**Annual Departmental Assessment Report**

**Department or Program:** Romance Languages

**Academic Year of Report:** 2020-2021

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**Section 1: Learning Objectives Assessed for this Report**

The Department of Romance Languages offers instruction in French, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish across all undergraduate levels. Our activities are divided into two main areas: lower-division (language and culture learning) and upper-division (literature, cultures, and linguistics).

**Lower-division.** Learning goals in our 100- and 200-level classes with a focus on language follow the national [World Readiness Standards for Language Learning](https://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/publications/standards/World-ReadinessStandardsforLearningLanguages.pdf), and are thus compatible and comparable with other language programs in the U.S.

**Upper-division.** RL offers majors in French, Italian, Romance Languages (two languages), and Spanish. These undergraduate majors have parallel structure and learning outcomes. Our students explore the languages, literature and cultures of the Romance world, both modern and historical. They work on understanding, speaking, reading and writing the modern language. Our courses focus on the historical roots of these languages and cultures, on cultural production (such as prose, poetry, theater, film, criticism), and linguistic knowledge.

**Upper-division courses (300-400 levels)**

Evaluation is based on content expertise and language proficiency. Any or all of the following criteria will be applied to assignments, or additional criteria may be included, as appropriate for the task.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **A (outstanding)** | **B (very good)** | **C (sufficient)** | **D (insufficient)** |
| **Content** | assignment contains copious detail, interesting, relevant, and accurate information | goes beyond basic information; details are accurate and relevant | assignment has only basic information; minimally covers topic or some information is not relevant or accurate | little or some irrelevant information; inaccuracies |
| **Academic language** | ideas are expressed clearly, with grammatical accuracy; excellent connections and transitions between ideas; evidence of use of spell-checker | ideas are expressed clearly, with limited errors; logical transitions; evidence of use of spell-checker | ideas are comprehensible, but some information is incomplete or incoherent; transitions are sometimes missing; evidence of use of spell-checker | some ideas are incomprehensible or disorganized; few logical connections or transitions; no use of spell-checker |
| **L2 proficiency (global rating): 300 level** | Proficiency is ACTFL Advanced Low or CEFR B2 | Proficiency is at ACTFL Intermediate High or CEFR B1 | Proficiency is at ACTFL Intermediate High or CEFR B1 | Proficiency is at or below ACTFL Intermediate Mid or CEFR A2 |
| **L2 proficiency (global rating): 400 level** | Proficiency is above ACTFL Advanced Low or CEFR B2 | Proficiency is at ACTFL Advanced Low or CEFR B2 | Proficiency is at ACTFL Advanced Low or CEFR B2 | Proficiency is below ACTFL Advanced Low or CEFR B2 |
| **Research** | well-documented work, drawing on multiple sources (library, internet, etc.) with correct use of citations; citations are well integrated into text | library and internet sources are used; correct use of citations are well integrated into text | only internet sources are used; minor problems with citation; very little missing information | poor use of sources; incomplete or incorrect citation |
| **Originality** | well synthesized research material, genuinely original language | solid synthesis of researched material | minimal synthesis of researched material; minimal recasting of ideas in original language; heavy use of cited material | little synthesis of research; overuse of cited material    |

As indicated in the Flight Path/Major Maps recently published through Tykeson advising, our majors and minors receive training leading to the following learning outcomes:

● Oral and written communication

● Critical thinking and analysis

● Cross-cultural collaboration

In addition, our programs of study set students up for success in careers that involve:

● Language teaching

● International diplomacy

● Translation

● Grant writing

● Advocacy

● Policy development & analysis

● Program administration and evaluation

● Economic and community development

● Public outreach and community relations

**Section 2: Assessment Activities**

The activities outlined in the sections below describe current initiatives. The COVID-19 pandemic and the transition to the new School of Global Studies and Languages have slowed our efforts in implementing innovations in assessment, but the School promises to create a new set of learning outcomes across all its programs.

**Lower-division.** We administer daily, weekly, and unit assessments in classes, in addition to different types of project-based assessments designed to motivate students with real-world tasks and measure their progress. Also, for five years (2014-2019, in French and Spanish, 2018-2019 in all four languages), we administered program-wide assessment using an externally validated instrument, the Standards-based Assessment of Proficiency (STAMP), an online, nationally recognized test for measuring language proficiency. The COVID-19 pandemic prevented us from continuing this testing as of spring 2020, but we hope to resume the use of STAMP in the future.

**Upper-division**. Our upper-level classes assess students’ written proficiency through traditional exams, take-home exams, field work, and in-class essay writing assignments. We evaluate their progress in oral proficiency through in-class debates, informational and interpretive presentations about literature, culture, and sociolinguistic issues. Students also create podcasts, and work in groups to produce videos, scripts, poetry readings, and short theatrical performances.

**Section 3: Actions Taken Based on Assessment Analysis**

Based on STAMP results over the past few years, we have made a concerted effort to improve instruction in the areas that showed the greatest weakness. Specifically, all lower-division programs have enhanced practice in listening comprehension, which STAMP indicated was the weakest of our students’ skill areas. This important shift in curriculum based on assessment results should prove hugely beneficial, since research shows that access to target-language input is key to improved acquisition.

**Section 4: Other Efforts to Improve the Student Educational Experience**

**Curricular revisions.** Romance Languages was well represented in President Schill’s LIFT (Language Learning Innovation for Teaching), designed to catalyze innovation in language teaching and learning. Nine RL faculty members were awarded the competitive LIFT grants between 2018-2020, representing a half of all awardees: Claudia Ventura, Harinder Khalsa, Andrew Rothgery, Gina Herrmann, Monica Lara, Amalia Gladhart, Cecilia Enjuto-Rangel, Diana Garvin, Fabienne Moore, Andre Djiffack, Analisa Taylor, Melanie Williams, Kelley Leon Howarth. New curricula developed through LIFT bolsters participation in second-language learning and teaching, provide multiple paths to proficiency and inspire students to persist in language study. Many of the LIFT classes have been implemented for the first time in the 2020-2021 cycle, and RL will monitor their progress through student experience surveys and by comparing work samples to those in our traditional classes. New classes have been created based on the LIFT model, without funding for course development, pointing to the sustainability of this model for future curricular innovation.

On the BA level, we continue to revise our Spanish Language and Society program, we have innovated a new Italian Studies major, and we are revising our minor programs in order to attract more students and make our minor course of study increasingly “career-legible.”

RL is still in negotiations with CAS on the formation of the new School of Global Studies and Languages. We expect to continue our curricular revisions to create new opportunities students. During the coming year (2021-2022), RL will participate actively in the SGSL Implementation Committee to integrate our activities with those of East Asian, Germanic/Scandinavian, and Global Studies.

**Advising.** RL has been active in partnering with and training the new Tykeson advisors. At the same time, we continue to maintain the close core advising relationships with our majors and minors regarding our discipline-specific study abroad, internship, and career-facing opportunities.

**Co-curricular activities.** We continue to create opportunities to motivate our students and give them ways to use our languages outside the classroom:

● Our initiatives include offering SLAT internships in UO classes (interships in local K-12 schools have been suspended during the pandemic), as well as integrating students into faculty research (e.g., linguistic landscaping with Professor Devin Grammon and Sr. Instructor II Paula Ellister).

● We expanded our experiential learning offerings, including the creation of the UO’s first ever “Study Away” program designed by Professor Analisa Taylor: “Local and Transborder Food, Labor, and Environmental Justice”. This program, initially planned for summer 2020, was not offered due to the pandemic, but it is slated to go live in summer 2021 with a hybrid format (half remote, half on site). This Spanish Immersion and Organic Farming in the Willamette Valley features “Spanish Immersion in Action” focused on farming practices as well as community interactive conversations about pluricultural solutions to local and global problems, Indigenous agricultural systems, agribusiness, globalization and human rights. The language immersion component of the program entails homestays with Spanish-speaking families and field trips to local community organizations.

**Credentialing.** In conjunction with the program-wide administration of the STAMP test, we were able to award over 200 UO students in RL programs with the Global Seal of Biliteracy ([https://theglobalseal.com](https://theglobalseal.com/)), a credential that attests to students’ real-world ability in English plus another language. See report at https://rl.uoregon.edu/2019/06/10/uo-language-students-earn-global-seal-of-biliteracy/.

**Section 5: Plans for Next Year**

The previous administrations of the STAMP test have been funded by President Schill’s LIFT initiative, the College of Arts and Sciences, and support from CASLS and the Yamada Center. However, the funding to continue this invaluable assessment has been difficult to sustain. We hope to integrate externally validated assessments as a regular part of our programs.

Our two recent hires in Spanish Sociolinguistics (Devin Grammon and Sergio Loza) were promised a sociolinguistics lab for undergraduate education. However, to date there has been no movement from the administration to facilitate this crucial resource for their research and for undergraduate engagement. We strongly urge swift action so that these two dynamic colleagues can realize their promise and enhance our students’ involvement in research.

Finally, RL is currently designing new WEB courses that should increase student access to our curriculum. Faculty are working with the UO Online Division to create innovations in language learning and assessment.