

Program-Level Assessment: Annual Report

Program Name (no acronyms): American Studies

Department: American Studies

Degree or Certificate Level: BA

College/School: College of Arts and Sciences

Date (Month/Year): September 2022

Assessment Contact: Emily Lutenski, Chair

In what year was the data upon which this report is based collected? 2022

In what year was the program's assessment plan most recently reviewed/updated? 2022

Is this program accredited by an external program/disciplinary/specialized accrediting organization? No

1. Student Learning Outcomes

Which of the program's student learning outcomes were assessed in this annual assessment cycle? (Please list the full, complete learning outcome statements and not just numbers, e.g., Outcomes 1 and 2.)

SLO1: Students will explain the relevant contexts—such as historical, political, geographic, literary, artistic, social, or intellectual—that shape American cultural practices, expressions, or ideas.

SLO2: Students will assess how American cultural practices, expressions, or ideas are constructed by or interpreted through frameworks of nation, class, race, gender, ability, or sexuality.

SLO3: Students will synthesize two or more disciplinary approaches in analyses of American cultural practices, expressions, or ideas.

SLO4: Students will effectively articulate arguments and information about American cultural practices, expressions, and ideas.

SLO5: Students will demonstrate the ability bridge academic concerns with American cultural practices, expressions, and ideas and the concerns of broader public life.

We revised all SLOs and assessment plan in Summer 2022 in response to the feedback we received in Spring 2022. We essentially trialed the plan by completing our entire rubric this year and discussed it to see if the process and rubric is a functional starting point for our new procedures.

We will not generally be assessing more than one SLO per year unless our major numbers change significantly. This is because, as our assessment plan (attached) points out, our BA major numbers are currently small. To gather enough student artifacts to create meaningful assessment data, we need to accumulate senior theses and surveys for a length of time. When our major numbers increase, we may choose to modify this assessment plan to initiate a more rapid assessment cycle. We will resubmit a revised plan at that time.

The new assessment plan asks us to begin the assessment process for one SLO per year in 2023. Truly initiating the assessment cycle in 2023 makes sense for us because this will be the first group of students to complete the BA major in American Studies that was revised and implemented in Fall 2019, and we can finally see if those changes developed the students' learning towards these outcomes (which, in our new assessment plan, have been revised in verbiage to make the assessment process more functional, but not in terms of the intent of the outcomes, so a backwards-design revision to the curriculum has not yet been necessary).

2. Assessment Methods: Artifacts of Student Learning

Which artifacts of student learning were used to determine if students achieved the outcome(s)? Please describe the artifacts in detail and identify the course(s) in which they were collected. Clarify if any such courses were offered a) online, b) at the Madrid campus, or c) at any other off-campus location.

The direct measure artifact of student learning used to determine if students have achieved this outcome is the senior thesis, which is described here:

The American Studies thesis is the culmination of the major. Students produce an extensive, original research project (30-40 pages in length) that demonstrates familiarity with the public concerns and interdisciplinary emphasis of the field, including its methodological, interpretive, curatorial, analytical, and theoretical imperatives. The thesis makes an argument about the construction, development, or meaning of diverse American cultural practices, expressions, or ideas. The argument is convincingly supported by properly documented primary and secondary source evidence. It is clearly written in an appropriate style, tone, and genre for American Studies audiences.

The indirect measure artifact of student learning used to determine if students have achieved this outcome will be a student survey. The indirect measure was not implemented in 2022 because it had not yet been developed—that will be implemented beginning in 2023 to give us additional data to consider. It is also attached here.

Both of the above artifacts will be collected in ASTD 4960 – Senior Workshop: Crafting the American Studies Thesis. This is the capstone course for the American Studies major, which is offered in-person every Spring semester on the St. Louis campus only.

Since our outcomes and assessment plan were revised after our Spring 2022 graduates had completed their thesis, the above artifact description and learning outcomes were not fully expressed on the assignment for ASTD 4960 as it was delivered in Spring 2022—this is something we can do in the future (as part of our work to “close the loop”) now that our assessment plan has been revised.

3. Assessment Methods: Evaluation Process

What process was used to evaluate the artifacts of student learning, and by whom? Please identify the tools(s) (e.g., a rubric) used in the process and **include them in/with this report document** (please do not just refer to the assessment plan).

The SLOs will be evaluated by rating the artifact of student learning with a rubric (attached) as a direct measure. All SLOs will also be evaluated through an indirect measure, a student survey (also attached). The survey was not developed until Summer 2022, and therefore was not administered on a trial basis this year. It will be administered in Spring 2023.

The ASTD 4960 instructor evaluated the direct measure artifact with the rubric at the end of the Spring 2022 semester. In a faculty meeting on September 14, 2022, the instructor reported the results of this assessment—highlighting students’ strengths and weaknesses—to the faculty. The faculty determined that during future meetings in Fall 2022, faculty who supervised seniors may also report on strengths and weaknesses they have observed in their work. Careful notes will be taken as a supplemental assessment artifact. This should allow faculty will determine an action plan to make necessary changes to curriculum, pedagogy, or assessment plan which can be enacted during the Spring 2023 semester.

In future years, this process will be overseen by the undergraduate coordinator, and we anticipate the early Fall meeting dedicated to assessment will allow us to proceed in the manner described in the attached revision of our assessment plan—with most of the above discussion taking place at a single meeting devoted to assessment early in the Fall semester.

4. Data/Results

What were the results of the assessment of the learning outcome(s)? Please be specific. Does achievement differ by teaching modality (e.g., online vs. face-to-face) or on-ground location (e.g., STL campus, Madrid campus, other off-campus site)?

We had four students complete the senior thesis in 2022, and they completed it under our old major, which has less intentional development of these learning outcomes than our revised major does. The data below, as a result, is likely to be somewhat unreliable due to both our small sample size and that the students did not complete our new major. While the artifact that students completed at the end of our old major is essentially the same as that produced in the new major, what differs between the old major and its revision is a series of steps to develop students learning toward these outcomes in directed manners. In other words, the assignment—the senior thesis—is the same at the end of the old and new major, but the curriculum map that leads the students there is different. In our old major, these outcomes may have been addressed, but circumstantially rather than intentionally. This is different in our new major. Nonetheless, what follows is the data collected via the trial rubric for these 5 students who were the last to complete our old major. Perhaps in 2023, when we can begin evaluating the new major, we will see if it has an effect on these results.

SLO1: For SLO1, half of the artifacts rated a 2 (Competent), and half rated a 3 (Exemplary).

SLO2: For SLO2, most of the artifacts rated a 2 (Competent). One rated a 3 (Exemplary).

SLO3: All of the artifacts rated 3 for SLO3.

SLO4: Half of the artifacts rated a “2” (Competent) and half of them rated a “3” for this outcome.

SLO5: All of the artifacts rated a “3.”

We only offer this course in person on the St. Louis campus, so there are no differences in modality or location.

5. Findings: Interpretations & Conclusions

What have you learned from these results? What does the data tell you?

SLO1: With the small sample size, it is difficult to deduce if the differences in the scores between students is meaningful, or a result of idiosyncratic experiences of the students during the semester—of having an illness, for example, or having an overly busy graduating semester. That the students were all competent is heartening, but the instructor of the course weighed in and thought scores could possibly be higher with greater scaffolding of the thesis project during the course of the semester—a tweak, perhaps, to the syllabus and pedagogy rather than to the curriculum overall.

SLO2: The rubric we designed distinguished between a 2 (Competent) and 3 (Exemplary) mostly by looking for where a student saw two or more frameworks (of nation, gender, race, sexuality, ability, or class) converging in an intersectional manner rather than being examined in isolation. All the students were very strong in considering at least one of these factors—every thesis did very good job in its analysis of the production of at least one category. The faculty should have more of a discussion of whether intersectionality is a key theoretical concept that every undergraduate American Studies major should be applying in every work, or if this is something more appropriate to graduate level work. If this is a key theoretical concept, it should be emphasized earlier in the curriculum—perhaps through tweaking either pedagogy or assignments in the introductory course, ASTD 1000, to more transparently emphasize intersectionality as a scholarly practice.

SLO3: The high ratings on SLO3 were great news, as interdisciplinarity is the hallmark of an American Studies methodology. Interestingly, when we discussed student work during assessment in 2019, this is where we wanted to place an emphasis. We began more transparently articulated what interdisciplinarity means and demonstrate when it happens in most of our classes, including in our introductory course, ASTD 1000, and as part of the senior thesis course. Perhaps this has had a positive effect, although with this small sample size it is hard to tell.

SLO4: Like SLO1, it is difficult to sort out whether the differences in scores here is meaningful or the result of idiosyncratic student experiences. The instructor for the course strongly suspects that the lower-ranked theses were not due to the students being less capable of communicating effectively, but rather that because the two particular students who produced these artifacts had issues like illness during the semester that meant they came together later than the others. In other words, their theses simply hadn't undergone as many drafts and revisions as the other two. The faculty could consider whether there is a way to scaffold the work in the senior thesis workshop so that students finish drafts earlier. There may also be a way to consider whether it makes some sense to spread the senior thesis out over two semesters—a course in research methods and a course in thesis writing, for example, which would lengthen the timeline of the thesis and allow for additional revision. This would be difficult to do due to staffing issues, but it is worth considering if there is a way to do so.

SLO5: The essays were all socially and politically engaged, asking and answering important questions about issues such as capitalism, ability, race, and nation and the way these are shaped by (and shape) American cultural practices and forms—they all looked outward from their scholarly analysis to suggest why the scholarly analysis could foster social change. This was heartening to see, but not necessarily surprising given the public emphasis of American Studies and the way that it is practiced at SLU, which also fosters those connections.

6. Closing the Loop: Dissemination and Use of Current Assessment Findings

- A. When and how did your program faculty share and discuss these results and findings from this cycle of assessment?

We discussed these findings at our department meeting on September 14, 2022. We took careful notes that iterated the above, and tried to deduce why the ratings for the artifacts were what they were, while also discussing the limitations of the assessment this year (the small sample size, etc.) We also discussed whether the rubric seemed to work. In general, we agreed the rubric overall appeared functional, but that we might reconsider the rubric for SLO2 before implementing the assessment tool for our students who complete our revised major in 2023. We agreed that a simplified assessment plan based on work produced at the end of a student's degree program would yield the best data, and that assessing one outcome per year would assist us with compiling a larger pool of student work that would provide a more meaningful glimpse into our curricular successes and areas for improvement.

- B. How specifically have you decided to use these findings to improve teaching and learning in your program? For example, perhaps you've initiated one or more of the following:

Changes to the Curriculum or Pedagogies

- Course content
- Teaching techniques
- Improvements in technology
- Prerequisites
- Course sequence
- New courses
- Deletion of courses
- Changes in frequency or scheduling of course offerings

Changes to the Assessment Plan

- Student learning outcomes
- Artifacts of student learning
- Evaluation process
- Evaluation tools (e.g., rubrics)
- Data collection methods
- Frequency of data collection

Please describe the actions you are taking as a result of these findings.

During Fall 2022 we will focus on any modifications to our assessment rubric and surveys so that we can successfully implement our assessment protocols in Spring 2023.

This means that in Spring 2023 the instructor for our senior thesis will have an even clearer sense of the outcomes for the project and be able to articulate these in course materials, such as the syllabus, and in scaffold them into the thesis assignment. One concrete step we can take to improve both our assessment practices and our students' achievement of them is to include the revised description of the thesis on every syllabus for ASTD 4960, as well as all the learning outcomes for the major (we had previously only been using the thesis to assess an outcome on communication—but have determined the thesis is the appropriate place to assess all of our BA outcomes). We

included last year's ASTD 4960 syllabus here, where the course description (which is fundamentally the artifact description) and learning outcomes are not the same as what we assessed via our trial rubric—in Spring 2023, we can align these to better implement our assessment protocols and aid our students in achieving our BA outcomes in an even more robust way.

In short, in AY23-23 we first anticipate changes to the assessment plan in terms of revising our rubric if deemed necessary, and in course pedagogy or content in for our senior thesis, particularly in syllabus content.

If no changes are being made, please explain why.

N/A

7. Closing the Loop: Review of Previous Assessment Findings and Changes

A. What is at least one change your program has implemented in recent years as a result of assessment data?

We revised our entire assessment plan for the BA (and MA and PhD) in Summer 2022 in response to the feedback we received in Spring 2022. This is not a curricular change, but it seemed most urgent to have a workable assessment plan so that we could collect meaningful data to enact any future changes in our curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment practices. We hope that in 2023 we will begin to have that data and be able to consider any more robust changes to our BA program. This is excellent timing for our assessment plan revision, as it will allow us to capture data only from students who have completed our revised major that was implemented in Fall 2019—that was not possible before, when all our graduates were still working under our old major.

In response to our assessment process in 2021, on which we received feedback in Spring 2022, the entire faculty discussed the need to streamline our assessment plan. As our assessment report feedback from AY20-21 indicated, we had areas of our plan that could be improved. We determined to rewrite our assessment plans to submit in Fall 2022. This work was completed over Summer 2022. In early Fall 2022 (September 14) the entire faculty met to discuss the plans before they were submitted to the College of Arts and Sciences and the Provost's Office in late September 2022. What follows is a summary of the feedback we received in Spring 2022 and our efforts to offer corrective action in this plan:

The outcome we assessed last year (a more complex version of SLO2) had numerous components and was quite complicated, which was characteristic of many of our SLOs (in part because we are an interdisciplinary field of study). In our new plan, we revised our SLOs to make them less complex and thus more easily assessable, as well as more transparent for our students.

The assessment report feedback also stressed that we should be focused on assessing the most advanced work produced in our students' degree plan. That has also been addressed by this revision. This also solves a problem that faculty members were concerned with—how complex and time-consuming the data collection and assessment process was. By locating this to our capstone course, we both assess students' most advanced work and streamline faculty labor. Not only that, but we have a specific artifact to assess—the senior thesis. This will enhance the effectiveness of our assessment.

Finally, this revision to our assessment plan will result in an accumulation of student artifacts over a period of years rather than only a handful of them produced during a single year, creating a larger data set that will be more meaningful and, we hope, lead to the best possible undergraduate American Studies education.

B. How has this change/have these changes been assessed?

Implementing the new plan in a preliminary manner in 2022 (even though we could not implement the student survey) has allowed us a trial to see if we believe it will be workable, although the senior theses we collected as artifacts were completed under our old major and the artifact description and learning outcomes we assessed were not as clearly stated on the course syllabus as they will be in the future. These were discussed at our faculty meeting

on September 14, where careful notes were taken in order to provide a foundation for revision of the rubric before its full implementation in 2023.

C. What were the findings of the assessment?

Certainly, having one artifact to assess, which truly epitomizes the culmination of the BA degree, is an improvement in the quality of our assessment protocol and the quality of the measures. The simplified outcomes are also a step in the right direction. At this point the small artifact sample size remains an issue, but the sample size will increase with time. The process is greatly streamlined and as a result we feel like overall involvement in the assessment process will be improved.

D. How do you plan to (continue to) use this information moving forward?

Moving forward, it makes sense to continue to think about how to translate the complexity of an interdisciplinary field to simple, measurable outcomes, and implementing simple, measurable processes for all our degree programs. “Interdisciplinarity” is often a buzzword in higher education, but few people successfully describe, implement, and measure it. This is the challenge of assessment in American Studies, and it makes good sense to continue to consider how our instruments, our curriculum, and our pedagogical practices are meeting this challenge.

IMPORTANT: Please submit any assessment tools (e.g., artifact prompts, rubrics) with this report as separate attachments or copied and pasted into this Word document. Please do not just refer to the assessment plan; the report should serve as a stand-alone document.

Program-Level Assessment Plan

Program: American Studies Department: American Studies Date (Month/Year): 09/2022	Degree Level (e.g., UG or GR certificate, UG major, master’s program, doctoral program): BA College/School: College of Arts and Sciences Primary Assessment Contact: Emily Lutenski, Chair
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Note: Each cell in the table below will expand as needed to accommodate your responses.

#	Student Learning Outcomes What do the program faculty expect all students to know or be able to do as a result of completing this program? Note: These should be measurable and manageable in number (typically 4-6 are sufficient).	Curriculum Mapping In which courses will faculty intentionally work to foster some level of student development toward achievement of the outcome? Please clarify the level at which student development is expected in each course (e.g., introduced, developed, reinforced, achieved, etc.).	Assessment Methods	
			Artifacts of Student Learning (What) 1. What artifacts of student learning will be used to determine if students have achieved this outcome? 2. In which courses will these artifacts be collected?	Evaluation Process (How) 1. What process will be used to evaluate the artifacts, and by whom? 2. What tools(s) (e.g., a rubric) will be used in the process? Note: Please include any rubrics as part of the submitted plan documents.
1	Students will explain the relevant contexts—historical, political, geographic, literary, artistic, social, or intellectual—that shape American cultural practices, expressions, or ideas.	<p>Introduced: ASTD 1000 – Introduction to American Culture: Movements, Myths, and Methods.</p> <p>Developed: ASTD courses with an “Contexts” attribute, including ASTD 2200 – American Homefronts, Global Wars; ASTD 2300 – Americans Abroad; ASTD 2600 – American Places; ASTD 3000 – American Decades; and ASTD 3100 – Making the American City.</p> <p>Achieved: ASTD 4960: Senior Workshop – Crafting the American Studies Thesis.</p>	<p>1. The direct measure artifact of student learning used to determine if students have achieved this outcome is the senior thesis. The indirect measure artifact of student learning used to determine if students have achieved this outcome is a student survey.</p> <p>2. Both of the above artifacts are collected in ASTD 4960 – Senior Workshop: Crafting the American Studies Thesis.</p>	<p>1. The ASTD 4960 instructor will evaluate the direct measure artifact at the end of the Spring semester and submit this to the department’s undergraduate coordinator. The undergraduate coordinator will report the results of this assessment and the student survey—highlighting students’ strengths and weaknesses—to the faculty during an annual department meeting dedicated to assessment in the early Fall semester. This will provide a starting point for discussions with all faculty, where faculty who have supervised seniors may also report on strengths and weaknesses they have observed in their work. Careful notes will be taken as a supplemental assessment artifact. By the end of the meeting, faculty will determine an action plan to make necessary changes to curriculum, pedagogy, or assessment plan.</p> <p>2. SLO1 will be evaluated by rating the</p>

				artifact of student learning on a rubric (attached) as a direct measure. SLO 1 (and all SLOs will also be evaluated through an indirect measure, a student survey (also attached).
2	Students will assess how American cultural practices, expressions, or ideas are constructed by or interpreted through frameworks of nation, class, race, gender, ability, or sexuality.	<p>Introduced: ASTD 1000 – Introduction to American Culture: Movements, Myths, and Methods.</p> <p>Developed: ASTD courses with an “Identities” attribute, including ASTD 2700 – Gender, Race, and Social Justice; ASTD 2400 – Immigration in U.S. History and Culture; ASTD 3010 – U.S. Ethnic Studies; and ASTD 3800 – Women’s Lives.</p> <p>Achieved: ASTD 4960: Senior Workshop – Crafting the American Studies Thesis.</p>	<p>1. The direct measure artifact of student learning used to determine if students have achieved this outcome is the senior thesis. The indirect measure artifact of student learning used to determine if students have achieved this outcome is a student survey.</p> <p>2. Both of the above artifacts are collected in ASTD 4960 – Senior Workshop: Crafting the American Studies Thesis.</p>	<p>1. The ASTD 4960 instructor will evaluate the direct measure artifact at the end of the Spring semester. They will report the results of this assessment and the student survey—highlighting students’ strengths and weaknesses—to the faculty during an annual department meeting dedicated to assessment in the early Fall semester. This will provide a starting point for discussions with all faculty, where faculty who have supervised seniors may also report on strengths and weaknesses they have observed in their work. Careful notes will be taken as a supplemental assessment artifact. By the end of the meeting, faculty will determine an action plan to make necessary changes to curriculum, pedagogy, or assessment plan.</p> <p>2. SLO2 will be evaluated by rating the artifact of student learning on a rubric (attached) as a direct measure. SLO2 (and all SLOs) will also be evaluated through an indirect measure, a student survey (also attached).</p>
3	Students will synthesize two or more disciplinary approaches in analyses of American cultural practices, expressions, or ideas.	<p>Introduced: ASTD 1000 – Introduction to American Culture: Movements, Myths, and Methods.</p> <p>Developed: ASTD courses with an “Practices” attribute, including ASTD 2100 – Studies in American Photography; ASTD 3020 – American Mosaic: Literature and Diversity; ASTD 3030 – History and Fiction; and ASTD 3050: American Soundscapes; and ASTD 3600: American Food and Cultures.</p>	<p>1. The direct measure artifact of student learning used to determine if students have achieved this outcome is the senior thesis. The indirect measure artifact of student learning used to determine if students have achieved this outcome is a student survey.</p> <p>2. Both of the above artifacts are collected in ASTD 4960 – Senior Workshop: Crafting the American</p>	<p>1. The ASTD 4960 instructor will evaluate the direct measure artifact at the end of the Spring semester. They will report the results of this assessment and the student survey—highlighting students’ strengths and weaknesses—to the faculty during an annual department meeting dedicated to assessment in the early Fall semester. This will provide a starting point for discussions with all faculty, where faculty who have supervised seniors may also report on</p>

		Achieved: ASTD 4960: Senior Workshop – Crafting the American Studies Thesis.	Studies Thesis.	<p>strengths and weaknesses they have observed in their work. Careful notes will be taken as a supplemental assessment artifact. By the end of the meeting, faculty will determine an action plan to make necessary changes to curriculum, pedagogy, or assessment plan.</p> <p>2. SLO3 will be evaluated by scoring the artifact of student learning on a rubric (attached) as a direct measure. SLO3 (and all SLOs) will also be evaluated through an indirect measure, a student survey (also attached).</p>
4	Students will effectively articulate arguments and information about American cultural practices, expressions, and ideas.	<p>Introduced: ASTD 1000 – Introduction to American Culture: Movements, Myths, and Methods.</p> <p>Developed: ASTD 2000- and 3000-level courses.</p> <p>Achieved: ASTD 4960: Senior Workshop – Crafting the American Studies Thesis.</p>	<p>1. The direct measure artifact of student learning used to determine if students have achieved this outcome is the senior thesis. The indirect measure artifact of student learning used to determine if students have achieved this outcome is a student survey.</p> <p>2. Both of the above artifacts are collected in ASTD 4960 – Senior Workshop: Crafting the American Studies Thesis.</p>	<p>1. The ASTD 4960 instructor will evaluate the direct measure artifact at the end of the Spring semester. They will report the results of this assessment and the student survey—highlighting students’ strengths and weaknesses—to the faculty during an annual department meeting dedicated to assessment in the early Fall semester. This will provide a starting point for discussions with all faculty, where faculty who have supervised seniors may also report on strengths and weaknesses they have observed in their work. Careful notes will be taken as a supplemental assessment artifact. By the end of the meeting, faculty will determine an action plan to make necessary changes to curriculum, pedagogy, or assessment plan.</p> <p>2. SLO4 will be evaluated by rating the artifact of student learning on a rubric (attached) as a direct measure. SLO4 (and all SLOs) will also be evaluated through an indirect measure, a student survey (also attached).</p>
5	Students will demonstrate the ability bridge academic concerns	Introduced: ASTD 1000 – Introduction to American Culture: Movements, Myths, and	1. The direct measure artifact of student learning used to determine if students	1. The ASTD 4960 instructor will evaluate the direct measure artifact at the end of

<p>with American cultural practices, expressions, and ideas and the concerns of broader public life.</p>	<p>Methods.</p> <p>Developed: ASTD course with a “Community Engagement” attribute, including ASTD 3910: American Studies Internship.</p> <p>Achieved: ASTD 4960: Senior Workshop – Crafting the American Studies Thesis.</p>	<p>have achieved this outcome is the senior thesis. The indirect measure artifact of student learning used to determine if students have achieved this outcome is a student survey.</p> <p>2. Both of the above artifacts are collected in ASTD 4960 – Senior Workshop: Crafting the American Studies Thesis.</p>	<p>the Spring semester. They will report the results of this assessment and the student survey—highlighting students’ strengths and weaknesses—to the faculty during an annual department meeting dedicated to assessment in the early Fall semester. This will provide a starting point for discussions with all faculty, where faculty who have supervised seniors may also report on strengths and weaknesses they have observed in their work. Careful notes will be taken as a supplemental assessment artifact. By the end of the meeting, faculty will determine an action plan to make necessary changes to curriculum, pedagogy, or assessment plan.</p> <p>2. SLO5 will be evaluated by rating the artifact of student learning on a rubric (attached) as a direct measure. SLO5 (and all SLOs) will also be evaluated through an indirect measure, a student survey (also attached).</p>
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Use of Assessment Data

1. How and when will analyzed data be used by program faculty to make changes in pedagogy, curriculum design, and/or assessment practices?

As noted above, the instructor of ASTD 4960 will complete the assessment rubric with the senior thesis as an artifact, as well as administer a student survey near the end of the Spring semester. Early in Fall semester, the entire faculty will meet to discuss the assessment data for one outcome and develop an action plan for making any necessary changes to pedagogy, curriculum, or assessment practices based on that data. The action plan may include further steps to gather data and make decisions (student focus groups, additional meetings), but these should be carried out by the end of the Fall semester. Any changes should be implemented in the subsequent Spring semester to allow time for any curriculum changes to be finalized. These should go into place by the subsequent Fall semester. Overall, this plan proposes one calendar year from the discussion of assessment data to changes being enacted in pedagogy, curriculum, or assessment practices.

2. How and when will the program faculty evaluate the impact of assessment-informed changes made in previous years?

The assessment plan proposed here includes assessing one outcome per year for a five-year cycle. This means that we would evaluate the impact of assessment-informed changes for each learning outcome every five years. This seems like a long time, but it makes sense for our unit because our BA major numbers are small. To gather enough student artifacts to create meaningful assessment data, we need to accumulate senior theses and surveys for a length of time. When our major numbers increase, we may choose to modify this assessment plan to initiate a more rapid assessment cycle.

Additional Questions

1. On what schedule/cycle will program faculty assess each of the program's student learning outcomes? (Please note: It is not recommended to try to assess every outcome every year.)

The assessment plan proposed here includes assessing one outcome per year for a five-year cycle as follows:

SLO1:	2023
SLO2:	2024
SLO3:	2025
SLO4:	2026
SLO5:	2027

It is notable that the rubric included here addresses each of the above learning outcomes (SLO1-5) and the entire rubric will be completed by the ASTD 4960 instructor each Spring; this is so we have numerous faculty members involved in the assessment process over a period of years, during which we will be compiling enough student artifacts to provide meaningful data. However, the assessment plan articulated here envisions only compiling and disseminating the data for one outcome per year; this is so that our small number of faculty can do focused work to envision and enact any action plan to change pedagogy, curriculum, or the assessment plan without significant workload hardships.

2. Describe how, and the extent to which, program faculty contributed to the development of this plan.

Throughout AY21-22 the entire faculty discussed the need to streamline our assessment plan. As our assessment report feedback from AY20-21 indicated, we had areas of our plan that could be improved. We determined to rewrite our assessment plans to submit in Fall 2022. This work was completed over Summer 2022. In early Fall 2022 the entire faculty met to discuss the plans before they were submitted to the College of Arts and Sciences and the Provost's Office. What follows is a summary of the feedback we received and our efforts to offer corrective action in this plan:

The outcome we assessed last year (an earlier version of SLO2) had numerous components and was quite complex, which was characteristic of many of our SLOs (in part because we are an interdisciplinary field of study). In this plan, we revised our SLOs to make them less complex and thus more easily assessable, as well as more transparent for our students.

The assessment report feedback also stressed that we should be focused on assessing the most advanced work produced in our students' degree plan. That has also been addressed by this revision. This also solves a problem that faculty members were concerned with—how complex and time-consuming

the data collection and assessment process was. By locating this to our capstone course, we both assess students' most advanced work and streamline faculty labor. Not only that, but we have a specific artifact to assess—the senior thesis. This will enhance the effectiveness of our assessment.

Finally, this revision to our assessment plan will result in an accumulation of student artifacts over a period of years rather than only a handful of them produced during a single year, creating a larger data set that will be more meaningful and, we hope, lead to the best possible undergraduate American Studies education.

IMPORTANT: Please remember to submit any rubrics or other assessment tools along with this plan.

Student Name:

Rater Name:

Rating Date:

American Studies BA Assessment Rubric

Artifact Description: The American Studies thesis is the culmination of the major. Students produce an extensive, original research project (30-40 pages in length) that demonstrates familiarity with the public concerns and interdisciplinary emphasis of the field, including its methodological, interpretive, curatorial, analytical, and theoretical imperatives. The thesis makes an argument about the construction, development, or meaning of diverse American cultural practices, expressions, or ideas. The argument is convincingly supported by properly documented primary and secondary source evidence. It is clearly written in an appropriate style, tone, and genre for American Studies audiences.

Learning Outcome	Exemplary (3)	Competent (2)	Developing (1)	Insufficient (0)	Rating
SLO1: Students will explain the relevant contexts—such as historical, political, geographic, literary, artistic, social, or intellectual—that shape American cultural practices, expressions, or ideas.	The sources or ideas addressed by the student are thoroughly and appropriately contextualized and the student cogently explains why these contexts matter to the overall argument.	The sources or ideas addressed by the student are contextualized, but the student offers somewhat unconvincing explanations of why these contexts matter to the overall argument.	The student attempts to contextualize the sources or ideas addressed in the thesis, but these contexts are inadequately researched and why they matter to the overall argument remains opaque.	The student does not endeavor to contextualize the sources or ideas in the thesis.	
SLO2: Students will assess how American cultural practices, expressions, or ideas are constructed by	The student provides a thorough, appropriate assessment of how American cultural practices,	The student thoroughly assesses how American cultural practices, expressions, or ideas are constructed by or	The student mentions how American cultural practices, expressions, or ideas are constructed by or interpreted through	The student does not attend to how American cultural practices, expressions, or ideas are	

or interpreted through frameworks of nation, class, race, gender, ability, or sexuality.	expressions, or ideas are constructed by or interpreted through frameworks of nation, class, race, gender, ability, or sexuality—including nuanced attention to how two or more of these frameworks are interlocking.	interpreted through frameworks of nation, class, race, gender, ability, or sexuality, but the assessment is limited to sufficient attention to one of these frameworks.	frameworks of nation, class, race, gender, ability, or sexuality, but how this occurs is not thoroughly addressed.	constructed or interpreted through frameworks of nation, class, race, gender, ability, or sexuality.	
SLO3: Students will synthesize two or more disciplinary approaches in analyses of American cultural practices, expressions, or ideas.	The student thoroughly integrates two or more disciplinary approaches to analyze of American cultural practices, expressions, or ideas.	The student uses the approaches of two or more disciplines to analyze American cultural practices, expressions, or ideas, but these approaches are not integrated.	The student competently uses a single disciplinary approach to analyze American cultural practices, expressions, or ideas.	The student's analysis is not transparently derived from disciplinary knowledge.	
SLO4: Students will effectively articulate arguments and information about American cultural practices, expressions, and ideas.	The student has a clearly stated argument that proceeds logically with strong transitions. The argument is sufficiently supported by primary and secondary source evidence and the stakes of the argument are clear.	The student has an argument and a logical organizational structure, but there may be points where transitions could be more effective. The argument is sufficiently supported by primary and secondary source evidence, but the stakes of the	The student's argument is less clear than it could be, and the organization of the paper could be improved. There are places where the evidence that is meant to support the argument is described rather than interpreted. There are rare places where the	The student does not have an argument. The essay is disorganized. The evidence presented does not support the argument. The essay's language, style, genre, and tone is inappropriate for	

	<p>The language, style, genre, and tone are appropriate for American Studies audiences. There are no problems with spelling, punctuation, grammar, or syntax. All sources are properly documented.</p>	<p>argument might not be transparent. The language, style, genre, and tone are appropriate for academic audiences, but perhaps not for American Studies in particular. There are rare errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, or syntax. All sources are documented, but the documentation may have subtle formatting errors.</p>	<p>language, style, genre, and tone may not be appropriate for academic audiences. There are errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, and syntax that may occasionally impede reading. Most sources are cited but there may be some information missing in the documentation.</p>	<p>an academic audience. There are frequent errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, and syntax that make portions of the student's work unintelligible. The sources are not cited.</p>	
<p>SLO5: Students will demonstrate the ability bridge academic concerns with American cultural practices, expressions, and ideas and the concerns of broader public life.</p>	<p>The student's work uses the academic tools of American Studies to engage convincingly with the concerns of broader public life in a manner that is detailed, specific, and comprehensive.</p>	<p>The student's work makes connections between academic concerns in American Studies and the concerns of broader public life in a manner that is more descriptive or speculative than analytical.</p>	<p>The student's work implies connections between American Studies and the concerns broader public life, but these are not transparently addressed.</p>	<p>The student's work does not appear relevant to broader public life.</p>	

Student Name:

Survey Date:

American Studies BA Exit Survey

Artifact Description: This survey is provided to graduating American Studies majors in order to gather information about the American Studies curriculum, course offerings, and pedagogy. Student feedback delivered here will help us to consistently revise our practices to deliver the best possible undergraduate education in American Studies.

1) How well did you achieve each of the following student learning outcomes?

SLO1: Students will explain the relevant contexts—such as historical, political, geographic, literary, artistic, social, or intellectual—that shape American cultural practices, expressions, or ideas.

Extremely Well (3)	Very Well (2)	Adequately (1)	Insufficiently (0)
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SLO2: Students will assess how American cultural practices, expressions, or ideas are constructed by or interpreted through frameworks of nation, class, race, gender, ability, or sexuality.

Extremely Well (3)	Very Well (2)	Adequately (1)	Insufficiently (0)
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SLO3: Students will synthesize two or more disciplinary approaches in analyses of American cultural practices, expressions, or ideas.

Extremely Well (3)	Very Well (2)	Adequately (1)	Insufficiently (0)
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SLO4: Students will effectively articulate arguments and information about American cultural practices, expressions, and ideas.

Extremely Well (3)	Very Well (2)	Adequately (1)	Insufficiently (0)
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SLO5: Students will demonstrate the ability bridge academic concerns with American cultural practices, expressions, and ideas and the concerns of broader public life.

Extremely Well (3)	Very Well (2)	Adequately (1)	Insufficiently (0)
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2) What aspects of your education in American Studies helped you with your learning, and why were they helpful?

3) What might American Studies do differently to help you learn more effectively, and why would these actions help?

American Studies 4920: Senior Capstone Spring 2022

Class Time: Wednesdays 1:15-4:00 pm

Class Location: 244C Adorjan Hall

Professor: Emily Lutenski

E-mail: emily.lutenski@slu.edu

Office Hours: By appointment at Zoom Personal Room ID 547 210 7430 (or 131 Adorjan Hall when COVID permits!)

Course Description

The American Studies capstone is the culmination of the major. During this course, you will produce an extensive research project (30-40 pages in length) that demonstrates the methodological, theoretical, and interpretive frameworks of American Studies. The research, writing, and thinking skills furthered here will be useful in a variety of careers. Furthermore, as a polished research essay, this project can also provide a writing sample for any future academic endeavors.

You will work independently on your projects, yet collaboratively as critics and an intellectual community. As a result, this course provides structure and mentoring to help you complete your work in manageable increments and includes both individual and group meetings in order to foster a supportive atmosphere. At the end of the semester, you will present your work publicly to showcase your accomplishments and celebrate the closure of your time as a SLU undergraduate student.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, you will be able to *articulate arguments and information effectively in writing and presentations*. This means that you will demonstrate appropriate, tone, style, and genre for American Studies audiences in clear and correct work delivered in both written and oral forms. It also means that your writing and presentations will have concise and accurate interpretive arguments and that you have prepared sufficient evidence to support your claims, including properly documenting both your primary and secondary sources.

To break this down further, I anticipate that by the end of the course, you will be able to do the following:

1. Devise a research question about American culture and conduct independent research to answer it.
2. Locate, evaluate, and interpret a variety of primary sources using interdisciplinary methods, which will enable you to make a convincing argument based on the evidence they provide.
3. Identify and critique secondary sources, putting them in conversation with each other and with your own work.
4. Write a clear, stylistically appropriate, and creative essay.

5. Give a polished, professional public presentation on your work.

Course Policies and Resources

Health and Safety: Facemasks

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, key safeguards like face masks have allowed SLU to safely maintain in-person learning. If public health conditions and local, state, and federal restrictions demand it, the University may require that all members of our campus community wear face masks indoors. **Therefore, any time a University-level face mask requirement is in effect, face masks will be required in this class.** This expectation will apply to all students and instructors, unless a medical condition warrants an exemption from the face mask requirement (see below).

When a University-wide face mask requirement is in effect, the following will apply:

- Students who attempt to enter a classroom without wearing masks will be asked by the instructor to put on their masks prior to entry. Students who remove their masks during a class session will be asked by the instructor to resume wearing their masks.
- Students and instructors may remove their masks briefly to take a sip of water but should replace masks immediately. The consumption of food will not be permitted.
- Students who do not comply with the expectation that they wear a mask in accordance with the University-wide face mask requirement may be subject to disciplinary actions per the rules, regulations, and policies of Saint Louis University, including but not limited to those outlined in the *Student Handbook*. Non-compliance with this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including any of the following:
 - dismissal from the course(s)
 - removal from campus housing (if applicable)
 - dismissal from the University
- To immediately protect the health and well-being of all students, instructors, and staff, instructors reserve the right to cancel or terminate any class session at which any student fails to comply with a University-wide face mask requirement.

When a University-wide face mask requirement is not in effect, students and instructors may choose to wear a face mask or not, as they prefer for their own individual comfort level.

ADA Accommodations for Face Mask Requirements:

Saint Louis University is committed to maintaining an inclusive and accessible environment. Individuals who are unable to wear a face mask due to medical reasons should contact the Office of Disability Services (students) or Human Resources (instructors) to initiate the accommodation process identified in the University's ADA Policy (<https://www.slu.edu/human-resources/pdfs/policies/americans-disabilities-act-policy.pdf>). Inquiries or concerns may also be directed to the Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity (<https://www.slu.edu/general-counsel/institutional-equity-diversity/index.php>). Notification to instructors of SLU-approved ADA accommodations should be made in writing prior to the first class session in any term (or as soon thereafter as possible).

Health and Safety: Attendance and Participation

The health and well-being of SLU's students, staff, and faculty are critical concerns, as is the quality of our learning environments. Accordingly, the following University policy statements on in-person class attendance are designed to preserve and advance the collective health and well-being of our institutional constituencies and to create the conditions in which all students have the opportunity to learn and successfully complete their courses:

- Students who exhibit any potential COVID-19 symptoms (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>) that cannot be attributed to some other medical condition the students are known to have, such as allergies, asthma, etc.) shall absent themselves from any in-person class attendance or in-person participation in any class-related activity until they have been evaluated by a qualified medical official. Students should contact the University Student Health Center (<https://www.slu.edu/life-at-slu/student-health/index.php>) for immediate assistance.
- Students (whether exhibiting any of potential COVID-19 symptoms or not, and regardless of how they feel) who are under either an isolation or quarantine directive issued by a qualified health official must absent themselves from all in-person course activities per the stipulations of the isolation or quarantine directive.
- Students are responsible for notifying their instructor of an absence as far in advance as possible; when advance notification is not possible, students are responsible for notifying each instructor as soon after the absence as possible. Consistent with the University Attendance Policy (<https://catalog.slu.edu/academic-policies/academic-policies-procedures/attendance/>), students also are responsible for all material covered in class and must work with the instructor to complete any required work. In situations where students must be absent for an extended period of time due to COVID-19 isolation or quarantine, they also must work with the instructor to determine the best way to maintain progress in the course as they are able based on their health situation.
- Consistent with the University Attendance Policy, students may be asked to provide medical documentation when a medical condition impacts a student's ability to attend and/or participate in class for an extended period of time.
- As a temporary amendment to the current University Attendance Policy, all absences due to illness or an isolation/quarantine directive issued by a qualified health official, or due to an adverse reaction to a COVID-19 vaccine, shall be considered "Authorized" absences

Attendance and Participation

Your attendance and participation are extremely important to your success in this class. Attendance will be taken daily. Since this course meets only once per week, more than two absences (in addition to any "Authorized" per the above section on Health and Safety: Attendance and Participation) will affect your grade for attendance and participation. You may use these at your discretion in the event of illness, field trips, mental health days, or other events that prevent your presence in class. More than two absences (in addition to those authorized due to COVID) will therefore affect your grade for attendance and participation. If you are more than ten minutes late to class or leave more than ten minutes early, you will be considered absent.

In class, you are expected to come prepared and to participate actively. This means that you have completed your reading for the day and that you have brought the reading and any notes you

have taken on it with you to class. You should always have a notebook and writing utensil with you in order to jot down ideas, thoughts, and information during our class periods. You should freely raise questions and offer insights on the reading in a curious, thoughtful, and civil manner. Doing this does more than create an energized intellectual community—it also helps you track your ideas and thinking, which in turn will make approaching your papers and reading responses easier. Please see the sections on grading for more information.

Deadlines and Submission of Work

This is an unusual semester, and we have all struggled during the pandemic era and its associated crises in myriad ways. Deadlines may be missed for truly legitimate reasons. Particularly in this class, however, meeting deadlines is important. This is because the class is designed to help you complete a major project in incremental, manageable steps—and missing one of these steps means the rest is thrown off kilter, particularly as we are workshoping and working, at times, as a team. In short, I highly recommend sticking to the schedule.

If you require an extension due to emergencies and extenuating circumstances, however, please contact me in advance of your due date to make these arrangements. This will mean our lines of communication are open, that I can help you with any support you need, and that I can also navigate the rest of the class when we depend upon each other's work.

Given that we're in a complicated semester during complicated times, I will not penalize late work in this class by, say, lowering its grade. But the pace of the semester also means that I cannot guarantee I can give you the comprehensive feedback I otherwise would if you turn in work late, and ultimately, without routine, structured feedback your project could otherwise suffer. So please do keep this in mind!

And, of course, if work isn't turned in at all, whether by the due dates listed on the syllabus or those arranged via an extension, this work will receive a "0."

E-mail

E-mail is the best way to communicate with me outside of class. I will check my e-mail at least once per day before 8:00 pm, Monday through Friday. When sending an e-mail inquiry, please plan accordingly and leave enough time to receive a response. Bear in mind that e-mail is appropriate for short communications (such as setting up a meeting), but for longer communications (like getting feedback on a paper draft), a meeting is far more productive.

Cell Phones, Laptops, etc.

The use of cell phones, iPads, laptops, and other electronic devices are permitted in class for the purposes of accessing course materials, note-taking, and work for this course. Indeed, for this course, if you have a laptop, I recommend you bring it with you. There may be times when we work together on, say, finding source material for your capstones.

Please, however, try to limit technological distractions to focus on the material at hand and each other's contributions. Consider closing windows to your e-mail or social media accounts before class, turning off or silencing notifications, turning off sound, and placing your devices in "Do

Not Disturb” mode. This will help us give each other our undivided attention in the limited time we have to learn from one another.

Academic Honesty

You are expected to maintain the most rigorous standards of academic integrity at all times. You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with the College of Arts and Sciences Policy on Academic Honesty at <https://www.slu.edu/arts-and-sciences/student-resources/academic-honesty.php>. Please be aware that violations of academic honesty or integrity can result in the failure of the assignment in question, the course, and even expulsion. If you are found to have plagiarized, you will, at minimum, receive a “0” on the assignment in question, and your case will be reported to the Department of American Studies.

Written Work

All work submitted for this class should be well written in appropriate academic style, proofread, and properly formatted: typed, double-spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman font, with one-inch margins, and page numbers accompanied by your last name in the upper-right hand corner of each page. Your name, the course number, the instructor’s name, and the date should be in the upper-left hand corner of the first page. Your work should be titled. All your sources *must* be properly cited in either MLA or Chicago style—please ask if you have any questions about proper citation. A good guide to both of these styles is available at https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/resources.html.

Religious Observances

I will make every reasonable effort to allow your participation in religious observances without academic penalty. In such cases, it is your obligation to provide me with adequate notice of the dates of religious holidays on which you will be absent. Absence from classes or examinations for religious reasons does not relieve you of responsibility for completing required work. Following the necessary notification, you should consult with me to determine what appropriate alternative will be provided to allow you to attend to your academic responsibilities.

Documented Disabilities

Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations are encouraged to contact the Center for Accessibility and Disability Resources, located within the Student Success Center (Busch Student Center 331), to discuss accommodations and eligibility requirements. Disability Services can be contacted at accessibility_disability@slu.edu or 314-977-3484 to schedule an appointment. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Once approved, information about academic accommodations will be shared with course instructors via email from Disability Services and via Banner on the instructor’s course roster.

Student Success Resources

The Student Success Center (<https://www.slu.edu/life-at-slu/student-success-center/index.php>, Busch Student Center 331) offers a variety of services in order to assist you in attaining your academic and professional goals. These include tutoring and writing services, help developing time management and study skills, and career counseling. All students are encouraged to use University Writing Services (<https://www.slu.edu/life-at-slu/student-success-center/academic-support/university-writing-services/index.php>); additional feedback benefits writers of all skill

levels. Trained writing consultants can help with essays and other written assignments, multimedia projects, and oral presentations. University Writing Services offers one-on-one consultations that address everything from brainstorming to crafting strong sentences and documenting sources properly.

Basic Needs Security

Students in personal or academic distress, or who are experiencing challenges in securing food or navigating campus resources are encouraged to contact the Office of the Dean of Students for support (<https://www.slu.edu/student-development/dean-of-students/index.php>, deanofstudents@slu.edu or 314-977-9378). If you are comfortable doing so, you may also reach out to me, and I will help connect you with necessary resources.

Title IX

Saint Louis University and its faculty are committed to supporting our students and seeking an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. If you have encountered any form of sexual harassment, including sexual assault, stalking, domestic or dating violence, we encourage you to report this to the University. If you speak with a faculty member about an incident that involves a Title IX matter, that faculty member must notify SLU's Title IX Coordinator and share the basic facts of your experience. This is true even if you ask the faculty member not to disclose the incident. The Title IX Coordinator will then be available to assist you in understanding all of your options and to connect you with all possible resources on or off campus. Anna Kratky is the Title IX Coordinator at Saint Louis University and can be reached at anna.kratky@slu.edu and 314-977-3886.

Tips for a Successful Course Experience

Content Note

In this class, we will aim to have respectful, critical, and civil exchanges. Please know that some of the content and language in this course may be found offensive, uncomfortable, or traumatizing. If you suspect specific material is likely to be emotionally challenging to you, please come discuss any concerns you have with me before the subject comes up in class. If you ever want to discuss your reactions to materials with me, please feel welcome—I consider this an appropriate part of teaching and learning. If you need to step outside during a class discussion you find difficult, you are welcome to do so without academic penalty. You will be responsible, however, for any material you miss. If you are out for a significant amount of time, please do come speak to me for coverage of this material and to discuss the situation.

Civil Discourse

A learner-focused educational experience thrives with discussion, debate—and, yes, dissent—at its center. Materials may be provocative materials and attend to weighty issues. We may disagree strongly. We may agree passionately. These points of convergence and divergence will not be the same for everyone—and our points of disagreement and deliberation are opportunities to have rigorous, thoughtful, and reasoned discussions. This is how we generate new knowledge—through fostering an atmosphere of inclusiveness where diversity of perspective is embraced through the open exchange of ideas.

Approaching controversial issues from multiple perspectives is not always easy. But in this class, my hope is that we will have “civil discourse.” This means that we commit to tolerating and respecting each other (including the authors we are reading) even when it seems hard to do so. To have tolerance and respect means that we listen to each other’s arguments in a considerate way, and we remain open to the possibility that our own arguments may be wrong. In other words, we all should have the opportunity to state our claims and provide evidence and reasoning for them—even when, and perhaps especially when, our claims are at odds with each other. Conflict is not always a bad thing—but no matter what, we should recognize our common intelligence and humanity.

In the event of disagreements, remember that there are differences between opinions and arguments. An opinion is a preference, which doesn’t need to be founded in anything. An argument, by contrast, has three parts: an assertion, reasoning for that assertion, and evidence to support that reasoning. Civil discourse rests on the presentation of arguments, and it also encompasses refutations of those arguments. A civil refutation of an argument might begin by restating it to ensure understanding: “One might say” It then will proceed to refute the argument (“However . . .”; or “But . . .”). It will further provide support for its counterclaim (“Because . . .”), and then arrive at a conclusion (“Therefore . . .”; or “As a result . . .”). These are good models for framing productive dialogue.

Grading Scale

SLU has adopted the following grading standards and definitions:

A (94-100%):	High achievement and intellectual initiative.
A- (90-93%):	Approaching high achievement.
B+ (87-89%):	Slightly higher than above average achievement.
B (84-86%):	Above average achievement.
B- (80-83%):	Approaching above average achievement.
C+ (77-79%):	Slightly higher than average achievement.
C (74-76%):	Average achievement.
C- (70-73%):	Below average achievement. Grade may not fulfill “C or better” course requirements.
D (60-69%):	Inferior but passing achievement. Students should check individual School or departmental policies for further information on potential implications of “D” grades.
F (59% and below):	Failure.

A letter grade based on the above scale will be assigned for final course grades. For final course grades, values greater than or equal to .5 will be rounded up, while values less than .5 will be rounded down. In general, work that is not turned in will receive a “0.”

Grading Breakdown

Research Proposal: 5%

Annotated Bibliography: 5%

Segment 1 – How do I contextualize my topic and sources?: 10%

Segment 2 – What have other scholars said about my topic and sources?: 10%

Segment 3 – What do my primary sources mean?: 10%
 Complete Essay Draft: 15%
 Workshop Feedback: 5%
 Final Essay: 25%
 Presentation: 5%
 Attendance and Participation: 10%

Detailed assignments will be distributed; grades will be posted to Canvas.

Recommended Texts

Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 9th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).

This book should be widely accessible both new and used; any sections I have assigned are also posted to Canvas as PDF files.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

All readings and assignments are due by the date listed on the syllabus; the syllabus is subject to change at the instructor's discretion.

Wednesday, January 19: Introduction

In class we will discuss the purposes and outcomes of the American Studies capstone process, go over the syllabus, ask and answer questions, and have guest speakers: recent American Studies graduates who will talk about their capstone process. 2021 BA graduates Bailey Foreman, Beatrice Beirne, Erin Kahle, and Zoe Probst plan to attend around 1:30 pm. Then we'll complete a topics brainstorming exercise together.

Wednesday, January 26: Research Questions and Answers

Read Chapters 1 and 2 in Turabian (on Canvas), as well as the sample senior capstone essay posted to Canvas. Come prepared to discuss your possible research question and how you plan to answer it.

Wednesday, February 2: Research Proposals

Read the sample research proposal and plan, as well as the suggested research proposal outline—both are on Canvas. We will discuss these in class, and you'll begin to formulate your research proposals and plans, which will be due next week.

Wednesday, February 9: Finding and Using Sources

Read Chapters 3 and 4 in Turabian (on Canvas). We will be joined in class by Jamie Emery, the research librarian for American Studies, who will talk to us about using SLU's research databases and other tools for interdisciplinary research on American culture. We'll talk about how one generally uses primary versus secondary sources in American Studies writing. We'll also introduce our research topics to one another, get suggestions about source materials and possible arguments, and spend some time executing preliminary research for your annotated bibliographies, which will be due next week.

Due by E-mail to the Entire Class: Research Proposals

Wednesday, February 16: What Can Interdisciplinarity Look Like?

Read Kevin Mumford's "Homesex Changes: Race, Cultural Geography, and the Emergence of the Gay" and Priscilla Wald's "Cultures and Carriers: 'Typhoid Mary' and the Science of Social Control," both on Canvas. In class we will "reverse-engineer" these essays to determine how the authors did their research. We will also look at your annotated bibliographies as a group.

Due by E-mail to the Entire Class: Annotated Bibliographies

Wednesday, February 23: Making an Argument

Read Chapter 5 in Turabian and selections from *They Say, I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*, which are both posted on Canvas. Keep Mumford's and Wald's essays from last week handy; we will be using them to identify the kinds of argumentative "moves" discussed by those two texts.

Wednesday, March 2: Outlines and Organization

Read Chapters 6 and 7 in Turabian and the excerpts provided from Wendy Laura Belcher's *How to Write Your Journal Article in Twelve Weeks*, which are posted to Canvas. We will discuss these in class, and you will begin to outline your final essays. We'll talk about how you are proceeding with the "segments" of your final essay, and schedule individual appointments for the next five weeks.

Wednesday, March 9

We will not be meeting in class today. Instead, you will have a scheduled individual appointment with me to discuss your "Segment 1."

Due by E-mail to the Instructor: Segment 1 – What have other scholars said about my topic and/or sources?

Wednesday, March 16

Spring break—no class! Enjoy it!

Wednesday, March 23

We will not be meeting in class today. Instead, you will have a scheduled individual appointment with me to discuss your "Segment 2."

Due by E-mail to Instructor: Segment 2 – How do I contextualize my topic and/or sources?

Wednesday, March 30

We will not be meeting in class today. Instead, you will have a scheduled individual appointment with me to discuss your "Segment 3."

Due by E-mail to the Instructor: Segment 3 – What do my primary sources mean?

Wednesday, April 6

We will not be meeting in class today. Instead, you will have a scheduled individual appointment with me to discuss your in-progress rough draft.

Wednesday, April 13

We will not be meeting in class today. Instead, you will have a scheduled individual appointment with me to discuss your complete rough draft.

Due by E-mail to the Entire Class: Complete Rough Draft

Wednesday, April 20

Before class, review the writing workshop guidelines posted to Canvas, which include directions for written feedback to your peers. During our class period, we will conduct a writing workshop.

Due by E-mail to the Instructor: Peer Feedback

Wednesday, April 27: Practice Presentations

Be prepared to do a complete, polished run-through of your final approximately 15-minute presentation (including all A/V), and to take notes and offer feedback to your classmates.

Wednesday, May 4: American Studies Senior Research Symposium

Presentations will be from 1:30-4:00 in 142 Adorjan Hall.

Due: Presentation

Monday, May 16 by 11: 59 pm

Due by E-mail to the Instructor: Final Essay