

# Program Assessment Report 2016-2017

**Program:** Latin American Studies

## Program Learning Description

PLOs #4 and #5: 4) discuss how literary works in Latin America represent cultural, social, and political issues such as the articulation and negotiation of class, racial, and sexual identities. 5) communicate with proficiency in the target language.

**Identify the artifact(s) (i.e. student work or outputs) that you used to assess the PLO. [Projects, papers, presentations, portfolios, exam questions, specific assignments, capstone work]**

Since this academic year, we do not have graduating majors, we will assess two required courses taken by students in the concentration and major: SPAN 314 (PLO #5) and SPAN 331 (PLO #4). For the SPAN 314, a presentation is used as the artifact. For SPAN 330, a research paper.

## Other artifact(s)

**Identify the instruments (e.g. rubrics, surveys, spreadsheets, statistical software) used to assess the artifact(s) (i.e. the way in which student output are analyzed).**

## Other instruments Used

Papers

**Describe program collaboration to plan, implement and use the results of assessment.**

**Explain the results of the assessment activities.**

**Where applicable, outline the steps you will take to make improvements to the program based on the results of assessment activities identified in #3.**

SPAN 331: PLO 4) discuss how literary works in Latin America represent cultural, social, and political issues such as the articulation and negotiation of class, racial, and sexual identities.

Students in the SPAN 331 course were assessed via a research paper (6 pages), two versions; first version turned in before Thanksgiving break and the final version at the end of the semester. This research paper in Spanish has to contextualize, describe, and interpret a defining literary text from the Spanish-speaking world. This paper must include an introduction, a review of secondary sources, a contextualization of the text (i.e., the text's historical context and the relationship between the text and the perspectives of the culture), interpretation and analysis, and a conclusion. The review of secondary sources, the contextualization, and the interpretation and analysis may be presented discretely or interwoven, but the introduction and conclusion must be clearly identifiable. A rubric normed by Dr. Silva, course instructor, was used to score the papers into four categories: "Exemplary" (10-9), "Very good" (8), "Good" (6-7) and "Unsatisfactory" (5). Ten different criteria were evaluated: thesis, argumentation, conclusion, contextualization, organization and style, grammar and spelling and evidence (primary and secondary sources). A total of 6 papers were collected in SPAN 331 Fall 2016. The data shows that of the 6 assignments assessed, 2 were exemplary, 3 were very good and 1 was good.

The LAS minor student in this class displayed an exemplary level of achievement (9/10) in "discuss how literary works in Latin America represent cultural, social, and political issues such as the articulation and negotiation of class, racial, and sexual identities." Course instructor can provide copies of LAS student's graded paper with rubric.

SPAN 314: PLO #5: communicate with proficiency in the target language.

Students in the SPAN 314 course, Latin American Culture and Civilization, must give an brief oral presentation in Spanish (10-15 minutes) of their cultural portfolios. All student presentations should demonstrate proficiency in educated Spanish speech and technical language in the field. To make our assessment more systematic and comparable across time, this class has adopted a rubric for assessing the work similar in scope and focus to the one used by the National Standards for our profession: ACTFL (=American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) proficiency standards. All grading criteria (rubrics) were included in the syllabus. Each student thus receives a score ranging from 1 to 100 (5-point scale x 4 dimensions of evaluation –grammar, fluency, pronunciation and content-). During Spring 2017, a total of 6 oral presentations were graded. The data shows that of the 6 assignments assessed:

2 students scored in the advance-high sublevel (95-100). Students at the Advanced High sublevel perform all advanced-level tasks with linguistic ease, confidence, and competence. They are consistently able to explain in detail and narrate fully and accurately in all time frames. They can discuss some topics abstractly, especially those relating to their particular interests and special fields of expertise, but in general, they are more comfortable discussing a variety of topics concretely.

1 student scored in the advance-mid sublevel (90-94). Speakers at the Advanced Mid sublevel are able to handle with ease and confidence a large number of communicative tasks. Advanced Mid speakers demonstrate the ability to narrate and describe in the major time frames of past, present, and future by providing a full account, with good control of aspect. Advanced Mid speakers can handle successfully and with relative ease the linguistic challenges presented by a complication or unexpected turn of events that occurs within the context of a routine situation or communicative task with which they are otherwise familiar. The speech of Advanced Mid speakers performing Advanced-level tasks is marked by substantial flow. Their vocabulary is fairly extensive although primarily generic in nature, except in the case of a particular area of specialization or interest. Their discourse may still reflect the oral paragraph structure of their own language rather than that of the target language.

2 students scored in the advance low level (87-89). Advanced Low speakers demonstrate the ability to narrate and describe in the major time frames of past, present, and future in paragraph-length discourse with some control of aspect. In these narrations and descriptions, Advanced Low speakers combine and link sentences into connected discourse of paragraph length, although these narrations and descriptions tend to be handled separately rather than interwoven. The speaker's dominant language may be evident in the use of false cognates, literal translations, or the oral paragraph structure of that language. At times their discourse may be minimal for the level, marked by an irregular flow, and containing noticeable self-correction. More generally, the performance of Advanced Low speakers tends to be uneven. Advanced Low speech is typically marked by a certain grammatical roughness (e.g., inconsistent control of verb endings), but the overall performance of the Advanced-level tasks is sustained, albeit minimally. The vocabulary of Advanced Low speakers often lacks specificity. Nevertheless, Advanced Low speakers are able to use communicative strategies such as rephrasing and circumlocution.

1 student scored in the intermediate high level (84-87). Intermediate High speakers can handle a substantial number of tasks associated with the Advanced level, but they are unable to sustain performance of all of these tasks all of the time. Intermediate High speakers can narrate and describe in all major time frames using connected discourse of paragraph length, but not all the time. Typically, when Intermediate High speakers attempt to perform Advanced-level tasks, their speech exhibits one or more features of breakdown, such as the failure to carry out fully the narration or description in the appropriate major time frame, an inability to maintain paragraph-length discourse, or a reduction in breadth and appropriateness of vocabulary. Intermediate High speakers can generally be understood by native speakers unaccustomed to dealing with non-natives, although interference from another language may be evident (e.g., use of code-switching, false cognates, literal translations), and a pattern of gaps in communication may occur.

The LAS minor student in this class scored (97/100) in the Advanced High Level and she demonstrated her ability to "communicate with proficiency in the target language". Course instructor can provide copies of LAS student's graded oral presentation.

**Are there any new resources needed to create program improvements? If so, please include the resources that you will request in the Budget section of the Annual Report.**