

Latin American Studies Program
Bachelor of Arts in Latin American Studies
Plan for Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes
The University of New Mexico¹

A. College, Department and Date

1. College: *College of Arts & Sciences*
2. Department: *Latin American Studies Program*
3. Date: *November 29, 2009*

B. Academic Program of Study

B.A. Latin American Studies

C. Contact Persons for the Assessment Plan

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D. Broad Program Goals & Measurable Student Learning Outcomes

The Latin American Studies (LAS) Program is designed to provide students with a broad yet solid interdisciplinary foundation. Undergraduate students complete at least two semesters of 300-level Spanish or Portuguese, with supplementary skills in a second language [Spanish, Portuguese, Ecuadorian Quechua (Quichua), or Quiche Maya]. All undergraduate LAS majors select one of three Core Areas. Between their Core Area and Electives, they complete coursework in at least three different disciplines. The Core Areas are: (1) Humanities (art history, literature and culture, history, media arts, religious studies); (2) Social and Natural Sciences (anthropology, biology, community and regional planning, economics, history, management, political science, sociology); (3) Core Area Focus (self-designed) (ex. environment and ecology; development; gender; U.S.-Latin American relations). Approximately 65 percent of their area studies course work focuses on either the Social/Natural Sciences or the Humanities, providing significant structure and focus.

Goal 1: Students will acquire knowledge of at least three dimensions—historical, literary, economic, etc.—of local, regional, and international processes in Latin America.

¹ This plan draws from the assessment plan developed by Kimberly Gauderman for LAS in May 2008, and from the assessment plan of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, developed by Margo Milleret in consultation with the department faculty. The current revision responds to comments from the Special Assistant to the Dean for Assessment, Chuck Paine.

SLO 1.1: Students will draw on their knowledge of local, regional, or international processes in Latin America to identify and describe at least two dimensions—historical, literary, economic, etc.—of specific issues or problems.

Goal 2: Students will think critically and solve problems on Latin American topics through the lens of various disciplinary perspectives.

SLO 2.1: Students will solve research problems on specifically-defined Latin American topics by applying two disciplinary perspectives and consulting and analyzing appropriate disciplinary sources.

SLO 2.2 Students will present their research in compelling, coherent, clearly-written analytical arguments, supported by appropriate documentation and disciplinary citation style.

Goal 3: Students will become clear and effective communicators in English and in either Spanish or Portuguese.

SLO 3.1: Students will orally present information, concepts, and analyses in English, Spanish or Portuguese, in a clear and compelling manner, using appropriate vocabulary, and complex grammatical structures.

Goal 4: Students will become intercultural communicators, with communicative proficiency in one Latin American language, being able to demonstrate an understanding and acceptance of cultural differences while communicating.

SLO 4.1: Students will engage in interpersonal communication with peers and superiors in a Latin American language demonstrating fluency, accuracy, and culturally appropriate vocabulary and behavior.

E. Assessment of Student Learning Three-Year Plan

1. Student Learning Outcomes

Relationship to UNM Student Learning Goals

University of New Mexico Student Learning Goals				
Program SLOs	Knowledge	Skills	Responsibility	Program SLO is conceptually different from university goals.
SLO 1.1: Students will draw on their knowledge of local, regional, or international processes in Latin America to identify and describe at least two dimensions—historical, literary, economic, etc.—of specific issues or problems.	X	X	X	
SLO 2.2 Students will present their research in compelling, coherent, clearly-written analytical arguments, supported by appropriate documentation and disciplinary citation style.		X	X	

2. Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes (All measurements are direct.)

Measurement: 2009-12 for SLO 1.1 and 2.2

In spring 2010, a Graduate Assistant, under the supervision of the Associate Director for Academic Programs, will collect two essays in electronic form from every LAS major graduating in 2010. The essays will come from the most recent 400-level LAS courses each student has completed, with each essay representing a different discipline. They will be assessed by a team including the Associate Director for Academic Programs, at least three members of ICLAS, and a Graduate Assistant in the MA/LAS program, seeking the greatest coverage of disciplines represented among the essays. Team members will read and assess the essays prior to a team meeting. At the meeting, team members will compare ratings and discuss those where ratings differ. The team will evaluate the essays based on the attached rubric. We expect that at least 60% of essays will achieve a score of 9 or better on a 15-point scale, where a score from 9 to 13 constitutes work that **fully meets** expectations for the BA in Latin American Studies. [We did not decide on a criterion. I offer this one.]

The purpose of the discussions will be to discuss program objectives and methods of achieving those objectives, including what constitutes adequate multidisciplinary knowledge, how best to facilitate students' application of multiple perspectives to their analysis of an issue, what constitutes good research and writing, and ways to ensure that the program allows students to develop these skills. The team will also discuss possible modifications to improve the assessment instrument to best serve our desired curricular goals.

The MA/LAS Graduate Assistant will prepare a written report of the assessment findings, under the supervision of the Associate Director for Academic Programs. This report will be distributed to ICLAS. ICLAS will discuss the findings in their first fall meeting of 2010 and make a decision regarding distribution of the report to all LAS faculty.

The assessment process will be repeated in 2011 and 2012 with rubrics revised during assessment discussions. Once LTAM 400 Introduction to Latin American Society I and II have been approved as major requirements, essays for evaluation will come from these courses.

Analysis and interpretation of data

The Associate Director for Academic Programs will report to ICLAS the findings of the assessments each year in the fall following the collection and analysis of data from the spring. ICLAS will discuss the implications of the data for curricular development and for the following assessment cycle. For example, was the assessment measure effective, or does it need to be altered? Did the results meet, exceed, or fall short of departmental expectations? What actions need to be taken in the future to either change the measurement or change the expectations, pedagogy, curriculum, or advising? The Associate Director will prepare a report to disseminate to the Latin American Studies faculty as a whole.

Approval of Outcomes Assessment Plans

Assessment plan approved by ICLAS December 2, 2009.

Kathryn McKnight
Associate Director for Academic Programs

Latin American Studies, University of New Mexico
BA Assessment Rubric for SLO 1.1 and 2.2
Based on papers from two different disciplinary courses

Goals of Latin American Studies Majors:

Latin American Studies majors will:

- 1) Acquire knowledge of at least three dimensions—historical, literary, economic, etc.—of local, regional, and international processes in Latin America;
- 2) Think critically and solve problems on Latin American topics through the lens of various disciplinary perspectives;
- 3) Communicate clearly and effectively in English and in either Spanish or Portuguese;
- 4) Become intercultural communicators, with communicative proficiency in one Latin American language, and demonstrating an understanding and acceptance of cultural differences while communicating.

In years 1-3 of the assessment cycle (2010-2013), ICLAS will assess students' achievement of the following two objectives:

- SLO 1.1: Students will draw on their knowledge of local, regional, or international processes in Latin America to identify and describe at least two dimensions—historical, literary, economic, etc.—of specific issues or problems.
- SLO 2.2: Students will present their research in compelling, coherent, clearly-written analytical arguments, supported by appropriate documentation and disciplinary citation style.

The following assessment rubric will be used to measure outcomes for SLO 1.1 and 2.2. Two papers will be assessed from each student and the average score will be used to assess the students' mastery of writing in two disciplinary fields (SLO 1.1).

Possible scores range from 0-15.

- Scores from 14-15 constitute work that **exceeds** expectations for the BA in Latin American Studies.
- Scores from 9-13 constitute work that **fully meets** expectations for the BA in Latin American Studies.
- Scores from 5-8 constitute work that **meets basic** expectations for the BA in Latin American Studies.
- Scores less than 5 constitute work that **does not meet** expectations for the BA in Latin American Studies.

	3 points	2 points	1 points	0 points
Knowledge of local, regional, or international processes in Latin America	In-depth knowledge of specific topic, supported by abundant main ideas and details.	Developed knowledge of specific topic, supported with 3-4 main ideas.	General knowledge of topic, supported with 1-2 main ideas.	Topic stated, but not explored or treated with depth or accuracy.
	Sophisticated and relevant discussion of topic's importance within broader Latin American processes.	Relevant discussion of topic's importance within broader Latin American processes.	Discussion of specific topic or broad context, but not both.	Little or no knowledge of specific topic or broader Latin American processes.
Use of disciplinary or field-appropriate approaches and techniques	Field-appropriate research questions, relevant to topic and sources, which could lead to new knowledge.	Field-appropriate research questions, relevant to topic or sources, could lead to new knowledge.	Research questions relate to topic or sources and are field-relevant.	Topic may or may not be field relevant; question or topic may be vague.
	Consults abundance of relevant primary and secondary sources, with full understanding.	Consults several relevant primary and secondary sources, demonstrating defensible understanding of sources.	Consults one or more relevant sources, comprehension errors do not undermine argument.	May or may not consult a field-relevant source. Comprehension may demonstrate significant errors.
	Applies field-appropriate methods and analytical techniques skillfully and thoroughly.	Applies field-appropriate methods and techniques of analysis.	Demonstrates relevant analysis.	May be limited to description, summary, or speculation.
	Argument supported by strong grasp of relevant theoretical concepts.	Argument may implement field-relevant concepts with accuracy.	Analysis may demonstrate partial grasp of relevant concepts.	
Quality and originality of ideas, analysis, argument, and evidence	Topic and ideas show original, creative, and higher-order thinking.	Topic and ideas show evidence of higher-order thinking.	Topic and ideas show defensible thinking.	Thoughts consider only the readily apparent or are unsupported.
	Arguments, evidence, and ideas support and elaborate on topic.	Arguments, evidence, and ideas strongly support topic.	Arguments, evidence, and ideas are relevant to topic.	Arguments and evidence not present.
	Factual evidence, compelling arguments and ideas, research-supported and well cited.	Factual evidence, interesting ideas supported with cited research.	Arguments, ideas, and evidence logical or research supported.	Ideas, arguments, and evidence based on opinions or flawed logic.
	Counterarguments considered and refuted.	Readily apparent counterarguments considered.	Counterarguments or alternative interpretations not considered.	
Organization, clarity, development, and coherence	Topic or point of view stated in well-incorporated opening and closing.	Topic or point of view stated in opening and closing.	Topic explicitly stated.	Focus may be unclear.
	Elements and ideas related to topic, to each other, and to audience.	Elements and ideas related to topic and each other.	Elements and ideas related to topic or to each other.	Major elements isolated or not related to each other.
	Ideas and thoughts are fully and clearly explained.	Ideas and thoughts are adequately explained.		
	Organization moves smoothly from topic to main ideas to details, with effective transitions.	Organization moves from topic to main ideas and details, with transitions.	Paper shows evidence of organization, but may stray from topic.	Organization scattered, disjointed.
Mechanics	Language clear, natural, engaging, and accurate.	Language clear and natural, errors do not interfere with meaning.	Language mostly comprehensible.	Errors and lack of clarity make reading difficult.
	Paragraphs facilitate reading.	Paragraphs facilitate reading.	Paragraphs used.	Paragraphs may not be used.
	Virtually no spelling errors.	Few spelling errors.	Spelling errors do not interfere with readability.	Spelling errors interfere with readability.
	Citation style is smooth and accurate.	Citation style is mostly accurate.	Sources identified and distinguished from writers' ideas and words.	Plagiarism may be present.
	Full and accurate documentation following appropriate style.	Sources documented with appropriate style.	Sources documented.	