General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title __HUM 1A  Background of World Culture and Society__  GE Area _C1_  
HUM 1A/B, 2A/B  Background of World Culture and Society; Modern Culture and Social Institutions  
GE Areas: A1, A2, A3, C1, C2, C3, D2, D3, F1, F2, F3

Results reported for AY __2013-14_____  # of sections __6_____  # of instructors __6______

Course Coordinator: __Cynthia Rostankowski____  E-mail: _Cynthia.Rostankowski@sjsu.edu___

Department Chair: __Chris Jochim____  College: __Humanities and the Arts________

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, by the department chair, to the Office of Undergraduate Studies, with an electronic copy to the home college by September 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?

- Recognize aesthetic qualities and processes that characterize works of the human intellect and imagination;
- Respond to works of art both analytically (in writing) and affectively (in writing or through other forms of personal and artistic expression).
- Enable students to participate in social and cultural communities associated with artistic and literary endeavors, enriching their personal and professional lives.

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

Three of the six seminars for HUM 1A used the same assignment to address students’ art experience. The assignment required students to visit a museum to view antiquities, and select one, no more than two objects about which to write. Most students chose to visit the museum on the Stanford campus, but some chose to go to the Legion of Honor in San Francisco, and others went to the Rosicrucian Museum in San Jose. Students were instructed to be sure to observe designations on the works on view at the Rosicrucian Museum, since many were copies, and were not appropriate to select for their assignment. No students selected plays or any live performance.

The general guidelines for the assignment asked students to: “prepare an essay that is both an evaluation of an arts experience as well as a description of your feelings in response to it (i.e. an affective response). For your arts experience this semester, you may include activities such as visiting a museum of art or related material, an art gallery visit, a theatre production (no movies), a live reading of a play or a live poetry reading, a live performance of music or dance, or some other interactive arts activity. Be sure that your arts experience is relevant to the era covered this semester – Antiquity. If you are in doubt as to whether some event or artwork is appropriate, please ask me BEFORE you select it.”
Expectations for student responses were directed to a specific artwork, or at most a comparison of two works. A description of the object(s) with care in visually attending to the work was required, as was an account of students’ experiences upon observing the work. Students attended to aspects of surface color and design, they noted features of works that were familiar to them from readings and lectures (e.g. features of sculptures that would identify works in terms of time period and provenance), they noted details of wear (missing parts of objects and how they were dealt with by the museum – not repaired or filled in, repaired in a different color with alternative materials, etc.) Such close viewing caused students to ask about repairs to works – were works sometimes so damaged as to have been in pieces when found? How might certain objects have been used? Students were sometimes surprised to see polychrome remains on sculptures, challenging stereotypes of ancient sculptural appearance for some.

Students’ affective responses included surprise at some of the representations and images they discovered as part of ancient depictions, curiosity addressed to both the craft of ancient objects as well as the restoration choices made by the museums regarding the works on display, a sense of context and time – works in some cases being more than 2000 years old, and available to students viewing, etc. Many students indicated pleasure in having some understanding of what they viewed, and suggested that they valued their experiences more because of their preparation from classes and reading for what they experienced. The in-person experience of artworks for which students have been prepared is the beginning of a willingness to explore the arts outside of the classroom. Over the four semesters in the Humanities Honors Program, students become comfortable in arts engagement of many sorts, in many contexts.

On of the challenges with this assignment is that students sometimes interpret the exploration of affective responses as mere expression of preference – “liking” or “disliking” what they see. In preparing students for their arts experience, seminar discussions encourage addressing what is observable, and how it might be described, apart from personal preferences. Learning to look and describe becomes important preparation for arts experiences. It also prepares students for active attention to what is presented in a stage production in future semesters.

During this AY, 100% of students found their way to a museum to complete the assignment. Tickets stubs or museum maps were required to be attached to the assignments when turned in to demonstrate attendance. Although students had the opportunity to re-write the assignment after receiving comments, to improve their work, fewer than 10% of students chose to do so. Approximately 15% of students received a grade of C+ or below.

(3) 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.)

To improve students’ attention to their sensory experiences of the arts, we have planned to test students observations with greater scrutiny in quizzes and examinations, with the aim of improving not only their attention to the specifics of the artworks, but also to improve attention to details in other contexts such as map reading, and textual descriptions. It is also our hope that such encouragement to improve attention to specific content will motivate improvements in note-taking during lectures.
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?
General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title __HUM 2A, Modern World Cultures-Honors____ GE Area ___D2____
HUM 1A/B, 2A/B  Background of World Culture and Society; Modern Culture and Social Institutions
GE Areas: A1, A2, A3, C1, C2, C3, D2, D3, F1, F2, F3

Results reported for AY ____ 2012-13 ____  # of sections ___4_____ # of instructors ___4_____ 

Course Coordinator: ___Cynthia Rostankowski_____ E-mail: ___Cynthia.Rostankowski@sjsu.edu_____

Department Chair: __Chris Jochim______ College: ___Humanities & Arts_______

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, by the department chair, to the Office of Undergraduate Studies, with an electronic copy to the home college by September 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?

“Students will be able to place contemporary developments in cultural, historical, environmental, and spatial contexts.”

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

To assess this objective, we examined student responses to one of our midterm questions. Here is the question:

11. “What is ‘socially constructed inequality’? How does Rousseau’s theory anticipate this modern term? Why is it important to know?”

This question was one of 15 short-answer questions on the exam, from which students chose 10 questions. The exam was 75 minutes in length, so responses would average 7 ½ minutes in length. Students also had some choice as to which questions to answer. The questions were graded on a 1-10 point scale, with 10 being perfect and 0 being a completely wrong or omitted answers.

Data was returned for 3 of 4 sections of the course. 59 students from those three sections chose to answer this question. The average grade for the 59 students was 8.6.

Each of the three faculty commented on their impressions of whether students had attained the learning objective, based on their reading the responses in their section. Following are their comments:

“Of those who answered, I thought that 15/16 students showed that good attainment of the learning objective, with 7 showing outstanding attainment. Their answers showed that they understood that contemporary inequalities grew out of social constructs that were developed over a long period of history.”

“Students clearly understood the ‘socially constructed’ part. Many were able to provide details concerning Rousseau’s focus on property as the cause but for some students this part was superficially addressed. Almost all understood the contemporary importance in addressing social inequalities today.”

“Most students showed that they attained the objective at a good or very good level. Most did well in discussing contemporary issues such as racism in the context of Rousseau's writing about ‘artificial’ inequalities, describing them as growing out of a history of the development of such social constructs. Five did this with a degree of sophistication, eleven showed a very good or clear basic understanding of the idea, and two were able to state the main point but without much elaboration.”
Summary:
Nearly all students who answered this question did show that they understood that contemporary problems like inequality grew out of cultural and historical contexts. This speaks directly to the learning outcome.

Sample answers:
1. Socially constructed inequality is how society defines the social, physical, and emotional differences we judge each other upon. Rousseau’s Second Discourse showcases how such inequality came to be through an anthropological and psychological study. Man began as a hunter-gatherer. Slowly he and his family began to band together with other families to live together in a cave (where no one truly knew whose father was whose) and evolving to a tribal community. Dance becomes a favorite activity to bring everyone together since everyone now lives in separate huts. Slowly people begin to compare the best dancers, the est looking, the strongest, the most motherly, and best future mate. With the settlement in one place farming and metallurgy (to create tools to assist in farming) is discovered and the poor and rich begin to be divided. Metal products come in demand, and land starts to be the factor of income and suddenly the protection of property is needed which eventually leads to the need for government and consequentially a group of high powered people who attempt to keep man’s inclination of self-preservation in check. Wants suddenly seem to supercede needs at this point, which in this anthropological study showcases the definition of social inequality and how it came to be.

2. Socially constructed inequality is the term for inequalities that are believed to have been constructed by society. Rousseau says that human beings are all born equal, but the more a society develops, the more potential there is for inequality. With mass accumulation of property, laws must be put in place. And with the government only protecting people with property, an inequality between people comes into existence. This is important to know because it explains almost every inequality in our modern society today.

3. There are two types of inequality: natural and political (moral) inequality. The latter is a convention created by man and evolves throughout the growth of society. An example today is racism. Rousseau says that humans started out equal, until the invention of agriculture and metallurgy. This created the need for land, which created private property. This creates a division of labor and eventually a division of rich and poor, based on how much property one owns. The distinction of rich and poor makes humans become selfish, greedy and wicked. This difference creates a rift in humanity and there are now some men who are better (richer) than others. It is important because as humans we seek the approval of others (amour propre). We will change our appearances and behavior to become accepted. As society gets more complex, this need to “adapt” grows. He says humanity is covered in too many layers of civilization, which is not good because society has negative influences on human nature.

4. Natural inequality is merely inevitable differences between people, like height or strength, but socially constructed inequalities are those forces in society that prevent a person from obtaining their wants and needs like those around them on the basis of some fabricated belief, taboo, or stigma. For example, segregated swimming pools mark people of different races as unequal, but there is nothing natural in this, only the social belief that it is natural. Rousseau realized that the creation of inequality in society is from a flawed logic, but that because inequality is constructed by man it can be destroyed by man also. Rousseau theorizes that this constructed inequality stemmed from when man first began to conceptualize private ownership and distinguish himself and his property from those around him. His theory is important today because understanding the misconceptions about inequality can help us spread equality among our fellow human beings and achieve a more enlightened lifestyle.

5. Rousseau outlined two forms of inequality, natural and artificial. Natural inequalities are given at birth (such as height, skin color), but artificial inequalities are socially constructed. Skin color is a natural differentiation, but racism is a socially imposed inequality. Rousseau’s writing on inequality outlines many modern social issues, such as racism, classism, sexism, and homophobia. His artificial inequality, basically describes the prejudices that plague our society. It is important to know because these prejudices and inequalities hold back society as a whole. It fits into his idea that an equal society is needed to advance into greater forms and achieve greater social, political and technological heights.
(3) 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.)

No modifications are planned because of these results.

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?
General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title: HUM 2B, Modern World Cultures-Honors

GE Areas: C2 and A2

HUM 1A/B, 2A/B Background of World Culture and Society; Modern Culture and Social Institutions

GE Areas: A1, A2, A3, C1, C2, C3, D2, D3, US1, US2, US3

Results reported for AY 2014-15 # of sections 4 # of instructors 4

Course Coordinator: Cynthia Rostankowski E-mail: Cynthia.Rostankowski@sju.edu

Department Chair: Chris Jochim College: Humanities & Arts

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, by the department chair, to the Office of Undergraduate Studies, with an electronic copy to the home college by September 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?

All of the following learning objectives were addressed for Area A2: Recognize aesthetic qualities and processes that characterize works of the human intellect and imagination; respond to works of art both analytically (in writing) and affectively (in writing or through other forms of personal and artistic expression), and understand the historical or cultural contexts in which specific works of art were created.

The following objective was addressed for C2: Respond to such works by writing both research-based critical analyses and personal responses.

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

These objectives were assessed by students' research essays for the semester. To assess students' ability to form clear thesis statements, students were given two short assignments to bring them to thesis statement formulation, and their path to research in support of them. The first assignment required students for select a topic from the various readings covered during the semester, state it, then offer three 6-8 sentence paragraphs each from a different perspective on the topic. A topic might be: Emerson’s American Transcendentalism, or Okonkwo in Things Fall Apart, or John Stuart Mill’s On Liberty. Students’ topic selections led to critical thinking yielding the several perspectives they needed. Some of the perspectives on these topics included “Transcendentalism does not limit its subscribers' religious perspectives,” or “Okonkwo's stubbornness becomes a problem for his village of Umoja because he undermines traditions while also supporting them,” or “Although Mill's Utilitarian ethical system rejects rights, Mill makes an exception and acknowledges people's right to liberty.” From these perspectives, students were able to arrive at thesis statements, with in-class and office hours discussion and further exploration of their topics. The aim of this assignment was to move students toward reflective activities regarding topics that would bring them to thesis statements of substance. Coming up with three perspectives was challenging for most students, and required critical thinking, careful reading of their primary texts, and lots of questions about what would constitute a well-formed thesis claim. Virtually all students needed assistance in class and during office hours to carry out the first stage of preparing to write a research essay.
Once thesis statements were formed, students began the second assignment, which asked them to search for scholarly sources by using some of the databases provided by the MLK Jr. Library. Their preferred database was JSTOR, since it included articles from scholarly journals exclusively. This led students to the practice of using key words to search for relevant materials, and refining those key word searches by critically considering and refining their choices. Once appropriate essays were identified, students were asked to create an annotated bibliography consisting of three sources relevant to and useful in supporting the selected thesis claim, with well-formed MLA style citations for each of the articles. The annotations consisted of a 8-12 sentence paragraph for each source, recounting the content of the article, and pointing out the ways it would be relevant in supporting the student’s thesis statement. Careful attention to expressive writing was encouraged. Writing with the aim of reporting the content of a scholarly essay was challenging to students, and required attention to spelling, sentence construction, and grammar. About 20% of students needed to seek out more suitable scholarly sources than those initially selected, and about 1/3 of students needed to correct the citations of their sources. Attention to details such as inclusion of periods in appropriate places, and proper indentation were typical problems. Because students were able to revise both the first and second assignments, feedback led to greater attention to relevance of sources, and details regarding use of MLA style requirements for their writing.

The third assignment, writing the research essay, was, for most students, a straightforward writing assignment. Students reported that their writing was more focused, and less prone to digression away from thesis support in their writing than in previous research assignments in contexts outside of Humanities Honors. Students were also attuned to careful sentence construction, and the mechanics of writing since they were guided to such attention in the earlier assignments. Grades assigned for research essays yielded no papers with grades lower than C+ across three of the four seminars. Fewer than 15% of students across the seminars that participated in this assignment format chose to re-write their essays, according to seminar instructors.

(3) 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.)

Because this three-assignment method requires extensive one-on-one interaction with students, additional seminar time will be set aside for small group engagement with the first and second assignments, and immediate instructor feedback when groups have questions while pursing perspectives, or checking citations. There is no plan to consolidate the assignments however, since positive student response to their improved understanding of the process of thesis formulation and research is great.

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?