General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title _ENVS 010_  GE Area _B2________________________________

Results reported for AY __2013‐14_______  # of sections ____4_________  # of instructors _____2_________

Course Coordinator: ______R.O’Malley_  E‐mail: _rachel.omalley@sjsu.edu_

Department Chair: ___ R.O’Malley (acting)____ College: ____SocSci_

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 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?
SLO #2: Students should be able to demonstrate ways in which science influences and is influenced by complex societies, including political and moral issues.
(2) What were the results of the assessment of this course? What were the lessons learned from the assessment?

In each chapter of the required textbook and on each of the five mini‐exams, students are exposed to (and tested on), scientific case studies relating to biological, cultural, geographical, nutritional, hydrological, climatological, ecological, social, political, and ethical issues including (but not limited to): how personal and societal choices affect human and environmental health, population growth and resource use, species loss (and conservation), and climate change.

From a total of 120 students taught by one instructor, on assessment activities, 75% received As, 20% Bs, 2% C, 2%D, and the 1% who received an F was through absenteeism. Students do well when the bar is set higher; students struggle with time management.

Diversity issues: In our first class, we hold an in‐class social science experiment, where students participate in a spontaneous survey measuring student perceptions, stereotypes, and judgements (four photos of individuals differentiated by race, class, and profession), and then analyze the data collected during an all‐class discussion. Throughout the semester, students are divided into small groups (for small group discussion), and are constantly exposed to, reminded of, and enlightened about different learning styles and ways to approach scientific learning.

Another instructor uses a Keystone XL debate write up to assess the SLO: After an in‐class debate between the “pro” and “against” groups, students wrote a response to the debate itself and their own personal views on the upcoming Keystone XL decision. They were to take into consideration ecology and sustainability topics that were covered during the semester in addition to economic and political implications. Grade breakdown on this assignment reflected high success rates, except for students who do not complete the assignment:  A 81/96; B 0/96; C 1/96; D 1/96; F 1/96; no submission 12/96

Students in these sections also used the myfootprint.org website to assess their personal/family footprint. After learning what their current impact is, students used the website to research ways that they—as individuals and communities—can reduce their impact on resources. Grade breakdown for this assignment also reflected high success rates, except for students who do not complete the assignment:  A: 75/96, B: 4/96; C: 5/96, D: 5/96, F: 2/96, no submission: 5/96.
Additionally, throughout the semester the class discussed topics such as biodiversity importance and loss, human influences on natural resources, laws and regulations that affect natural resources (ie. Clean Air Act, Kyoto Protocol, Surface Mining Reclamation Act, Endangered Species Act, etc), and the use of genetic engineering in medicine (ie. new/more medicines, human body parts for transplant, who gets “real” vs GE parts, non-medical use, etc). Question on the final exam were also used to assess this SLO. Below are a few examples:

- #21: The tragedy of the commons refers to the overuse and/or exploitation of? (shared resources)
- #26: The ability to use genetic engineering to create medicine for non-medical uses raises questions of ? (ethics)
- #35: One reason for doing ecological restoration is? (to help ecosystems that we have damaged)
- #37: Which of the following is not one potential problem associated with nuclear energy? (requires fossil fuels; other correct options were high cost, public safety, ocean impacts)
- #38: Regarding “Future Conditional”...Which of the following social and/or environmental issues is not one that all of the groups are dealing with? (advertising junk food to children; other correct options were mismanagement of resources, pollution, poverty)
- #60: In addition to increasing human population, _____ is a factor in world hunger. (food waste)

Written midterm questions, the Keystone XL debate response, and an in-class free write response to the “Future Conditional” documentary—which discusses how environmental and social justice are closely tied together for many communities—all included issues of diversity such as race, income, education, and urban versus rural communities.

(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.) Instructors report that having a student assistant present during class at least once a week to help oversee small-group discussions would be helpful.

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?

This course continues to be well-aligned with the Goals, Student Learning Objectives (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.

Students receive thorough feedback on their writing through a combination of revision assignments, group assignments, peer editing and instructor feedback.