

**UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO**  
**College of Arts and Sciences**

**Media Studies—Program Assessment Plan**

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**Program Goals**

1. Understand foundational relationships between media, culture and society.
  - a. If students in the senior year of our program are asked to appraise the contemporary media landscape, on their own initiative they can recognize areas where analysis of the forces that shape that landscape can be most productive, particularly in the context of the university's mission statement, that is, to achieve greater social justice. Students can draw on major theories, traditions and frameworks in media studies, recall and describe them so that they may be applied in sustained written and oral analysis.
2. Develop foundational skills in media professional practice in electronic media and journalism.
  - a. By graduation, students will have a level of competence that will enable them to get an entry-level job in media production and/or journalism. It also means students will possess a familiarity with the ethical canons of media production and journalism and apply them.

*What one might say to a parent who asks what our ideal student would look like:*

*She would understand the U.S. media landscape – history, contemporary issues, cultural forces and ethical dimensions – and also be able to make media of some kind at a level that would enable her to get an entry-level job that requires that skill.*

**Possible direct measures for Goal 1:**

- A standard test to be administered as part of the final exam for Introduction to Media Studies to ensure consistency in evaluation of student performance and in student learning of key objectives of this course.
- At present the department has no interest in offering a single 400-level capstone course to be required of all majors, what is sometimes known as a culminating assignment. However, we do require all MS grads to have taken two topic-focused 400-level seminars. Different faculty have different specialties, but a majority of senior faculty have taught these seminars, given them an opportunity to evaluate the degree to which MS students can exhibit an understanding of foundational skills. Faculty could develop a rubric, perhaps, a checklist of concepts, etc., seen as core information that should have been required in our introductory courses and reinforced in later courses, and meet periodically to discuss the degree to which our “terminal” students can recall and apply this core information. This would be an exercise in content analysis.

Note: The unit is about to embark on one of our periodic discussions of exactly what our curriculum is and how the delivery of that content should be apportioned among the courses we offer. Indeed, some courses may be eliminated, some altered and new ones added. Thus, this assessment exercise comes at a propitious time. One of the tasks we will perform is the creation of a curriculum map.

### **Possible direct measures for Goal 2:**

- Some faculty are interested in designating places in the curriculum where multiple faculty members examine student class work, e.g., video and/or audio projects, news and feature stories, etc. At the end of the sophomore and then the junior year might be appropriate times. Faculty would be responsible for allowing access to student work to fellow faculty. Scoring guidelines could be codified beforehand. This would be particularly useful in monitoring the work of adjunct faculty.
- A logical extension of the preceding measures would be the requirement that Media Studies students create a “senior portfolio” that represents their best work. This would be evaluated not only by faculty but outsiders whose professional and educational contacts would give us some sense of how our students measure up in their eyes. We would provide a checklist or brief summary of what we intended that our grads know how to do.
- Entry and exit tests measuring our students’ understanding of basic media ethics. All students have to take at least one 300-level course. The exit test might be administered at the conclusion of that course.
- Systematic evaluation of the performance of our students in internships. (Such internships are not required but are strongly encouraged, and most of our students who are interested in careers in media production take at least one such internship.)

Note: Evaluation points, final portfolios and entry and exit tests can also be used to evaluate outcomes in theory-based courses. Appropriate rubrics could be created to promote uniformity in evaluation.

### **Indirect measures:**

- Compilation and analysis of the distribution of grades as students move through the major, all the while recognizing the inadequacy of grades as a measure of learning outcomes given all the factors that contribute to grades. Still, it would be useful to know if the class level at which students enter our major or the way in which students self-sequence our courses seems to affect student grades.
- Retention/graduation statistics viewed in the context of the quality of our MS grads. (An effort to “cut the tail off our distribution” might result in fewer students sticking in the major but better students coming out of the major.)
- Job placement or graduate school acceptance
- Career development over time; that is, tracking our grads for years after graduation
- A student perception survey, perhaps appended to the one the university already does
- Occasional alumni focus groups
- Awards won students in local, regional and national competitions
- Regular review of syllabi in all our courses by faculty