

## UNM DEPARTMENT OF LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

### STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENTS

#### GENERAL INFORMATION

The University of New Mexico requires all academic programs to design learning outcomes that provide an intellectual guideline for what students should ultimately gain from their degree program. To help academic programs determine whether or not students are effectively mastering material and achieving the learning goals that have been designed, programs utilize assessment tools to evaluate student performance. Below is information on LAS Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) and Assessment for undergraduate and graduate students.

#### UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

The Latin American Studies (LAS) Program is designed to provide students with a broad yet solid interdisciplinary foundation. Undergraduate students complete at least two semesters of 300-level Spanish or Portuguese, with supplementary skills in a second language [Spanish, Portuguese, Quechua, or K'iche' Maya). All undergraduate LAS majors select one of three Core Areas. Between their Core Area and Electives, they complete coursework in at least three different disciplines. The Core Areas are: (1) Humanities (i.e., art history, literature and culture, history, media arts, religious studies); (2) Social and Natural Sciences (i.e., anthropology, biology, community and regional planning, economics, history, management, political science, sociology); (3) Core Area Focus (self-designed) (ex. environment and ecology; development; gender; U.S.-Latin American relations). Approximately 65 percent of their area studies course work focuses on either the Social/Natural Sciences or the Humanities, providing significant structure and focus.

**Goal 1:** Students will acquire knowledge of at least three dimensions-historical, literary, economic, etc.-of local, regional, and international processes in Latin America.

**SLO 1.1:** Students will draw on their knowledge of local, regional, or international processes in Latin America to identify and describe at least two dimensions-historical, literary, economic, etc.-of specific issues or problems.

**Goal 2:** Students will think critically and solve problems on Latin American topics through the lens of various disciplinary perspectives.

**SLO 2.1:** Students will solve research problems on specifically-defined Latin American topics by applying two disciplinary perspectives and consulting and analyzing appropriate disciplinary sources.

**SLO 2.2:** Students will present their research in compelling, coherent, clearly-written analytical arguments, supported by appropriate documentation and disciplinary citation style.

**Goal 3:** Students will become clear and effective communicators in English and in either Spanish or Portuguese.

**SLO 3.1:** Students will orally present information, concepts, and analyses in English, Spanish or Portuguese, in a clear and compelling manner, using appropriate vocabulary, and complex grammatical structures.

**Goal 4:** Students will become intercultural communicators, with communicative proficiency in one Latin American language, being able to demonstrate an understanding and acceptance of cultural differences while communicating.

**SLO 4.1:** Students will engage in interpersonal communication with peers and superiors in a Latin American language demonstrating fluency, accuracy, and culturally appropriate vocabulary and behavior.

#### **UNDERGRADUATE ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

Before graduation, every LAS major must submit to the LAII Associate Director for Academic Programs a research paper of at least 5-pages in length, written by the student in a 300- or 400-level class, after she or he has completed 24-36 hours of LAS course work. The paper must have at least 40% Latin American content and should relate to the student's chosen core area of focus (either Humanities or Social Sciences). It should employ research methods appropriate to the discipline, using data and/or secondary sources, and developing a coherent argument.

#### **GRADUATE STUDENTS**

The Latin American Studies (LAS) Program is designed to provide MA students with a broad yet solid interdisciplinary foundation. The MA in Latin American Studies is designed to prepare students for careers in government service, teaching, scholarship, business, travel, and tourism, and inter-American and/or non-governmental organizations. In addition, the program complements graduate work in a student's chosen professional field (i.e. dual degrees: the LAS Program has five formalized dual-degree programs with Community & Regional Planning, Education (LLSS), the Law School, Public Health, and the Robert O. Anderson Schools of Management) and provides graduate training in preparation for the pursuit of a disciplinary or interdisciplinary PhD.

**Goal 1:** Students will develop in-depth knowledge in two fields of concentration in Latin American Studies, including at least one disciplinary field of study.

**SLO 1.1:** Students will describe in depth specific Latin American issues or problems in relation to local, regional, and international processes, in two fields of concentration.

**Goal 2:** Students will learn theory and/or research methods in two disciplines.

**SLO 2.1:** Students will solve a research problem on a specifically-defined Latin American topic by applying a disciplinary perspective and consulting and analyzing appropriate disciplinary sources or data.

**Goal 3:** Students will develop and utilize academic forms of written and oral communication to present their research.

**SLO 3.1:** Students will present their research orally or in writing in compelling, coherent, clear analytical arguments, supported by appropriate documentation and disciplinary citation style.

**Goal 4:** Students will develop and apply interdisciplinary of methods to Latin American topics.

**SLO 4.1:** Students will solve a research problem by applying an interdisciplinary methodology and sources appropriate to both disciplines.

## **MA ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

There are generally two routes for completing M.A. degree requirements.

**Plan I:** involves course work, a master's thesis (that has a primary focus on one concentration but draws on theories and substantive content from the second concentration), oral defense of the thesis, and satisfactory performance on a comprehensive examination in one field.

**Plan II:** involves course work and satisfactory performances on comprehensive examinations in two fields.

**Thesis option** — Students must select two areas of concentration. Students are required to present an oral defense of the thesis before a thesis committee composed of at least two faculty members in one area of concentration and one faculty member from the second area of concentration. Students also are required to sit for the comprehensive examination in the second area of concentration, administered by two faculty members from that concentration.

**Non-thesis option** — Students must select two areas of concentration. Students are required to sit for the comprehensive examinations in both areas of concentration. The examinations are administered by a Committee on Studies (COS) composed of two faculty members from each concentration.

## **Evaluation Rubric**

### **High Pass:**

1. demonstrates comprehensive mastery of specific Latin American issues, problems, or cases, by describing them in relation to contemporary, historical, local, regional, and/or international processes;

2. presents a sophisticated analytical thesis that responds to the problem posed;
3. demonstrates comprehensive understanding of the literature relevant to the field, by supporting the analysis with defensible interpretations of appropriate sources;
4. employs with mastery concepts, theory, methods, or approaches of the discipline or field;
5. demonstrates comprehensive mastery of the issues, problems, or cases;
6. thoroughly answers all parts of the question asked;
7. presents the ideas in compelling, coherent, clear analytical arguments, supported by appropriate bibliographical references.

**Pass:**

1. demonstrates comprehensive knowledge of specific Latin American issues, problems, or cases, by describing them in relation to contemporary, historical, local, regional, and/or international processes;
2. presents a comprehensible analytical thesis that responds to the problem posed;
3. demonstrates comprehensive knowledge of the literature relevant to the field, by supporting the analysis with defensible interpretations of appropriate sources;
4. employs concepts, theory, methods, or approaches of the discipline or field in an intelligent manner;
5. demonstrates a full understanding of the issues, problems, or cases;
6. addresses answers all parts of the question asked;
7. presents the ideas in an organized, analytical argument, in articulate language, supported by appropriate source references;
8. may have some extraneous or erroneous material, which does not detract from the overall quality of the essay.

**Low Pass:**

1. demonstrates adequate knowledge of specific Latin American issues, problems, or cases, by describing them in relation to contemporary, historical, local, regional, and/or international processes;
2. presents a thesis that responds to the problem posed;
3. demonstrates adequate knowledge of the literature relevant to the field, by supporting the analysis with defensible interpretations of appropriate sources;
4. demonstrates an understanding of some concepts, theory, methods, or approaches of the discipline or field;
5. demonstrates an adequate understanding of the issues, problems, or cases;
6. addresses the main points of the question asked;
7. presents the ideas in an organized, analytical argument, in articulate language, supported by appropriate source references;
8. may have some extraneous or erroneous material, which detracts from the overall quality of the essay.

**Fail:**

1. Fails to demonstrate adequate knowledge of specific Latin American issues, problems, or cases, by describing them in relation to contemporary, historical, local, regional, and/or international processes;
2. May not present a thesis that responds to the problem posed;
3. Fails to demonstrate adequate knowledge of the literature relevant to the field, by supporting the analysis with defensible interpretations of appropriate sources;
4. Fails to demonstrate an understanding of concepts, theory, methods, or approaches of the discipline or field;
5. Fails to demonstrate an adequate understanding of the issues, problems, or cases;
6. Does not address the main points of the question asked;
7. Presents the ideas in an unintelligible manner;
8. May consist primarily of summaries of the readings.