process to understand terminology and analytical tools, and hammers key concepts relating to Performance Studies and Latin American Studies semester long.

<b><u>2017/18 Cycle:</u></b> Level	Percentage of Students
Exceeded “meets outcome” to Mastery level	30.78%
Exceeded “meets outcome” in most parts	46.15%
Met the outcome in most parts	23.07%
Did Not Meet the outcome at the level intended	0%

#### IV. CLOSING THE LOOP

- 7. 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.**

Compared with the results of the assessment report submitted in 2017 when we focused on PLOs 4a and 4b for the Major and PLO 2, but with a different focus (on Brazilian culture,) for the Minor, the percentage of students that “exceeded meeting the outcome” showing a higher ability significantly improved in both instances. During last year’s assessment, 36.83% exceeded the average for PLO 4a, and 47.36% did the same for PLO 4b. While this year we only focused on PLO 3b with a performance focus, the 76.93% of students scoring over the “meets requirement” / average rubric represents an improvement of 40.1 and 29.57% respectively.

Last year the Minor also showed 47.36% of students that scored “exceeded meeting the outcome,” with this year representing an improvement of 29.57%.

It is important to note that comparing this year to last involves comparing two different “perspectives” –social with cultural– from our required “clusters.” If we were to compare it with our last assessment of PLO 3b, with a focus on literature in 2015 –for the Major only– the improvement is still notable. In 2015, 33.32% of students scored above the “meets the outcome” average. In comparison, this year our students improved by more than 40 percentage points.

This year’s sample focus on only the LAS majors and minors taking the class may have played a role in bumping up those numbers, as these students have a stronger investment on the issues raised compared to the average student taking the class to fulfill their core F requirement. The 2015/16 cycle also involved students having to express themselves in Spanish, and this year the essays were written in English, which we can also hypothesize as playing a role in bumping those numbers up.

While the exercise was still very useful to take the gauge our majors and minors improvement in relation to this PLO based on past scoring on the same ones, I will recommend to our board to look at a totally random sample next time, and also to put the PLOs #3b/2 to rest for a while, concentrating next year on ones we have not yet addressed.

- 8. What were the most important suggestions/feedback from the FDCD on your last assessment report (for academic year 2016-2017, submitted in October 2017)? How did you incorporate or address the suggestion(s) in this report?**

The main suggestion was to reduce the number of individual outcome statements. While we have not done so yet, we are currently in the midst of a curriculum revision which will definitely include a revision and tightening of our PLOs.

We were also curious about progress on similar areas, so we decided to address the previous lack of comparative data by focusing on the same PLOs from a past assessment. While this is only the fourth assessment that the program undertakes, we wanted to take the opportunity to go back to see if a PLO we had assessed before had shown improvement, and take note of any changes. We will continue to process this data as we continue to work on our new curriculum.

## ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

**(Any rubrics used for assessment, relevant tables, charts and figures should be included here)**

LAS Major & Minor learning outcomes assessment  
October 19, 2018

**MAJOR: PLO 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.**

**MINOR: PLO 2. Students can individually and comparatively describe and analyze the diversity of the Latin American region and its peoples from at least two perspectives (social, cultural, historical, and/or religious and philosophical).**

- Course: LAS 305 Latin/x America: Performance & Culture
- Assignment: Final Written Essay
- Professor: Roberto Varea

Criteria	3=Exceeds	2=Meets	1=Does Not Meet
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<p><b>PLO 3b. (Major)</b>  <i>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</i>  <b>///</b>  <b>PLO 2. (Minor)</b>  <i>Students can individually and comparatively describe and analyze the diversity of the Latin American region and its peoples from the cultural perspective</i></p>	<p>Students can go beyond summary to offer original critique, informed by secondary sources, of performative / dramatic works, and/or other artistic and cultural production, including reflection of their historical context and systemic inequalities.</p>	<p>Students can summarize and offer basic analysis of performative / dramatic works, and/or other artistic and cultural production, including reflection of their historical context and systemic inequalities.</p>	<p>Students can basically summarize but offer no significant analysis of performative / dramatic works, and/or other artistic and cultural production.</p>
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