**General Education Annual Course Assessment Form**

Course Number/Title  LING 21 Language and Thinking     GE Area  A3

Results reported for AY 2016-17  # of sections 20 (F16: 10; S17: 10)  # of instructors 11

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Department Chair: Swathi Vanniarajan  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 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 5: Students should be able to effectively distinguish and convey inductive and deductive patterns as appropriate, sequencing arguments and evidence logically to draw valid conclusions and articulate related outcomes (implications and consequences)

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

The data considered are based on reports from ten of the 11 instructors accounting for 475 of the 490 students enrolled. All sections require an argumentative essay in which students explore a controversial issue offering arguments from both sides of the issue. They are expected to present sound and cogent arguments informed by bibliographic sources and to point out fallacies in arguments of either side. Students worked towards developing their argumentation skills in problem set and quizzes, as well as midterm exam. They developed their essays in two steps, by revising a draft after peer review and/or in-person meeting with the instructor. In reporting the results, instructors used a four-point rubric (that focuses on both content and form) and the number of students achieving each level. (Details of the rubric are available upon request)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High performance</th>
<th>Average performance</th>
<th>Marginal performance</th>
<th>No submission</th>
<th>Total # of students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19 sections</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>165</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, with 86% of the essays having been assessed for average and high performance, we can generalize that students have met the learning objective. There were two issues that were identified by one or more instructors as needing attention and intervention.
The first issue that was posed by several instructors was that students, even the ones who met expectations, were challenged to develop meaningful reasoning and to write clear arguments.

The second issue identified independently by three instructors was the choice of topics for the argumentative essay. They found that students were not able to choose topics that were rich enough for exploration from both sides and also that they tended towards overdiscussed issues, like abortion and the death penalty, to which instructors were averse because of their commonality.

(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.)

Several instructors were planning to incorporate into their class time more practice with analyzing and developing counterarguments. One instructor suggested scaffolding the final essay assignment so that students could research and develop “pro” and “con” arguments separately before they formulate their final essay. This suggestion was put into effect and showed considerable success. Another instructor reports having implemented with success the scaffolding by separating the tasks of arguing both sides and then selecting one side to develop further in two separate essays.

To limit the range of topics students explore in their argumentative essay, one instructor suggested a choice from among a number of news articles on current events that the students will have posted throughout the semester on a discussion board. We will follow up on this suggestion in the next AY to evaluate its efficacy.

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?

All sections are aligned with the A3 GELOs.

(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.

There are no large sections offered for this course. Revisions of essays are built into the class schedule.