

BACHELOR'S PROGRAMME

AMERICAN STUDIES

FACULTY OF ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF GRONINGEN

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Project number: Q0725

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This report was finalised on 4 April 2020



REPORT ON THE BACHELOR'S PROGRAMME AMERICAN STUDIES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GRONINGEN

This report takes the NVAO's Assessment Framework for the Higher Education Accreditation System of the Netherlands for limited programme assessments as a starting point (September 2018).

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA REGARDING THE PROGRAMME

Bachelor's programme American Studies

Name of the programme:	American Studies
International name:	American Studies
CROHO number:	50623
Level of the programme:	bachelor's
Orientation of the programme:	academic
Number of credits:	180 EC
Specialisations or tracks:	-
Location:	Groningen
Mode of study:	full time
Language of instruction:	English
Submission deadline NVAO:	01/05/2020

The visit of the assessment panel Region Studies to the Faculty of Arts of the University of Groningen took place on 30 and 31 October and 1 November 2019.

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA REGARDING THE INSTITUTION

Name of the institution:	University of Groningen
Status of the institution:	publicly funded institution
Result institutional quality assurance assessment:	positive

COMPOSITION OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL

The NVAO has approved the composition of the panel on 4 March 2019. The panel that assessed the bachelor's programme American Studies consisted of:

- Prof. dr. P. (Peter) Van Nuffelen, research professor in Cultural History of the Ancient World at Ghent University (Belgium) [chair];
- Prof. dr. D.M. (Diederik) Oostdijk, professor in English Literature at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam;
- Prof. dr. E.J.C. (Eibert) Tigchelaar, research professor in Biblical Studies at KU Leuven (Belgium);
- Dr. N.A. (Nicolet) Boekhoff - van der Voort, lecturer Islam and Arabic at the Faculty of Philosophy, Theology and Religious Studies of the Radboud University;
- Prof. dr. G. (Gert) Buelens, professor in English and American Literature at Ghent University (Belgium);
- E.L. (Emma) Mendez Correa, bachelor's student in Greek and Latin Language and Culture at Leiden University [student member].

The panel was supported by drs. E.G.M. (Mariette) Huisjes, who acted as secretary.



WORKING METHOD OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL

The bachelor's programme American Studies at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Groningen was part of the cluster assessment Region Studies. Between March 2019 and November 2019 the panel assessed 38 programmes at five of universities: Radboud University, Leiden University, University of Amsterdam, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and the University of Groningen.

Panel members

The panel consisted of the following members:

- Prof. dr. P. (Peter) Van Nuffelen, research professor Cultural History of the Ancient World at Ghent University (Belgium) [chair];
- Prof. dr. D.M. (Diederik) Oostdijk, professor in English Literature at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam;
- Prof. dr. A. (Umar) Ryad, professor in Arabic and Islamic Studies at KU Leuven (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. E.J.C. (Eibert) Tigchelaar, research professor of the research unit Biblical Studies, Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies at KU Leuven (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. G. (Gunnar) De Boel, professor in (Greek) Linguistics and Modern Greek and Byzantine Literature (Department of Literary Studies) at Ghent University (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. I. (Inge) Brinkman, professor in African Studies at Ghent University (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. G. (Gert) Buelens, professor in English and American Literature at Ghent University (Belgium);
- Dr. D. (Diana Bullen) Presciutti, senior lecturer in Art History, director of Global Studies and director of the Interdisciplinary Studies Centre at the University of Essex (United Kingdom);
- R.A. (Rianne) Clerc-de Groot MA, teacher in Classics at the Cygnus Gymnasium in Amsterdam;
- Dr. D. (Dario) Fazzi, lecturer in North American Studies and International Studies at Leiden University;
- Prof. dr. A.F.R. (Ann) Heirman, professor in Chinese Language and Culture at Ghent University (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. A. (Axel) Holvoet, professor at the Institute of the Languages and Cultures of the Baltic of Vilnius University (Lithuania);
- Prof. dr. V. (Vincent) Houben, professor Geschichte und Gesellschaft Südostasiens at Humboldt Universität Berlin (Germany);
- Prof. dr. E.M.H. (Helena) Houvenaghel, professor in Spanish Language and Culture at Utrecht University;
- Prof. dr. D. (Daeyeol) Kim, professor at the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales (INaLCO) of the Université Sorbonne Paris Cité (France);
- L. (Lotte) Metz MA, teacher in Greek and Latin at the Stedelijk Gymnasium Nijmegen;
- Prof. dr. J. (John) Nawas, professor in Arabic and Islamic Studies at KU Leuven (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. A. (Andreas) Niehaus, professor in Japanese Language and Culture at Ghent University (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. J.L.M. (Jan) Papy, professor in Latin Literature at KU Leuven (Belgium);
- Dr. N.A. (Nicolet) Boekhoff-van der Voort, teacher Islam studies and coordinator Graduate School for Humanities at Radboud University;
- C. (Charlotte) van der Voort, bachelor's student in Greek and Latin Language and Culture, and pre-master's student Dutch Language and Culture at Leiden University [student member];
- L. (Lara) van Lookeren Campagne, bachelor's student in Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Amsterdam [student member];
- G.M. (Gerieke) Prins, bachelor's student in Social and Migration History with a minor in Latin American Studies at Leiden University [student member];
- E.L. (Emma) Mendez Correa, bachelor's student in Greek and Latin Language and Culture at Leiden University [student member];
- Prof. dr. L.P. (Lars) Rensmann, professor in European Politics and Society at University of Groningen [referee International Studies at Leiden University];
- Em. prof. dr. C.H.M. (Kees) Versteegh, emeritus professor in Arabic and Islam at Radboud University [referee Arabic and Middle Eastern Studies at University of Amsterdam];

- Prof. dr. H. (Harco) Willems, professor in Egyptology at KU Leuven (Belgium) and director of the excavation in Dayr al-Barshā (Egypt) [referee Ancient Near East Studies at Leiden University];
- Prof. dr. J. (Jaap) Wisse, professor in Latin Language & Literature at Newcastle University (United Kingdom) [referee Greek, Latin and Classics at the University of Amsterdam and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam].

For each site visit, assessment panel members were selected based on their expertise, availability and independence.

The QANU project manager for the cluster assessment was dr. Els Schröder. She acted as secretary in the site visit to Radboud University and in the first site visit to Leiden University. In order to assure the consistency of assessment within the cluster, the project manager was present at the start of the site visits as well as the panel discussion leading to the preliminary findings at the other site visits and reviewed the draft reports. During her leave of absence, she was replaced by her colleagues at QANU. Dr. Irene Conradie acted as project manager in the combined site visit to the University of Amsterdam and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and in the second site visit to Leiden University. Dr. Anna Sparreboom acted as project manager in the site visit to the University of Groningen.

Several secretaries assisted in this cluster assessment: drs. Trees Graas, employee of QANU, also acted as secretary in the site visit to Radboud University; drs. Mariette Huisjes, freelance secretary for QANU, also acted as secretary in the first site visit to Leiden University and in the site visit to the University of Groningen; drs. Erik van der Spek, freelance secretary for QANU, acted as secretary in the second site visit to Leiden University; drs. Marielle Klerks, freelance secretary for QANU, acted as secretary in the combined site visit to the University of Amsterdam and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. The QANU project managers and the secretaries regularly discussed the assessment process and outcomes.

Preparation

On 22 November 2018, the panel chair was briefed by the project manager on the tasks and working method of the assessment panel and more specifically his role, as well as use of the assessment framework. Prior to the site visit, the panel members received instruction by telephone and e-mail on the tasks and working method and the use of the assessment framework. A schedule for the site visit was composed. Prior to the site visit, representative partners for the various interviews were selected. See Appendix 3 for the final schedule.

Before the site visit, the programmes wrote self-evaluation reports of the programmes and sent these to the project manager. She checked these on quality and completeness, and sent them to the panel members. The panel members studied the self-evaluation reports and formulated initial questions and remarks, as well as positive aspects of the programmes.

The panel also studied a selection of theses and their assessment forms, based on a provided list of graduates between 2018-2019 (see Appendix 4).

Site visit

The site visit to the University of Groningen took place on 30 and 31 October and 1 November 2019. At the start of each site visit, the panel discussed its initial findings on the self-evaluation reports and the theses, as well as the division of tasks during the site visit. During the site visit, the panel studied additional materials about the programmes and exams, as well as minutes of the Programme Committee and the Board of Examiners. An overview of these materials can be found in Appendix 4. The panel conducted interviews with representatives of the programmes: students and staff members, the programme's management, alumni and representatives of the Board of Examiners. Members of the Programme Committee were included as part of the interviews with staff and students. It also offered students and staff members an opportunity for confidential discussion during a consultation hour. No requests for private consultation were received.



The panel used the final part of the site visit to discuss its findings in an internal meeting. Afterwards, the panel chair publicly presented the panel's preliminary findings and general observations.

The site visit concluded with a development dialogue, held in parallel sessions, in which the panel members and the representatives of the programme discussed various development routes for the programmes. The results of this conversation are summarised in a separate report, which will be published through the programmes' communication channels.

Report

After the site visit, the secretary wrote a draft report based on the panel's findings and submitted it to the project manager for peer assessment. Subsequently, the secretary sent the report to the panel. After processing the panel members' feedback, the project manager sent the draft reports to the faculty in order to have it/these checked for factual irregularities. The project manager discussed the ensuing comments with the panel's chair and changes were implemented accordingly. The report was then finalised and sent to the Faculty of Arts and University Board.

Definition of judgements standards

In accordance with the NVAO's Assessment framework for limited programme assessments, the panel used the following definitions for the assessment of the standards:

Generic quality

The quality that, from an international perspective, may reasonably be expected from a higher education Associate Degree, bachelor's or master's programme.

Meets the standard

The programme meets the generic quality standard.

Partially meets the standard

The programme meets the generic quality standard to a significant extent, but improvements are required in order to fully meet the standard.

Does not meet the standard

The programme does not meet the generic quality standard.

The panel used the following definitions for the assessment of the programme as a whole:

Positive

The programme meets all the standards.

Conditionally positive

The programme meets Standard 1 and partially meets a maximum of two standards, with the imposition of conditions being recommended by the panel.

Negative

In the following situations:

- The programme fails to meet one or more standards;
- The programme partially meets Standard 1;
- The programme partially meets one or two standards, without the imposition of conditions being recommended by the panel;
- The programme partially meets three or more standards.

SUMMARY JUDGEMENT

Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes

The panel fully acknowledges and endorses the uniqueness, ambition, topicality and societal relevance of the programme's profile. However, it warns against the loss of focus that may occur if the programme continually widens its scope and piles up new ambitions. It recommends safeguarding a strong, recognisable focus which can be clearly communicated to future students and employers, and on which the relevant expertise can be concentrated.

Like the profile, the intended learning outcomes are extensive and very ambitious. They are detailed and clearly formulated, and they certainly reflect the required level and orientation. As such, the intended learning outcomes are inspiring landmarks in the panel's view. However, the panel recommends checking whether it is reasonable and realistic to expect all students of all different specialisations to meet all requirements. If not, the intended learning outcomes should be made less detailed and demanding.

Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment

The bachelor's programme American Studies has a well-structured curriculum with clear learning paths and ample free space for the students to follow and develop their own interests. For most courses, no textbooks are used, rather there is a combination of newspaper and magazine articles, literature, political pamphlets, and films. The panel finds this use of contemporary materials innovative and stimulating. The choice of study materials also fits with the programme's character, which is multidisciplinary and increasingly problem-oriented. The panel is impressed by the 'Rhetoric and composition' learning trajectory, for instance, which systematically trains students in using the English language at an advanced level. It endorses the use of English in this programme. As with the profile, it warns against a further broadening of the scope of courses as this could result in a lack of focus.

The programme uses mostly small groups that allow for intensive interaction and fit very well with its aim and character. The assignments are as innovative as the teaching materials, which the panel is enthusiastic about. The problem-based learning the programme embraces – with students finding their own tools and developing their own arguments – works well with students who perform above average, in its view. However, it underscores that the programme should also be rewarding and effective for the average student and asks the programme to keep their interests in mind. In particular, it suggests that the specific methods of the different individual disciplines should be taught and highlighted explicitly, and not be learned in passing. It also suggests giving more structure to the thesis trajectory, so that all lecturers operate roughly in the same manner when supervising a student.

As the programme is well aware, feasibility is a risk factor in this very high-level programme. Again, the panel stresses that *all* students should be able to get through the programme in three years if they work hard and plan well. It is satisfied to see that the staff has already taken some measures to lighten the study load, and encourages them to monitor this well and take additional measures if necessary. Also, the students should be prompted to stick to the schedule and finish the programme as closely as possible to the nominal three years. The panel also bears in mind the other aspect to the intensive character of the programme, which is that students have a steep learning curve and blossom intellectually.

The panel compliments the programme on its well-balanced team of lecturers in terms of expertise, gender, age and cultural background. The staff's enthusiasm and competence in managing a very intensive and high-level programme are also praiseworthy. The panel noticed the staff composition is currently not well-balanced in terms of academic positioning (at the time of its visit, there was only one full professor and seven assistant professors), but was pleased to learn that the intended appointment of an associate professor will contribute somewhat to further differentiation. This is a good first step towards a more even spread in academic positions and responsibilities.



Labour market orientation, student support, services and quality assurance are all up to standard, in the panel's view.

The panel concludes that all in all, the bachelor's programme American Studies offers its students a stimulating and supportive environment, in accordance with the ambitious intended learning outcomes. In its view, the learning environment sufficiently enables them to achieve an academically oriented bachelor's degree.

Standard 3: Student assessment

The panel is impressed by the range of assessment methods used in the bachelor's programme American Studies. It finds them challenging and activating, and they fit in well with the programme's goals. With a good assessment plan and assessment matrix, well-informed students, a well-engrained quality culture, and well-designed thesis assessment forms, the programme has its assessment system under control. The one exception to this, in the panel's view, is that the individual assessments of the first and second examiners should be made more explicit in order to show independent judgment. This can be done by having them fill out separate assessment forms. Also, with regard to thesis assessment, the panel underscores that exceptionally high marks should be solidly substantiated.

The panel was informed during the site visit that the new central Board of Examiners for Arts has been positively received. It endorses the benefits of the harmonised procedures and efficiency gains. It congratulates the members of the new Board of Examiners on the energetic way in which they have shaped its duties and the associated procedures in a short period of time. It encourages the Board of Examiners to continue along the path it has chosen and is fully confident that the quality assurance of the assessment within the bachelor's programme American Studies is in good hands.

All things considered, the panel judges that the bachelor's programme American Studies has an adequate assessment system in place that contributes significantly to the validity, reliability and transparency of assessment.

Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes

Judging by the quality of the bachelor's theses, discussions the panel had with students and alumni, and informal reports and comments about student and alumni success provided by the programme, the panel concludes that alumni of the bachelor's programme American Studies realise the intended learning outcomes, albeit to varying degrees. Since the intended learning outcomes are very ambitious – as stated under Standard 1 – this is not a surprising outcome. It is not an immediate need for concern either, as the panel confirmed that all graduates achieve an appropriate academic level.

The panel assesses the standards from the *Assessment framework for limited programme assessments* in the following way:

Bachelor's programme American Studies

Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes	meets the standard
Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment	meets the standard
Standard 3: Student assessment	meets the standard
Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes	meets the standard
General conclusion	positive

The chair, prof. dr. Peter van Nuffelen, and the secretary, drs. Mariette Huisjes, of the panel hereby declare that all panel members have studied this report and that they agree with the judgements laid down in the report. They confirm that the assessment has been conducted in accordance with the demands relating to independence.

Date: 4 April 2020

DESCRIPTION OF THE STANDARDS FROM THE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK FOR LIMITED FRAMEWORK ASSESSMENTS

Context

The bachelor's programme American Studies is one of 16 bachelor's programmes offered by the Faculty of Arts at the University of Groningen. Since 2018, the faculty's programmes have been managed by 5 management clusters. The bachelor's programme American Studies is part of the Classics, History, Archaeology, Middle-Eastern Studies and American Studies (CHARMA) cluster. A programme coordinator acts as a link between the lecturers and the cluster board. Student intake has been fluctuating in the past years, but is now expected to stabilise at around 50 new students each year.

Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes

The intended learning outcomes tie in with the level and orientation of the programme; they are geared to the expectations of the professional field, the discipline, and international requirements.

Findings

Profile

The bachelor's programme American Studies aims to prepare its students for a wide range of master's programmes and a professional career by offering them critical awareness of diversity across past and present societies, taking American societies as their point of departure. It is the programme's ambition that graduates can synthesise a variety of academic approaches to identify and solve problems that are typical of our increasingly multicultural societies. Graduates can articulate and evaluate their own cultural beliefs and values, as well as understand those of others. In short, the programme aims to train global citizens. It does so by means of a broad knowledge and understanding of major events and developments in the total American hemisphere from the late fifteenth century to the present. The staff is currently discussing whether the programme's scope should be extended to Central and South America (Spanish) as well and introduce a specialisation that focuses specifically on Latin America. The programme also has plans to add a focus on the role of the media in the transformation and contemporary conditions of democratic cultures.

Characteristics that make the Groningen programme stand out are: introduction to an interdisciplinary approach, a strong focus on critical and cultural theory and an international orientation, with a particular focus on the US, Canada and Central America. Within the Netherlands, only Radboud University offers a full bachelor's programme in American Studies. Compared to this programme, the Groningen bachelor's programme differentiates itself with its broader scope (not only the US) and its focus on critical and cultural theory. Its combination of specialist knowledge and transferable skills – such as English language skills and intercultural competences – are intended to appeal to employers in an increasingly globalised world.

The panel recognises that the bachelor's programme American Studies has a unique profile. It likes the ambitious profile, and during its visit it found that it strikes a chord especially with high achieving students. It is also convinced of the programme's societal relevance, now that the ability to function in a globalised world and manage diversity are of growing importance. It is concerned, however, that the profile may be weakened and watered down by an ever-growing ambition and ever-broadening scope. It recommends finding a strong, recognisable focus on which the programme's expertise can be concentrated, and sticking to this for a number of years. For instance, if the programme needs to broaden its scope because of the widespread 'international turn' in American Studies, this should be limited by studying hemispheric or even worldwide phenomena *in so far as* they are relevant to understanding the US.



Intended learning outcomes

It is the programme's ambition to prepare its students for a career in academia, politics, business, media, the cultural and creative industries and other sectors. Its intended learning outcomes are in line with this ambition and based on the Dublin Descriptors. In total, there are 21 intended learning outcomes. For a full overview, see Appendix 1.

According to the panel, the intended learning outcomes reflect the programme's profile well. The introduction to an interdisciplinary approach is highlighted, for instance, by stating that graduates 'have demonstrated general understanding of the main theories and methodologies of the core disciplines relevant to the domain of American Studies, including cultural studies and cultural theory, political science, popular culture and media studies, history, literature, sociology, economics and constitutional law'. The focus on identifying and solving problems concerning diversity is expressed in the intended learning outcome that graduates 'have shown an awareness of cultural and socio-political problems stemming from different forms of inequality in contemporary multicultural societies [...] and are able to articulate possible solutions on the basis of theoretical, ethical and practical reasoning'. The international orientation becomes apparent from the intended learning outcome that graduates must master the English language at near-native (C2) level. Another example of the problem-solving capacity is that graduates 'have the cognitive and practical skills to offer viable solutions for complex problems that require originality, creativity, flexibility in thinking to resolve, as well as the ability to adopt multiple perspectives and tools offered by a range of disciplines'.

The panel finds the intended learning outcomes to be well-formulated and an extensive expression of the programme's profile. As such, they are certainly useful as targets to work towards. The panel is not entirely convinced, however, that it is reasonable to demand of all students that they realise all 21 intended learning outcomes. It recommends that the programme modify and condense the ambitious list of intended learning outcomes to a level that is attainable for more students.

The panel appreciates that an Advisory Board on Employability was established in an early phase (2012). The Advisory Board meets once a year to discuss the overall content of the programme's courses and their relevance for the job market. The panel believes the Advisory Board on Employability may play a crucial role in refining the profile and intended learning outcomes.

Considerations

The panel fully acknowledges and endorses the uniqueness, ambition, topicality and societal relevance of the programme's profile. However, it warns against the loss of focus that may occur if the programme continually widens its scope and piles up new ambitions. It recommends safeguarding a strong, recognisable focus which can be clearly communicated to future students and employers, and on which the relevant expertise can be concentrated.

Like the profile, the intended learning outcomes are extensive and very ambitious. They are detailed and clearly formulated, and they certainly reflect the required level and orientation. As such, the intended learning outcomes are inspiring landmarks in the panel's view. However, the panel recommends checking whether it is reasonable and realistic to expect all students of all different specialisations to meet all requirements. If not, the intended learning outcomes should be made less detailed and demanding.

Conclusion

Bachelor's programme American Studies: the panel assesses Standard 1 as 'meets the standard'.

Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment

The curriculum, the teaching-learning environment and the quality of the teaching staff enable the incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Findings*Programme language and name*

The ability to communicate effectively in English is a key aspect of what the programme wants to teach its students. All of the study material is in English, and teaching in English fosters an international classroom, prepares students for an international career and enables the programme to attract international staff. Therefore, the programme is fully English-taught. The panel endorses the clear choice for English wholeheartedly.

Curriculum content and structure

The curriculum has a mandatory core consisting of three learning pathways: 'The Americas' I-III, 'Theories of culture' I-III, and 'Rhetoric and composition' I-II. This core is supplemented by electives and culminates in the bachelor's thesis. For a full overview of the curriculum, see Appendix 2.

During their first year, the students build a foundation for their knowledge and skills. 'The Americas' I and II (a total of 20 EC) deal with American history. 'Theories of culture I' (10 EC) I explores how the social movements of the 1960s transformed American society and changed the way the world thinks about race, class and gender. In 'North and South Americans' (10 EC), the students read classic Latin American and Canadian literature and engage with issues like immigration, trade policy and the 'war on drugs' in depth. 'Rhetoric and composition' 1 (10 EC) prepares them to give presentations and write argumentative essays. Besides these mandatory courses, they may choose two 5 EC special topic courses from a series of seven.

In their second year, the students deepen their knowledge, reading classic works of theory. In 'The Americas' III (10 EC), they learn about encounters and conflicts in the early modern period. In 'Political cultures' (10 EC), they learn about the way in which media and technology shape political participation. There is also an advanced course in 'Rhetoric and composition' (10 EC). Finally, the students have more space to tailor the programme to their taste. They can choose 30 EC worth of electives and special topics.

The third bachelor year consolidates the students' learning process and prepares them for a master's programme or a professional career. They choose a 30 EC minor, for instance a minor abroad, a multidisciplinary university minor, a faculty minor, a teacher training minor or a career minor. It is possible to do a bachelor internship within the career minor or in combination with a faculty minor. In the second semester, they take two final courses: 'Mobility, migration, transculturation' (10 EC) and 'Theories of culture' III. The capstone of the bachelor's programme is the bachelor's thesis (10 EC).

It is a typical feature of the programme's profile that all courses introduce the students to an interdisciplinary approach by familiarising them with different disciplines. Even survey courses like 'The Americas' cover not only the historical perspectives, but also the economic, sociological, political, literary and cultural perspectives. The fact that most courses are team-taught fits perfectly with that aim.

The panel finds the programme to be well structured, with clear learning paths: knowledge and understanding of developments on the American continent in 'The Americas' I to III; intercultural knowledge and competences in 'Theories of culture' I to III; and argumentation and presentation in English in 'Rhetoric and composition' I to III. During the site visit, it heard that the lecturers meet regularly to review courses and safeguard the programme's structure, which it appreciates. It studied a sample of the course material and was pleasantly surprised by the innovative combination of contemporary literature, poetry, primary texts by political activists, and articles from newspapers



and popular magazines, films, etc. The aim of this collection is to create an understanding of history or society at a deep level. The panel finds this approach stimulating, and it welcomes the fact that the material provides the most up-to-date information to be had on the Americas. The material is comparable to what students at Harvard or Yale receive. The programme leaves much space for the students to follow and develop their own interests, which is an excellent feature of the programme in the panel's view. Finally, the panel is impressed by the attention paid by the staff to the students' mastering the English language at a high level. Rhetoric and composition are taught with rigour and passion, it found, with lots of training and extensive feedback, and with good results, as it registered from the eloquence of the students it met during the visit and from the theses it studied.

The panel's recommendation under standard 1 to find a strong focus for the programme's profile will also affect the curriculum. It now has a very broad scope, with the risk that students end up with knowing 'a little bit of everything'. However, both the students and staff told the panel convincingly that the programme works well because of its finely tuned architecture, in which all courses interrelate. This is in accordance with the programme's claim that the curriculum is fully integrated. Possibly, therefore, no changes are necessary to the content of the programme as it is. But its focus should be a point of attention, and the panel warns against a further broadening of the scope.

Teaching methods

The American Studies staff want to create a supportive but challenging learning environment, in which the students are expected to shoulder substantial reading and writing loads and reflect critically on the knowledge and skills that they acquire. The teaching is mostly done in small groups, as this allows for the most intensive interaction between the students and instructors. The aim is to create an increasingly problem-based learning experience for the students in their second and third years, so that they develop independent learning and research skills. They are encouraged to dive into the literature and not be intimidated. They told the panel that they find the seminars of high quality and they like the fact that the lecturers actively interact with the students.

In the panel's view, the programme is not only *about* the Americas, but also a US-type of programme within the Dutch context: pragmatic and problem-oriented, targeted at students finding their own tools, learning to argue, and reflecting on this process in essays and other creative products, rather than having their knowledge tested in exams. It appreciates and respects the unique character of the programme, and is convinced that the problem-based approach works well with academic high-flyers – who are both capable and motivated to get the most out of it. But since the bachelor's programme American Studies is a regular bachelor's programme, it should also be suitable for average students. The panel fears that for them, the 'learning by doing' teaching method is too exacting.

Although the panel did not speak to students who alleged they found the programme too demanding, it does suspect that average students struggle to grasp the many different methodologies that play a part in the programme. This fear is confirmed by the numbers about study progress: approximately half of the student population is either failing or struggling to get past the 'binding study advice' barrier. Also, in three years (2016 to 2018), not one of a total of 256 enrolling students actually finished the programme in the nominal three years. The panel discussed these fears with the programme staff. They responded that the issue of how to help individual students who have difficulty in keeping up is regularly discussed in staff meetings and that these students are monitored by the study advisor. Students may not finish the programme within the nominal time, the lecturers say, but they are all kept active and eventually do complete it. The panel argues that the teaching methods could also be made more suitable to average students. In particular, the methods of different academic disciplines contributing to American Studies should not be learned in passing while studying certain cases, in its view, but pointed out explicitly. All students should be able to recognise particular methodologies and apply and justify methods properly when writing their own bachelor's thesis. The panel learned that some lecturers already emphasise what methods and methodologies are in play, but it underscores the importance of this being done consistently.

Thesis trajectory

The bachelor's thesis is the culminating research essay, and an opportunity for the students to put what they have learned into practice by setting up and carrying out a research project under supervision. The students first submit a mini-proposal and then a full proposal; they get feedback on both from several relevant supervisors. The next phase is a draft version, on which they again receive feedback before handing in the final version. Besides receiving individual guidance, they also take part in group meetings, in which writing skills are trained at an advanced level and thesis topics are discussed. It struck the panel that the amount and form of the guidance received depends to a large extent on the individual supervisors. It recommends scripting the thesis trajectory more explicitly, so that it will become more uniform and predictable for the students.

Feasibility

The programme is meant to be challenging, and it certainly is, the panel found. This can also be deduced from the study progress, as mentioned above. In its view, there are two sides to the heavy-duty character of the programme. The students told the panel that the amount of work they have to do for some courses is extremely demanding. But, they say, if you plan well and work hard, it is possible to keep up with the pace. Also, they still love the programme, even though it asks a lot of them, because they feel 'awakened' by it and find the programme intellectually very rewarding. The panel recognises that the programme is of a very high level, and the students who succeed in it grow tremendously, becoming good debaters and writers. It applauds the fact that the programme does its best to improve feasibility, for instance by reducing the reading load for certain courses, adapting writing assignments and cutting up 10 EC courses into more manageable 5 EC ones. It disagrees, however, with the attitude that it is fine for each student to go through the programme at his or her own pace. This attitude seems to be dominant among the programme's staff; the students told the panel that they are encouraged to take some extra time. An element of feasibility, in its view, is that all students should not only be facilitated in finishing the programme within more or less the nominal time, but also encouraged to do so. Although in the end the students are of course free to choose their own study pace, transgressing the normal duration should not be the norm, nor should it be encouraged by the staff.

Labour market orientation

The main (optional) elements that prepare the students for the labour market are the career minor and the internships. In the career minor, they learn to reflect on what they can do professionally with the knowledge and competences they have acquired during their studies. They also take a look at the labour market and train skills and attitudes that will help them in finding a job. In addition to this, the faculty organises an annual career event, with workshops, lectures, training sessions and an information market. However, the students indicated that there were few presentations by American Studies graduates. The study association organises an alumni event every year specifically for American Studies students. The panel finds these arrangements sufficient preparation for the labour market.

Student support and student involvement

The panel found that at the start of their studies, some students felt thrown in at the deep end; they have to learn how the programme works and what is expected of them. In response to this, the programme staff have offered the American Studies writing guide, which explains essay requirements. This is perceived as helpful. First-year students also have regular mandatory mentor groups. American Studies forms a relatively small community, and the study advisor as well as the lecturers are very approachable for the students, the panel found. To support the decision of which minor to choose, the university organises a minor market. In general, the student support is sufficient, the panel found. It can be considered a compliment that the students call the programme well-organised.

Each course is evaluated, and the Programme Committee (consisting of lecturers and students on a 50-50 basis) screens these course evaluations. This seems to work, since some courses have been



changed on the basis of comments made by the Programme Committee, and the students told the panel they are happy with what is done with their feedback.

Lecturers

During the past couple of years, the American Studies programme has seen turbulent times, with a high turnover of staff and four different programme chairs in three years. Since the arrival of a new chair in 2018, the situation seems to have stabilised. The core of the teaching staff consists of eight lecturers. Five of these staff members hold a university teaching qualification, the remaining three are working towards one. There are relatively many students per staff member: the ratio is 38 to 1.

The panel compliments the programme on its staff, who are well-balanced in many respects: true to its spirit, it has a good variety in expertise, gender, age and cultural background. In one respect, however, the panel noted an imbalance. At the time of its visit, the core staff counted only one full professor and seven assistant professors. The appointment of an associate professor – as planned at the time of its visit – would be a suitable first step towards a more well-balanced spread in academic positions and responsibilities.

The panel was impressed by the enthusiasm and fervour of the team. It is worthy of praise that – even though there is relatively limited staff time available per student – the lecturers manage to keep up a programme as intensive as the bachelor's programme American Studies, and have happy students who love the programme.

Programme-specific services

American Studies in Groningen has its own study association, called E Pluribus Unum. It connects all the students and offers them a space where they feel at home. The study association organises an introduction weekend to welcome first-year students plus social events and study trips. The students call E Pluribus Unum the backbone of the programme. Furthermore, talented and ambitious students may join the university's honours programme, which contains both a 20 EC broadening track at the university level and a 25 EC deepening track at the faculty level. The panel finds the programme-specific services sufficient.

Considerations

The bachelor's programme American Studies has a well-structured curriculum with clear learning paths and ample free space for the students to follow and develop their own interests. For most courses, no textbooks are used, rather there is a combination of newspaper and magazine articles, literature, political pamphlets, and films. The panel finds this use of contemporary materials innovative and stimulating. The choice of study materials also fits with the programme's character, which is multidisciplinary and increasingly problem-oriented. The panel is impressed by the 'Rhetoric and composition' learning trajectory, for instance, which systematically trains students in using the English language at an advanced level. It endorses the use of English in this programme. As with the profile, it warns against a further broadening of the scope of courses as this could result in a lack of focus.

The programme uses mostly small groups that allow for intensive interaction and fit very well with its aim and character. The assignments are as innovative as the teaching materials, which the panel is enthusiastic about. The problem-based learning the programme embraces – with students finding their own tools and developing their own arguments – works well with students who perform above average, in its view. However, it underscores that the programme should also be rewarding and effective for the average student and asks the programme to keep their interests in mind. In particular, it suggests that the specific methods of the different individual disciplines should be taught and highlighted explicitly, and not be learned in passing. It also suggests giving more structure to the thesis trajectory, so that all lecturers operate roughly in the same manner when supervising a student.

As the programme is well aware, feasibility is a risk factor in this very high-level programme. Again, the panel stresses that *all* students should be able to get through the programme in three years if they work hard and plan well. It is satisfied to see that the staff has already taken some measures to lighten the study load, and encourages them to monitor this well and take additional measures if necessary. Also, the students should be prompted to stick to the schedule and finish the programme as closely as possible to the nominal three years. The panel also bears in mind the other aspect to the intensive character of the programme, which is that students have a steep learning curve and blossom intellectually.

The panel compliments the programme on its well-balanced team of lecturers in terms of expertise, gender, age and cultural background. The staff's enthusiasm and competence in managing a very intensive and high-level programme are also praiseworthy. The panel noticed the staff composition is currently not well-balanced in terms of academic positioning (at the time of its visit, there was only one full professor and seven assistant professors), but was pleased to learn that the intended appointment of an associate professor will contribute somewhat to further differentiation. This is a good first step towards a more even spread in academic positions and responsibilities.

Labour market orientation, student support, services and quality assurance are all up to standard, in the panel's view.

The panel concludes that all in all, the bachelor's programme American Studies offers its students a stimulating and supportive environment, in accordance with the ambitious intended learning outcomes. In its view, the learning environment sufficiently enables them to achieve an academically oriented bachelor's degree.

Conclusion

Bachelor's programme American Studies: the panel assesses Standard 2 as 'meets the standard'.

Standard 3: Student assessment

The programme has an adequate system of student assessment in place.

Findings

Assessment policy

The programme has an assessment plan that provides a detailed survey of the various modes and moments of assessment and their relative weight. An assessment matrix links the courses directly to the intended learning outcomes, with most intended learning outcomes being covered more than once, with the focus shifting to more advanced levels as the students progress through the programme. The assessment takes many forms: from exams to essays, self-reflection journal entries, position papers, responses to discussion questions, reviews, reports, op-eds, podcasts, portfolios, digital assessment forms, individual and group presentations. Throughout the programme, there is a balance between formative and summative assessment methods, and individual and group work.

All course syllabi contain details about the modes of assessment, the criteria, the relative weight of the various components of the grade and the date of the exam and the re-sit, or deadlines for written assignments. The students told the panel they are well-informed, and they stated that the assessment methods are effective and have a good fit to the programme's structure.

As a form of quality assurance *ex ante*, the assessment is peer-reviewed by colleagues. The Programme Committee checks whether the course modules contain a balanced mix of different modes of assessment, whether the grading percentages seem fair, and whether the course assessment matches the assessment in previous and subsequent courses. Grading guidelines clearly specify criteria to mark assignments such as presentations, essays or exams. In the panel's view,



these guarantee consistent and transparent assessment throughout the course units. Just failing grades are routinely checked again. All examiners must ensure that after a course is completed, a report is available, which includes the course syllabus, the assignments plus instructions, the assessment criteria as well as an evaluation form, filled in by the examiner and a colleague who acted as the peer reviewer. On the basis of this report, the Board of Examiners regularly conducts a review in order to safeguard the quality of assessment *ex post*.

The panel is impressed by the range, innovative character and well-organised spread of assessment methods throughout the year. They are challenging and activating and fit in well with the programme's aims. The panel particularly appreciates that command of the English language is an explicit object of assessment. It is also impressed by the quality culture that seems to be engrained in the programme's assessment system and to which all lecturers contribute: the double grading of near failing grades is a good example of the energy put into this. Combined with the carefully designed assessment plan and assessment matrix, this ensures that the programme has its assessment well under control.

Thesis assessment

The bachelor's thesis is assessed on the basis of a list of criteria that are outlined in the thesis guidelines, such as 'identifying a topic and assessing the scholarly conversation', 'argument and analysis: clarity, structure, originality, insight' and 'readability and technical precision'. On the recommendation of the previous assessment panel, all theses are assessed independently by two examiners. Together, they fill in an assessment form after discussing their respective judgements.

The panel finds the criteria in the thesis assessment forms well-chosen. The students also commented to the panel that they find the criteria helpful while writing their thesis. The panel is glad to see that the previous panel's advice was taken to heart, so that there are now two examiners for each thesis. However, the independent assessment by both examiners should be made more explicit, in its view. As it is, both examiners fill out one form after an oral discussion. Instead, the panel recommends that both examiners use separate forms first, then discuss their findings and gradings, and fill out a third, collective final form. In this way, it becomes more transparent what each examiner's view on the thesis was. If their gradings differ by more than one point, a third examiner should be called in. Finally, the panel suggests sending all assessment forms automatically to the student, to guarantee that they can take advantage of the feedback given.

The panel studied a sample of the bachelor's theses and their assessment forms. In general terms, it agreed with the examiners. On the basis of the sample studied, it remarked that when a particularly high mark is given (between 8 and 10), it is especially necessary to motivate such a decision extensively. In the sample studied, this was not consistently the case.

Board of examiners

The assurance of assessment quality within the bachelor's programme American Studies rests with the Board of Examiners. Until January 1, 2019, this was the Board of Examiners History, Media Studies and Greek and Latin Language and Culture. From that date, this group has continued as an expertise team within a new central Arts Board of Examiners. The chairs of the constituent expertise teams sit on this new board of examiners, plus a professional assessment expert. The Board evaluates the assessment of individual courses and the theses on a random basis, trying to give as many courses as possible an evaluation once every three years. It has drawn up a protocol for these evaluations: ensuring that the assessment proceeds in accordance with its own rules and guidelines, that the learning objectives stated in the assessment plan are assessed for each course, and that the assessment is valid, reliable and transparent. The evaluations by the Board take place on the basis of the assessment portfolios supplied by the course co-ordinators and lecturers. These contain study instructions, papers/exams and assessment forms, possible resits, answer models and result lists with partial and final grades. In addition to evaluating the assessment quality, the Board also has an advisory function with regard to regulations, assessment forms, etc.

The panel was informed during the site visit that the recent transition to one central Board of Examiners has been received very positively all around. An important advantage is that procedures throughout the entire Faculty of Arts can be made comparable; also, one central Board can work more efficiently than several decentralised ones. Expertise teams are available within the Board for programme-specific matters. The panel endorses the benefits of the new central Board of Examiners and compliments its members on the energetic way in which they have expeditiously put the new working method on track. They did this, for example, by facilitating the assurance process and drawing up rules and guidelines and an evaluation protocol. Providing a single 'counter' for the faculty where everyone can go with questions or complaints about assessment is another goal. The panel encourages the Board of Examiners to keep up the good work and is confident that the assessment quality of the bachelor's programme American Studies can be safely entrusted for the future to the new Board.

Considerations

The panel is impressed by the range of assessment methods used in the bachelor's programme American Studies. It finds them challenging and activating, and they fit in well with the programme's goals. With a good assessment plan and assessment matrix, well-informed students, a well-engrained quality culture, and well-designed thesis assessment forms, the programme has its assessment system under control. The one exception to this, in the panel's view, is that the individual assessments of the first and second examiners should be made more explicit in order to show independent judgment. This can be done by having them fill out separate assessment forms. Also, with regard to thesis assessment, the panel underscores that exceptionally high marks should be solidly substantiated.

The panel was informed during the site visit that the new central Board of Examiners for Arts has been positively received. It endorses the benefits of the harmonised procedures and efficiency gains. It congratulates the members of the new Board of Examiners on the energetic way in which they have shaped its duties and the associated procedures in a short period of time. It encourages the Board of Examiners to continue along the path it has chosen and is fully confident that the quality assurance of the assessment within the bachelor's programme American Studies is in good hands.

All things considered, the panel judges that the bachelor's programme American Studies has an adequate assessment system in place that contributes significantly to the validity, reliability and transparency of assessment.

Conclusion

Bachelor's programme American Studies: the panel assesses Standard 3 as 'meets the standard'.

Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

Findings

Theses

While studying a sample of the bachelor's theses, it struck the panel that they are not structured as academic theses mostly are. It discussed this with the programme's staff and learned that it is a conscious choice to ask for long scholarly essays, in which the students structure the argument in their own way, without the crutches a standard layout would offer. It finds this an acceptable practice. It noted that the theses meet the ambitious intended learning outcomes to varying degrees, as was to be expected. Some theses it judged to be original, ambitious and of an impressive theoretical level, while others were thinner and theoretically weaker. It found all theses to be of the appropriate academic level, however.



Alumni

The majority of American Studies graduates pursue a master's degree, mostly in the humanities. Frequently chosen master's programmes are in the fields of journalism, European culture, criminology, modern history and international relations. Graduates also find their way into competitive research master's programmes. Informal feedback to the programme from alumni demonstrated that they are generally successful in pursuing their master's degree. This impression is reinforced by the positive feedback the students receive on their internships, which describes them as driven and motivated, with a fresh look on the field of arts, culture and heritage in the US. Monitoring the success of its graduates in a more structured way is one of the programme's key priorities for the future. The panel encourages the programme in its ambition to collect alumni data more systematically.

Although no systematic data are available, the panel is easily convinced that the bachelor's programme American Studies prepares its students well for a broad range of master's programmes. It is, after all, a broad programme with an interdisciplinary orientation at a high conceptual level. It struck the panel that the senior students and alumni are proficient both in writing and in oral communication. This is consistent with their own observations that the programme lifted them to a considerably higher level in both cognition and communication.

Considerations

Judging by the quality of the bachelor's theses, discussions the panel had with students and alumni, and informal reports and comments about student and alumni success provided by the programme, the panel concludes that alumni of the bachelor's programme American Studies realise the intended learning outcomes, albeit to varying degrees. Since the intended learning outcomes are very ambitious – as stated under Standard 1 – this is not a surprising outcome. It is not an immediate need for concern either, as the panel confirmed that all graduates achieve an appropriate academic level.

Conclusion

Bachelor's programme American Studies: the panel assesses Standard 4 as 'meets the standard'.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The panel assessed standards 1, 2, 3, and 4 of the bachelor's programme American Studies as 'meets the standard'. Based on the NVAO decision rules regarding limited programme assessments, the panel therefore assesses the programme as 'positive'.

Conclusion

The panel assesses the *bachelor's programme American Studies* as 'positive'.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

<i>Dublin Descriptors for BA Level</i>	<i>Learning Outcomes for the BA programme in American Studies articulated in Key Competences</i>
Acquiring Knowledge and Understanding	<p>A Bachelor Degree in American Studies is awarded to students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 a. have demonstrated broad, interdisciplinary knowledge and understanding of major themes and developments in the history, culture, society, politics and economics of the Americas from the late fifteenth century to the present 1 b. have demonstrated broad, comparative knowledge and understanding of the United States' role and position within transatlantic, inter-American, and global contexts 1 c. have demonstrated general understanding of the main theories and methodologies of the core disciplines relevant to the domain of American Studies, including cultural studies and cultural theory, political science, popular culture and media studies, history, literature, sociology, economics, and constitutional law 1 d. have demonstrated understanding and knowledge of ways in which cultures and societies in the Americas have been shaped by U.S. ideologies (including individualism, exceptionalism, consumerism, free-market capitalism, manifest destiny, the American Dream, as well as ideologies of race, class, gender, and religion), and have demonstrated understanding of the role of the media in institutionalizing and critiquing those ideologies
Applying Knowledge and Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 a. can apply the requisite research skills, knowledge and tools (including online and digital tools and learning environments) to select, analyze, process, and critically evaluate large amounts of new information from a variety of disciplinary domains, and present their research results, both orally and in writing, by making effective use of relevant and appropriate theories, methodologies and IT technologies 2 b. are able to apply theories and methodologies of the core disciplines relevant to the domain of American Studies, including cultural studies and cultural theory, political science, popular culture and media studies, history, literature, sociology, economics, and constitutional law to specific problems, new contexts, and concrete situations within the domain of American Studies and related fields; and are also able to understand and analyze the ways in which contemporary societies are shaped by ideologies and the media, and to develop critical responses to concrete questions within the domain of American Studies and beyond 2 c. have shown an awareness of cultural and socio-political problems stemming from different forms of inequality in contemporary multicultural societies, notably in the United States and the Americas and are able to articulate possible solutions on the basis of theoretical, ethical, and practical reasoning



	<p>2 d. can produce logical, critical, conceptually and theoretically sound, creative, and (partly) original argumentative essays and reflect critically on the situatedness of their own perspective</p> <p>2 e. can make constructive contributions to group projects by taking the initiative and demonstrating leadership potential</p> <p>2 f. have the cognitive and practical skills to offer viable solutions for complex problems that require originality, creativity, flexibility in thinking to resolve, as well as the ability to adopt multiple perspectives and tools offered by a range of different disciplines</p> <p>2 g. are able to take responsibility, show initiative, plan and manage projects, work under time pressure, and conduct themselves ethically (both academically and interpersonally)</p>
Making Informed Judgments and Choices	<p>3 a. are able to conduct guided and semi-independent research, to evaluate critically relevant primary and secondary sources and other information.</p> <p>3 b. have the ability to select and integrate relevant methodologies and theories of relevant disciplines within American Studies in a critical and interdisciplinary analysis of complex social, cultural, historical and political problems in the United States and its relation to other countries in the Americas</p> <p>3 c. are able to form grounded opinions about major social, political, and economic issues in U.S. society, as well as the role that ideology and the media play in those issues</p> <p>3 d. are able to re-evaluate their views of the United States and contrasting cultures (in the wider American hemisphere and beyond) within the context of their own lives and experiences</p>
Communicating Knowledge and Understanding	<p>4 a. have the ability to communicate effectively in English, both orally and in writing, the results of their research and to present complex information in a clear and concise manner to specialist and non-specialist audiences</p> <p>4 b. have demonstrated proficiency in the target language of English at C2 level (near native) in the areas of listening and reading, and at C1 level (proficient) in written and spoken production (based on the CEFR)</p> <p>4 c. are able to demonstrate sensitivity to and respect for cultural differences and have the ability to deal effectively with potential differences of background, opinion and/or values; to work and communicate effectively in an international and intercultural context</p>
Capacities to Continue Learning	<p>5 a. possess the appropriate learning skills and strategies to independently identify and fill specific knowledge gaps and stay up-to-date with current developments in the domain of American Studies and related fields</p> <p>5 b. have the ability to successfully undertake specialized second cycle degree programmes requiring BA-level domain-specific knowledge and understanding as well as independent research skills, in particular in American Studies and related fields, as well</p>

	<p>as Research Master programmes, both in Europe and North America</p> <p>5 c. have acquired the requisite intercultural awareness and respect to successfully complete advanced academic course work at a partner institution in the United States, as well as in future international employment contexts</p>
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APPENDIX 2: OVERVIEW OF THE CURRICULUM

	Semester 1	Semester 2
Course modules Year 1	Theories of Culture Ia and b: Race, Class, and Gender (5+5 ECTS)	The Americas IIa and b: New Frontiers (5+5 ECTS)
	The Americas Ia and b: The American Century and Beyond (5+5 ECTS)	Special Topics (5+5 ECTS) 2018-2019 Options: Voice of America Canada and the U.S. Narrative Politics: Literature The United States of Television Canada's Cultural Mosaic Narrative Politics: Images
	Rhetoric and Composition Ia and b (5+5 ECTS)	North and South Americans I and II (5+5 ECTS)
Course modules Year 2	The Americas IIIa and b: From Exploration to Early Republic (5+5 ECTS)	Political Culture (10 ECTS)
	Rhetoric and Composition IIa and b (5+5 ECTS)	Special Topics (10 ECTS) 2018-2019 Options: Digital Cities DIY American Horror Cinema Early America and the Orient
	Theories of Culture IIa and b: Political Theory/Media Theory (5+5 ECTS)	Elective: Global USA or Media Specialization (10 ECTS)
Course modules Year 3	Minor (30 ECTS; Career Minor or Study Abroad Minor or Faculty of Arts Minor or University Minor)	Theories of Culture IIIa and b: Consumer Nation (5+5 ECTS)
		Research Seminar: Mobility, Migration, Transculturation (10 ECTS)
		Bachelor's Thesis (10 ECTS)

APPENDIX 3: PROGRAMME OF THE SITE VISIT

Day 1 (Wednesday 30 October)	
09.00 - 09.15	Arrival of the panel / Welcome from the Vice-Dean
09.15 - 12.30	Preparation, private panel meeting and documentation review
12.30 - 13.00	Lunch break
13.00 - 13.45	Meeting with faculty senior management
13.45 - 14.15	Private panel meeting
14.15 - 15.00	Meeting with programme management - BA en MA (North) American Studies
15.00 - 15.45	Meeting with students - BA en MA (North) American Studies
15.45 - 16.30	Meeting with staff - BA en MA (North) American Studies
16.30 - 17.30	Private panel meeting and documentation review
17.30 - 18.00	Open consultation hour

Day 2 (Thursday 31 October)	
09.00 - 10.00	Private panel meeting
10.00 - 10.45	Meeting with programme management - B Griekse en Latijnse Taal en Cultuur and M Classics
10.45 - 11.30	Meeting with students - B Griekse en Latijnse Taal en Cultuur en M Classics
11.30 - 12.15	Meeting with staff - B Griekse en Latijnse Taal en Cultuur en M Classics
12.15 - 12.45	Lunch break
12.45 - 13.15	Private panel meeting
13.15 - 14.00	Meeting with programme management - B Midden-Oosten Studies en M Middle Eastern Studies
14.00 - 14.45	Meeting with students - B Midden-Oosten Studies en M Middle Eastern Studies
14.45 - 15.30	Meeting with staff - B Midden-Oosten Studies en M Middle Eastern Studies
15.30 - 16.30	Private panel meeting
16.30 - 17.15	Meeting with Examination Board
17.15 - 17.45	Private panel meeting

Day 3 (Friday 1 November)	
09.00 - 10.00	Private panel meeting and documentation review
10.00 - 11.00	Final interview with management
11.00 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.30	Private panel meeting to formulate conclusions of the visit
12.30 - 13.00	Lunch break
13.00 - 15.30	Private panel meeting to formulate conclusions of the visit
15.30 - 16.30	Development dialogue(s) in three parallel sessions: Middle Eastern; (North) American Studies; Classics
16.30 - 17.00	Informal feedback on the panel's findings and recommendations
17.00 - 18.00	End of the site visit / Drinks



APPENDIX 4: THESES AND DOCUMENTS STUDIED BY THE PANEL

Thesis selection

Prior to the site visit, the panel studied 12 theses of the bachelor's programme American Studies. The selection was based on a provided list of 65 graduates between 2018-2019. The programme does not contain specialisations. The project manager and panel chair assured that a variety of topics and a diversity of examiners were included in the selection and that the distribution of grades in the selection matched the distribution of grades of all available theses. Further information on the selected theses is available from QANU upon request.

The bachelor's programme American Studies shares a Board of Examiners with all Faculty of Arts programmes. The programme shares ten of its mandatory courses with the Faculty Minor North American Studies (50 EC in total). As part of their study trajectory, students choose a 'Minor' (30 EC). This may consist of a Career Minor, Stay Abroad Minor, University Minor or Faculty of Arts Minor, creating additional opportunities for course overlap.

During the site visit, the panel studied, among other things, the following documents (partly as hard copies, partly via the institute's electronic learning environment):

Faculty-wide documents:

- Arts Board of Examiners annual report 2017-2018;
- Arts Board of Examiners minutes 2018-2019;
- BoE Expert team History, Media Studies and Greek and Latin Language and Culture annual report 2017-2018;
- BoE Expert team History, Media Studies and Greek and Latin Language and Culture minutes 2018-2019;
- Big7 Arts Board of Examiners.

Specific reading material bachelor's programme American Studies:

- Self-evaluation report including appendices;
- Student:staff ratio numbers American Studies programme;
- Programme Committee American Studies annual report 2017-2018;
- Programme Committee American Studies minutes 2018-2019.

Of the following courses, the panel studied complete portfolios (course guide and literature, relevant course documents, assignments, tests and answer keys, a selection of assessed student work and, if available, course evaluations):

- The Americas 1a (B1; LAX025P05);
- Theories of Culture 1b (B1; LAX041P05);
- Rhetoric and Composition 2b (B2; LAX050B05);
- Media Specialization (B2; LAX043B10);
- Theories of Culture 3b (B3; LAX053B05);
- Mobility, Migration, Transculturation (B3; LAX022B10).