General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title   **LING 21 LANGUAGE AND THINKING**    GE Area **A3**

Results reported for **AY 2015-16**  # of sections **21** (F15: 14; S16:7)  # of instructors: **11**

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Department Chair: **SWATHI VANNIARAJAN**    College: **HUMANITIES & 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 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 GELO(s) were assessed for the course during the AY?**

**GELO 1**: Students should be able to locate and evaluate sources, through library research, and integrate research through appropriate citation and quotation.

**GELO 2**: Students should be able to present effective arguments that use a full range of legitimate rhetorical and logical strategies to articulate and explain their positions on complex issues in dialogue with other points of view.

(2) **What were the results of the assessment of this course?**

The data considered are based on reports from seven of the 11 instructors accounting for 432 of the 568 students enrolled. Although all sections require two to three essays, data for assessing both GELOs were reported by different instructors from one or more than one argumentative essay. In reporting the results, some instructors used grades and percentage of students achieving each grade, others used average grade for the class, and two instructors used a four-point rubric and number of students achieving each level. In so doing, most individual reports did not distinguish grades for the two GELOs, except for the ones using rubrics for assessment.

**GELO 1 & 2**

Grades distribution

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<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>F</th>
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<td>17</td>
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Rubric

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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>TOTALs</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
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Instructors from 4 sections (108 students) reported average performance at 86% for both GELOs.

What were the lessons learned from the assessment?
Instructors report that the library orientation, one of the course activities for promoting information literacy, has proven effective in how students identify and retrieve sources for the evidence-based argumentative essay. Also, allowing students to choose the topic of their essay, as opposed to being assigned it, has contributed to more lively investment in the process of writing and argumentation.

Some instructors report that a surprising number of students failed to use in-text citation, even among ones whose scores place them at the exceeds/meets level. The two-draft system used helped them in working through these issues, since it allowed for tailored comments to each student about his/her work, which led to improvement in their use of outside sources during the semester.

**GELO 2**

Rubric criteria used in two sections
- Organize information to be compatible with the purpose and audience
- Provide relevant details to accomplish the purpose and meet the specific audience’s needs
- Develop comprehensive messages for the purpose of the assignment
- Provide in depth research to support their stance

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What were the lessons learned from the assessment?

One instructor reports that breaking down each essay assignment into steps to be completed over time, thus adding one more step to the process of writing the essay, gave his students the opportunity to receive more feedback from peers as well as the instructor, with visible success. Another instructor reports that he offered extra credit for visiting with a writing tutor, and those who took advantage of this absolutely showed substantial improvement in logical presentation of their arguments.

(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.)**

Individual course instructors are planning to make adjustments to their sections to better address GELO1, for example, by exploring ways to increase students’ awareness of the importance of proper in-text citation, such as building a component into the lectures. For better addressing GELO2, some instructors plan to break down each essay assignment into steps to be completed over time. The additional step may involve the students presenting their essay project to the class before the essay is due giving them the opportunity to develop their essays over time, with more feedback than they got previously.

In terms of data collection for this multi-section course, a team of lead instructors has met on several occasions during the Spring 2016 semester and developed a rubric to be used for evaluating the final essay. As the final essay is a common assignment in all the sections and it addresses all GELOs, it was chosen for data collection for the subsequent semesters. The new rubric was included in the course’s recertification sample syllabus (attached) submitted in Spring 2016. In meetings to be scheduled throughout AY 2016-17, the team of instructors will use the rubric and revise it as needed for optimum usability in all sections. We expect that the use of a common rubric for essay evaluation will address the problem of the variability we encountered in data collection and reporting. Also, the
course coordinator will make sure that all instructors turn in reports and do so in a timely fashion by sending out reminders, as appropriate.

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 (GELOs), Content, Support, and Assessment? If they are not, what actions are planned?

Instructors of all sections were given the latest recertified sample syllabus for the course and were encouraged to use a similar set of assignments to address each GELO. Meetings in the beginning of each semester are conducted to ensure that all instructors are aware of the GELO(s) to be assessed at that particular semester.

(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 GELOs for writing.

No large sections were offered.