

## Latin American Studies Program (LAS) 2016 - 17 Yearly Assessment Report College of Arts and Sciences

### **1. Identifying Information:**

Name of Program: Latin American Studies (LAS)

Type of Program: Major

College of Arts and Sciences Division: Social Sciences

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

Name/Email Address of Additional Individuals Who Should Receive Feedback: Professor Cecilia Santos, [santos@usfca.edu](mailto:santos@usfca.edu); Gladys Perez, [gaperez5@usfca.edu](mailto:gaperez5@usfca.edu)

### **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.

### **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

#### **4. Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs):**

- 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.

#### **5. Brief Summary of Most Recent Assessment Plan:**

Our last report was submitted by our last Program Director, Cecilia Santos. 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.

Prof. Santos 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 2015 semester, focusing on our students' ability to communicate effectively in Spanish about the Latin American cultural and literary production.

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

The primary tool used to assess the PLO #3b was a final essay written in Spanish. This exam was assigned by Professor Karina Hodoyan.

The report concluded that:

- The LAS students evaluated are performing well.
- The results were what we expected 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.
- The efforts to improve students' performance and reduce the percentage of students that score in medium level c (@25% and consistent in all goals assessed) is showing results.

## **6. Academic Program Review:**

The most recent Academic Program Review's External Reviewer Visit took place in the Fall of 2016. After the Program received the external reviewers' letter, the LAS Advisory Board discussed the external reviewers' recommendations during meetings conducted in the Spring and Fall of 2017. The LAS Director and Advisory Board members met with the Dean of Arts and Sciences, the Associate Dean for the Social Sciences, and the Associate Dean for Academic Effectiveness in the Fall of 2017. An "action plan" discussed at the time.

## **7. Methods:**

For Spring 2017, the Latin American Studies Program focused on the Program Goal #4 and on the PLOs #4a and #4b, which are described above.

We selected one elective course within the “Social Perspectives” cluster, namely, Brazilian Culture and Society (SOC 361-01). This is an upper-division elective course offered by the Department of Sociology. This course fulfills the Cultural Designation requirement. The course was taught by Professor Cecilia Santos. There were 19 students enrolled. Students’ learning outcomes were assessed throughout the Spring 2017 semester.

Our aim was to assess students’ ability to communicate knowledge about one country in Latin America (in this case, Brazil, the largest country in the region) and generate independent knowledge about contemporary Brazilian culture and society. The Program Goal # 4 and correspondent PLOs # 4a and # 4b were not assessed in any of our previous assessment plans carried out in 2016 and 2012, respectively. In 2016, we assessed Program Goal # 3 and PLO # 3a, as noted above, and in 2012 we assessed Program Goals # 1 and # 2.

We used the following rubrics to assess the PLOs #4a and #4b:

<p><b>4a. Students can craft a well-organized and clearly written multi-page essay.</b></p>	<p><b>a.</b> Students have trouble with basic organization, expression, and format</p>	<p><b>b.</b></p>	<p><b>c.</b> Students can produce an organized essay with a clear thesis and few grammatical errors.</p>	<p><b>d.</b></p>	<p><b>e.</b> Students show no problems with organization, expression, or argumentation, and offer original and thoughtful arguments.</p>
<p><b>4b. Students can express themselves coherently and thoughtfully in discussions and presentations.</b></p>	<p><b>a.</b> Students rarely contribute to classroom discussion or do not advance such discussions; presentations are disorganized and show little preparation.</p>	<p><b>b.</b></p>	<p><b>c.</b> Students offer pertinent and regular contributions to classroom discussion; presentations are on topic, prepared in advanced and easy to follow.</p>	<p><b>d.</b></p>	<p><b>e.</b> Students offer thoughtful, regular contributions that advance classroom discussion; presentations are well-prepared, organized, delivered, and offer original insight.</p>

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

Direct methods (research presentation, final research paper, and leading in-class discussion of one reading): The direct tools used to assess the PLO #4a and #4b were a

paper proposal, a research presentation, a final research paper, and leading one in-class discussion. All assignments were created by Professor Cecilia Santos for the course Brazilian Culture and Society (SOC 361-01), used to assess the PLOs #4a and #4b. Students received detailed written guidelines for each assignment. Professor Santos graded the nineteen students enrolled in this course.

Paper proposal: The paper proposal was 2 to 3 pages in length. Students were required to select a topic relating to any aspects of contemporary Brazilian culture and society. The proposal had to include the topic, one main research question, rationale for selecting such topic, expected findings, and a preliminary bibliography including at least 3 scholarly sources not cited in the course outline. Besides receiving written feedback, students were also required to make an appointment with the instructor to receive further guidance and follow up on the progress of their research projects.

Paper presentation. The preliminary findings of each individual research project were presented in class two weeks before the final paper was due.

Leading one in-class discussion. Each student was required to lead one in-class discussion on an assigned reading during the semester. The student had to prepare at least two questions and a comment of substance drawing from the selected reading. The questions and comments were posted on Canvas and presented to the class.

Indirect methods (individual meetings with students and class participation): The indirect tools utilized by the professor to assess PLO #4a and especially PLO #4b were individual meetings with the students and observation of their participation in class. As noted above, after submitting their research proposals, every student met with the professor to go over her/his ideas. Before turning in the final draft of their papers, all students made in-class presentations of preliminary results of their research projects and received feedback from the professor and their peers. After their research presentations, some students also held individual meetings with the professor for further comments on earlier drafts of their papers. Besides the individual meetings and leading one in-class discussion of a selected reading, all students were required to participate in class. This included participating in small group discussions, in-class debates, and making general contributions to collective learning through comments and questions on the lectures, videos showed in class, and the larger class discussions.

## 8. Results:

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

	Rubric a	Rubric b	Rubric c	Rubric d	Rubric e
PLO # 4a (paper)	1 (5.26%)	1 (5.26%)	6 (31.57%)	5 (26.31%)	2 (10.52%)
PLO # 4b (class presentation & participation)	1 (5.26%)		8 (42.10%)	5 (26.31%)	4 (21.05%)

The rubrics regarding the two PLOs were very similar. However, students did better in their class presentations and class participation than in their research papers.

Only two students (10.52%) demonstrated a “higher ability” (e) to craft a well-organized and clearly written multi-page essay. These students showed no problems with organization, writing skills, or argumentation, and offered original and thoughtful arguments on the topic of their research (PLO #4a). The double number of students (21.05%) achieved the highest outcome (e) with respect to their research presentations and class participation (PLO #4b).

For both PLOs, five students (26.66%) accomplished a “good” achievement of outcome (d).

Six students (31.75%) demonstrated an “average” achievement of outcome (c) in relation to PLO #4a, whereas a higher percentage of students (42.10%) achieved the same outcome (c) in relation to PLO #4b.

For PLO #4a, two students (11.52%) achieved a “below average” outcome (a and b), whereas only one student (5.25%) was “below average” (a) regarding PLO #4b.

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

Compared with the results of the assessment report submitted in 2016, the percentage of students scoring a “higher ability” achievement of outcome (e) almost doubled for PLO # 4a, and was almost four times higher regarding PLO #4b. The percentage of students scoring a “good” achievement of outcome (d) remained almost the same as that scored in 2016. On the other hand, contrary to the previous assessment, there was one student scoring a “very poor” achievement of outcome (a) on both PLOs #4a and #4b. The higher percentage at the top and at the bottom of the scores resulted in a lower percentage of “average” achievement of outcome (c) compared with that in 2016 for both PLO’s.

However, because the sample was small in both assessment periods (Spring 2016 and Spring 2017), and the Program did not assess the same PLOs every year, it is not possible to make sense of the implications of the data collected this year.

	PLO1a	PLO2a	PLO2b	PLO2c	PLO3a	PLO3b	PLO4a	PLO4b	PLO4c	PLO5a	PLO5b	PLO5c
<b>Latin American Studies Program Learning Outcomes X Courses</b>	Students can describe and contrast patterns of geographic and sociocultural diversity in the region.	Students can identify, classify and analyze the main historical periods of Latin American development.	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.	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.	Students can read advanced texts; write about daily activities; and communicate with native speakers about everyday topics and personal opinions.	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.	Students can craft a well-organized and clearly written multi-page essay.	Students can express themselves clearly, coherently and thoughtfully in discussions and presentations.	Students can demonstrate the research skills necessary to make original contributions to the study of Latin America.	Students can summarize and critically assess current social, political and economic issues in the region.	Students can describe and critically appraise their academic and extra-curricular experiences in Latin America.	Students can promote understanding of Latin America in educational, service, social, or employment contexts.
<b>Courses or Program Requirement</b>												
<b>Required Core Courses</b>												
LAS 376/HIS Latin American Perspectives	I	M	I	I			D	D	D	I		I
SPAN 202 Fourth Semester Spanish OR					M		M	M	M			
SPAN 222 Spanish for Bilingual Students II OR					M		D	M	M			
PCRT 202 Fourth Semester Portuguese					M		D	M	M			
<b>Religious and Philosophical Perspectives</b>												
LAS 301/THH Religion in Latin America	D	D							D	D		
LAS 322/THH Liberation Theology	I	I							D	D		
LAS 340/THH Pan-American Saints: Hagiography and Politics	D	D							D	D		
LAS 363/PHH Latin American Philosophy									M	M		
THRS 345 Religion of US Latinos				D					D	D		
THRS 390 Race and Religion in the Americas	D	D		D					M	D		
THRS 422/SL Liberation Theology in Spanish	I								D	D		
<b>Partial Coverage Courses</b>												
THRS 305 Feminist Theology: From the Third World	I								D	D	I	
<b>Historical Perspectives</b>												
LAS 370/HIS Colonial Latin America	D	D		I					M	M		
LAS 371/HIS Modern Latin America	D	D		D					M	M	D	
LAS 372/HIS Indigenous and Colonial Mexico	D	D		I					M	M	D	
LAS 373/HIS Modern Mexico	D	D		I					M	M	D	
LAS 374/HIS Central America and the Caribbean	D	D		I					M	M	D	
LAS 375/HIS Brazil and Amazonia	D	D		I					M	M	D	
LAS 377/HIS The Southern Cone	D	D		I					M	M	D	
LAS 378/HIS Andean Nations	D	D		I					M	M	D	
LAS 379/HIS Latinos in the US	D	D		I					M	M	D	
LAS 430/HIS Undergraduate Seminar in Latin American History	M	D	D	D					M	M		
SPAN 390 SpP: Revolution and Rebellion in Mexico during the 20th-21st Centuries	D	I	D	D	D				M	M	D	
<b>Latin American Studies Program Learning Outcomes X Courses</b>	Students can describe and contrast patterns of geographic and sociocultural diversity in the region.	Students can identify, classify and analyze the main historical periods of Latin American development.	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.	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.	Students can read advanced texts; write about daily activities; and communicate with native speakers about everyday topics and personal opinions.	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.	Students can craft a well-organized and clearly written multi-page essay.	Students can express themselves clearly, coherently and thoughtfully in discussions and presentations.	Students can demonstrate the research skills necessary to make original contributions to the study of Latin America.	Students can summarize and critically assess current social, political and economic issues in the region.	Students can describe and critically appraise their academic and extra-curricular experiences in Latin America.	Students can promote understanding of Latin America in educational, service, social, or employment contexts.
<b>Courses or Program Requirement</b>												
<b>Cultural Perspectives</b>												
ENGL 212 Introduction to Chicano Literature												
LAS 305/THH Latin@ America Performance and Culture							D	M	M			
LAS 315/MS Telenovelas and Soap Operas							D	D	M		M	
LAS 317/MS Latin American Cinema									M			
LAS 351/SPA Ovidiario Publication (1-4 units)					M				M			
LAS 380/MS Latin@s in the US Media							D	D			D	
MS 216 Brazilian Cinema							D	D			D	
SPAN 206 Continuities and Conflicts in the Hispanic/Latino World	D						D	D			D	
SPAN 255 Small, Round & Juicy: The Modern Hispanic Short Story												
SPAN 272 Gender and Sexuality in Latina Literature												
SPAN 283 Subaltern Economic Experiences in Latin American Film and Literature					M		M	D	D			
SPAN 335 20th Century Spanish American Literature					M		D	D				
SPAN 336 Feminist Discourse and Feminist Theories in Latin American Literature												
SPAN 346 Evil in Latin American, Hispanic and Latino Literature												
SPAN 360 Studies in Latin American Culture	I				D		D	D				
SPAN 375 Literature of US-Mexico Borderlands			M		M		M	M	D	D		
SPAN 431 Rewriting Dante's Divina Commedia in Hispanic Literature					M		M	M	M	D		
SPAN 437 Unending Hearts: Reading Reality: Latin American Narratives					M		M	M	M	D		
SPAN 458 The Latin American City in Its Cinema: Urban Spaces and Living Practices	M	D			M		M	M	M	D		
SPAN 459 Borges, the Readerly Writer					M		M	M	M	D		
<b>Partial Coverage Courses</b>												
ART 309 Art of the Americas												
LAS 210/ML Music of the Americas												
LAS 350/MS Human Rights and Film												
MUS 203 Music and Social Protest												
THRS 303 Performance and Cultural Resistance												
<b>Latin American Studies Program Learning Outcomes X Courses</b>	Students can describe and contrast patterns of geographic and sociocultural diversity in the region.	Students can identify, classify and analyze the main historical periods of Latin American development.	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.	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.	Students can read advanced texts; write about daily activities; and communicate with native speakers about everyday topics and personal opinions.	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.	Students can craft a well-organized and clearly written multi-page essay.	Students can express themselves clearly, coherently and thoughtfully in discussions and presentations.	Students can demonstrate the research skills necessary to make original contributions to the study of Latin America.	Students can summarize and critically assess current social, political and economic issues in the region.	Students can describe and critically appraise their academic and extra-curricular experiences in Latin America.	Students can promote understanding of Latin America in educational, service, social, or employment contexts.
<b>Courses or Program Requirement</b>												
<b>Social Perspectives</b>												
CCON 286 Economics of Latin America	I	D	D	D	D		M	M	D	D		
INTD 363 Economics of the Developing World	I	D	D	D	D		M	M	D	D		
LAS 313/SC Latin@-Chicano@ Culture and Society							M	M	D	D		
LAS 331/PO Latin American Politics					D		M	M	D	D		
LAS 396 Immigration (1-4 units)							M	M	D	D		
POLS 325 Latino Politics in the US			I				D	M	D	D	M	M
SOC 314 U.S. Mexico Borderlands	I				M		M	M	D	D		
SOC 361 Brazilian Culture and Society	I	I	I	I	I		M	M	D	D		
SPAN 225 Spanish and Spanish Speakers					M		D	M	D	D		
SPAN 325 Language and Culture in Latin America					D		D	M	D	D		
SPAN 301 Building Bridges			D		D		D	M	D	D		
<b>Partial Coverage Courses</b>												
ECON 473 *International Macroeconomics			I	D					D	D		
MS 407 *Alternative Media & Social Change							D		D	D		
POLS 210 *Immigration & Citizenship in US							D	D	D	D		
POLS 338 Gender and Politics in Comparative Perspective			I				D	D	D	D		
POLS 345 *Global Economic Justice			I				D	D	D	D		
POLS 450 *Political Economy of Developing Nations			I				D	D	D	D		
SOC 233 Gender, Development and Globalization			I				D	D	D	I		
SOC 302 *Global Inequalities and Social Justice			I				D	D	I	I		
SOC 322 Resistance to Corporate Globalization			I				D	D	I	I		
<b>Multi and Interdisciplinary Perspectives</b>												
(Applies to different categories depending on topic)												
LAS 345 CELASA Seminar	I		I		I		D	M	M	D	M	M
SPAN 390 Special Topics	I	I	I				D	D	D	I		

Key:  
I = Introductory  
D = Developing  
M = Mastery

Institutional Learning Outcomes X Program Learning Goals/Outcomes	PLO1	PLO2	PLO3	PLO4	PLO5
Institutional Learning Outcomes	Integrate perspectives from multiple disciplines to understand the diversity of the Latin American region and its peoples.	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.	Communicate effectively in Spanish and/or Portuguese and demonstrate familiarity with the region's cultural and literary production.	Communicate knowledge about the Latin American region and be able to generate independent knowledge.	Be socially responsible citizens of the Americas.
1. Students reflect on and analyze their attitudes, beliefs, values, and assumptions about diverse communities and cultures and contribute to the common good.	M				M
2. Students explain and apply disciplinary concepts, practices, and ethics of their chosen academic discipline in diverse communities.		M		M	
3. Students construct, interpret, analyze, and evaluate information and ideas derived from a multitude of sources.	M	M		M	
4. Students communicate effectively in written and oral forms to interact within their personal and professional communities.			M	M	
5. Students use technology to access and communicate information in their personal and professional lives.		D		D	
6. Students use multiple methods of inquiry and research processes to answer questions and solve problems.		M		D	
7. Students describe, analyze, and evaluate global interconnectedness in social, economic, environmental and political systems that shape diverse groups within the San Francisco Bay Area and the world.	M				M
Key: I = Introductory D = Developing M = Mastery					