

Key Assessment Findings and Curricular Improvements
School of Arts and Sciences
Department of Media Studies
Undergraduate B.A. in Media Studies

Key Assessment Findings

Table of Results
Student Learning Assessment Rubric
Department of Media Studies
Senior Comprehensive Exam
AY 2011-2012

Trait	Level						Mean	SD	Total N
	Exceeding Expectations (3pts)		Meeting Expectations (2pts)		Below Expectations (1pt)				
	N	%	N	%	N	%			
1) Critical analytical skill applied to interpretation of audiovisual text	5	11%	35	78%	5	11%	2.00	0.48	45
2) Knowledge of critical and production terminology	5	11%	31	69%	9	20%	1.91	0.56	45
3) Ability to demonstrate, via essay, comprehension of & engagement with a work of contemporary scholarship	3	7%	40	89%	2	4%	2.02	0.34	45

Note: 1) The "N" represents the number of students at each level of performance for each trait.

2) The "%" represents the percentage of the number of students falling at the level performance

for each trait against the total number of students.

3) The mean is the average of all scores across the levels within the trait.

4) The standard deviation (SD) is the measure of the variability of the data set, indicating how "spread out" these data are from the mean value.

The Media Studies Faculty discussed the outcome of the Senior Comprehensive Exam at its meeting of February 9, 2012. The results were in line with previous exams. Most students pass; few fail; a few achieve distinction. The exam results correlate well with the overall academic record of the students: as in years past, those passing with distinction were among the best

students in the major. Failers were among the weakest students. It was noted that a higher-than-usual number of students had failed the terminology section. Student reports indicated that some were surprised that they not only had to know and supply term definitions, but had to identify relevant terms in relation to visual texts. The faculty agreed to make this expectation clear in the department’s website description of the exam. It was also suggested that students don’t take this segment of the exam seriously enough, and that a larger and more expansive list of key terms would be appropriate. Both of these steps were acted upon. Another issue discussed was that while students generally do well on the clip analysis, they don’t deploy critical terminology as well or extensively as might be expected. It was suggested that critical terms also be supplied as part of this section of the exam (not to duplicate terms in the terminology section), with a requirement that a certain number of such terms, both critical- and production-oriented, be included as part of the analysis. This would also serve the end of better integrating sections of the exam, an objective noted in past years, and one that has gradually been implemented, making a the exam a better assessment tool, and matching the program’s mission of teaching media literacy in a way that fuses. Given the low number of overall failures while individual section failures were somewhat higher, and in view of the generally forgiving standard that students may fail one section of the exam and still pass overall, it was suggested that students now be required to retake the entire exam, not just the failed sections, as a means of signaling the need for more thorough and balanced preparation.

Table of Results – II
Department of Media Studies
Senior Comprehensive Examination Attempts
AY 2011-2012

	Fail		Pass		Pass w/Distinction		TOTAL
	#	%	#	%	#	%	
AY2011-12	2	4.25%	42	89.36%	3	6.38%	47

Curricular Improvements

Notwithstanding the small modifications mentioned above, the faculty expressed overall satisfaction with the exam as a means of assessing our students’ media literacy as taught with our curriculum. It was again lamented that the department does not have the faculty resources to hold more advanced elective courses that would better prepare our students for the examination across a wider area of subjects, such as video gaming or animation, and that would help them integrate core disciplinary concepts with a broader array of sub-fields.