

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

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**A. College, Department and Date**

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

**B. Academic Program of Study**

*M.A. Latin American Studies*

**C. Contact Person(s) for the Assessment Plan**

*Kathryn McKnight, Associate Director of the LAII for Academic Programs,*  
[\*mcknight@unm.edu\*](mailto:mcknight@unm.edu)

**D. Broad Program Goals & Measurable Student Learning Outcomes**

The Latin American Studies (LAS) Program is designed to provide MA students with a broad yet solid interdisciplinary foundation. The MA in Latin American Studies is designed to prepare students for careers in government service, teaching, scholarship, business, travel, and tourism, and inter-American and/or non-governmental organizations. In addition, the program complements graduate work in a student's chosen professional field (i.e. dual degrees: the LAS Program has four formalized dual-degree programs with Community & Regional Planning, Education (LLSS), the Law School, and the Robert O. Anderson Schools of Management) and provides graduate training in preparation for the pursuit of a disciplinary or interdisciplinary PhD. Graduate concentrations include Anthropology, Art History, Brazilian Literature & Culture, Community & Regional Planning, Economics, Gender Studies, History, Human Rights, International Management, Political Science, Religions & Philosophy, Sociology, Southwest Studies, Spanish American Literature, and Spanish Linguistics.

Goal 1: Students will develop in-depth knowledge in two fields of concentration in Latin American Studies, including at least one disciplinary field of study.

SLO 1.1: Students will describe in depth specific Latin American issues or problems in relation to local, regional, and international processes, in two fields of concentration.

Goal 2: Students will learn theory and/or research methods in two disciplines.

SLO 2.1: Students will solve a research problem on a specifically-defined Latin American topic by applying a disciplinary perspective and consulting and analyzing appropriate disciplinary sources or data.

Goal 3: Students will develop and utilize academic forms of written and oral communication to present their research.

SLO 3.1 Students will present their research orally or in writing in compelling, coherent, clear analytical arguments, supported by appropriate documentation and disciplinary citation style.

Goal 4: Students will develop and apply interdisciplinary of methods to Latin American topics.

SLO 4.1: Students will solve a research problem by applying an interdisciplinary methodology and sources appropriate to both disciplines.

**E. Assessment of Student Learning Three-Year Plan**

**1. Student Learning Outcomes**

All of the program’s SLOs at the graduate level meet the university’s goals of Knowledge, Skills, and Responsibility. All measurements described below are direct measurements.

<b>University of New Mexico Student Learning Goals</b>				
<b>Program SLOs</b>	<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Skills</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Program SLO is conceptually different from university goals.</b>
SLO 1.1: Students will describe in depth specific Latin American issues or problems in relation to local, regional, and international processes, in two fields of concentration.	X	X	X	
SLO 4.1: Students will solve a research problem by applying an interdisciplinary methodology and sources appropriate to both disciplines.	X	X	X	

## **2. Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes**

### **Measurement: 2009-12 for SLO 1.1**

Faculty on each student's Committee on Studies (COS) will grade the respective MA and exams using the attached rubric. The Associate Director for Academic Programs will create a written report of the results. We expect that 80% of all MA exams will rate at a low pass or above, and 60% will be at a pass or above. SLO 1.1 will be assessed three years in a row, following the same method of collection and team assessment, with a rubric revised on the basis of the prior year's experience.

### **Measurement: 2011-2012 for SLO 4.1**

For MA students completing an interdisciplinary thesis, the members of the Committee on Studies will evaluate the thesis based on the attached rubric (to be developed) and will submit their evaluations to the Associate Director, who will compile the results and present them to ICLAS at the first meeting of the fall semester. We expect that 80% of theses will be accepted for the degree.

### **Analysis and interpretation of data**

ICLAS will discuss MA assessment in the second meeting of spring semester. The purpose of the discussions will also be to share ideas regarding program objectives and methods of achieving those objectives, including what constitutes adequate knowledge of core Latin American content and discipline-specific theory, and the ability to apply this knowledge to developing a coherent argument on a Latin American issue, problem, event, or textual corpus, and the degree to which students achieve these objectives.

Particular attention will be paid to the interdisciplinary concentration exams—Gender Studies, Human Rights, and Southwest Studies—and interdisciplinary theses. ICLAS will discuss the implications of the data for curricular development. For example, was the assessment measure effective, or does it need to be altered? Did the results meet, exceed, or fall short of program 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 for Academic Programs will summarize the ICLAS discussion and disseminate to Latin American Studies faculty by the end of the academic year.

### **Approval of Outcomes Assessment Plans**

This assessment plan was approved by ICLAS on December 2, 2009, with the exception of the SLO 4.1 measurement, which was not discussed.

Kathryn McKnight  
Associate Director for Academic Programs

**Latin American Studies, University of New Mexico**  
**MALAS Comprehensive Exam Assessment Rubric for SLO 1.1**  
**Evaluation Rubric for the Comprehensive Exams**

**Student Learning Objective (SLO) 1.1:** Students will describe in depth specific Latin American issues or problems in relation to local, regional, and international processes, in two fields of concentration.

**MA/LAS Exam Goals:** MA/LAS students should demonstrate their breadth of preparation in the Latin American field, including:

- 1) In-depth knowledge in two fields of concentration in Latin American Studies, including at least one disciplinary field of study;
- 2) An understanding of the theory and/or methodology of two academic disciplines;
- 3) The ability to apply a disciplinary perspective, including theory and/or methodology, to field-relevant literature or data in the discussion of issues, problems, or cases;
- 4) The ability to bring to their analysis of these issues, problems, or cases, a breadth of knowledge of the history, society, and culture(s) of Latin America.

**Exam Evaluation Rubric:**

The MA/LAS comprehensive exam is evaluated according to the following guidelines:

**High Pass:** This exam overall exceeds expectations for this level of graduate studies. The essay:

- 1) demonstrates comprehensive mastery of specific Latin American issues, problems, or cases, by describing them in relation to contemporary, historical, local, regional, and/or international processes;
- 2) presents a sophisticated analytical thesis that responds to the problem posed;
- 3) demonstrates comprehensive understanding of the literature relevant to the field, by supporting the analysis with defensible interpretations of appropriate sources;
- 4) employs with mastery concepts, theory, methods, or approaches of the discipline or field;
- 5) demonstrates comprehensive mastery of the issues, problems, or cases;
- 6) thoroughly answers all parts of the question asked;
- 7) presents the ideas in compelling, coherent, clear analytical arguments, supported by appropriate bibliographical references.

**Pass:** This exam overall fully meets expectations for this level of graduate studies. The essay:

- 1) demonstrates comprehensive knowledge of specific Latin American issues, problems, or cases, by describing them in relation to contemporary, historical, local, regional, and/or international processes;
- 2) presents a comprehensible analytical thesis that responds to the problem posed;

- 3) demonstrates comprehensive knowledge of the literature relevant to the field, by supporting the analysis with defensible interpretations of appropriate sources;
- 4) employs concepts, theory, methods, or approaches of the discipline or field in an intelligent manner;
- 5) demonstrates a full understanding of the issues, problems, or cases;
- 6) addresses answers all parts of the question asked;
- 7) presents the ideas in an organized, analytical argument, in articulate language, supported by appropriate source references;
- 8) may have some extraneous or erroneous material, which does not detract from the overall quality of the essay.

**Low Pass:** This exam overall meets expectations for this level of graduate studies. The essay:

- 1) demonstrates adequate knowledge of specific Latin American issues, problems, or cases, by describing them in relation to contemporary, historical, local, regional, and/or international processes;
- 2) presents a thesis that responds to the problem posed;
- 3) demonstrates adequate knowledge of the literature relevant to the field, by supporting the analysis with defensible interpretations of appropriate sources;
- 4) demonstrates an understanding of some concepts, theory, methods, or approaches of the discipline or field;
- 5) demonstrates an adequate understanding of the issues, problems, or cases;
- 6) addresses the main points of the question asked;
- 7) presents the ideas in an organized, analytical argument, in articulate language, supported by appropriate source references;
- 8) may have some extraneous or erroneous material, which detracts from the overall quality of the essay.

**Fail:** This exam overall fails to meet expectations for this level of graduate studies. The essay does one or more of the following:

- 1) Fails to demonstrate adequate knowledge of specific Latin American issues, problems, or cases, by describing them in relation to contemporary, historical, local, regional, and/or international processes;
- 2) May not present a thesis that responds to the problem posed;
- 3) Fails to demonstrate adequate knowledge of the literature relevant to the field, by supporting the analysis with defensible interpretations of appropriate sources;
- 4) Fails to demonstrate an understanding of concepts, theory, methods, or approaches of the discipline or field;
- 5) Fails to demonstrate an adequate understanding of the issues, problems, or cases;
- 6) Does not addresses the main points of the question asked;
- 7) Presents the ideas in an unintelligible manner;
- 8) May consist primarily of summaries of the readings.