WGS Capstone Assessment, Spring 2015

Twelve capstone essays were evaluated for the degree to which each one demonstrates a grasp of the following WGS learning outcomes:

Learning outcome 3: Explicate the concept of intersectionality, specifically within the context of the complex ways gender intersects with other social categories of difference, e.g., race, ethnicity, class, nation-state, age, geography, religion, sexuality, etc.

Learning outcome 6: Engage in theoretically informed civic engagement in the context and concerns of gender, race, and social justice.

For each essay, the following scale was applied for each learning outcome:

Scale: 0 = not at all, 1 = concept may be mentioned but grasp of concept is not evident, 2 = superficial and underdeveloped with errors in application, 3 = effort to apply concept are not successful, 4 = good grasp and application, 5 = original, illuminating application

**Results**

Most students performed at the 4 and 5 levels (roughly equivalent to B and A) on both measures. Of most concern in the results is that three students (roughly ¼) demonstrated little preparation for or commitment to intersectional analysis. For learning outcome 6, the capstone essay may not be the best measure of students’ preparation for civic engagement because of the wide range of topics and methods students may choose to pursue.

Average scores:

Learning outcome 3: 3.8 (2 scored 0, 1 scored 3, 6 scored 4, 3 scored 5)

Learning outcome 6: 4.1 (1 scored 0, 2 scored 3, 6 scored 4, 3 scored 5)

**Qualitative comments for each score range**

**Learning outcome 3 (intersectionality)**

**Scores of 0:**

Intersectionality is not mentioned or addressed

No mention or application of intersectionality

**Scores of 3:**

Critique of normative standards in light of identity differences—but the approach is somewhat superficial

**Scores of 4:**

Intersectionality is central to the argument

Does not explicate intersectionality, but intersections of gender and sexuality are central and strategies are extrapolated from public policy related to multiple identities

Author applies intersectionality in accounting for access to services and the availability/lack of availability of data

Explicates intersectionality and applies it to a critique of existing literature and call for new research

Does not explicate intersectionality or even mention it by the term, but intersections of race and gender are the central conceptual tool of analysis

Intersectionality isn’t central to the project but is consistently applied as a critical lens

**Scores of 5:**

Intersectionality is central to analysis; dynamic application using complex comprehension of intersectionality to analyze media culture

Richly theoretical engagement with gender and age, with a nod to race

Analysis includes intersections of gender with sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, and nation, as well as naturism

**Learning outcome 6 (civic engagement)**

**Scores of 0:**

Not applicable.

**Scores of 3:**

Implications for civic engagement are murky and undeveloped

Research is directed toward identifying need for social action, but issues and strategies are only vaguely articulated

**Scores of 4:**

Project has implications for professional practice and makes recommendations

Advocates for awareness of intersectional impacts in voting and legislation

Project can be seen as civic engagement in that it intervenes in and makes recommendations for popular culture production

Systematic analysis concludes with a call for informed activism

Shows awareness of potential activist dimension of topic and critiques a particular form of advocacy

Aims to inform activism through analysis of multiple layers of the problem posed; a good grasp of the need for civic engagement and critique of limited scope

**Scores of 5:**

Project aims at self-preparation/self-transformation as an agent of change

Includes auto-ethnography of civic engagement and multi-level system analysis to set a sweeping context for activism

Author effectively justifies the research and writing as civic engagement in the context of interconnected social, affective, and legal issues

**Comments**