Master of Arts in Texts, Technologies, and Literature

An Assessment Plan for UMBC's English Master of Arts Program

Fall 2016

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Introduction

In Spring 2016, the Master of Arts in Texts, Technologies, and Literature Assessment Committee collaborated to create program-level student learning outcomes, map outcomes to learning opportunities, identify where and how to measure student learning, and discuss anticipated learning challenges and accomplishments of incoming students and graduates.[1] The committee began with an assessment inventory—they collected and reviewed the course syllabi, reflected on how faculty in the program measure and analyze student learning, and situated their assessment planning within UMBC requirements.

Several factors facilitated the discussions:

- The English Bachelor of Arts program had just completed the Academic Program Review process. Since many committee members participated in the review and self-study process, they were well positioned to reflect on student learning at the next stage.

- Most of the committee members were experienced learning assessment practitioners.

- The assessment committee chair set specific goals for each meeting with advance assignments that enriched the discussions.

- Six students were preparing to graduate from the program, and faculty wanted to gain their insights through an exit survey focused on the program-level student learning outcomes.

Assessment Committee

- Lucille McCarthy, Chair
- Jean Fernandez
- Carol Fitzpatrick
- Jennifer Maher
- Michele Osherow
- Sally Shivnan
- Orianne Smith

Rubric Subcommittee

- Lucille McCarthy, Chair
- Jessica Berman
- Jean Fernandez
- Jennifer Maher

Advisor: Jennifer M. Harrison, FDC

Preliminary Learning Results

Although this is the first assessment cycle for this program, and extensive results are not yet available, the 2016 Spring Exit Survey offers preliminary insights. The student reflections suggest that students seek additional learning opportunities in conducting research. Of six graduates, four responded to the survey in spring and summer 2016. Students reported that their skills improved in all four learning outcomes. However, 25% said skills in conducting research only moderately improved. Therefore, faculty will focus on outcome 3 in the first assessment cycle. (See the **English MA Assessment Reporting Chart** below.)

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[1] English MA Assessment Committee Meetings took place on April 13 and May 4, 2016, supported by FDC staff.

Closing the Loop Actions

Several interventions emerged from faculty discussions of students' learning reflections in the Exit Survey:

- *Course-Level:* 607 added Fieldwork Research Discussions to class meetings and expanded the study questions to help students explicitly and metacognitively assess their learning in information literacy.

- *Course- and Program-Level:* Faculty reflected on information literacy work throughout the program, examining in detail how 601 established foundational graduate skills in research. They confirmed that students do have access to this learning opportunity, but may need additional help in transferring what they have learned in their first classes to later work.

- *Program-Level:* Faculty across the program are incorporating AOK Library workshops, tutorials, and librarian class visits to build students research skills.

- *Follow-Up Measures:* The program has crafted rubrics to measure student learning in core courses and milestones.

- *Process:* Faculty will revise the exit survey to include a question about the student's chosen track.

Purpose Statement

The Master of Arts in Texts, Technologies, and Literature provides an opportunity for advanced students to further their understanding of literature and a broad array of other texts, including digital, academic and those that function in everyday use, in relation to both historical and contemporary culture. The program welcomes students with undergraduate majors in such areas as American Studies, Media Studies, Communication Studies, Modern Languages and Literature, and Gender and Women's Studies, as well as English.

It is designed to accommodate students with a variety of interests and career paths, including those who are considering an academic career in English, whether in Rhetoric and Composition, Communication and Media Studies, or Literature; those interested in pursuing a Ph.D.; K-12 teachers looking for advanced training; and those entering communications, editorial, and/or digital media professions. Students may specialize in the study of print-based or multi-modal texts of particular periods or genres; rhetoric, communication, and composition; or language use and production in various settings.

Students in the program will …

- explore a range of literatures in English and a variety of textual forms, media and practices in relation to their cultural contexts
- develop advanced skills in reading, analyzing, and writing about texts, from the lyric poem to digital work in multi-media, and
- have the opportunity to study language in use in various settings, or to specialize in the study of communication or the teaching of composition. (http://english.umbc.edu/ma-program-2/)

2016 Statistics

- 6 graduates
- 8 new students
- 8 continuing from 2015
- 6 continuing from before 2015
- 5 Graduate Assistants

The Learning Assessment Cycle

The English MA Assessment plan engages the four-part assessment cycle to:

1. Craft student learning outcomes
2. Offer learning opportunities
3. Identify useful measures of student learning
4. Apply the results to improve student learning

The plan addresses each part of the cycle in the following sections.

1. Student Learning Outcomes

The English MA Assessment Committee reflected individually and as a group on what English Master of Arts students should know and be able to do when they complete their degrees. Faculty began by examining outcomes for the undergraduate English degree and discussing how the master's program complicates and extends student learning. Four learning outcomes emerged from the discussions as detailed below.

Students completing the MA in English will be able to …

1. Demonstrate advanced skills in critical thinking, reading, speaking, and writing, including the ability to analyze texts, to synthesize ideas, and to reflect on these activities.
2. Generate theoretically informed interpretations of texts and questions for scholarly inquiry.
3. Conduct and produce original research.
4. Engage in professional activities, including producing a variety of academic and multimodal genres, including proposals, presentations, reports, and review essays.

Outcome Alignment

In addition to aligning the four outcomes to UMBC's institutional-level learning outcomes, the Functional Competencies, faculty mapped the MA outcomes to the BA program to help incoming students envision how the degree would complicate and extend skills they gained in their undergraduate studies. Outcomes 1 and 2 evolved from undergraduate outcomes 1 and 2; outcome 3 extends BA outcome 4; outcome 4 complicates BA outcomes 3 and 6.

Outcome Alignment Table

English MA Outcome	English BA Outcome	UMBC Functional Competency
SLO 1	SLO 1	UMBC Functional Competency 1: Oral & Written Communication
SLO 2	SLOs 2 and 5	UMBC Functional Competency 3: Critical Analysis & Reasoning
SLO 3	SLO 4	UMBC Functional Competency 5: Information Literacy
SLO 4	SLOs 3 and 6	Integration of UMBC Functional Competencies 1, 3, 4 (Technological Competency) and 5

Each Student Learning Outcome (SLO) for the English MA program was developed from the bachelor's outcomes and has been aligned to the UMBC institutional-level outcomes, the UMBC Functional Competencies (see http://fdc.umbc.edu/files/2015/02/General_Education_Competencies_0805.pdf).

2. Student Learning Opportunities

The MA in English program challenges students to master these outcomes across 30 graduate credits, including six credits of core courses:

- ENGL 601, Methods of Interpretation
- ENGL 607, Language in Society

Additionally, students must take at least one course in each of three areas:

- Critical Theory, Genre Study, Composition, Rhetoric, Communications, Media Studies
- World Literature; Gender, Minority, and Ethnic Studies
- Pre-1800 Studies

Students choose their remaining courses from graduate English courses, or up to 2 approved graduate courses from MLLI, GWST, AMST or LLC.

Finally, students choose to demonstrate their learning in either a thesis or a portfolio:

- The master's thesis option requires two semesters of English 799
- The portfolio option requires one semester of English 798 and an additional graduate-level course.

How Do Students Build Mastery of the SLOs?

Students build on undergraduate learning in the core courses, where they complicate and refine their skills in written and oral communication, critical reasoning, and research to lay the groundwork for the original research required in their master's thesis or portfolio. Beginning in Fall 2016, faculty will assess student learning in these foundational courses using rubrics designed to measure embedded writing assignments that challenge students to demonstrate the program outcomes at a first-year master's level.

Next, students work towards mastering the learning outcomes through electives—thesis students choose six electives; portfolio students take seven electives. The three choice areas for electives ensure that students gain experiences with multiple pathways in English studies, while retaining flexibility in crafting a course sequence that responds to their learning goals. Additionally, students may take up to two courses from complementary programs. Students who select the portfolio option self-assess their learning in the elective courses through the portfolio process. Faculty expect thesis students to integrate their learning from the core and electives into their final project.

Students demonstrate their summative learning experiences in one of two ways: the portfolio or the thesis. To gain insights about student learning at each stage of the process, the faculty have adapted a set of rubrics from Kansas State University (http://www.k-state.edu/assessment/slo/degprogunit/grad/rubrics.html) models recommended by Barbara Walvoord (http://gradschool.cornell.edu/academics/learning-assessment/learning-assessment-workshop). See Appendix B for the family of rubrics for the English MA program.

Curriculum Map: Where Learning Happens

UMBC — THE GRADUATE SCHOOL AT UMBC — AN HONORS UNIVERSITY IN MARYLAND — Master of Arts in Texts, Technologies, and Literature Curriculum Map	Core Courses		Electives			MA Portfolio	MA Thesis
	601	607	Students choose at least one course in each area			798+ course	799
	Methods of Interpretation	Language in Society	Theory, Genre, Comp, Rhet, MCS	World Lit, Diversity	pre-1800 course	Portfolio Independent Study	Master's Thesis Research
Program-Level Student Learning Outcomes							
1 Demonstrate advanced skills in critical thinking, reading, speaking, and writing, including the ability to analyze texts, to synthesize ideas, and to reflect on these activities. *UMBC Functional Competency 1: Oral & Written Communication*	5	6	6	6	6	7	7
2 Generate theoretically informed interpretations of texts and questions for scholarly inquiry. *UMBC Functional Competency 3:Critical Analysis & Reasoning*	5	5	6	6	6	7	7
3 Conduct and produce original research. *UMBC Functional Competency 5: Information Literacy*	4-5	4-5	6	6	6	7	7
4 Engage in professional activities, including producing a variety of academic and multimodal genres, including proposals, presentations, reports, and review essays. *Integration of UMBC Functional Competencies 1, 3, 4 (Technological Competency) and 5*	5	5	6	6	6	7	7

Key:	In this course, students …	
	Do not focus on this outcome	
	Gain fundamental knowledge and skills in this outcome not likely learned in undergraduate studies	4
	Complicate and refine learning in this outcome	5
	Cultivate mastery of this outcome	6
	Demonstrate graduate-level mastery of this learning outcome and introduce original ideas	7
	Double lines indicate formal assessments.	

created April 2016, revised June and October 2016 by Jennifer M. Harrison, UMBC FDC

The English MA Curriculum Map captures the whole program. It maps how students build mastery in each of the program's student learning outcomes, denotes where key assessments will take place, and aligns the program-level learning outcomes to the institutional-level learning outcomes, the Functional Competencies.

3. Direct and Indirect Measures of Student Learning

Formative Direct Measures

Faculty plan to measure student learning in the two core courses (601 and 607) using rubrics in Blackboard or Excel. A subcommittee of the core faculty for the courses and Faculty Development Center staff will meet in Fall 2016 to devise rubrics for each course that will enable comparisons of students' development from course to course.

These formative measures will enable faculty to discern if students are grasping the foundational concepts of the program. Since students typically take one core course in the first semester and one in second semester of the first year, these measures will help faculty ascertain how best to help students move towards mastery. The resulting data will direct next steps in continuous improvement.

Summative Direct Measures

As the Curriculum Map in the section above illustrates, faculty expect students to demonstrate mastery of the learning outcomes in the final program projects. Both the portfolio and the thesis challenge students to integrate learning from the core courses and electives with original research ideas, so they are ideal for summative assessment. Therefore, the faculty have elected to use a series of rubrics to measure the results. As thesis committees and portfolio advisors grade students' final projects and presentations, they plan to use rubrics to analyze how well students achieved each of the learning outcomes. The rubrics are set up in an Excel spreadsheet that enables faculty to aggregate student results across groups of graduates and across the program. (See Appendix B.)

Indirect Measure: Student Exit Survey

In Spring 2016, the committee created an exit survey for graduating students. Using Qualtrics, software designed for online surveys, the chair invited students to self-assess their learning in the English MA program. In addition to four questions focused on the student learning outcomes, the survey asks students to note which courses and experiences helped them to achieve each outcome. Further, the survey asks students to reflect on how they will apply their learning in the future. (See Appendix B.)

The Spring 2016 pilot survey yielded 4 of 6 responses, so the Assessment Committee has reflected on ways to gain more data. Future versions may engage a *continuity mechanism*—a tool that embeds learning assessment processes into everyday work—to gain better responses.

MASTER OF ARTS IN TEXTS, TECHNOLOGIES, AND LITERATURE
LEARNING ASSESSMENT PLAN

English MA Assessment Planning Chart

English MA Outcome	Direct: Formative	Direct: Summative	Indirect
SLO 1	601, 607	798 and Thesis 799 and Portfolio	Exit Survey
SLO 2	601, 607	798 and Thesis 799 and Portfolio	Exit Survey
SLO 3	601, 607	798 and Thesis 799 and Portfolio	Exit Survey
SLO 4	601, 607	798 and Thesis 799 and Portfolio	Exit Survey

As illustrated above, each measure aims to collect learning data on each outcome to gain understanding of how well the program's scaffolded learning sequence works. With these insights, faculty will be able to intervene efficiently and effectively (individually and collectively) if learning problems emerge in students' work.

English MA Assessment Schedule

Focus on English MA Outcome	Two-Year Cycle
SLO 3	2016-18
SLO 1	2018-20
SLO 2	2020-22
SLO 4	2022-24

4. Closing the Loop: Planning to Apply Data to Continuous Improvement

Although direct measure evidence is not yet available about student learning in the English MA program, the Assessment Committee reflected on their experiences with student learning in the program since it began and ways they have worked with students to help them succeed. In the coming years, as the committee collects and analyzes data from the rubrics and exit surveys, they will gain evidence-based insights about student learning successes while identifying areas of particular challenge and interventions to make learning more attainable. See Closing the Loop Actions above and the **English MA Assessment Reporting Chart**.

Continuity Mechanisms: A UMBC-Specific Approach

UMBC has already created a number of *continuity mechanisms* to help programs keep assessment continuous and meaningful. These include the Academic Program Review process, which requires cumulative reports on reflections about student learning on a seven-year cycle with formal updates at the third year; and the Biennial Assessment Reports (and related meetings), which requires reports that integrate prior results with interventions and new results.

Additionally, the committee has devised program-specific *continuity mechanisms*. For example, one closing-the-loop application under discussion, which resulted from the Spring 2016 Exit Survey, may be to embed the final exit survey into the program completion paperwork or as an annual report students submit each fall. In this way the survey (renamed to questionnaire or annual report) could become embedded in the process, eliminating the perception of it as an add-on to a completed degree. Likewise, the committee has planned to embed assessment practices in everyday work in the following ways:

- Learning assessment tools, materials, and results will be shared with graduate students in the program to gain their insights and feedback while making the program goals explicit.

- Course rubrics will be embedded in the grading processes of the core courses, shared with students to foster self-assessment, and assessed for effectiveness as results are reviewed. This is in lieu of the secondary evaluation process used by the English BA.

- Portfolio, thesis, and thesis defense rubrics will be embedded into the committee review process as part of the paperwork to finalize approvals.

- Regularly scheduled Assessment Committee meetings will include time to reflect on the assessment process and results.

- Assessment Committee faculty will reserve time on the full English faculty meeting agenda for discussion of student learning results and the relationships between student learning at each level.

- Assessment Committee faculty will share results with the Graduate Program Director Council, with the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, and on their website.

- The English MA website will be updated to reflect best practices in learning assessment transparency, i.e., making this plan and results available to all audiences.

- Faculty in the program will be advised that student learning outcomes (aligned to the program outcomes) are required for each course. The Assessment Committee recommends that faculty include student learning outcomes on their syllabi.

- Discussions of student learning outcomes with students, begun in the Fall 2016 graduate student reception, will continue as part of each semester's reception.

- This plan will be used as an example on the Faculty Development Center website to guide other graduate programs preparing assessment plans.

- Assessment Committee faculty will consider sharing the results with broader UMBC audiences, for example, through presentations at the Provost's Teaching and Learning Symposium and other Faculty Development Center programs.

Course-Level and Assignment-Level Interventions

As faculty gather learning data at the course and assignment level, particularly in the core courses, they plan to analyze students strengths and weaknesses, reflect and discuss the possible needs revealed by the results, and devise interventions to help address these needs. These interventions may include, for example, revising the assignment prompt, fine-tuning the rubric, and/or adding learning opportunities to the course.

Program-Level Interventions

Course-level data can yield useful insights about what is working well at the program level and what need additional attention. As faculty gather and aggregate learning data, they plan to examine the results across courses and semesters, triangulate multiple measures, and work to identify possible interventions for continuous improvement. Additionally, alignment to the BA program allows for inter-program feedback. Program reports follow the English BA schedule.

Institutional-Level Interventions

The Assessment Committee chair will share learning results at meetings of the Graduate Program Directors in an effort to identify common ground with other graduate programs. Shared learning challenges may need to be addressed at the institutional level, particularly with struggles that cross disciplines.

English MA Assessment Reporting Chart

English MA Outcome	Semester, Year, Measure	Results	Intervention	Results after Intervention
SLO 1	Spring 2016 Exit Survey	100% improved or greatly improved		
SLO 2	Spring 2016 Exit Survey	100% greatly improved		
SLO 3	Spring 2016 Exit Survey	75% improved or greatly improved; 25% moderately improved	**Course-Level:** 607 Fieldwork Research Discussions; study question additions **Course- and Program-Level:** Review of how 601 establishes foundation in research skills, discussion of ways to help students build and transfer these skills. **Program-Level:** Connect students to AOK Library workshops and tutorials. **Process:** Revise Exit Survey to include students' track. **Follow-up:** Program will measure students' research skills using rubrics in core courses.	
SLO 4	Spring 2016 Exit Survey	100% improved or greatly improved		

Of six 2016 graduates, four completed the exit survey in spring and summer 2016. These initial data suggest that students require additional support in conducting original research. Two students' reflections on their learning in outcome 3 suggested enhancing research training, for example through research courses, additional "course selection within the program," and training in research skills.

Appendix A: Learning, Assessment, and Graduate Students

A resource for discussing student learning assessment with students.

Welcome to the Master of Arts in Texts, Technologies, and Literature!

The faculty in your program have crafted a curriculum designed to help you learn, grow, and prepare for the next stage in your career and education. Additionally, they have implemented a learning assessment plan designed to foster continuous improvement of your learning. The student learning outcomes appear below to give you a preview of what you will learn and how faculty will measure your learning. Check in with your advisor(s) with your questions, to review the curriculum map for the program, or to request more information.

Student Learning Outcomes

Student learning outcomes or SLOs express what students will know and be able to do by the time they complete a program.

Students completing the MA in English will be able to …

1. Demonstrate advanced skills in critical thinking, reading, speaking, and writing, including the ability to analyze texts, to synthesize ideas, and to reflect on these activities.
2. Generate theoretically informed interpretations of texts and questions for scholarly inquiry.
3. Conduct and produce original research.
4. Engage in professional activities, including producing a variety of academic and multimodal genres, including proposals, presentations, reports, and review essays.

Assessment Measures

Faculty will measure student learning in the core courses, English 601 and 607 to assess your learning in the beginning of the program. Additionally, faculty measure student learning in the capstones (portfolios, theses, defenses) and in the exit survey.

Appendix B: Rubrics

Excel files appear in Box at https://umbc.box.com/s/mkg1e81qrx2q2ohhfnyje530ol2ylib7, including a rubric aggregator to streamline collecting data.

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Master of Arts in Texts, Technologies, and Literature Portfolio Assessment Form

Semester, Year, and Date: Student:

Committee Chair: Committee Member Assessor:

Please assess this student's demonstration of each student learning outcome and add a score from 4 to 1 in the Portfolio column.

	Student Learning Outcomes	4. Exemplary	3. Proficient	2. Acceptable	1. Deficient	Portfolio
1	Demonstrate advanced skills in critical thinking, reading, speaking, and writing, including the ability to analyze texts, to synthesize ideas, and to reflect on these activities.	Demonstrates outstanding skills.	Demonstrates above average skills.	Demonstrates acceptable level of skills.	Demonstrates unacceptably low level of skills.	
2	Generate theoretically informed interpretations of texts and questions for scholarly inquiry.	Demonstrates outstanding critical analysis.	Demonstrates above average critical analysis.	Demonstrates acceptable critical analysis.	Demonstrates unacceptable critical analysis.	
3	Conduct and produce original research.	Demonstrates outstanding research skills.	Demonstrates above average research skills.	Demonstrates acceptable research skills.	Demonstrates unacceptable research skills.	
4	Engage in professional activities, including producing a variety of academic and multimodal genres, including proposals, presentations, reports, and review essays.	Reflects outstanding ability to express self clearly, accurately and professionally.	Reflects above average ability to express self clearly, accurately and professionally.	Reflects acceptable ability to express self clearly, accurately and professionally.	Reflects unacceptably low ability to express self clearly, accurately and professionally.	

Developed April 2016 by Jennifer M. Harrison, UMBC FDC, from Kansas State University (http://www.k-state.edu/assessment/slo/degprogunit/grad/rubrics.html) models noted by Barbara Walvoord (http://gradschool.cornell.edu/academics/learning-assessment/learning-assessment-workshop).

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Master of Arts in Texts, Technologies, and Literature Thesis Assessment Form

Semester, Year, and Date: *Student:*

Committee Chair: *Committee Member Assessor:*

Please assess this student's demonstration of each student learning outcome and add a score from 4 to 1 in the shaded Thesis and Defense columns.

	Student Learning Outcomes	4. Exemplary	3. Proficient	2. Acceptable	1. Deficient	Thesis	Defense
1	Demonstrate advanced skills in critical thinking, reading, speaking, and writing, including the ability to analyze texts, to synthesize ideas, and to reflect on these activities.	Demonstrates outstanding skills.	Demonstrates above average skills.	Demonstrates acceptable level of skills.	Demonstrates unacceptably low level of skills.		
2	Generate theoretically informed interpretations of texts and questions for scholarly inquiry.	Demonstrates outstanding critical analysis.	Demonstrates above average critical analysis.	Demonstrates acceptable critical analysis.	Demonstrates unacceptable critical analysis.		
3	Conduct and produce original research.	Demonstrates outstanding research skills.	Demonstrates above average research skills.	Demonstrates acceptable research skills.	Demonstrates unacceptable research skills.		
4	Engage in professional activities, including producing a variety of academic and multimodal genres, including proposals, presentations, reports, and review essays.	Reflects outstanding ability to express self clearly, accurately and professionally.	Reflects above average ability to express self clearly, accurately and professionally.	Reflects acceptable ability to express self clearly, accurately and professionally.	Reflects unacceptably low ability to express self clearly, accurately and professionally.		

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English 601: Methods of Interpretation

Semester, Year, and Date: *Student:*

	Course Student Learning Outcomes	4. Exemplary	3. Proficient	2. Acceptable	1. Deficient	Assessment
1	Demonstrate comprehensive understanding of literary theories. (MA ENGLISH SLO 1, FC 1, Exam)	Demonstrates outstanding skills.	Demonstrates above average skills.	Demonstrates acceptable level of skills.	Demonstrates unacceptably low level of skills.	
2	Demonstrate competence in employing literary theory for purposes of Literary Criticism. (MA ENGLISH SLO 2, FC 3, Writing Assignment)	Demonstrates outstanding critical analysis.	Demonstrates above average critical analysis.	Demonstrates acceptable critical analysis.	Demonstrates unacceptable critical analysis.	
3	Demonstrate a wide range of critical vocabulary (MA ENGLISH SLO 2, FC 3, Writing Assignment)	Demonstrates outstanding skills.	Demonstrates above average skills.	Demonstrates acceptable level of skills.	Demonstrates unacceptably low level of skills.	
4	Demonstrate knowledge of archival databases. (MA ENGLISH SLO 3, FC 5, Bibliography Exercise)	Demonstrates outstanding skills.	Demonstrates above average skills.	Demonstrates acceptable level of skills.	Demonstrates unacceptably low level of skills.	
5	Demonstrates knowledge of electronic data bases in literary studies. (MA ENGLISH SLO 3, FC 5, Bibliography Exercise)	Demonstrates outstanding skills.	Demonstrates above average skills.	Demonstrates acceptable level of skills.	Demonstrates unacceptably low level of skills.	
6	Demonstrates ability to map scholarship in a given field. (MA ENGLISH SLO 3, FC 5, Journal Review and Annotated Bibliography)	Demonstrates outstanding skills.	Demonstrates above average skills.	Demonstrates acceptable level of skills.	Demonstrates unacceptably low level of skills.	
7	Demonstrates proficiency in scholarly writing and scholarly presentations. (MA ENGLISH SLO 1 and 4, FC 1, 3, 4, 5 Writing Assignments and Class Presentations)	Reflects outstanding ability to express self clearly, accurately and professionally.	Reflects above average ability to express self clearly, accurately and professionally.	Reflects acceptable ability to express self clearly, accurately and professionally.	Reflects unacceptably low ability to express self clearly, accurately and professionally.	

Developed October 2016 by Jennifer M. Harrison, UMBC FDC.

This rubric for English 601 presents the student learning outcomes (SLOs) at the course level. Each course-level SLO is aligned to the program- and institutional-level outcomes, so faculty can see how well students gain foundational learning in each of the outcomes. Additionally, the results can be aggregated at multiple levels.

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English 607: Language in Society Rubric for Papers

Semester, Year, and Date: *Student:*

	Course Student Learning Outcomes	4. Exemplary	3. Proficient	2. Acceptable	1. Deficient	Assessment
1	Demonstrate developing skills in critical thinking, reading, speaking, and writing by synthesizing texts relevant to language in society. *(MA ENGLISH SLO 1, FC 1)*	Demonstrates outstanding skills.	Demonstrates above average skills.	Demonstrates acceptable level of skills.	Demonstrates unacceptably low level of skills.	
2	Identify questions that emerge from class readings and discussion and write theoretically informed interpretations. *(MA ENGLISH SLO 2, FC 3)*	Demonstrates outstanding critical analysis.	Demonstrates above average critical analysis.	Demonstrates acceptable critical analysis.	Demonstrates unacceptable critical analysis.	
3	Synthesize relevant texts, analyze their research techniques, and add new insights. *(MA ENGLISH SLO 3, FC 5)*	Demonstrates outstanding research skills.	Demonstrates above average research skills.	Demonstrates acceptable research skills.	Demonstrates unacceptable research skills.	
4	Practice professional skills in integrating critical thinking, research in writing and oral communication. *(MA ENGLISH SLO 4, FC 1,3,4,5)*	Reflects outstanding ability to express self clearly, accurately and professionally.	Reflects above average ability to express self clearly, accurately and professionally.	Reflects acceptable ability to express self clearly, accurately and professionally.	Reflects unacceptably low ability to express self clearly, accurately and professionally.	
COMMENTS						

Developed September 2016 by Jennifer M. Harrison, UMBC FDC, using Lucille McCarthy's syllabus and prior worksheets in this Excel workbook.

This rubric for English 607 presents the student learning outcomes (SLOs) at the course level. Each course-level SLO is aligned to the program- and institutional-level outcomes, so faculty can see how well students gain foundational learning in each of the outcomes. Additionally, the results can be aggregated at multiple levels.

English MA Program Data Aggregator Worksheet

The Assessment Committee uses this tool to gather and analyze student learning results from the Rubric Aggregator worksheet. By copying the formulas under Percentages on the Rubric Aggregator worksheet and pasting them as values in the spaces below, a view of student learning across the program will emerge.

Program Student Learning Outcomes (FCs)	Master's Portfolio							Master's Defense							Master's Thesis							Results Across Milestones					
	Mean	SD	4	3	2	1	N	Mean	SD	4	3	2	1	N	Mean	SD	4	3	2	1	N	Mean	4	3	2	1	N
1 (FC1)								2.00	0.00	0%	0%	100%	0%	1	2.00	0.00	0%	0%	100%	0%	1	2.00	0%	0%	100%	0%	2
2 (FC3)								2.00	0.00	0%	0%	100%	0%	1	2.00	0.00	0%	0%	100%	0%	1	2.00	0%	0%	100%	0%	2
3 (FC5)								2.00	0.00	0%	0%	100%	0%	1	2.00	0.00	0%	0%	100%	0%	1	2.00	0%	0%	100%	0%	2
4 (FC1, 3, 4, 5)								2.00	0.00	0%	0%	100%	0%	1	2.00	0.00	0%	0%	100%	0%	1	2.00	0%	0%	100%	0%	2

created April 2016 by Jennifer M. Harrison, UMBC FDC

This worksheet also appears in the Excel files in Box (**https://umbc.box.com/s/mkg1e81qrx2q2ohhfnyje53ool2ylib7**). It is designed to capture the results of each milestone rubric. So far it shows just one student's defense and thesis scores. Over time, it will show student learning across the program.

Appendix C: Exit Survey

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Master of Arts in Texts, Technologies, and Literature Exit Survey 2017

Please reflect on your learning experiences during your studies in the UMBC English Master of Arts program with the questions below.

What was your concentration?
- ○ Rhetoric/Composition/Communication
- ○ Literary Studies

How have your skills in critical thinking, reading, speaking, and writing, including the ability to analyze texts, to synthesize ideas, and to reflect on these activities improved as a result of your studies in the English MA program at UMBC?
- ○ My skills greatly improved
- ○ My skills improved
- ○ My skills moderately improved
- ○ My skills did not improve

Please reflect on the courses, projects, and/or activities that helped you most in this area. Please explain.

How have your skills in generating theoretically informed interpretations of texts and questions for scholarly inquiry improved as a result of your studies in the English MA program at UMBC?
- ○ My skills greatly improved
- ○ My skills improved
- ○ My skills moderately improved
- ○ My skills did not improve

Please reflect on the courses, projects, and/or activities that helped you most in this area. Please explain.

How have your skills in conducting and producing original research improved as a result of your studies in the English MA program at UMBC?

○ My skills greatly improved

○ My skills improved

○ My skills moderately improved

○ My skills did not improve

Please reflect on the courses, projects, and/or activities that helped you most in this area. Please explain.

How have your skills in professional activities (including producing a variety of academic and multimodal genres, like proposals, presentations, reports, and review essays) improved as a result of your studies in the English MA program at UMBC?

○ My skills greatly improved

○ My skills improved

○ My skills moderately improved

○ My skills did not improve

Please reflect on the courses, projects, and/or activities that helped you most in this area. Please explain.

0% [   ] 100%

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Appendix D : Student Learning Artifact

Social Media Meets Social Justice:
The Role of the Hashtag in the Contemporary Conversation on Race
Deborah F. Kadiri

Because race is a social construct, it informs every sociocultural aspect of life for people of color. When it comes to the black American, the precedent that has been advertised by the dominant society is that black lives are of inferior, if any, value. A long history of enslavement and dehumanization speaks to this fact. The late nineteenth and early-twentieth century, for instance, saw the rise of blackface minstrelsy, as white actors caked their faces in black soot and acted in a mocking imitation of African-American song, dance, and speech that reinforced blacks' status as second-class citizens in a post-slavery society. As Eric Lott notes in his article, "Blackface and Blackness: The Minstrel Show in American Culture," "[T]he minstrel show indeed seems a transparently racist curiosity, a form of leisure that, in inventing and ridiculing the slow-witted but irrepressible 'plantation darky' and the foppish 'northern dandy negro,' conveniently rationalized racial oppression . . . [and] took such distortions as authentic" (3). Yet, these stereotypical portrayals, established by the dominant white society, were not new. As Sterling A. Brown notes in his 1933 essay entitled "Negro Character as Seen by White Authors," such stereotypes date back to the days of slavery and the depiction of African-American characters in many white-authored texts. He writes:

> The Negro has met with as great injustice in American literature as he has in American life. The majority of books about Negroes merely stereotype Negro character. . . . It can be said, however, that all of these stereotypes are marked either by exaggeration or omissions; that they all agree in stressing the Negro's divergence from an Anglo-Saxon norm to the flattery of the latter; they could all be used, as they probably are, as justification of racial proscription; they all illustrate dangerous species generalizing from a few particulars recorded by a single observer from a restricted point of view—which is itself generally dictated by the desire to perpetuate a stereotype. (180)

Historically, the marginalization of the black community, however, was not restricted to popular culture and the stereotypes that it engendered. As a result, race has remained the one social construct that is responsible for the most recurring causes of national controversy in both virtual and public spaces. The perceived inferiority of blacks has also manifested in violence against black bodies, as evident in February 2012 when a young, unarmed black teenager was shot and killed for reasons that still remain unclear to this day. The murder of Trayvon Martin at the hands of a self-proclaimed neighborhood watchman, who was not held responsible, led many Americans to question the interests of the justice system. In the wake of the trial that ensued, many black Americans came to terms with the harsh reality that their best interest is not a priority of said system—an event that contributed to the development of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement today and its pursuits of the justice long denied blacks.

The nature of contemporary discourse on race is informed by these instances that mark pivotal moments in our history. After all, such instances served as the impetus behind the evolution of discourse associated with the Civil Rights Movement into today's #BlackLivesMatter Movement—a shift that exemplifies the recurring realization that the social construct of race is problematic for people of color. With the passing of time, however, social constructs are often challenged to the point of widespread rejection. This is evident today as the primary perspective of the conversation has shifted from one that previously promoted integration to a fault to one that now focuses on both the positive and negative effects of the

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This partial sample demonstrates student learning in the portfolio process. Since the student's work was accepted for publication in a collection of essays, a secondary source confirms student achievement of the program student learning outcomes. See the English MA Box file for the complete paper.