General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title: Philosophy 66: Introduction to Aesthetics  GE Area: C1

Results reported for AY 2017-2018  
# of sections: 8  # of instructors: 2

Course Coordinator: Tom Leddy  E-mail: Thomas.leddy@sjsu.edu

Department Chair: Janet Stemwedel  College: H & A

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?

SLO 1: Arts courses will enable students to recognize aesthetic qualities and processes that characterize works of the human intellect and imagination.

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

We focused this year on having the students learn how to recognize the qualities of beauty and sublimity. Prof. Leddy says: In the very first class students are asked to give three examples of things they consider to be beautiful and then come up with their own definition of beauty which they then discuss with other members of the class. Later in the semester students learn about the aesthetic quality of beauty through studying the theories of Pythagoras, Plato, Aquinas, Hume, and others. The aesthetic quality of the sublime is covered through studying the writings of Burke and Kant on this topic. Mid-terms showed that 80 per cent got Bs or better and, given that the questions related to the SLO, this showed the students understood the material. The processes that characterize the works of art we study in class (from ancient Greek tragedy to hip-hop dance) include, for instance, inspiration, which is addressed in Plato’s Ion, poetic making, which is addressed in the Symposium, and self-expression, as found in Collingwood and in the writings of recent French feminists. Students are expected to write a research paper based on a personal field trip to an art gallery or museum in which they describe their response to a work of art. So not only the creative process but the processes of reception, which, they learn, John Dewey thought was continuous with the creative process, are explored. This continues to be the most effective assignment and 70 per cent of the students received a B or better. Fern Alberts writes “Throughout the semester students engage with philosophical texts that deal with aesthetic matters (art, judgments about art, music, architecture, dance, etc). A few weeks into the semester, students can already identify aesthetic judgments and recognize/use important arguments (Hume, Plato, Bell) in these judgments. About 85% of the students seem to do well examining aesthetic concepts on the mid-term and this number usually increases by the final exam.”

(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.)
There are no plans at this time.

**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 - Janet Stemwedel, Chair, Philosophy Department

(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.

The instructor of record provides feedback and grades all writing assignments. The instructor of record, welcomes, if not requires, first drafts of all writing assignments and provides feedback on drafts. If sections are exceptionally oversized they are graded by the instructor of record with the assistance of an Instructional Student Assistant. The Instructional Student Assistant must be approved both by the Instructional Assistant Coordinator and the Philosophy Department Chair for their excellence in both composition and their expertise in the field of the philosophy at issue. Whenever an Instructional Student Assistant (ISA) aids in the grading of a large course, s/he provides feedback along with grading. In all cases, when the help of an ISA is employed, the instructor of record must explicitly notify the students of the class that some writing assignments have been graded and feedback has been provided by an ISA. The instructor of record then, if so requested by a student, must reread, provide additional feedback, and regrade the written assignment, if a grade revision is warranted.