

# Program Assessment Plan

## American University

### Academic Program: SOC: Journalism & Public Affairs - MA

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Contact Person for Christine Lawrence

**Assessment:**

**Unit Website Address:** <https://www.american.edu/soc/>

**Unit's Primary Department:** Journalism

**COLA Reader -1:** Joe Graf

**COLA Reader -2:** Kathy McAdams

#### Learning Outcome: Define Ethical Issues

Define key ethical issues and legal guidelines facing journalists.

**Outcome Year:** 2011-2012

**Start Date:** 06/30/2010

**Outcome Status:** Active Learning Outcome

#### Assessment Plan

Assessment Measure	Target	Schedule/Cycle	Active
This outcome will be assessed using the final exams and papers of Legal Aspects of Communication, a required class for the MA degree. The course explores current legal problems; theory of controls in journalism, visual communication, television, and radio; libel suits, copyrights, and infringement. Students must pass the final exam as it is part of the comprehensive exam for the MA degree.	Students must demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the legal and ethical issues related to journalism.	This outcome will be assessed in the spring of 2012 by two faculty members, who will read each exam.	Yes
<b>Measure Type:</b> Final Paper/ Final Project			
Comprehensive Exams (Direct). Students write two essays on issues involving journalism ethics and law. Each exam is reviewed by at least two faculty members.	All students must pass the comps to get their degree.	Annual.	Yes
<b>Measure Type:</b> Quiz/ Exam			
Capstone Projects--Seminar in Public Affairs and Seminar in Journalism, TV Documentary.	All students must complete a capstone project with a grade of B or better.	Annual--Capstones are reviewed by the faculty member teaching these seminar courses and discussed in curriculum/ syllabus review.	Yes
<b>Measure Type:</b> Final Paper/ Final Project			
Course Assignments (Direct).	Grades of B or higher on most tests and assignments.	For each course -- reviewed by division faculty and discussed in syllabus and curriculum reviews.	Yes
<b>Measure Type:</b> Written Assignment			
Awards -- The Journalism Division looks to several awards, both internal and external, as measures of the achievement of outcomes. The Division also provides fellowships to high-achieving graduate students. There are fellowships with the Washington Post, where the students have stories published on a regular basis.	To use professionally published news articles as an indication of the students success in the program.	Annual--Assessment is determined by both the number of articles published and by the quality of the submissions.	Yes
<b>Measure Type:</b> Other			
Graduating Student Survey--assessment of student perceptions in achieving outcomes (Indirect).	On average students will rate their academic career at least "very good" or "excellent."	Annual. The survey has been administered annually since 2005 to all graduating students. The results are tabulated and	Yes
<b>Measure Type:</b> Survey			

Assessment Plan			
Assessment Measure	Target	Schedule/Cycle	Active
reviewed by the Associate Dean and Division Director.			
Surveys among internship supervisors (Indirect). Internship supervisors (i.e. employers) currently evaluate students. This evaluation is reviewed by the faculty member responsible for internships. A uniform rating/ evaluation form will be developed in 2011-12. This form will ensure that the ratings are directly related to the outcomes.  <b>Measure Type:</b> Field Work/ Internship	On average, internship supervisors will rate students' performance "very good" or "excellent" in all categories. This categories directly address the learning outcomes.	Each semester.	Yes
A survey of 3-5 year alumni (Indirect).  <b>Measure Type:</b> Alumni Feedback	On average, alumni will rate their academic career "very good" or "excellent."	Every five years -- to assess their transition into and preparedness for the profession.  Alumni who have been working for several years should be better able to assess their education.	Yes
Faculty Retreat and Ad Hoc Curriculum/ Syllabus Reviews (Indirect).  The Journalism Division monitors its curriculum and uses input from its faculty (many of whom are practicing professionals), adjunct faculties (who are all professionals), and alumni (including the Dean's Advisory Council--a group of high level alumni who are professionals in the field).  <b>Measure Type:</b> Focus Group	To ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of the profession.	No schedule identified.	Yes
Ad Hoc Research Studies -- SOC Image Study, Writing Programs Survey, Career Center Survey, Alumni Focus Groups, to address specific issues. Alumni Survey (Indirect).  Studies have been conducted through the Development Office and also in Research Methods classes. Two studies in particular --the Writing Study and the Career Center Survey -- provided useful data to evaluate student perceptions toward our program.  <b>Measure Type:</b> Other	Surveys conducted occasionally	Occasional.	Yes
Institutional research -- Student Evaluations of Teaching, Campus Climate Survey, Graduation Census, National Survey of Student Engagement (Indirect).  The School of Communication and Journalism Division routinely analyze other data available in order to provide the background by which to understand more specific data.  <b>Measure Type:</b> Survey	To add context for the evaluation of other data.	Annual.	Yes

### Learning Outcome: Describe Role of Media

Describe the role and context of media in democracy and in global society, including the rapidly changing industry and the impact of emergent media.

**Outcome Year:** 2011-2012

**Start Date:** 06/30/2010

**Outcome Status:** Active Learning Outcome

Assessment Plan			
Assessment Measure	Target	Schedule/Cycle	Active

### Assessment Plan

Assessment Measure	Target	Schedule/Cycle	Active
<p>This outcome will be assessed by the papers and exams undertaken by the required course, Seminar in Journalism, which looks at the ethical and economic issues affecting the press and the current changes in the domestic and global media landscape.</p> <p>This course is currently being re-evaluated. The direct assessments will take place when the final course outline is in place. (Direct)</p>	<p>Students must demonstrate the outcomes that are relevant to each particular piece in the portfolio.</p>	Annual or every two years.	Yes
<b>Measure Type:</b> Final Paper/ Final Project			
Comprehensive Exams (Direct). Day-long exams include two components: a news-writing skills test (Outcomes 3, 4, 5) and two essays on issues involving journalism ethics and law (Outcomes 1 and 2). Each exam is reviewed by at least two faculty members.	All students must pass the comps to get their degree.	Annual.	Yes
<b>Measure Type:</b> Quiz/ Exam			
Capstone Projects--Seminar in Public Affairs and Seminar in Journalism, TV Documentary. <b>Measure Type:</b> Final Paper/ Final Project	All students must complete a capstone project with a grade of B or better.	Annual--Capstones are reviewed by the faculty member teaching these seminar courses and discussed in curriculum/ syllabus review.	Yes
Course Assignments (Direct). <b>Measure Type:</b> Written Assignment	Grades of B or higher on most tests and assignments.	For each course -- reviewed by division faculty and discussed in syllabus and curriculum reviews.	Yes
Awards -- The Journalism Division looks to several awards, both internal and external, as measures of the achievement of outcomes. <b>Measure Type:</b> Other	Only high achieving students get awards.	Annual--Assessment is determined by both the number of awards received by students but also by the quality of the submissions.	Yes
Graduating Student Survey--assessment of student perceptions in achieving outcomes (Indirect). <b>Measure Type:</b> Survey	On average students will rate their academic career at least "very good" or "excellent."	Annual. The survey has been administered annually since 2005 to all graduating students. The results are tabulated and reviewed by the Associate Dean and Division Director.	Yes
Surveys among internship supervisors (Indirect). Internship supervisors (i.e. employers) currently evaluate students. This evaluation is reviewed by the faculty member responsible for internships. A uniform rating/ evaluation form will be developed in 2011-12. This form will ensure that the ratings are directly related to the outcomes. <b>Measure Type:</b> Field Work/ Internship	On average, internship supervisors will rate students' performance "very good" or "excellent" in all categories. These categories directly address the learning outcomes.	Each semester.	Yes
A survey of 3-5 year alumni (Indirect). <b>Measure Type:</b> Alumni Feedback	On average, alumni will rate their academic career "very good" or "excellent."	Every five years -- to assess their transition into and preparedness for the profession. Alumni who have been working for several years should be better able to assess their education.	Yes

Assessment Plan			
Assessment Measure	Target	Schedule/Cycle	Active
<p>Faculty Retreat and Ad Hoc Curriculum/ Syllabus Reviews (Indirect).</p> <p>The Journalism Division monitors its curriculum and uses input from its faculty (many of whom are practicing professionals), adjunct faculties (who are all professionals), and alumni (including the Dean's Advisory Council--a group of high level alumni who are professionals in the field).</p> <p><b>Measure Type:</b> Focus Group</p>	To ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of the profession.	No schedule identified.	Yes
<p>Ad Hoc Research Studies -- SOC Image Study, Writing Programs Survey, Career Center Survey, Alumni Focus Groups, Alumni Survey (Indirect).</p> <p>Studies have been conducted through the Development Office and also in Research Methods classes. Two studies in particular --the Writing Study and the Career Center Survey -- provided useful data to evaluate student perceptions toward our program.</p> <p><b>Measure Type:</b> Other</p>	Surveys conducted occasionally to address specific issues.	Occasional.	Yes
<p>Institutional research -- Student Evaluations of Teaching, Campus Climate Survey, Graduation Census, National Survey of Student Engagement (Indirect).</p> <p>The School of Communication and Journalism Division routinely analyze other data available in order to provide the background by which to understand more specific data.</p> <p><b>Measure Type:</b> Survey</p>	To add context for the evaluation of other data.	Annual.	Yes

## Learning Outcome: Digital Skill Sets

Demonstrate multiple digital skill sets and apply them across varied platforms.

**Outcome Year:** 2011-2012

**Start Date:** 06/30/2010

**Outcome Status:** Active Learning Outcome

Assessment Plan			
Assessment Measure	Target	Schedule/Cycle	Active
<p>This outcome will be assessed by a review of the online graduate student publication, The American Observer. In this live news lab, the students write, edit and produce multimedia content including slideshows, audio, video, photographs and text. Students learn news judgment, story and visual selection, and legal and ethical issues. They also learn to use Word Press, Photoshop, Fireworks, Flash, Slideshow and QuickTime.</p> <p><b>Measure Type:</b> Multimedia Project</p>	Students must demonstrate a solid understanding of the requirements of producing an online publication on deadline.	This outcome will be assessed in the fall of 2012 when The American Observer is published.	Yes
An assessment of the publication of The American Observer, which is a required class for all the MA students.	All students need the multimedia and writing skills necessary for the publication of an online magazine or news site.	This course will be assessed in the fall of 2012.	Yes
Capstone Projects--Seminar in Public Affairs and Seminar in Journalism, TV Documentary.	All students must complete a capstone project with a grade of B or better.	Annual--Capstones are reviewed by the faculty member teaching these seminar courses and discussed in curriculum/ syllabus review.	Yes
<b>Measure Type:</b> Final Paper/ Final Project			

Assessment Plan			
Assessment Measure	Target	Schedule/Cycle	Active
<p>Course Assignments (Direct).</p> <p><b>Measure Type:</b> Written Assignment</p>	Grades of B or higher on most tests and assignments.	For each course -- reviewed by division faculty and discussed in syllabus and curriculum reviews.	Yes
<p>Awards -- The Journalism Division looks to several awards, both internal and external, as measures of the achievement of outcomes.</p> <p><b>Measure Type:</b> Other</p>	Only high achieving students get awards.	Annual--Assessment is determined by both the number of awards received by students but also by the quality of the submissions.	Yes
<p>Graduating Student Survey--assessment of student perceptions in achieving outcomes (Indirect).</p> <p><b>Measure Type:</b> Survey</p>	On average students will rate their academic career at least "very good" or "excellent."	Annual. The survey has been administered annually since 2005 to all graduating students. The results are tabulated and reviewed by the Associate Dean and Division Director.	Yes
<p>Surveys among internship supervisors (Indirect). Internship supervisors (i.e. employers) currently evaluate students. This evaluation is reviewed by the faculty member responsible for internships. A uniform rating/ evaluation form will be developed in 2011-12. This form will ensure that the ratings are directly related to the outcomes.</p> <p><b>Measure Type:</b> Field Work/ Internship</p>	On average, internship supervisors will rate students' performance "very good" or "excellent" in all categories. This categories directly address the learning outcomes.	Each semester.	Yes
<p>A survey of 3-5 year alumni (Indirect).</p> <p><b>Measure Type:</b> Alumni Feedback</p>	On average, alumni will rate their academic career "very good" or "excellent."	Every five years -- to assess their transition into and preparedness for the profession. Alumni who have been working for several years should be better able to assess their education.	Yes
<p>Faculty Retreat and Ad Hoc Curriculum/ Syllabus Reviews (Indirect). The Journalism Division monitors its curriculum and uses input from its faculty (many of whom are practicing professionals), adjunct faculties (who are all professionals), and alumni (including the Dean's Advisory Council--a group of high level alumni who are professionals in the field).</p> <p><b>Measure Type:</b> Focus Group</p>	To ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of the profession.	No schedule identified.	Yes
<p>Ad Hoc Research Studies -- SOC Image Study, Writing Programs Survey, Career Center Survey, Alumni Focus Groups, Alumni Survey (Indirect). Studies have been conducted through the Development Office and also in Research Methods classes. Two studies in particular --the Writing Study and the Career Center Survey -- provided useful data to evaluate student perceptions toward our program.</p> <p><b>Measure Type:</b> Other</p>	Surveys conducted occasionally to address specific issues.	Occasional.	Yes
<p>Institutional research -- Student Evaluations of Teaching, Campus Climate Survey, Graduation Census, National Survey of Student Engagement (Indirect). The School of Communication and Journalism Division routinely analyze other data available in order to provide the background</p>	To add context for the evaluation of other data.	Annual.	Yes

Assessment Plan			
Assessment Measure	Target	Schedule/Cycle	Active
by which to understand more specific data.			
<b>Measure Type:</b> Survey			

## **Learning Outcome: Publish Professional Quality Work**

Publish or air professional quality work in the news industry through internships and/ or a deadline-driven news outlet.

### **Outcome Year: 2011-2012**

**Start Date:** 05/30/2012

**Outcome Status:** Active Learning Outcome

Assessment Plan			
Assessment Measure	Target	Schedule/Cycle	Active
The MA degree candidates undertake professional internships with Washington, D.C., news bureaus. The internships are a minimum of 12 weeks, 15 hours a week for credit. Most students do their internship in the summer. The internship supervisor fills out an evaluation form assessing the intern's work. These evaluation forms and the students' final papers will be used as the assessment measure.	Students must demonstrate that they are capable of professional quality work in the news industry.	Annually.	Yes
<b>Measure Type:</b> Field Work/ Internship			
Students take on internships in professional news organizations.	Each student is evaluated by the internship supervisor.	Annual.	Yes
<b>Measure Type:</b> Field Work/ Internship			
Capstone Projects--Seminar in Public Affairs and Seminar in Journalism, TV Documentary.	All students must complete a capstone project with a grade of B or better.	Annual--Capstones are reviewed by the faculty member teaching these seminar courses and discussed in curriculum/ syllabus review.	Yes
<b>Measure Type:</b> Final Paper/ Final Project			
Course Assignments (Direct).	Grades of B or higher on most tests and assignments.	For each course -- reviewed by division faculty and discussed in syllabus and curriculum reviews.	Yes
<b>Measure Type:</b> Written Assignment			
Awards -- The Journalism Division looks to several awards, both internal and external, as measures of the achievement of outcomes.	Only high achieving students get awards.	Annual--Assessment is determined by both the number of awards received by students but also by the quality of the submissions.	Yes
<b>Measure Type:</b> Other			
Graduating Student Survey--assessment of student perceptions in achieving outcomes (Indirect).	On average students will rate their academic career at least "very good" or "excellent."	Annual.  The survey has been administered annually since 2005 to all graduating students. The results are tabulated and reviewed by the Associate Dean and Division Director.	Yes
<b>Measure Type:</b> Survey			
Surveys among internship supervisors (Indirect). Internship supervisors (i.e. employers) currently evaluate students. This evaluation is reviewed by the faculty member responsible for internships. This form ensures that the ratings are directly related to the outcomes.	On average, internship supervisors will rate students' performance "very good" or "excellent" in all categories. These categories directly address the	Annually.	Yes

Assessment Plan			
Assessment Measure	Target	Schedule/Cycle	Active
	learning outcomes.		
<b>Measure Type:</b> Field Work/ Internship			
A survey of 3-5 year alumni (Indirect).	On average, alumni will rate their academic career "very good" or "excellent."	Every five years -- to assess their transition into and preparedness for the profession.	Yes
<b>Measure Type:</b> Alumni Feedback		Alumni who have been working for several years should be better able to assess their education.	
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<b>Measure Type:</b> Survey			

### Learning Outcome: Report Complete News Story

Report, write, and edit an accurate, balanced and complete news story in long-form print, online and radio style.

**Outcome Year:** 2011-2012

**Start Date:** 06/30/2010

**Outcome Status:** Active Learning Outcome

Assessment Plan			
Assessment Measure	Target	Schedule/Cycle	Active
Students in the graduate program take a day-long comprehensive exam that requires writing a complete news story quality news writing on a in long-form print, online and radio formats. Students must pass the deadline. the comprehensive exams to earn their degree.	Students must be able to produce quality news writing on a deadline.	Annually.	Yes
<b>Measure Type:</b> Quiz/ Exam			
Comprehensive Exams (Direct). Day-long exams include two components: a news-writing skills test (Outcomes 3, 4, 5) and two essays on issues involving	All students must pass the comps to get their degree.	Annual.	Yes

### Assessment Plan

Assessment Measure	Target	Schedule/Cycle	Active
journalism ethics and law (Outcomes 1 and 2). Each exam is reviewed by at least two faculty members.			
<b>Measure Type:</b> Quiz/ Exam			
Capstone Projects--Seminar in Public Affairs and Seminar in Journalism, TV Documentary. <b>Measure Type:</b> Final Paper/ Final Project	All students must complete a capstone project with a grade of B or better.	Annual--Capstones are reviewed by the faculty member teaching these seminar courses and discussed in curriculum/ syllabus review.	Yes
Course Assignments (Direct). <b>Measure Type:</b> Written Assignment	Grades of B or higher on most tests and assignments.	For each course -- reviewed by division faculty and discussed in syllabus and curriculum reviews.	Yes
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## Assessment Plan

Assessment Measure	Target	Schedule/Cycle	Active
<p>and also in Research Methods classes. Two studies in particular --the Writing Study and the Career Center Survey -- provided useful data to evaluate student perceptions toward our program.</p> <p><b>Measure Type:</b> Other</p>			
<p>Institutional research -- Student Evaluations of Teaching, Campus Climate Survey, Graduation Census, National Survey of Student Engagement (Indirect). The School of Communication and Journalism Division routinely analyze other data available in order to provide the background by which to understand more specific data.</p> <p><b>Measure Type:</b> Survey</p>	<p>To add context for the evaluation</p>	<p>Annual.</p>	<p>Yes</p>