

Assessment Plan and Assessment Mapping: Master of Arts/Sciences in American Studies (Standard Specialization)

Because this is an interdisciplinary degree in which students take courses in two or more departments/disciplinary fields, we have instituted four points of assessment that all American Studies students must participate in. Thus, in addition to their regular assessment in graduate courses in a variety of departments (for example, History, English, Anthropology, etc.), American Studies (standard) graduate students are specifically assessed for their progress toward learning objectives in/on:

- A. ENGL/HIST 6600, the required “Theory and Methods in American Studies” class for all AS students.
- B. Thesis proposal (and defense)
- C. Thesis (and defense) (Plan A and Plan B)
- D. Completed Program of Study

A. Assessment Mapping: ENGL 6600

All students in the program have one required class other than other interdisciplinary courses, ENGL/HIST 6600. This course provides students with theory and method of graduate-level research in American Studies.

Below is a table for this class, rated by the instructor with H, M, L (high, medium, low) for priority given to the Learning Objectives. ENGL 6600 is taught every year. It was taught in Spring 2017 by Dr. Keri Holt, Director of the American Studies Program. There were **FIVE** American Studies graduate students enrolled in the course for Spring 2018.

Course	L1:	L2:	L3:
	Evaluate a range of American “texts” and examine those texts within specific disciplinary frameworks	Express ideas and arguments in well-crafted, convincing forms	Conduct effective research, locating and analyzing primary and secondary sources using appropriate methods dictated by the relevant discipline(s).
ENGL/HIST 6600: American Studies Theory and Method	H	H	H

In addition, periodically the English department offers two other American Studies graduate courses, ENGL/HIST 6610 “Seminar on the American West” and ENGL 6630 Studies in Film and Popular Culture. The topic in this course varies.

Below is a table that depicts the priority given to the program’s learning objectives in this seminar.

Course	L1:	L2:	L3:
	Evaluate a range of American “texts” and examine those texts within specific disciplinary frameworks	Express ideas and arguments in well-crafted, convincing forms	Conduct effective research, locating and analyzing primary and secondary sources using appropriate methods dictated by the relevant discipline(s).
ENGL/HIST 6610: Seminar on the American West	H	H	H
ENGL 6630 Studies in Film and Poular Culture	H	H	H

Because these courses have not been offered since 2014, they are not included in our “outcomes” section. We will include data for these courses in future reports when they are offered. ENGL 6630 will be offered in Spring 2019.

B. and C.: Thesis Description

The Plan A thesis or B thesis/research project is a requirement of all American Studies (Standard) students. Students undertake their thesis during their second year. The Plan A thesis required students to enroll in 6 credits over one or two semesters. The department minimum length for the thesis is 50 pages, but committees are free to set their own minimum above 50. The Plan B thesis requires students to enroll in three thesis credits. The department minimum is 25 pages, but committees are free to set their own minimum above 25.

Students form a thesis committee of at least three faculty members who are appointed to the graduate faculty: A major advisor, a committee member, and an outside member. In American Studies, students choose a major thesis advisor from the department that best represents the topic and content of their thesis. At least one member of the committee must have his/her major appointment in a department other than the main topic of the thesis.

B. Assessment Mapping: Thesis Proposal and Proposal Defense

The thesis proposal is a written document produced by the student, revised under the guidance of the thesis advisor, and then shared with the entire thesis committee. Students may be required by the advisor and/or entire committee to revise their thesis proposal multiple times before they are allowed to go to oral defense with the entire committee.

The thesis proposal oral defense results in one of four decisions, which is voted on by the entire thesis committee:

- **Pass:** No revision required. Student may proceed directly to researching and writing the thesis.
- **Pass with minor revisions:** Student may be required to make these minor revisions before he/she is allowed to proceed to the researching/writing of the thesis, or the committee may allow the student to proceed to the researching/writing of the thesis and to address the minor revisions in the thesis itself.
- **Pass with major revisions:** Student may be required to make these major revisions before he/she is allowed to proceed to the researching/writing of the thesis, or the committee may allow the student to proceed to the researching/writing of the thesis and to address the major revisions in the thesis itself.
- **Fail:** Student is required to rewrite most or all of the proposal and must re-sit the oral defense.

Assessment of Learning Objectives: Both the thesis proposal and thesis proposal defense require mastery of Learning Objectives 2 and 3. The thesis proposal and thesis proposal defense may, but is not required to, address Learning Objective 1, depending on the topic of the thesis. Below is a table that describes how the thesis proposal and thesis proposal defense address the learning objectives.

Event	L1:	L2:	L3:
	Evaluate a range of American “texts” and examine those texts within specific disciplinary frameworks	Express ideas and arguments in well-crafted, convincing forms	Conduct effective research, locating and analyzing primary and secondary sources using appropriate methods dictated by the relevant discipline(s).
Written thesis proposal	May (but does not need to) evaluate a range of texts.	H	H
Oral defense of thesis proposal	May (but does not need to) evaluate a range of texts.	H	H

For outcomes on the thesis proposal and defense, click here

C. Assessment Mapping: Thesis and Thesis Defense

The thesis is a written document produced by the student and revised under the guidance of the thesis advisor and/or thesis committee. When the advisor and/or thesis committee decide the thesis is defensible (sometimes after multiple revisions), the defensible version of the thesis is then shared with the entire committee and an appointment for examination is filed (at least two weeks before the defense date) with the Graduate School.

The thesis defense is an oral examination of the thesis. The thesis oral defense results in one of four decisions, which is voted on by the entire thesis committee:

- **Pass:** No revision of thesis required.

- **Pass with minor revisions:** Student must make minor revisions before submitting the thesis to the Graduate School for review (for Plan A) or the library (for Plan B). Unless the revisions are extremely light, the thesis advisor reviews them to make certain they have been completed satisfactorily.
- **Pass with major revisions:** Student must make major revisions before submitting the thesis to the Graduate School for review (for Plan A) or the library (for Plan B). The thesis advisor and/or entire committee reviews the revised thesis to make certain the revisions have been completed satisfactorily.
- **Fail:** Student is required to rewrite most or all of the thesis and must re-sit the oral defense.

Assessment of Learning Objectives: The thesis and thesis defense require mastery of Learning Objectives 2 and 3. The thesis and thesis defense may, but are not required to, address Learning Objective 1, depending on the topic of the thesis. Below is a table that describes how the thesis and thesis proposal defense address the learning objectives.

Event	L1: Evaluate a range of American “texts” and examine those texts within specific disciplinary frameworks	L2: Express ideas and arguments in well-crafted, convincing forms	L3: Conduct effective research, locating and analyzing primary and secondary sources using appropriate methods dictated by the relevant discipline(s).
ENGL 6970: Thesis (Plan A requires 6 credits, Plan B 3 credits)	May (but does not need to) evaluate a range of texts.	H	H
Oral defense of written thesis	May (but does not need to) evaluate a range of texts.	H	H

For outcomes on the thesis and thesis defense, click here

C. Assessment Mapping: Completed Programs of Study

To ensure that American Studies (standard) students are successfully completing learning objective #1 (Evaluating a range of American “texts” and examining those texts within specific disciplinary frameworks), the Director of Graduate Studies meets with all enrolled students to discuss their Programs of Study (POS) every year. Many students

