

**Annual Key Assessment Findings and Curricular Improvements
Department of Modern Languages and Literatures/A&S**

**Undergraduate BA Program in French and French/Secondary Education
AY 2009-10**

Key Assessment Findings

Senior Assessment

Two candidates completed the senior assessment requirements during the AY 2009-10 (Table 2, 3, 4). In the fall, they took the senior seminar the highlight of which was the writing of the senior thesis (Table 3), and in the spring they completed the assessment portion, consisting of a written examination in two parts (Table 2), and the oral defense of the thesis (Table 4). Both students were evaluated according to three sets of rubrics, which include the written comprehensive exam, the senior thesis, and the oral defense of the senior thesis. Students generally met expectations in the first two assessments. In the third, one student either met or exceeded expectations. The other student met most expectations but fell below expectations in a couple of cases.

Table 2: Written Comprehensive Exam Results (AY 2009-10)

Trait	Level						Mean	SD	Total N
	Exceeding Expectations (3pts)		Meeting Expectations (2pts)		Below Expectations (1pt)				
	N	%	N	%	N	%			
1) Language use	0	0%	1	50%	1	50%	1.50	0.00	2
2) Vocabulary	0	0%	2	100%	0	0%	2.00	0.00	2
3) Interp. Commun.: reading	0	0%	2	100%	0	0%	2.00	0.00	2
4) Present. Commun.:writing	1	50%	1	50%	0	0%	2.50	0.00	2
5) Literary & Cult. Content (N/A)	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
6) Literary & Cult. Analysis	0	0%	2	100%	0	0%	2.00	0.00	2
7) Translation	0	0%	2	100%	0	0%	2.00	0.00	2

Table 3: Senior Thesis Results (AY 2008-09)

Trait	Level						Mean	SD	Total N
	Exceeding Expectations (3pts)		Meeting Expectations (2pts)		Below Expectations (1pt)				
	N	%	N	%	N	%			
1) Topic	1	50%	1	50%	0	0%	2.50	0.00	2
2) Treatment of culture	1	50%	1	50%	0	0%	2.50	0.00	2
3) Sources	1	50%	1	50%	0	0%	2.50	0.00	2
4) Organization	1	50%	0	0%	1	50%	2.00	0.00	2
5) Language use	0	0%	1	50%	1	50%	1.50	0.00	2
6) Vocabulary	0	0%	2	100%	0	0%	2.00	0.00	2

Table 4: Oral Defense of Senior Thesis Results (AY 2008-09)

Trait	Level						Mean	SD	Total N
	Exceeding Expectations (3pts)		Meeting Expectations (2pts)		Below Expectations (1pt)				
	N	%	N	%	N	%			
1) Content of thesis summary	0	0%	2	100%	0	0%	2.00	0.00	2
2) Organization	1	50%	1	50%	0	0%	2.50	0.00	2
3) Non-verbal effectiveness	0	0%	2	100%	0	0%	2.00	0.00	2
4) Pronunciation	0	0%	1	50%	1	50%	1.50	0.00	2
5) Comprehension of questions	1	50%	1	50%	0	0%	2.50	0.00	2
6) Response to questions	0	0%	2	100%	0	0%	2.00	0.00	2
7) Reflectiveness	0	0%	2	100%	0	0%	2.00	0.00	2

Summary and Curricular Improvements

The positive findings above are due in great part to the rigorous training students receive during senior seminar. Nevertheless, the difficulty that the students had writing a 25-page paper in French in AY 2008-09 convinced us to institute (starting in fall 2009) a course in Translation & Stylistics to be taken concurrently with Senior Seminar. Since we believe that this initiative improved the students' grammar and language skills, we decided to continue to require this new course. Unfortunately, though, neither this course nor the time spent studying abroad seems to

helps them with their organizational skills, for they should be honing them in all courses where they are called upon to write papers.

Both of our French majors were engaged in demanding programs: one combined her French major with a major in Secondary Education, and the other combined hers with Politics. Both earned Latin honors, both graduating cum Laude and Magna cum Laude, respectively. Our highest departmental honor, the Helmut A. Hatzfeld Award for Excellence in the study of French, was awarded to both students.

**Undergraduate BA Program in German/Secondary Education
AY 2009-2010**

Key Assessment Findings

Senior Assessment

No seniors graduated in German/Secondary Education in AY 2009-2010

**Annual Key Assessment Findings and Curricular Improvements
Department of Modern Languages and Literatures/A&S**

**Undergraduate BA Programs in Spanish, Spanish for International Service and
Spanish/Secondary Education
AY 2009-10**

Key Assessment Findings

Senior Assessment

Six candidates completed senior assessment in Spanish for International Service in AY 2009-2010. Three candidates completed senior assessment in Spanish. There were no candidates this year in Spanish/Secondary Education. Students completing the SIS and Spanish programs completed written comprehensive exams and also made a public presentation of the results of a research project, completed during the course of the Senior Seminar. The exam for each major was tailored to the specific goals and requirements of each program, although both stressed linguistic competence in Spanish. The theme for the research project was chosen by each student in consultation with the instructor for the Senior Seminar.

Undergraduate Comprehensive Exam Results

	Fail		Pass		TOTAL
	#	%	#	%	
Major: Spanish for International Service	0	0.00%	6	100.00%	6
Major: Spanish	0	0.00%	3	100.00%	3
TOTAL	0	0.00%	9	100.00%	9

Oral Presentation of Senior Project (SIS)

Trait	Level						Mean	SD	Total N
	Exceeding Expectations (3pts)		Meeting Expectations (2pts)		Below Expectations (1pt)				
	N	%	N	%	N	%			
1) Language use (oral expression)	1	17%	5	83%	0	0%			6
2) Mastery of Content	1	17%	5	83%	0	0%			6
3) Organization and presentation of material	1	17%	5	83%	0	0%			6

Oral Presentation of Senior Project (Spanish)

Trait	Level						Mean	SD	Total N
	Exceeding Expectations (3pts)		Meeting Expectations (2pts)		Below Expectations (1pt)				
	N	%	N	%	N	%			
1) Language use (oral expression)	0	0%	3	100%	0	0%			3
2) Mastery of Content	0	0%	3	100%	0	0%			3
3) Organization and	0	0%	3	100%	0	0%			3

presentation of material									

Summary and Curricular Improvements

The positive findings above are due in great part to the rigorous training students receive in research approaches and public speaking in the senior seminar. Nevertheless, the difficulty that the students had in formulating a research question, carrying out research and writing a substantial paper (approximately 20 pages) in AY 2009-10 convinced us to begin to approach methodological questions more systematically from the outset of the Senior Seminar. For the AY 2010-2011, the Senior Seminar in Spanish/SIS will be team-taught, with one hour weekly devoted exclusively to research skills, writing and organizational skills specific to longer projects and public presentation. The Spanish section has also begun efforts to more clearly define our expectations of students—in terms of reading and writing assignments—at each level of our program. We have also changed the major requirements to limit the number of courses at the 200-level which can be used as electives and more importantly, have begun to require students to complete a minimum of two 400-level electives in residence at CUA.

Because of the small number of students graduating in Spanish, the Senior Seminar in Spanish and SIS was run as one combined seminar. While it was challenging for the instructor to design a program that met the needs of two groups of students, some of the complaints from students came from student expectations that the seminar would, as it had in the past, forego a good number of class meetings in lieu of “field trips.” While students in the Spanish major had in the past only been required to pass written comprehensive exams (and could pass by simply demonstrating their mastery of a standard literary history), in AY 2009-2010 they were asked to do something more challenging, that is, define and execute a research project. This is why the Spanish section will continue to work to better prepare students to meet these sorts of challenges, which we believe better test the sorts of skills our graduates will need.