

Languages and Cultures of Asia Assessment Snapshot

The Department offers undergraduates courses in the study of Central and Southwest Asia, South Asia and Southeast Asia with catalogue listings under two prefixes: LCA (521) for content courses in the humanities, and LCA (522) for language courses. Under the new program adopted by the Department in May 2006, an undergraduate student will now be able to major in LCA with one of three options: (a) the study of at least two LCA regions, coupled with the intensive study of one or more LCA languages up to the advanced level; (b) the study of two or more LCA regions with a combination of humanistic content courses and language courses or (c) the intensive humanistic study of two or more LCA regions up to the advanced level, without language training. The complex mix of regions, languages and literatures, and religious expression makes for a challenging course of study, and is a challenging arrangement to assess.

We approach assessment as a tool to help us know whether our students are achieving competence in the language they study and are acquiring analytical skills and theoretical perspectives in the study of Asian humanities.

Means and Methods of Assessment:

In addition to the “regular” work associated with managing language curriculum (e.g., course evaluations to obtain information on course/departmental objectives; coordinated oversight of language proficiency as defined by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages), the department also engages in the following activities to systematically look at program-level learning goals:

- 1) Consultation with the LCA undergraduate to evaluate patterns of student course selections, development of major programs of study, and ensure appropriate sequencing and strategies for accomplishing student and departmental goals.
- 2) Department-wide coordination and discussion of student performance in the required capstone seminar taken by all majors. This course is designed to reinforce a shared community of interest among LCA students, to establish a baseline for methodological understandings of the field, and to evaluate both individually and collectively the intellectual, ethical, and communicative achievements of the students
- 3) Administration of an exit survey to all graduating seniors. This survey seeks feedback about the LCA major experience and encourages students to evaluate their own roles and performance as members of LCA. When it is next administered, students will be asked to evaluate how well they perform with respect to specific learning goals. They will also evaluate overall program quality, ability to locate and register for courses, quality of instruction, and the quality of departmental advising.