



Spanish & Latin American Studies | 2016-2017 Assessment Report

1. Please give a brief overview of the assessment data you collected this year.

The Learning Outcome the Spanish Program assessed this year --in agreement with the other faculty in Modern Languages-- was Learning Outcome #6: "Have read great works of Spanish and Latin American literature and have a sense of their place in literary history." The assessment was conducted during fall and spring semesters of 2016-2017. In fall semester two sections of *SPAN 329: Representative Spanish and Latin American Authors* were assessed, and in spring semester of 2017 one section of *SPAN 438 Major Spanish and Latin American Writers*. *SPAN 329 Representative Authors* is an upper-level course required for all students graduating with a Spanish major or minor. This course is the first introduction to Spanish and Latin American literature for most students entering the program. *SPAN 438 Major Spanish and Latin American Writers* course is a more advanced course. Students wishing to complete SPAN 438 must have had SPAN 329 prior. SPAN 438 is a course required for the major, although minors can take it as an elective.

For *SPAN 329 Representative Authors* an anthology of contemporary texts and films is used. The textbook incorporates a number of activities designed to move Spanish students from edited readings to authentic literature. Another goal for this course is to enhance students' language skills with pre- and post-reading activities. The course assignments are designed to build students' comprehension skills as well as to enhance their cultural knowledge about the Spanish-speaking world through the discussion of works of literature. The texts are all written by contemporary authors.

For *SPAN 438 Major Spanish and Latin American Writers course*, the instructor teaching the course is the one who selects literary readings around a theme. The readings at this level are authentic pieces of literature (not edited for foreign language students). The semester that this course was selected for the assessment, the topic taught was "Detective Fiction." All the reading selections were contemporary short stories written by Latin American authors.

Summative assessment methods were used. Tests and other graded evaluations were the reliable source to provide information about the students' ability to place literary texts in their specific historical context. In the course SPAN 329, we looked at the results of students' midterm and final examinations. For the course SPAN 438, we used the midterm and final essays. We observed if students could place the literary selections they were analyzing in within proper historical context.

The assessment also included an examination of the course syllabi, placing special attention to how the content, required readings, requirements and learning goals aligned with the

programmatic learning outcome assessed.

Results of Assessment

First, while the syllabi and course content underscored the importance of understanding literary texts in the proper social and cultural context, neither one of these courses covered literary periods beyond the contemporary time. Therefore, a historical contextualization beyond the contemporary period was not relevant to the goals of the courses.

Second, the summative assessment results demonstrated that the large majority of students in all of these courses acquired significant interpretative skills and were able to use cultural and contextual knowledge in their literary analysis. Moreover, at both the introductory levels (SPAN 329) and the more advance level (SPAN 438), students were able to incorporate the social and national specificities of different Spanish-speaking cultures into their textual analysis. However, because of the emphasis of these literature courses on contemporary texts, the assessment results did not show the students' understanding of historical sequencing or periodization beyond the contemporary world.

2. How will you use what you've learned from the data that was collected?

UW-Green Bay Spanish and Latin American Studies program has moved away from being literature centered to be a program more focused on contemporary cultural and socio-political issues. Thus, the literature courses have departed from having a chronological focus on historical epochs and literary periods to incorporating a more thematic approach. The emphasis on literary periods and historical contextualization as implied in Learning Outcome # 6 does not seem to apply to the current approach to the teaching of literature in our program. For all these reasons, more conversations need to take place around the validity of maintaining this learning outcome for the program.