General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title  AFAM 2A/2B  GE Area U1, U2, U3, D2, D3

Results reported for AY __2013-2014_______  # of sections ____3____  # of instructors __3__

Course Coordinator: Ruth P. Wilson  E-mail: ruth.wilson@sjsu.edu

Department Chair: Ruth P. Wilson  College: CoSS

Instructions: Each year, the department will prepare a brief (two page maximum) report that documents the assessment of the course during the year. This report will be electronically submitted to <curriculum@sjsu.edu>, by the department chair, to the Office of Undergraduate Studies, with an electronic copy to the home college by October 1 of the following academic year.

Part 1

To be completed by the course coordinator:

(1)  What SLO(s) were assessed for the course during the AY?

SLO2: Students will be able to identify the dynamics of ethnic, cultural, gender/sexual, age-based, class, regional, national, transnational, and global identities, and the similarities, differences, linkages, and interaction between them.

(2)  What were the results of the assessment of this course? What were the lessons learned from the assessment?

Students are informed on the green sheet to expect three Buzz Essays during the course of the semester. The Buzz Essay is an unannounced 10-points, 30-minute pop quiz administered at the beginning of a class session. We used the Buzz Essay technique in one of the three course sections to assess student understanding of the concept “social stratification”. Buzz Essay #3 required students to compare the meaning of liberty and freedom for two social strata living during the antebellum period of US history.

Twenty of the 42 enrolled students in one of three AFAM 2A course sections were present at the beginning of the 30-minute activity and submitted their essay. Three students scored 10/10 points, indicating that they understood the question and the concept “social stratification”, identified two social groups specific to the antebellum era, provided sufficient details in their response, and demonstrated good writing skills. Five students received a score in the 8 to 8.9 range. Their scores reflected their knowledge of the concept, selection of two contrasting strata appropriate for the historical era, and ability to write clearly with limited grammatical errors. Ten students scored in the 5-7.9 point range. Students in this category tended to select two contrasting social strata but did not match the details with the strata properly, or made too many grammatical errors to earn a higher score. Two students earned a 0/10 points because they submitted an essay that discussed groups that emerged after the antebellum era.

Low student participation was the result of weather (rain resulted in students arriving in class too late to take the Buzz Essay), illness, or engagement in a campus protest.
What modifications to the course, or its assessment activities or schedule, are planned for the upcoming year? (If no modifications are planned, the course coordinator should indicate this.)

We made several modifications to the course this semester during AY 2013-2014. The BOGS Committee approved our petition to add two additional GE Credits (D2, D3) to the course. Thus, we are able to offer the same number of GE Credits as other American History/California History courses.

We increased the number of sections of AFAM 2A from one section to three. Two of the three sections are team taught by a retired senior professor (Dr. Millner) and a newly minted Ed.D. lecturer who has a specialty in African American Studies (Dr. White). Dr. Millner’s mentoring skills have proven to be effective in maintaining the high quality of instruction in this GE course and we look forward to Dr. White’s involvement in teaching 2B in Spring 2015.

Unfortunately, we were unable to coordinate our assessment activity in time for the October deadline. The reported results include less than one third of our students enrolled in the three sections of the course. The Assessment Coordinator is working with all instructors to develop, collect, and analyze assessment data from all three sections during the Fall 2014 final exam period.

Part 2

To be completed by the department chair (with input from course coordinator as appropriate):

(4) Are all sections of the course still aligned with the area Goals, Student Learning Objectives (SLOs), Content, Support, and Assessment? If they are not, what actions are planned?

Yes, all sections of the course are still aligned with the area Goals, SLOs, Content, /support, and Assessment.

(5) If this course is in a GE Area with a stated enrollment limit (Areas A1, A2, A3, C2, D1, R, S, V, & Z), please indicate how oral presentations will be evaluated with larger sections (Area A1), or how practice and revisions in writing will be addressed with larger sections, particularly how students are receiving thorough feedback on the writing which accounts for the minimum word count in this GE category (Areas A2, A3, C2, D1, R, S, V, & Z) and, for the writing intensive courses (A2, A3, and Z), documentation that the students are meeting the GE SLOs for writing.

Our students write a 1500 word essay and three Buzz Essays during the course of the semester. The Department has hired a graduate student to assist with reading the student essays and highlighting writing problems. This allows faculty to focus on reading and grading the content of student writing. Students get feedback from faculty on their writing skills as well as their acquisition of course content. Thus, faculty are able to track the improvement in writing skills over the course of the short buzz essays and the longer writing assignments throughout the semester, and provide written and verbal feedback.