

Annual Assessment Report

Academic Year: 2015-2016

Department: History, Philosophy, and Religious Studies

Program(s): American Studies

Assessment reports are to be submitted annually to report assessment activities and results by program. The reports are due every summer with a deadline of September 15th each year.

The use of this template is entirely optional.

Note: These reports have been required by MSU policy since 2004.

1. What Was Done

Major: We evaluated program learning outcomes #5 and #6 this year: students will be able to use evidence from primary and secondary sources in making an argument; students will be able to cite sources according to the conventions of the discipline

Minor: AMST currently does not offer an undergraduate minor.

2. What Data Were Collected

MAJOR: 4 papers were randomly selected by the chair of the Assessment Committee from one AMST capstone course. A faculty committee of two read the papers and evaluated them according to the following rubrics:

MAJOR LEARNING OUTCOME 5 - Our graduates will be able to use evidence from primary and secondary sources

Unacceptable	Acceptable	Good	Excellent
the paper uses only secondary sources with no understanding that research requires primary materials Unacceptable	the paper demonstrates the use of primary and secondary sources but without notable distinction Acceptable	the paper has an understanding of the difference between the various types of sources Good	the paper addresses distinctions between types of sources used in the argument Excellent

MAJOR LEARNING OUTCOME 6 - Our graduates will be able to cite sources according to the conventions of the discipline

Unacceptable	Acceptable	Good	Excellent
the paper does not cite sources or does so with a limited understanding of the conventions of the discipline Unacceptable	the paper uses an academic citation style, but is often inconsistent in applying the guidelines Acceptable	the paper cites sources according to the conventions of the discipline with only a few minor mistakes Good	the paper demonstrates a clear understanding of how to cite sources correctly according to the conventions of the discipline Excellent

2. What Was Learned

Major:

Learning Outcome #5: distinguish between primary and secondary sources

Excellent	75%
Good	25%
Acceptable	0%

Total “Acceptable” and better: 100%. This result surpasses the goal of 75% of our graduates having acquired the ability to distinguish between primary and secondary sources.

Learning Outcome #6: be able to cite sources according to the conventions of the discipline

Excellent	50%
Good	50%
Acceptable	0%
Unacceptable	0%

Total “Acceptable” and better: 100%. This result surpasses the goal of 75% of our graduates being able to marshal evidence from both primary and secondary sources to support an argument.

4. How We Responded

Faculty recommendations: For Criteria #5, students demonstrated that they have a strong understanding of the differences between primary and secondary sources. It is recommended that students in AMST 401R review additional argumentative approaches they might employ in addressing the different forms of knowledge provided by primary and secondary sources. In this way, students could further discuss what is at stake in distinguishing between these two types of sources.

For Criteria #6, students followed the appropriate citation guidelines in their papers in employing either the MLA or Chicago Style. In 2016, however, the *MLA Handbook* updated its guidelines with the release of the 8th edition, which has garnered some controversy in the academy. In the future, AMST faculty will need to discuss whether they plan to adopt the new MLA guidelines or stay with the 7th edition, a decision many departments are now facing.

Submitted by: AMST Assessment Committee