

Assessment of Student Learning Plan (ASLP): Women & Gender Studies

2017-18 Academic Year

A. College, Department, Date

College Academic Affairs
Department Women and Gender Studies
Date May 29, 2018

B. Contact Person for the Assessment Plan

Name and title Lisa Walker, Director of Women and Gender Studies

C. Degree Program

Name of Degree Program BA in Women and Gender Studies

D. Assessment of Student Learning: Program Assessment

Step 1: Identify the Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's)

- a. Do you have your student learning outcomes published on your department's website? **Yes/No**
- b.
 - i. https://usm.maine.edu/sites/default/files/wgs/1.%20Learning%20Outcomes%20_%20Self%20Study%202012.pdf
 - ii. If no, please list 3-5 of the most important student learning outcomes for your program. **What will students know by the end of your program?**
- c. Please identify **which of your student learning outcome(s) were assessed this past academic year.** (One or more of the outcomes and corresponding assessment plans could come from your department's CORE Course Blueprint(s).

Outcome 6

d. Do you have a **matrix or curriculum map** showing when your student learning outcomes are assessed and in which courses? **Yes/No**

E.	Objective I Define, discuss and apply	Objective II Identify	Objective III Compare and assess	Objective IV Recognize, interpret and critique	Objective V Engage intellectually	Objective VI Synthesize
EYE 109 Gender, Representation & Resistance	I	I	I	I	I	
100 Introduction to WGS	I	I	I	I	I	
201 Women, Knowledge and Power	R	R	R	R	R	I
380 Politics of Difference	M	M	M	R	R	R
390 Contemporary Feminist Theories	M	M	M	R	R	R
485 & 486 Internship & Thesis	M	M	M	M	M	M
490 Capstone	M	M	M	M	M	M

F.

i. If yes, do you have this map published on your website? Please indicate url or attach a copy of the curriculum map.

Step 2: Assessment Methods Selected and Implemented

a. Identify which direct measures (other than course grades), that were used to determine whether students achieved the stated learning outcomes for the degree.

This year, WGS continued its focus on the capstone year, using the rubrics adopted last spring for assessing Outcome # 6, “students can synthesize course work with independent reading and practice outside the classroom to produce a substantial written or oral project and reflect on their experience with difference.” Scoring rubrics

were used for the thesis and the internship papers (WGS's major written capstone projects), and for the oral presentation of capstone projects at Thinking Matters.

- b. *Briefly describe when you implemented the assessment activity, and if a scoring rubric was used to evaluate the expected level of student achievement. (This information may be shown on your curriculum map).*

Outcome 6:

Outcome #6 was measured during the spring semester. All seniors completed a research project during spring 2018, and all presented their work in the Thinking Matters conference in April. 5 students presented in panels, 1 student presented a poster, and 1 student presented a "lightening talk" in the evening of Thinking Matters. The Director of WGS used scoring rubrics at the Thinking Matters presentation, in consultation with a second WGS faculty member who attended the presentations. WGS is especially pleased with the students' preparation for the oral presentation of capstone projects. (see attached rubric).

The WGS Director, who teaches the Capstone class, used the Undergraduate Research Paper rubric to assess the written projects submitted by capstone students completing the internship option. Thesis students' written projects were assessed by individual student's thesis committee members, using the Undergraduate Research Paper Rubric, following the thesis defense.

Example: Outcome 1 was measured during the fall semester -- all majors completed a problem-solving case study during the ___ course. Case studies were graded on a rubric by two faculty members.

Example: Outcome 2 was measured during the spring semester -- all majors in the capstone course completed a research project. Research projects will be reviewed and graded by a group of faculty.

Step 3: Using the Assessment results to Improve Student Learning

- a. *Briefly describe your unit's process of reviewing the program assessment results (i.e. annual process by faculty committee, etc).*

Assessment of Capstone students' is done by the Director of WGS. For Internship students, the director works in consultation with other faculty to score rubrics for the oral presentation, and works alone to score rubrics for written work. For thesis students, the Director works in consultation with thesis committee members to score rubrics for oral and written work.

b. What specific changes have been or will be made to improve student learning, as a result of using the program assessment results?

Capstone Classes/Outcome 6

The program continues to work on improving the academic pathway for thesis students, refining its delivery of a two-semester pathway for thesis students. In fall 2017, the senior WGS students considering the thesis option enrolled in a combined section of HON 311: Honors Thesis Workshop/WGS 320: Advanced Topics: Feminist Thesis Workshop, taught by the Director of WGS. (See attached syllabus). This is the first semester that WGS has offered a fall-semester course devoted to thesis writing. Each student in the class conducted research, wrote a thesis proposal, and organized a thesis committee. All students in the fall Thesis Workshop class chose to pursue the thesis in the second semester of senior year, and the thesis committees determined that the final projects met the program's learning outcomes successfully.

Based on the success of this course, WGS Council voted to assign the new class, "WGS 486: Feminist Thesis Workshop," a permanent place in the catalog. WGS will face challenges offering this course regularly for the very small number of WGS students who seek to write a senior thesis, and hopes, in the near future, to collaborate with other programs and departments whose students might benefit from taking the class.

WGS 201

Last year, focus groups with faculty and students regarding WGS 201, a required course in both the major and the minor, revealed that the learning goals and outcomes of the course could be clarified. This spring, WGS council voted to change the name of the course from "Women, Knowledge and Power," to "Rethinking Gender and Culture" in an effort to draw attention to the role that the course fills in the core curriculum. WGS intends to sharpen our focus on how the course helps students "understand how people make sense [of gender and other forms of difference] through the production of cultural representation including artistic creations, literary productions and performances" and to "understand ethical issues raised by cultural representations, including what they suggest about students in their diverse roles"

(<https://usm.maine.edu/sites/default/files/Core%20Curriculum/Cultural%20Interpretation.pdf>). Our next step is to undertake a review of recent 201 syllabi to study how well they align with Core Curriculum and WGS learning outcomes, discuss any curricular changes that need to be made to the class, and then plan an assessment of how WGS 201 is meeting learning outcomes.

c. Date of most recent program review/self-study?

The program performed a self-study in 2012 and underwent External Program Review in 2013. Learning goals were most recently revised in 2014.

E..Course Assessment Activities: *Is your program able to report any assessment-related activities at the Course-Level... (i.e. created grading rubrics to use in required courses, examined student progress in entry-level courses, developed a new course, etc)? Please briefly explain any assessment projects.*

WGS Developed a new course, “WGS 486: Feminist Thesis Workshop” to serve as the first semester of a two-semester pathway for senior thesis students. (see attached syllabus)

Following the spring 2018 assessment of the thesis students’ written work and defense, WGS proposed revising the Undergraduate Research Paper rubric used to assess the final written project to include a focus on revision, which is an important part of the thesis writing process. WGS also drafted a rubric for the thesis defense, a component of thesis students’ oral presentation of their capstone project, which has always been assessed without reference to a rubric. These rubrics (attached) will be considered by the WGS Curriculum Committee in fall 2018 for adoption in spring 2019.

F. Community Engagement Activities in your departmental curriculum:

a. Does your department have a student learning outcome that is related to any community engagement activities? If so, please state the outcome.

WGS has over 50 community partners, and a community-based curriculum in that it emphasizes the understanding of diversity and difference within structures of power; it requires students to practice the exercise of ethical judgment and civic action. As our 2012 self-study states, the program is also committed to providing high-quality programming for WGS and other USM students exemplifies the coherence of an undergraduate experience that integrates classroom learning and out-of-class experiences into a dynamic and mutually reinforcing whole.” Further, as the self study reports,

“**Community engagement** is also a crucial component in the WGS curriculum. At both the introductory and capstone level, WGS students collaborate with local or regional organizations in order to deepen their understanding of feminist theory, research, and activism as well as to provide partners with resources that advance their missions related to diversity and inclusivity.

Internships play a key role in the WGS curriculum. All majors either complete an 8-hour a week internship in their final year of matriculation, or write a 30-page senior thesis. The majority of students pursue the internship option. WGS interns have worked with a wide range of community partners . . . Among alumnae/i surveyed for the self-study, 68% reported that their senior year internship experience was either very, or somewhat, useful to them professionally.”

b. Please indicate if any of the community engagement activities listed below are included in your program’s curriculum, by noting which activities are required or optional for students in your major.

<u>Community Engagement Activity</u>	<u>Required/Optional</u>	
Student Research (related to a community-based problem)	R	O
Student-Faculty Community Research Project	R	O
Internship, or a Field Experience	R	O
Independent Study (community-related project)	R	O
Capstone Course (community-related project)	R	O
Service-Learning (course-based)	R	O
Study Abroad, or an International Program	R	O
Interdisciplinary Collaborative Project (community related)	R	O
Student Leadership Activities (related to a team project)	R	O
Students/Faculty Community Leadership (advisory boards, committees, conference presentations)	R	O
Other activities:		

c. Please list any courses (i.e. EDU 400) that have a community engagement activity in your program.

Upper-level courses: WGS 490: Capstone

Rubric: Undergraduate Research Paper/Thesis WGS

Student: _____

Notes:

	4-Exceeds Standards	3-Meets Standards Skillfully	2-Meets Standards	1-Approaching Standards
Research Quality	All references are scholarly, topic-specific and from legitimate sources. Key texts are cited. Compelling evidence is given to support claims; citations are clear and fairly represented.	Most references are scholarly, topic-specific and from legitimate sources. Clear evidence is given to support claims; citations for the most part are clear and fairly represented.	Scholarly sources are used; they are generally related to the topic. Sources that support claims are generally evident; citations for the most part are clear.	Sources are used but research could be more topic-specific and/or scholarly. Although sources are used, it is not always clear how they support claims; citations may be confusing.
Content/Subject Knowledge	Rich in content. Demonstrates excellent command of subject matter. Takes an original approach to the subject and sustains a complex argument with skill. Fully synthesizes the student's experience of difference with the topic at hand.	Demonstrates above average command of subject matter. Has a clear, complex project. Begins to take interpretive risks. Skillfully synthesizes student's experience of difference with topic at hand.	Demonstrates a general, fundamental command of subject matter. Has a project that is thoughtful and clear. May not take interpretive risks. Begins the synthesize student's experience of difference with topic at hand.	Tries to explain subject matter, but may generalize or overlook important elements of subject. Does not synthesize student's experience of difference with topic at hand.
Thesis/Argument	Has a well-developed argument and outlines main points to be covered. The project builds upon the thesis throughout, guiding the reader skillfully through the supporting material.	Demonstrates and effective presentation of the thesis. most of the project refers to the key focus of the paper and the supporting statements are clearly connected to main idea.	States a general thesis at the beginning of project. The thesis guides the development of the project, but linkages between sections could be clearer in places	Thesis is present but not fully supported. Linkages between supporting material and main idea are unclear.

WGS Undergraduate Thesis Defense Rubric

	A	B	C	D
Student demonstrates ability to draw on knowledge developed in the WGS major to contextualize the thesis project	Demonstrates an excellent ability draw on knowledge from the WGS major to contextualize the project.	Demonstrates a good ability to draw on knowledge from the WGS major to contextualize the project.	Demonstrates a fair ability to draw on knowledge from the WGS major to contextualize the project.	Demonstrates no or little ability draw on knowledge from the WGS major to contextualize the project.
Student demonstrates ability to refer to integrate relevant literature.	Demonstrates an excellent understanding of relevant literature.	Demonstrates a good understanding of relevant literature.	Demonstrates a fair understanding of relevant literature.	Demonstrates no or little understanding of relevant literature.
Student demonstrates knowledge of appropriate research strategies and methods.	Demonstrates an excellent knowledge of research and methods.	Demonstrates a good knowledge of research and methods.	Demonstrates a fair knowledge of research and methods.	Demonstrates no or little knowledge of research and methods.
Student demonstrates ability to respond to questions about research.	Demonstrates excellent ability to respond to questions about research.	Demonstrates good ability to respond to questions about research.	Demonstrates fair ability to respond to questions about research.	Demonstrates no or little ability to respond to questions \ research.

Overall Assessment

WGS 320: Feminist Thesis Workshop

Professor L. Walker

Fall 2017

Tuesday 11:30-1:00

94 Bedford Street

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Marie Laveau

Course Overview:

The thesis option for WGS provides seniors with a unique opportunity to undertake and complete an independent research project with the guidance of WGS faculty. The WGS thesis course sequence should be completed in two semesters. In WGS 320: Feminist Thesis Workshop, taken in the fall of the senior year, each student will develop a topic, investigate the thesis subject thoroughly, write and revise a formal research statement, conduct a review of the appropriate literature, choose a thesis advisor and committee, embark on a research program, and produce a formal thesis prospectus. In coordination with a primary advisor and committee, students will also set dates for submissions of writing. In the spring, students planning to finish the thesis should enroll in 4-6 credits of WGS 486: Women and Gender Studies Thesis, along with WGS 490: Capstone Experience. WGS 486 students will learn about writing and defending thesis. They will meet with the WGS Director and other thesis students to establish a schedule for drafts, workshop drafts of thesis chapters, and practice for the thesis defense and public presentation of the thesis.

In addition to learning about the process of researching and writing a thesis, this course will introduce students to feminist approaches to academic disciplines relevant to individual students' thesis topics. Early in the semester, readings will be chosen by the instructor. Later in the semester, each student will have a chance to workshop reading materials that they provide to the class.

Students in the WGS thesis classes should expect to spend, in addition to reading for class, a minimum of 5-10 hours per week working on their projects, and should budget for more hours when deadlines are approaching. A thesis is a larger project than most papers, and cannot be completed well by "binge-writing"; strive to integrate reading, research, and writing into your daily lives from the beginning of the first semester. This course is designed to help you form good reading, research, and writing habits that will carry you through to the successful completion of your thesis project, and beyond!

Required Reading: Available at USM Bookstore, and also amazon.com (students qualify for discounted “Prime” accounts and free 2-day shipping).

- Lipson, Charles. *How to Write a BA Thesis: A Practical Guide from Your First Ideas to Your Finished Paper*. Chicago: U of Chicago Press, 2005.
- Teish, Luisa. *Jambalaya: The Natural Woman’s Book of Personal Charms and Practical Rituals*.

Recommended Reading:

- Turbian, Kate L., Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 8th edition. Chicago: U of Chicago Press, 2010.
- Rooney, Ellen. *Cambridge Companion to Feminist Literary Theory*. Cambridge UP, 2006

Course Objectives:

1. Design a developed, viable thesis research statement that is grounded in your academic and/or community work in the WGS major.
2. Thoughtfully select your primary advisor and thesis committee.
3. Develop strong research strategies based on an understanding of feminist methods and theories.
4. Write, workshop, and revise a thesis prospectus with the following elements:
 - a. Working title
 - b. Abstract
 - c. Description of your goals the method(s) of analysis you plan to use
 - d. Literature Review
 - e. Chapter Outline
 - f. Research and writing timeline
 - g. Bibliography of primary and secondary sources
5. For students continuing with the thesis in the spring semester: Set a submission date for a “first chapter” to your advisor. This must be a substantial section of your thesis, edited for clarity and appropriately formatted. Coordinate subsequent submission dates with your primary advisor.

Course Requirements:

Research Journal and Drafts (25%): Students will keep a research journal with both information and detailed observations about their capstone project. For internship students, the research journal should respect the confidentiality rules of the internship site. The journal should avoid identifying individuals by name, when necessary. There will be periodic in-class checks of the research journal, and several guided entries on the class readings that will be submitted individually. Drafts will also be graded for thoughtfulness, effort and completeness, and will count in this category.

Reading Lists (20%): A reading list, for the purposes of this class, is a working bibliography with notes. Two formal reading lists will be due this semester, one after the first month, and one towards the end of the semester. Students should update their reading lists throughout the semester.

Bibliographic Essay (20%): The annotated bibliography will include your summary and assessment of a variety of sources identified through library research.

Final Thesis Proposal (25%): A final, oral presentation of your work will be delivered at the WGS Research Symposium in May. You should also think about presenting at “Thinking Matters.”

Class Workshop Assignment (10%): Each student will be asked to create an opportunity for collaboration on the research project by selecting a reading relating to their research project, summarizing it, and posing a series of key questions for the class to consider during an in-class workshop. Materials will be distributed to the class in advance of a class meeting date to be determined.

Abstracts (10%): One conference abstract will be due. You may choose from two due dates, one early and one later in the semester. Students are not required to submit abstracts, but they are required to write them.

Grading:

Unless otherwise noted, the grading scale on assignments and for final course grades is as follows:

94-100 A	B+ 87-89	C+ 77-79	D+ 67-69	F 59 or below
90-93 A-	B 84-86	C 74-76	D 64-66	
	B- 80-83	C- 70-73	D- 60-64	

We will use the grade book on Blackboard to record grades. This grade book will also provide you with a weighted running total of your grade for the class so that you can check your course progress.

COURSE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

WGS 320 POLICIES

- **Attendance:** This class is too small, and meets to infrequently, for anyone to miss a class except for the direst of circumstances! Each absence after the first one may result in a **5-point subtraction** from your final course average. Any exceptions to the policy must be agreed upon before the second absence is incurred. Please do not plan appointments, even with medical doctors, during class time. Class is your appointment. Arriving unduly late or leaving unduly early may be counted as an absence. Beyond regular attendance, adequate class participation requires:
 - discussing your understanding and interpretation of assigned readings
 - asking questions about the readings and the ideas raised in class
 - presenting and examining your point of view about ideas under discussion
 - responding to points of view expressed by the instructors and students in the class
 - giving constructive and precise feedback during writing workshops
- **Email:** Please use your USM email address for correspondence and check it regularly! I will try to respond to your emails within 24-48 hours, except for during breaks.

- **Blackboard:** Some course materials will be available on Blackboard. It is mandatory that you bring them to class with you. In the event that we use Blackboard for students to share work and engage in discussion, no use will be made of any materials posted by faculty or students other than those intended by the faculty member teaching the course. Student work is for the exchange of ideas within the classroom context. *Students retain all rights to their work.* Without permission of the author no work on Blackboard can be copied or reproduced in any format, with or without identifying markers, for any use outside the class.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES:

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Everyone associated with the University of Southern Maine is expected to adhere to the principles of academic integrity central to the academic function of the University. Any breach of academic integrity represents a serious offense. Each student has a responsibility to know the standards of conduct and expectations of academic integrity that apply to academic tasks. Violations of student academic integrity include any actions that attempt to promote or enhance the academic standing of any student by dishonest means. Cheating on an examination, stealing the words or ideas of another (*i.e.*, plagiarism), making statements known to be false or misleading, falsifying the results of one's research, improperly using library materials or computer files, or altering or forging academic records are examples of violations of this policy which are contrary to the academic purposes for which the University exists. Acts that violate academic integrity disrupt the educational process and are not acceptable. Evidence of a violation of the academic integrity policy will normally result in disciplinary action. A copy of the complete policy may be obtained from the Dean of Students Office, online at www.usm.maine.edu/deanofstudents or by calling and requesting a copy at (207) 780-5242.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES (ADA) NOTIFICATION / ACCOMMODATIONS

The university is committed to providing students with documented disabilities equal access to all university programs and services. If you think you have a disability and would like to request accommodations, you must register with the Disability Services Center. Timely notification is essential. The Disability Services Center can be reached by calling 207-780-4706 or by email at dsc-usm@maine.edu. If you have already received a faculty accommodation letter from the Disability Services Center, please provide me with that information as soon as possible. Please make a private appointment so that we can review your accommodations.

LEARNING COMMONS & TUTORING

Tutoring services include writing, critical reading, academic coaching, study skills and time management. Walk-in tutoring is available at the Glickman Library in Portland, the Gorham Library, and the LAC Writing Center. For best service, we recommend making an appointment at <https://usm.maine.edu/learningcommons/schedule-tutoring-appointment>. Questions about tutoring should be directed to Paul Dexter at 207-780-5577.

COUNSELING

Counseling is available at USM. The best way to schedule an appointment is to email usm.health@maine.edu. More information is available at <https://usm.maine.edu/uahcs>.

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

The University of Maine System does not discriminate on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, including transgender status and gender expression, national origin, citizenship status, age, disability, genetic information or veteran's status in employment, education, and all other programs and activities. Please contact Lynda Dec, CHRO & Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX support for USM 45 Exeter Street, Portland, ME, 207.262.7911, Email: lynda.dec@maine.edu with questions or concerns.

STATEMENT ON RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE FOR USM STUDENTS

Absence for Religious Holy Days: The University of Southern Maine respects the religious beliefs of all members of the community, affirms their rights to observe significant religious holy days, and will make reasonable accommodations, upon request, for such observances. If a student's religious observance is in conflict with the academic experience, they should inform their instructor(s) of the class or other school functions that will be affected. It is the student's responsibility to make the necessary arrangements mutually agreed upon with the instructor(s).

TITLE IX

The University of Southern Maine is committed to making our campuses safer places for students. Because of this commitment, and our federal obligations, faculty and other employees are considered mandated reporters when it comes to experiences of interpersonal violence (sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating or domestic violence, and stalking). **If you tell me about any incident of interpersonal violence, I must notify the University's Deputy Title IX Coordinator** who can help provide support and academic remedies for students who have been impacted.

For more Information, please see the resources below:

- Information on the Campus Safety Project: <http://usm.maine.edu/campus-safety-project> or by contacting
- Sarah Holmes, USM's Title IX Coordinator: sarah.e.holmes1@maine.edu or 207-780-5767.
- **Confidential Contacts:** If students want to speak with someone confidentially, the following resources are available on and off campus:
 - University Counseling Services (207-780-4050)
 - 24 Hour Sexual Assault Hotline (1-800-871-7741)
 - 24 Hour Domestic Violence Hotline (1-866-834-4357).