

# Annual Assessment Report

Academic Year: 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 15<sup>th</sup> 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 for criteria #1 and criteria #2 from AMST 101D and AMST 401R this year. Criteria #1 indicates that students will be able to understand the ways American culture can be interpreted from multiple perspectives. Criteria #2 indicates that students will be able to apply the analytical methods of AMST to a range of historical and contemporary issues.

**Minor:** AMST currently does not offer an undergraduate minor.

## 2. What Data Were Collected

**MAJOR:** 20 papers were randomly selected by the chair of the Assessment Committee from AMST 101D and 3 papers were selected from the AMST capstone course. A faculty committee of two read the papers and evaluated them according to the following rubrics:

*MAJOR LEARNING OUTCOME 1: students will be able to understand the ways American culture can be interpreted from multiple perspectives*

<b>Unacceptable</b>	<b>Acceptable</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
the paper shows no understanding of how American culture may be interpreted from multiple perspectives <b>Unacceptable</b>	the paper gestures toward an understanding of how American culture may be interpreted from multiple perspectives but does not have strong grasp of this concept <b>Acceptable</b>	the paper shows an understanding of the ways American culture can be interpreted through a range of perspectives <b>Good</b>	the paper has a sophisticated understanding of the ways American culture can be interpreted through a diverse range of perspectives <b>Excellent</b>

*MAJOR LEARNING OUTCOME 2: students will be able to apply the analytical methods of AMST to a range of historical and contemporary issues*

<b>Unacceptable</b>	<b>Acceptable</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
the paper shows no understanding of the analytical methods of AMST or that they can be applied to a range of historical and contemporary issues <b>Unacceptable</b>	the paper is able to apply the some of the analytical methods of AMST to a small range of historical and contemporary issues <b>Acceptable</b>	the paper shows a solid understanding of how the analytical methods of AMST may be applied to a range of historical and contemporary issues <b>Good</b>	the paper demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of how to apply the analytical methods of AMST to a range of historical and contemporary issues <b>Excellent</b>

## 2. What Was Learned

**AMST 101D:**

**MAJOR:** Learning Outcome #1: students have clear understanding of ways American culture can be understood from multiple perspectives.

Excellent: 50%  
Good: 25%  
Acceptable: 15%  
Unacceptable: 10%

Learning Outcome #2: Students demonstrate clear understanding of how AMST methods can be applied to historical and contemporary issues.

Excellent: 60%  
Good: 20%  
Acceptable: 10%  
Unacceptable: 10%

For both learning outcomes, more than 75% of students demonstrated that they had a demonstrable understanding of different perspectives on American culture *and* of different AMST methods can elucidate historical and contemporary issues in American culture.

**AMST 401R:**

Learning Outcome #1: understanding the ways American culture may be interpreted from multiple perspectives

Excellent	33.3%
Good	66.6%
Acceptable	0%
Unacceptable	0%

Total "Acceptable" and better: 100%. This result surpasses the goal of 75% of our student having acquired the ability to understand the ways American culture may be interpreted from multiple perspectives.

Learning Outcome #2: be able to apply the analytic methods of AMST to a variety of historical and contemporary issues

Excellent	66.6%
Good	33.3%
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 #1, AMST 401R students demonstrated that they have acquired the ability to understand the ways American culture may be interpreted from multiple perspectives.

It is recommended that instructors for this course continue to be explicit about identifying different perspectives on American culture *and* how specific American Studies analytics can be applied to deepening students understand of American culture as it has developed over time.

It is recommended that faculty encourage students in AMST 401R to more clearly position their major arguments within specific critical, historical and/or theoretical contexts. In doing so, students might be able to assess with greater sophistication how their scholarly perspectives are shaped by and/or differ from established critical positions in the discipline of AMST.

For Criteria #2, students in AMST 401R, it is recommended that faculty teaching the course keep encouraging students to foreground more frequently the central or foundational ideas of different schools or traditions in the field of AMST throughout their papers. While students demonstrated an ability to provide these observations in their written work, it would strengthen their work if they foregrounded this information more fully in their papers.

Submitted by: AMST Assessment Committee