

Program-Level Assessment: Annual Report

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| Program Name (no acronyms): | Department: African American Studies |
| Degree or Certificate Level: B.A. | College/School: CAS |
| Date (Month/Year): November, 2023 | Assessment Contact: Bukky Gbadegesin |
| In what year was the data upon which this report is based collected? 2022-23 | |
| In what year was the program's assessment plan most recently reviewed/updated? 2023 | |
| Is this program accredited by an external program/disciplinary/specialized accrediting organization? No | |

1. Student Learning Outcomes

Which of the program's student learning outcomes were assessed in this annual assessment cycle? (Please list the full, complete learning outcome statements and not just numbers, e.g., Outcomes 1 and 2.)

In Spring 2023, the department offered AAM 2010: Contemporary Black America which is used to access Learning Outcome #3: Students will be able to interpret political ideas and movement strategies that people in Africa and the Diaspora have employed in their search for global justice. AAM 2010 is one of three courses that is required for all African American studies majors in the first two years of their coursework. However, nonmajors also enroll in the course.

In the same semester, the department offered AAM 4960 Capstone which is used to access Learning Outcome #4: Students will be able to develop research questions and research proposals with faculty guidance, as well as to execute independent research. AAM 4960 is one of three courses that is required for all African American studies majors. Only majors and minors typically enroll in the course. At the end of their degree coursework. In this semester-long class, students complete a research project on a topic of their own choosing under instructor supervision.

2. Assessment Methods: Artifacts of Student Learning

Which artifacts of student learning were used to determine if students achieved the outcome(s)? Please describe the artifacts in detail and identify the course(s) in which they were collected. Clarify if any such courses were offered a) online, b) at the Madrid campus, or c) at any other off-campus location.

In AAM 2010, students write a 2000-word (8pp) paper that juxtaposes the political ideas of two different key figures in African American history/studies and in the process, critically analyzes the main areas of alignment, divergence, and the rationale for each.

In AAM 4960, students will complete a 5,000-6,000-word (20pp) capstone research paper in which they use one or more the methodological approaches reviewed in the course.

3. Assessment Methods: Evaluation Process

What process was used to evaluate the artifacts of student learning, and by whom? Please identify the tools(s) (e.g., a rubric) used in the process and **include them in/with this report document** (please do not just refer to the assessment plan).

The instructors of AAM 2010 and AAM 4960 developed a rubric to evaluate each assignment, with the input of other faculty members in the department. In AAM2010, 3 majors and 3 nonmajors were assessed. In AAM 4960, artifacts were assessed from 2 students.

4. Data/Results

What were the results of the assessment of the learning outcome(s)? Please be specific. Does achievement differ by teaching modality (e.g., online vs. face-to-face) or on-ground location (e.g., STL campus, Madrid campus, other off-campus site)?

By the end of AAM2010, Contemporary Black America, students showed in their final paper that they could interpret the political ideas and movement strategies that Black people, in the 1960s Civil Rights Movement, used in their search for justice. Most majors did a good job of comparing and contrasting political views, selecting key quotes and arguments in sources, finding sources beyond those provided, and structuring their arguments. Few areas needed work including balancing personal value judgments with rigorous critical analysis of key arguments, and correctly listing and formatting citations. Major/nonmajors did not differ significantly in meeting this learning objective. In-class debates and a mid-semester writing assignment on a single historical figure were very helpful in guiding students on how to meet their learning objectives for this class. In the future, it would be helpful to have short sessions focused on assessing strong vs weak arguments, and personal value judgments versus rationed critiques when it comes to political positions where passions or personal ideas of morality might come into play. Also, in their final papers, a few students relied on narrating the debate rather than extracting and assessing salient points as they pertained to each thematic area. To address this, future classes will need to emphasize how to assess a text as a whole, rather than point by point.

In AAM 4960, Capstone, two enrolled students showed in their final papers that they could develop research questions and research proposals and execute independent research projects. Students developed a unique framing for familiar subjects, illustrating their ability to develop research questions. The project addressed key issues in Africana Studies, made excellent use of primary and secondary sources, evidenced strong time management and organization, and went through 2 full drafts. Both final papers could have addressed intersectional thinking more.

5. Findings: Interpretations & Conclusions

What have you learned from these results? What does the data tell you?

This is the first year that this learning outcome has been assessed since African-American Studies has attained department status. In the future, the Assessment Coordinator needs to touch base with faculty at the beginning of the semester when their courses will be assessed to get on the same page about the rubric contents. Beyond that procedural point, it would make sense to have 2-3 rounds of assessment before making any large-scale changes or recommendations. With that in mind, there are a few preliminary conclusions:

- 1) Reported results are uneven—with varying degrees of detail. In future, it would be helpful if similar levels of information are gathered across courses.
- 2) In-class pedagogical tasks have been shown to help students meet learning objective measured in the assessment assignment: so, having exercises geared towards the rubric points that need work, would be beneficial.

6. Closing the Loop: Dissemination and Use of Current Assessment Findings

A. When and how did your program faculty share and discuss these results and findings from this cycle of assessment?

In Fall 2023, the faculty of African American Studies met to discuss rubrics (with Robert Cole) and will meet again in December 2023 to discuss the results of the assessment cycle and to consult on the 2023-24 assessment cycle.

B. How specifically have you decided to use these findings to improve teaching and learning in your program? For example, perhaps you've initiated one or more of the following:

Changes to the Curriculum or Pedagogies

- Course content
- Teaching techniques
- Improvements in technology
- Prerequisites
- Course sequence
- New courses
- Deletion of courses
- Changes in frequency or scheduling of course offerings

Changes to the
Assessment Plan

- Student learning outcomes
- Artifacts of student learning
- Evaluation process
- Evaluation tools (e.g., rubrics)
- Data collection methods
- Frequency of data collection

Please describe the actions you are taking as a result of these findings.

As a result of this assessment cycle, the unit will adopt single-point rubrics to clarify how the elements of each assignment fulfill the curricular learning objective. We will also continue to gather information from one African-American Studies originated course per semester. I'd suggest that we clarify what specific assignment components will be assessed in fulfillment of learning objective #4 because the final capstone paper does not include a research proposal. We may also clarify which elements of a student's research *activities* will be assessed (i.e. research question, methodology, literature review, research practices, writing practices).

If no changes are being made, please explain why.

N/A

7. **Closing the Loop: Review of Previous Assessment Findings and Changes**

A. What is at least one change your program has implemented in recent years as a result of assessment data?

This is the first year that this learning outcome has been assessed since African-American Studies has attained department status. We will have 2-3 rounds of assessment before making any large-scale changes or recommendations.

B. How has this change/have these changes been assessed?

N/A

C. What were the findings of the assessment?

This assessment found that students met learning objectives #2 and #4, satisfactorily; but, additional reporting details would be needed to confirm what pedagogical changes would improve delivery of these objectives.

D. How do you plan to (continue to) use this information moving forward?

E.

We plan to review these findings in relation to 2023-24 assessment findings and make further recommendations or changes after that point.

IMPORTANT: Please submit any assessment tools (e.g., artifact prompts, rubrics) with this report as separate attachments or copied and pasted into this Word document. Please do not just refer to the assessment plan; the report should serve as a stand-alone document.

For your final paper, you are asked to interpret the political ideas and movement strategies that Black people have used in their search for global justice. Please write a 8pp essay on the following prompt:

On January 23, 1962 at Community Church in Manhattan, Malcolm X and Bayard Rustin took opposing sides in a debate on the theme of "Separation and Integration". **Listen to this debate** and/or **read the transcript.** ↓ Then, compare and contrast their positions on:

(1) the class divide in black communities, (2) a feasible path to black liberation, and (3) the role of white allies.

As you write, cite the direct quotes (with the relevant minute marks) in which each speaker addressed the three topics above. Based on their own words, explain their positions, where they align with each other, and where they diverge. To support your arguments, be sure to draw on our in-class lectures/discussions, our assigned readings, or recent/historical events.

This prompt is designed to showcase your critical thinking/analysis, which we've been working on in this class. This prompt is also meant to test your knowledge and understanding of key debates in Black Studies. More broadly, this Rustin/Malcolm X debate addressed ideas of human dignity, equity, well-being, justice, and the common good. Each speaker shared his vision of systemic social changes and other ways to promote flourishing and the dignity of the human person and society as a whole.

Please respond thoughtfully. Do not write a stream of consciousness response, but rather, outline your work before you start writing.

Be sure to type your Name, Date, Assignment Title on 3 separate single-spaced lines at Top Left corner of 1st page. The text of your paper should be double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12pt font, and *proofread*.

You should use at least 5 outside sources to write this paper--including the audio of the debate, and one source from our syllabus. Use **Chicago Manual of Style citation format** to cite each of your sources.

**AAM2010 Contemporary Black America
Final Paper Prompt**

For the final paper, students write a 2000-word (8pp) essay that compares and contrasts the political ideas and movement strategies of two influential figures (proponents) in the Civil Right era as relates to three thematic areas: 1) class divide in black communities, (2) a feasible path to black liberation, and (3) the role of white allies. A successful paper makes clear arguments, is supported by in-class lectures/discussions, assigned readings, or recent/historical events, and uses at least five outside sources cited in MLA style. Preferred formatting guidelines should be followed. Overall, the paper showcases each student’s knowledge and understanding of key debates in Black Studies.

Rubric for AAM2010 Final Paper

| Needs Work | Goals | Done Well |
|-------------------|--|------------------|
| | Students clearly states main arguments in opening and closing paragraphs of the essay. | |
| | Paper clearly discusses each thematic area and correctly identifies each proponent with their political ideas. Student offers a convincing discussion of how each figure aligns or diverges in their political ideas. Response clearly identify the potential strategic rationale behind the ideas of each influential figure. | |
| | Arguments are clearly supported by in-class lectures/discussions, assigned readings, or recent/historical events, and uses at least five outside sources cited in MLA style. | |
| | Paper is correctly formatted and meets word count. | |
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