

American Studies Program Assessment and Curriculum Matrix

Learning outcomes

The American Studies program has fourteen student learning outcomes: (1) know and use the methods and materials of American Studies scholarship, (2) demonstrate integrative research and learning, (3) appreciate the diversity of persons, (4) analyze and interpret a range of cultural products, (5) read critically, (6) write critically and in an interdisciplinary fashion, (7) think and argue analytically, (8) speak effectively, (9) make presentations using various media, materials, and information technology, (10) work collaboratively, (11) appreciate and perform civic engagement activities, (12) research in primary sources, secondary academic sources, and material culture, (13) know the history of American Studies scholarship and the field, and (14) design one's own conference-ready research project. (See Curriculum Matrix below, 5.1)

Assessment methods

Course-level assessment for the concentration occurs mostly in IDS 233, IDS 250, and IDS 333. Various methods are used in these courses such as progression of assignments, muddiest point exercises, minute papers and so on. Program-level assessment is in IDS 461, "Seminar in American Studies," the capstone course for the concentration. Successful completion of this capstone course, especially its major research project, is evidence that the students have achieved the concentration's learning outcomes.

Use of assessment data

Currently, the coordinator of the American Studies Concentration, who teaches the capstone course, is able to judge whether learning outcomes have been reached. Several years ago, when student learning justified changes to courses and the flowsheet, the coordinator spoke with the chairs of all the departments that contribute courses to the program. IDS 232, "American Identities" was redesigned as an introductory course and IDS 333, "Topics in American Studies" became a required mid-level course. The capstone course IDS 461, "Seminar in American Studies" was created, which was offered for the first time in Fall 2009. These changes were examined and approved. The chairs of all the contributing departments were then called to a meeting to discuss the next steps for the concentration. Student performance in the capstone course and in its major research project does not yet demonstrate a trend warranting changes.

American Studies Curriculum Matrix Fall 2010 Draft

Course Numbers	IDS 232	IDS 250	ART 236	GPH 222	IDS333	IDS 461
Course Names	American Identities	Humanities in Cult. Settings	Arts in America	Geography of the U.S.	Topics in American Studies	Seminar in American Studies
Methods and materials of American Studies scholarship	I		P	P	P	R
Integrative research and learning	I	I	P	P	P	R
Diversity of persons	I	I			P	R
Analyze and interpret range of cultural products	I	I	P	P	P	R
Critical Reading	I	I	P		P	R
Critical and Interdisciplinary Writing	I	I	P		P	R
Analytical thinking and argument	I	I			P	R
Oral and written presentation	I	I	P	P	P	R
Presentation skills using various media, materials, and IT, and up to academic standard	I	I		P	P	R
Collaborative and experiential learning	I	I		P	P	R
Civic engagement activities and reflection	I				P	R
Research in primary and secondary sources in varied forms and through investigation of material culture	I		P		P	R
History of American Studies scholarship					I	P
Self-designed research project					I	P
I=Introduce	P= Practice	R=Reinforce				