

# FMS 2018 Assessment Report

## I. Program Assessment Meetings

- A. May 31, 1hr. Seth Soulstein and Katie Waugh:
  - Review and editing of existing Assessment Plan
  - Review of student outcomes, and determination of areas of focus for 2018-2019
  - Review of program changes
- B. May -- Nov: Online Collaboration -- Becca Myers, Seth Soulstein, and Katie Waugh
  - Drafts of Report and Plan shared

## II. Closing the Loop

The program staffing underwent some significant changes during the 2017-2018 year, with the hiring of a valued new faculty member in the field, and the resignation of co-chair Catherine Burroughs near the end of Fall Semester. Prof. Becca Myers joined the program as a co-chair at the beginning of Spring 2018.

Due to the rather tenuous condition of the program in 2016-2017, the 2017 Report did not outline specific student learning outcomes on which the program would focus. The program continues to strive for curricular development and a sense of cohesion, as described in 2017. However, during the course of 2017-2018 several outcomes anticipated in 2017 took place:

- **Benefits of consistent, engaged instruction:** For the first time in several years, all FMS courses offered in 2017-2018 were taught by a single faculty member. Seth Soulstein's approach resulted in student interest in the field and importantly, a more cohesive developmental progression in course sequences. Initial review of data supports this:
  - a) **Stronger Performance in Upper-Level Spring-Semester Course:** All but two students enrolled in FMS320: Envisioning the Other had taken a FMS class in the Fall. Students in this course had a more nuanced vocabulary and a greater ability to think critically (for instance, more immediate critical conversations about the gaze, etc) than upper-level students enrolled in Fall courses. This stemmed largely from an agreed-upon set of texts and methods that were established in courses offered in Fall 2017. The two new students initially demonstrated less ability to perform at the standards exhibited by other students, but developed these skills over the semester.
  - b) **Strong Enrollment in FMS Courses:** While not an overt indication of student learning, this does demonstrate enthusiasm for the program and new pedagogy. It also suggests more willing and meaningful participation in the program's curriculum.

## III. Examination of Data

As described above, staffing in 2016-2017 was quite unsure, and the initial FMS Assessment Plan drafted in 2017 did not have participation from any faculty teaching in the field. As such, the 2017 "Action Plan" outlined goals more in line with establishing a clear vision for the program, rather than assessing student outcomes. This work resulted in the following:

1. **Working to redefine mission and goals:** Profs. Myers, Soulstein, and Waugh worked throughout late Fall 2017 -- Spring 2018 to discuss changes and clarifications to the program's mission. These conversations centered largely on evaluating gaps in the curriculum from a disciplinary standpoint and discussing student performance as related to our still-forming goals for the program. This led to some concrete changes: Restructuring the introductory course sequence in the field (described below), and reworking the major description to de-emphasize film production (as found in the 2018 FMS Assessment Plan).
2. **Reformulating the inclusion of (Former) Program Goal #3: "Explore Production Skills,"** as related to Capstone production: As indicated above, the role of production in the curriculum is in need of clarification. Specifically, students routinely pursue production-oriented methods for capstone work, regardless of whether they have formal preparation in these practices. This places significant burden on both students and faculty (Seth Soulstein) to produce at capstone-level. Solutions to this issue are outlined below in "Program Changes."

#### **IV. Program Changes for the Upcoming year**

Given the contingency of both the staffing and curriculum in the program, more work can be done to improve Assessment and curriculum efforts in the future. The following changes are planned for 2018-2019:

##### **A. Efforts to improve students' skills in critical thinking skills and film and media analysis:**

This has been a key area faculty identified as needing improvement throughout the 2017-2018 year. Student performance as a result of this change will be assessed according to the methods described below in "V: Action Plan." Changes will include:

- The previous iteration of FMS101 was determined to have too much content to reach the depth needed to provide a solid foundation in the field. This was evident by evaluating upper-level students' performance in film and media analysis (specifically in FMS401). As a result, next year the foundation sequence in the field has been expanded into two courses: FMS101: Introduction to Film Studies and FMS102: Introduction to Media Studies.
- Changes to content in FMS241: Reading Popular Film (Fall 2018), to emphasize a more critical approach to film analysis (review of previous iterations of the course suggest this should produce demonstrable improvements in student performance).

##### **B. Strengthening preparation for capstone work:**

- Offering FMS285: SpTp: Screenwriting during the 2018-2019 year, as students overwhelmingly choose to create screenplays for their capstone work.
- Strengthening curriculum in film and media analysis (described above), so that students can more easily envision capstone research and analysis in the field. In addition to the changes described above, future iterations of upper-level courses in FMS will feature refined learning outcomes to better target critical engagement.

##### **C. Curriculum Development:**

- Faculty will continue to work on building a sustainable, viable curriculum that can thrive regardless of the specific faculty member teaching in the program.

**V. Action Plan**

- A. Data will be collected in FMS courses in 2018-2019 by Seth Soulstein, and will be discussed during Fall and Spring Semesters. Profs. Myers and Waugh will synthesize this data in a final report during Spring 2019.
- B. The Following Goals will targeted:
  - Assess student performance on learning outcomes associated with Program Goals 1 & 3, especially those who complete the full 101-102 sequence in 2018-2019.
  - Assess upper-level student performance (students enrolled in courses at the 200-400 level) in Program Goals 1 & 3, to provide a baseline for performance in these areas (to determine in the future if there's an improvement that could be correlated to our course change.)