



Film Studies

Final Assessment Report & Implementation Plan

Faculty / Affiliated University College	Department of English and Writing Studies, Faculty of Arts & Humanities, Western University
Degrees Offered	Bachelor of Arts
Modules Reviewed	Honours Specialization in Film Studies Specialization in Film Studies Major in Film Studies
External Consultants	Dr. Paul Moore, Associate Professor, Ryerson University Dr. Gunnar Iversen, Professor, Carleton University
Internal Reviewer	Dr. John D. Cuciurean, Faculty of Music, Western University
Date of Site Visit	January 14-15, 2021
Evaluation	Good Quality with Report in Two Years
Approval Dates	SUPR-U: May 12, 2021 SCAPA: May 19, 2021 Senate (for information only): June 11, 2021
Year of Next Review	Year of next cyclical review – 2027-28

Overview of Western’s Cyclical Review Assessment Reporting Process

In accordance with Western’s Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), the Final Assessment Report (FAR) provides a summary of the cyclical review, internal responses, and assessment and evaluation of the undergraduate Film Studies program delivered by the Faculty of Arts and Humanities.

This report considers and reports on the following documents: the program’s self-study, the external consultants’ report, and the responses from the Department and the Associate Dean of Science.

This Final Assessment Report (FAR):

- i) provides an Executive Summary of the Review Process, including an overview of the Department as outlined in the Self-Study brief;
- ii) identifies the strengths of the program;
- iii) identifies opportunities for program enhancement and improvement; and,
- iv) prioritizes the recommendations of the external consultants in the Implementation Plan.

The Implementation Plan details the recommendations from the Final Assessment Report that are required for implementation, identifies who is responsible for approving and acting on the recommendations, outlines any action or follow-up that is required, and provides the timeline for completion.

The Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan is sent for approval through SUPR-U, SCAPA, Senate and the Ontario Universities’ Council on Quality Assurance and is made available on a publicly accessible location on Western’s IQAP website. The Final Assessment Report with the Implementation Plan is the only document resulting from the undergraduate cyclical review process that is made public; all other documents are confidential to the Program/School/Faculty and SUPR-U.

Executive Summary (as identified in the Self-Study Brief)

Overview

Western University has been offering undergraduate degrees in Film Studies since 1975, first through the Department of English Language and Literature (1975-2006), and then through the Department of Film Studies (2006-2016). In 2016, its department structure was dissolved due to declining enrolments (30% over the past 10 years) and budgetary pressures, and it became one of four programs within the Department of English and Writing Studies in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities.

Film Studies, led by a Program Director, has five fulltime faculty members, two fulltime faculty from other departments, as well as some limited duties faculty. It continues to offer a range of courses across its five modules and collaborates with Visual Arts, Media Studies, Women's Studies and Feminist Research, Modern Languages and Literatures, the School for Advanced Studies in the Arts and Humanities, and others.

Film Studies prepares students to take on these roles in global leadership and the public good. Our courses teach students to become critical readers of film and related emerging media, and to communicate skillfully and professionally about these media. The program's offerings are grounded in the study of a globalized political economy of the production and distribution of national, transnational, regional, postcolonial and diasporic cinemas and their relations to gender, sexuality, class, and race. Film Studies at Western thus traverses a varied and dynamic terrain from local film cultures to global blockbusters with stops in the avant-garde, documentary, auteur, and genre studies.

Both faculty and students have been recognized with awards of excellence and graduates have enjoyed gainful employment in various facets of the industry. As part of experiential learning, interns have found placements with community partners such as the Toronto International Film Festival, Warner Bros, Forest City Film Festival, Museum London.

Learning Outcomes and the curriculum have been recently revised and are consistent with the Quality Assurance Framework of Ontario, the Western Degree Outcomes, and those of the Department of English and Writing Studies.

Strengths/Innovations of the Program (as identified in the Self-Study brief)

- collaboration with other programs
- excellence in teaching
- innovative course designs, such as Horror, Dystopia, and Disney
- opportunity to test film theory with practice in production courses and courses with production components
- resources through partnerships
- increase in enrolment due to popular introductory course, Film 1022, open to all students
- employment opportunities for graduates

Challenges (as identified in the brief)

- Recent change from Department of Film Studies to a program within the Department of English and Writing Studies with compression of courses, faculty, and staff
- Loss of 16mm projection booth in renovations to University College
- Declining enrolments as experienced across the North American landscape

Recent Changes (as identified in the brief)

- Change from departmental structure to being one of four programs in English and Writing Studies
- Revision of Learning Outcomes
- Curriculum review and reform

Changes under Consideration (as noted in the Brief)

- Continuing curriculum reform
- Improving communication with the Department Chair and other Chairs re course offerings
- Engaging other departmental faculty in contributing to courses
- Exploring cross-listing more Film courses with other departments
- Exploring inclusion in the Creative Arts and Production program (currently in planning process with three faculties)
- Introducing a service-learning course

Self-Study Process

In preparing for this review, the Film Studies Program reviewed data on course enrolments and was involved in extensive collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data from current students, alumni, and town hall meetings. It also drew on the findings from an extensive review completed in 2016 during the transition from department to program

Onsite Review by External Consultants

The external review committee (comprised of the two external reviewers and one internal reviewer) was provided with Volumes I and II in advance of their visit and then (due to pandemic restrictions) met online with the following over the course of the two days.

- Dr. John Doerksen, Vice Provost, Academic Programs
- Dr. Margaret McGlynn, Vice-Provost of Academic Planning Policy and Faculty
- Dr. Michael Milde, Dean, Faculty of Arts & Humanities

- Dr. Tracy Isaacs, Associate Dean (Academic), Faculty of Arts & Humanities
- Dr. Christopher Keep, Film Studies Program Director
- Dr. Manina Jones, Chair, English and Writing Studies
- Film Studies Faculty
- Faculty from other units who teach in the program
- Film Studies Undergraduate Studies
- Administrative Staff
- D. McCord, Librarian and R. Glushko, Associate Chief Librarian

Following the formal review, the external reviewers submitted a comprehensive report of their findings which was sent to Program Director and the Dean for review and response. These formative documents, including Volumes I and II of the Self-Study, the External Report, and the Faculty response, have formed the basis of this summative assessment report of the Film Studies undergraduate program.

Summative Assessment – External Reviewers’ Report

Strengths of the Program

- Robust Major and Minor modules
- Dedicated teachers who inspire their students: *clear evidence of generally excellent teaching delivery and assessment*
- Flexible faculty open to change and adaptation
- Strong students showing high level of admissions, academic achievement, graduation rates and satisfaction through course evaluations

Challenges for the Program

- Specialization in Film seems stretched beyond capacity of current resources
- Attracting more students (acknowledging that this is national concern)
- Expanding community-based learning
- Adding more production courses

Reviewers’ Recommendations and Program/Faculty Responses

Note bene: The Reviewers included 12 recommendations/suggestions in their report, following the order of the template for the report. The Program, however, grouped its response according to the theme and utility going forward with which the decanal report aligned.

REVIEWERS’ RECOMMENDATIONS	PROGRAM/DECANAL RESPONSE
1. <i>Strategically expand options for community-based experiential learning.</i>	<p><u>Program:</u></p> <p>Members of the Program met in a Town Hall to discuss the external report and are moving immediately forward with Recommendations 1, 5, 6, 7, 10 and 11.</p> <p><u>Dean:</u></p> <p>Recommendations #1, 5, 6, 7, 10 and 11 are welcome recommendations and the Faculty is supportive of the Program in implementing these.</p>
5. <i>Clarify expectations and planning for Fourth-year capstones.</i>	
6. <i>We recommend that the faculty consider the possibility of adding one more production course, to meet student interest.</i>	
7. <i>We recommend film studies should explore establishing partnerships for the internship course.</i>	
10. <i>Plan strategically for audio-visual creation literacy within the Program.</i>	
11. <i>Facilitate options for post-graduate or co-curricular experience in production.</i>	<p><u>Department:</u></p> <p>With respect to Recommendations #2 and #8, the Program feels that it currently meets these standards but given the limitations of the required virtual visit that these aspects may not have been clearly exposed or discussed.</p> <p><u>Dean:</u></p> <p>Recommendations #2 and 8 are covered in the curriculum but may not have been fully obvious or visible during the online visit</p>
2. <i>Attend more carefully to current disciplinary context of “global diversity.”</i>	
8. <i>Facilitate options for studying a global diversity of cultures.</i>	
3. <i>Attend more carefully to current disciplinary context of “industrial, cultural and technological basis” of a breadth of audio-visual media.</i>	<p><u>Department:</u></p> <p>Recommendations 3, 4, 9 and 12 are deemed outside the purview of the IQAP process as they</p>

<p>4. <i>a) Reform delivery of Intro full-year course for diversity of perspectives.</i></p> <p><i>b) We further recommend the first 0.5 credit introductory course be ‘An introduction to audio-visual media’, incorporating more emphasis on TV and new digital media, and the second 0.5 credit introductory course be a ‘world cinema’ or ‘global cinema’, exploring global diversity of cinematic forms.</i></p>	<p>reflect in some cases media studies rather than film studies.</p> <p><u>Dean:</u></p> <p>Recommendations #3, 4, 9 and 12 refer to expanding and broadening the media component which is covered by the Media Studies program in the Faculty of Information and Media Studies. Discussions are underway about the development of a Creative Arts and Production Program that would address this rather than have Film Studies duplicate course offerings.</p>
<p>9. <i>The Program should facilitate clear pathways for its students to pursue the study of audio-visual media beyond film, in Film courses but also beyond the program.</i></p>	
<p>12. <i>Protect classroom screenings in Program delivery at all levels.</i></p>	

Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan provides a summary of the recommendations that require action and/or follow-up. The Department Chair/Director, in consultation with the Dean of the Faculty/Affiliated University College Principal will be responsible for monitoring the Implementation Plan. The details of progress made will be presented in the Deans’ Annual Report and filed in the Office of the Vice-Provost (Academic).

Recommendation	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
1. Strategically expand options for community-based experiential learning.	Program should entrench community-based events and routines for experiential learning as a carefully planned aspect of the curriculum.	Director of Film Studies Program	Fall 2021 through Winter 2024
2. i) Clarify expectations and planning for Fourth-year capstone courses (FILM 4409E & FILM 4495F/G). ii) Explore establishing partnerships for the internship course (FILM 4495F/G).	a) Clearly define the expected number of pages and scope of the BA thesis (FILM4409E), communicate this on the department webpage, and explicitly differentiate the thesis scope from that of an MA thesis. b) Create clear instructions of what an internship course (FILM4495F/G) application looks like. c) Provide a fair and transparent process of supervisor assignment for both thesis and internship supervision.	Director of Film Studies Program	Fall 2021 through Winter 2024
3. Create additional option for study of film production.	Consider adding one more production course, to meet student interest, with the possibility of a course in screenwriting in collaboration with English.	Chair, Department of English and Writing Studies, and Director of Film Studies Program	Fall 2021 through Winter 2024

4. Plan strategically for audio-visual creation literacy within the Program.	Carefully plan to include creative audio-visual literacy alongside reading and writing as fundamental critical skills, across the curriculum’s teaching and assessments.	Director of Film Studies Program	Fall 2021 through Winter 2024
5. Facilitate options for post-graduate or co-curricular experience in film production.	Provide clear pathways for students to pursue post-graduate training, graduate studies, and “double majors” elsewhere (eg. the new Creative Arts Production major) to fully develop careers in creative audio-visual production.	Director of Film Studies Program	Fall 2021 through Winter 2024