

Asian American Studies Program Assessment Update

The Program in Asian American Studies is an interdisciplinary program that focuses on the scholarship and experiences of Americans and immigrants to the United States from Asian heritage groups. The program sheds light on Asian American experiences and concerns, both historically and in contemporary society. Until recently, the program has not articulated formal learning objectives or assessment processes. Thus, the most significant update on assessment is that an assessment plan has been developed based on collective discussions, a review of the course syllabi, and the course evaluation process that was re-designed in Fall of 2008.

Course assignments are created to support the overarching learning goals in the program, and are intended to provide specific knowledge about the Asian American experience and to nurture the skills to think about the knowledge. Common types of assignments invite students to conduct formal research or create original projects about Asian American topics, but also include reflective writing, performance, active participation in discussion and in lectures. These activities not only provide information, but also model how to think critically as well as facilitate discussion about the course-provided knowledge. By instituting common goals for course assignments, the program can use them to assess student attainment of these goals.

In addition, the program has instituted a new course evaluation strategy intended not only to evaluate how well the instructor performed or how interestingly material in the course was delivered, but to also assess how students' ways of thinking are transformed by their classroom experience. Students are invited to evaluate their own engagement with the content of the course, and to reflect on how their learning has changed. The program intends to use this information to improve the program.