

FORM 201B: ASSESSMENT PLAN (Updated June 2014)

Program/Department: MA/Geog & MA/GIS / GSHAA

Program Mission

Each program in CSU's Department of Geography, Sociology, History, African American Studies, and Anthropology serves the State of Illinois and metropolitan Chicago through accessible, quality instruction employing pertinent scholarly and technological methods; and through scholarship and practice in the interacting arenas of the environment, the economy, and the community. The primary objective of the program is to prepare its majors for the job market and for graduate studies through quality teaching and mentoring. The Department serves other programs in the University through quality teaching and through provision of GIS facilities and regional information. The Department serves the community through the Fredrick Blum Neighborhood Assistance Center and its Calumet Environmental Resource Center. The Department strives to be a national leader in the training of minority and women scholars in each of its constituent disciplines.

Program Effectiveness Objectives (PEOs)

1. Prepare students for professional careers and graduate and further graduate studies.
2. Provide quality general education instruction in Geography/Geographic Information Science, Sociology, History, African American Studies, and Anthropology.
3. Support other programs in the University through program minors in Geography, Sociology, African American Studies, Anthropology, and Environmental Studies.
4. Provide state-of-the-art technology and service in the CSU Geographic Information Systems laboratory.
5. Provide exemplary community outreach through the Fredrick Blum Neighborhood Assistance Center and the Calumet Environmental Resource Center.
6. Continue to position the Department as a nationally recognized center for providing training in Geography, Geographic Information Science, Sociology, History, African American Studies, and Anthropology, especially for women and minorities.
7. Provide a firm, collegial and supportive base in which faculty can continue their excellent teaching, research, and practice.

MA in Geography Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

Upon completion of the MA in Geography students should be able to:

- a. Analyze the changing geography of the physical and human environments at local, regional, national, and global scales;
- b. Evaluate urban spatial patterns and processes;
- c. Demonstrate proficiency in the geography of a major region; a region of the student's choice;
- d. Apply geographic information systems (GIS) and quantitative techniques for spatial analysis and modeling;
- e. Write a master's thesis to address a significant geographic research question(s);
- f. Organize information into coherent written and oral presentations.

Assessment of MA in Geography Student Learning Outcomes:

PEOs	SLOs	Assessment Instruments	Criteria*
1. 1 & 6	a. a through d	a. Geog 5860, Geographic Inquiry	a. \geq B
2. 1 & 6	b. a through f	b. Two Master's Papers or a Thesis	b. Pass
3. 1 & 6	c. a through f	c. Comprehensive Exam	c. Pass
4. 1 & 6	d. a through f	d. Student Self-Assessment	d. Satisfactory

5. 1 & 6	e. a through f	e. Alumni Survey	e. Satisfactory
6. 1 & 6	f. a through f	f. Employer Survey	f. Satisfactory

*See the following pages for description of assessment instruments and criteria/grading rubrics.

MA in Geography with GIS Concentration Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

Upon completion of the MA in Geography with GIS concentration students should be able to:

- a. Explain earth-map relationship and distortions on map projections;
- b. Process analog and digital remote-sensing imagery to prepare imagery for analysis;
- c. Analyze analog and digital remote-sensing imagery to extract/create new information;
- d. Create spatial databases consisting of raster and/or vector data models for GIS analysis and modeling;
- e. Use analytical capabilities of ArcGIS, ArcGIS Extensions, and ERDAS IMAGINE in spatial analysis and modeling;
- f. Customize ArcGIS and ArcGIS extensions to add specialized functionalities and automate operations;
- g. Design a Web map that allows viewers to display and query the layers on the map;
- h. Write a master's thesis that integrates remote sensing and GIS to address significant human and/or environmental issues;
- i. Organize information into a coherent written and oral presentation.

Assessment for MA in Geography with GIS Concentration Student Learning Outcomes:

PEOs	SLOs	Assessment Instruments	Criteria*
1. 1 & 6	a. a	a. Pretest/Post-test	a. $\geq 80\%$
2. 1 & 6	b. h & i	b. Geog 5860, Geographic Inquiry	b. $\geq B$
3. 1 & 6	c. a through i	c. Thesis	c. Pass
4. 1 & 6	d. a through i	d. Student Self-Assessment	d. Satisfactory
5. 1 & 6	e. a through i	e. Intern-Employer Survey	e. Satisfactory
6. 1 & 6	f. a through i	f. Alumni Survey	f. Satisfactory
7. 1 & 6	g. a through i	g. Employer Survey	g. Satisfactory

*See following pages for description of assessment instruments and Criteria/grading rubrics.

**DESCRIPTION OF ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS AND
GRADING RUBRICS
FOR
MA in GEOGRAPHY AND MA IN GEOGRAPHY WITH GIS CONCENTRATION**

1. Student Self-Assessment Instrument:

The student self-assessment instrument, an instrument for indirect assessment of learning, is the same for both options. The instrument is administered annually to students who are in the program for at least one year. The instrument consists of open-ended questions and closed-ended Likert-style student survey questions adapted from *Learner-Centered Assessment on College Campuses: Shifting the Focus from Teaching to Learning*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2002. In the open-ended questions, students are asked to state what they have learned in the last one year and their opinion about their program and the progress they are making toward the completion of their program. In the closed-ended Likert-style questions, students are asked to evaluate their level of agreement about their educational experience at Chicago State University on a three ordered response levels (**Some, Much, Most**). Although some of the questions in this test instrument are open-ended, a judgment is made by the assessment coordinator whether responses by a particular student would indicate *satisfaction* or *dissatisfaction*. If responses to the questions by the majority of the self-assessing students indicate *satisfaction*, the program gets a *satisfactory* grade. If responses to the questions by the majority of the self-assessing students indicate *dissatisfaction*, the program gets *unsatisfactory* grade. (See below for the Student Learning Audit/Self-Assessment Instrument.)

2. Instruments for Direct Assessment of Learning for the MA in Geography:

Students in the MA in Geography have the non-thesis or the thesis option of completing the MA. The non-thesis option requires successful completion of two referred seminar papers (now renamed master's papers) in two required seminar courses and a comprehensive examination. The referred seminar papers and the comprehensive are used for direct assessment of learning. The comprehensive exam questions are written by the student's a graduate committee consisting of three professors. The papers and the comprehensive examination are evaluated by the graduate committee and a grade of "Satisfactory" or "Not Satisfactory" is assigned by each faculty member to each of the student's work. If there is no consensus among the committee members about the quality of the papers and the result of the comprehensive exam, the committee holds a meeting to reach a consensus; a consensus to assign a grade of "Pass" or to require the student to make improvements.

Students in the thesis option have to complete **Geog 5860, Geographic Inquiry**, with a grade of "B" or better and the MA thesis (see the last two pages of this assessment plan for assessment criteria for the MA thesis). Geog 5860 and the thesis are the two instruments for direct assessment of learning for students of MA in Geography with thesis option.

3. Instruments for Direct Assessment of Learning for the MA in Geography with GIS Concentration:

Pretest/post-test for MA in Geography with GIS concentration is one of the instruments for direct assessment of learning. Geog 5800 (Introduction to GIS) or an equivalent course or background is a prerequisite for admission into the GIS Certificate program and for Geog 5830, Advanced GIS. The **pretest/post-test** is administered annually to students taking Geog 5830. Students are given a pretest in the first week of the course to assess some basic GIS concepts and skills and their preparedness for the advanced level course. The same test is administered as a post-test toward the end of the semester to assess mastery of the same basic concepts and skills by students as a result of revisiting the concepts and skills in the advanced level course. An average score of 80% or better (i.e. B or better) in the post-test is considered a satisfactory performance, and the average score in the post-test is expected to be significantly higher than the average for the pretest. The second instrument for direct assessment of learning for

students in the MA in Geography with GIS concentration is the MA thesis (see the last two pages of this assessment plan for the assessment criteria for the MA thesis).

4. Intern-Employer Survey, Alumni Survey, and Alumni-Employer Survey for all three MA options:

One or more of these surveys are conducted occasionally. Intern supervisors, alumni, and alumni-employers are asked a series of questions to rate performance of interns, the CSU geography/GIS program, and performance of alumni respectively on a scale of 5 to 1 (5 = Excellent, 3 = Satisfactory, and 1 = Unsatisfactory). An average score of 3 or better on each survey is considered **Satisfactory**. Question-by-question analysis of survey responses are used to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses to improve curriculum.

Student Learning Audit/Self-Assessment Instrument
Department of Geography, Sociology, History, African American Studies and Anthropology

Please think back over the past term/year in your life as a student at Chicago State University and complete the following sentences as honestly as you can. Your responses will be held confidential and the Department will use them only to make improvements in the program. However, we always encourage you to discuss freely any program issues and concerns with your advisor, the Chair, or any geography faculty.

1. Circle your program of study: **(a) Undergraduate Geography, (b) Community Development Certificate, (c) GIS Certificate, (d) MA in Geog, (e) MA in Geog with GIS Concentration (f) Geog minor, (g) None of the above.**
2. I started my program at Chicago State University in _____
3. Compared with this time last term/year, I now know that ...
4. Compared with this time last term/year, I am now able to ...
5. Compared with this time last term/year, I could now teach another student how to
6. The most important thing I have learned about myself in the past term/year is ...
7. The biggest differences between my expectations about college and what actually turned out to be are ...

8. *As you read through the responses to these open-ended statements, you can start sorting them by asking a series of questions:*
- a. How much of your learning **in the past term/year** is in an entirely new area? **Circle one:**
Some Much Most
 - b. How much of the learning **in the past term/year** is a refinement, rethinking, or adaptation of something you already know or can do? **Circle one:**
Some Much Most
 - c. Is the learning of no great significance or does some of it appear to have transformed your life in some ways?
 - d. How much of the learning confirms your existing practices and assumptions? **Circle one:**
Some Much Most
 - e. How much of the learning challenges your typical ways of thinking? **Circle one:**
Some Much Most
9. **If you have any additional comments or concerns about your program, please record them here:**

Adapted from Learner-Centered Assessment on College Campuses: Shifting the Focus from Teaching to Learning. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2002.

Assessment Criteria for Master's Thesis

Student name:

Date of defense:

CRITERIA:	DESCRIPTION:	ASSESSMENT:	
1. <i>Research Question</i>	Is the main research question (or problem statement) presented in a clear and analytical way? Is it formulated in a simple and understandable manner, for example similar to: "How can instrument A contribute to the solution of problem B?", or "To what extent can theories A, B, and C explain the empirical phenomenon D?" Is the (societal and/or scientific) relevance of the research question clear? Is the geographic nature of the research question made apparent?	Circle your choice: I – S – G – VG	
2. <i>Literature Review and Background</i>	Does the literature reviewed lead logically to the methodology and theory? Is the study area well described? If there is historical background information, does it connect well with the research questions? Does the section in general contain information from a strong and varied group of sources?	I – S – G – VG	
3. Method and Theory	Are the methods used in the study clearly explained (<i>description</i> of methods)? Is the choice to use particular methods made convincing (<i>justification</i> of methods)? Are the theories described relevant and are they explained in an <i>understandable, structured and convincing</i> manner?	I – S – G – VG	
4. Findings	Are the data and results presented in a structured manner and according to an explicit ordering principle? Is the use of maps, tables, figures, diagrams and schemata illustrative and demonstrative of technical competence?	I – S – G – VG	
5. <i>Conclusions and Recommendations</i>	Do the conclusions result from the findings of the study? Do the conclusions give clear answers to the main research questions of the thesis? Does the author recommend <i>specific</i> actions and initiatives, or ideas for further research?	I – S – G – VG	
6. <i>Style</i>	Is the length of the thesis in accordance with the requirements? Is the length congruent with its contents? Are there (many) typographical and grammatical errors? Is the thesis easy to read and well-written? Are maps provided of high quality? Are references made correctly and are they complete? Is the division into chapters, sections, and paragraphs consistent and sound? Are citations appropriately made, and gathered into a consistent list and/or bibliography?	I – S – G – VG	

Calculating the final Grade		
<i>Special circumstances</i>	Are there any special circumstances or factors that are, in a positive or negative sense, relevant for the assessment of this thesis? (please explain)	NOTES:
<i>Defense</i>	Is the thesis presented in an appropriate manner in a public forum? Do the answers to public questions reflect an understanding of the structure and content of the thesis, and an ability to defend the author's choices?	
Final grade	<p>Guidelines:</p> <p><i>Not Acceptable (F)</i> if thesis scores <i>insufficient</i> on at least one of the six criteria;</p> <p><i>Acceptable, but revisions strongly suggested (P)</i>: if thesis scores <i>sufficient</i> on all six criteria;</p> <p><i>Acceptable, but revisions suggested (P)</i> if thesis scores <i>good</i> on at least three criteria, while <i>sufficient</i> on the remaining ones;</p> <p><i>Acceptable, with Commendation (P)</i> if thesis scores <i>good</i> on all criteria (or every <i>sufficient</i> is compensated by at least one <i>very good</i>);</p> <p><i>Acceptable, with Honors (P)</i>: if thesis scores <i>very good</i> on at least two criteria and <i>good</i> on the remaining criteria;</p> <p><i>Acceptable, with High Honors (P)</i> if thesis scores <i>very good</i> on all criteria.</p> <p>When the assessment, using the above six criteria, results in a grade with a margin (for example 6.5 to 7), the thesis supervisor may use any information on "Special circumstances" to decide about the final grade.</p>	<p>Proposed Grade:</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Final Grade:</p> <p>.....</p>

