General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title          FREN 25A          GE Area               C2 Letters

Results reported for AY     2014-2015          # of sections     1          # of instructors     1

Course Coordinator:         Danielle Trudeau       email:         danielle.trudeau@sjsu.edu

Department Chair:           Damian Bacich            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: Letters courses will enable students to recognize how significant works illuminate enduring human concerns.

Assessment of this SLO is based on ten (10) journal entries, assigned every other week, and four (4) essays assigned during the semester.

The course this semester was completely restructured with a new reader that included some major French literary texts from the Middle Ages to the 19th century. The goal was to train second-year French learners to progressively read more complex, literary texts in French, develop their vocabulary knowledge and reflect on their reading by writing short essays. The traditional approach, which uses short texts to illustrate grammar points, was reversed in order to give more significance to reading comprehension. The students first read the texts in class, asked questions on the parts that were harder to understand, and searched the texts for grammatical structures essential to understanding (e.g. masculine or feminine forms, personal pronouns, locative adverbs, verb forms, possessive pronouns). In-class reading activities consisted of each student reading one part out loud, then discussing the texts’ main features, i.e. structure, characters, story line, time, location, events, themes. The students were then assigned to redo or complete the readings by themselves, research the vocabulary, and review or learn the particular grammatical points that were mentioned during the group activity.

This approach and the new reader allowed the students to develop their reading competency more in depth, and according to their own needs, and therefore prepared them better to reflect on their readings in written form. We also had more time in class to explore some variations of the same themes in different cultures (the students in this class came from eight different countries!) as well as in other art forms such as films, songs, theatre, and visual arts.

The course reader and course ancillary materials included fables, some of which were presented in other versions or media (e.g. “La Cigale et la Fourmi” (“The Ant and the Grasshopper”) in the classical, medieval, La Fontaine’s, and Disney’s versions), some famous medieval moral tales, “La
Housse partie” ("The Divided Blanket"), and short stories from the 19th century: “Aux champs” ("The Adopted Son") and "La parure" ("The Necklace") by Maupassant, “La chèvre de Monsieur Seguin” ("Monsieur Seguin’s Little Goat") by Daudet. The culminating text was the “Eldorado” chapters from Voltaire’s Candide (ch. 17 and 18).

The students discussed in class, then wrote on the following themes: the passage of time, the uneven distribution of work and wealth, the respective duties of parents and children, social classes and values, conformism and anti-conformism, education and social progress or liberation (i.e. of women), the pursuit of riches, love, and freedom, the perfect political regime (such as Voltaire’s Eldorado).

The students responded very well to this new format and approach, even though the readings were challenging. As it turned out very quickly, the themes were sometimes easier to grasp than they thought at first glance since the text selections reflected several themes that are well represented in many cultures. Several students could compare the French version and other versions of the stories in English, Spanish, German, Persian, Vietnamese, etc.

The students wrote ten (10) journal entries and four (4) essays. They were supposed to write a short journal entry (one page) every week. In the beginning, they were given the choice of developing either a theme of their choice or reflect on one of the discussion topics included in the reader. Most students who did this assignment regularly dramatically improved their written proficiency, becoming increasingly able to discuss complex ideas, describe conflicts, and evaluate the moral suggested by the texts. The essays were on assigned topics, and three of them came with suggested outlines. The themes the students wrote on included: the fables’ practical or moral lessons; parents and children, adoption and education; social conformism and the pursuit of mundane values; about the idea of a perfect world and reality.

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

The changes introduced in FREN 25A yielded overall excellent results. Less emphasis was put on grammar and more on reading comprehension and essay writing: grammar and vocabulary tests and the grammar part in the final weighed 30%, while 80% went to written assignments and essay questions in the final.

The students enjoyed the readings and the activities around them, especially having to read out loud in class which made them better understand the texts, being able to discuss the contents, and having to regularly write journal entries. Participation was high, with twelve (12) out of thirteen (13) students regularly attending class and contributing to the discussions and other activities. The students regularly turned in the journal entries, with their writing becoming more structured and more in-depth toward the end of the semester – a rather unusual pattern. Eight (8) students received an A for the journal entries, two (2) received a B, two (2) received a C, and one (1) received a D. There was a little less enthusiasm for the essays, perhaps because they traditionally represent an exercise viewed as more challenging. Four (4) students received an A for the four essays, five (5) received a B, three (3) received a C, and one (1) received an F. The lower grades were mostly due to spelling and grammar mistakes.

The new FREN 25A format and approach definitely contribute to better accomplishing this G.E. learning objective of the course, while also preparing students to better pursue the French B.A. program learning objectives.

(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.)

- Include in the reader fewer, longer texts, as well as drama excerpts, e.g. scenes from plays by Molière, Marivaux, Anouilh, and Ionesco.
Revise and expand the questions that accompany the texts in order to cover the main aspects of the stories or the plays: number of characters, their profession, time and location of the story, themes, etc.

Distribute at the beginning of the semester the description of the assignments.

Develop a class vocabulary list: each week, students will receive participation points if they expand the list with words or phrases taken from that week’s or previous ones’ readings.

Increase the length of the journal entries to two pages every week, giving three questions to answer. Letting the students define their topics very seldom yielded the results expected from the assignment.

Use the French B.A. rubric to grade the written assignment: 60% for structure and content, 40% for grammar, spelling, proper use of internet resources. Let the students know at the beginning of the semester.

Prevent cheating: have the students turn in their papers as Word files via Canvas, with Turnitin activated; let the students know at the beginning of the semester and remind them during the semester that hiring tutors (including those provided by the university) to rewrite the papers before turning them in is tantamount to cheating and is strictly forbidden.

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 _______ FREN 25B _______ GE Area _______ C2 _______

Results reported for AY _______ 2014/2015 _______ # of sections _______ 1 _______ # of instructors _______ 1 _______

Course Coordinator: _______ Celine Richard Cherif _______ E-mail: _______ celinecherif2000@yahoo.com _______

Department Chair: _______ Damian Bacich _______ 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?

SLO 1: Letters courses will enable students to recognize how significant works illuminate enduring human concerns.

FREN 25B offered an introduction to French literature and French poet, novelist and playwright Marcel Pagnol. Students watched the last adaptations from his plays Marius and Fanny refilmed by filmmaker Daniel Auteuil. The movies were shown in class (French version with English subtitles on Netflix); each movie was shown during three, 30-minute sessions, followed by discussion sessions and comprehension quizzes. Reading was assigned each week as homework and comprehension was evaluated with quizzes posted on Canvas. The students appreciated watching first the movie in class and then reading the corresponding parts from the play at home. Most of the students had never read a French play before.

Along with these two plays and two movies, the students also watched selected parts of César original movie by Marcel Pagnol, La Fille du Puisatier directed by Daniel Auteuil, Jean de Florette and Manon des Sources directed by Claude Berri, La Gloire de mon père by Yves Robert. These films based on novels and plays from the first half of the 20th century illustrate the themes that characterize Pagnol: family, childhood, relationship between father and children, gender roles, honor, and love. Contemporary songs illustrating these themes, as well as the culture of the south of France, were incorporated in the program: Dès que le vent soufflera by Renaud, Là-bas by Jean-Jacques Goldman and Marseille by Patrick Fiori.

In order for the students to understand the time period of Fanny and Marius, students also watched in class parts of the French documentary Paris, Années folles (Paris, the Roaring Twenties) written by Emmanuel Blanchard and Vincent Labaume. The documentary in French is available on-line and was posted on Canvas for the students to watch entirely at home. Parts of the commentary were written out in French in order to help the students better understand the documentary. Finally, the students were also encouraged to watch interviews of Pagnol and Auteuil.
What were the results of the assessment of this course? What were the lessons learned from the assessment?

Assessment of this SLO was based on seven (7) journal entries assigned every other week, five (5) short essays assigned during the semester and four (4) essays assigned in class.

The students had to resubmit their journal entries and short essays. Work was not graded until students had made a sufficient number of corrections. Students were encouraged to submit their work online and to use Word. Journal entries and short essays submitted without accents or without the use of spellcheck in French were not accepted. A rubric was distributed to the students after the second essay in class:

- 30% Structure: introduction, body, conclusion; 3 sections for the body.
- 30% Content: Description and commentary; use of learned vocabulary, ideas.
- 20% Presentation: handwritten or typed, with accents, double spaced
- 20% Grammar, spelling, style

Students were invited to grade their own work according to this rubric. After the first two minutes of bewilderment, they realized that taking time to evaluate their own work could help them become more aware of their weaknesses. They realized that the grade they gave to themselves matched in most cases the grade assigned by their instructor. They also learned that organizing their thoughts, the structure of their essay, and improving the overall presentation of their essays enhanced the communicative value of their papers.

Students all did well in these assignments because they were forced to resubmit, correct their mistakes and reorganize their work. Students with initially lower grades had to work more, and some of them had to resubmit more than twice. Students with better proficiency were forced to use more complex grammatical structures. They were happy as it allowed them to work at their own pace, level and progress. No problems with these assignments were identified except for the fact that students generally are not accustomed to resubmitting their own work multiple times, reading the comments made by their instructor and correcting their mistakes.

Finally, the students were invited to pick one of their best or preferred essays and rewrite it in order to be published in the student publication Le Crouton. Students were happy to take part assembling their articles. They all accepted to have their work published and were fully aware their peers would read it. Two previous issues of Le Crouton were published on the Department Facebook website in 2013. Although one student initially asked not to publish her work in this publication, she changed her mind once it was explained to her that her article was essential to the others (The women in the 20's). Le Crouton embodies and synthesizes pretty well what the students have learned in FREN 25B about the human, universal concerns represented in Marcel Pagnol’s plays but, most of all, it gives them a chance to showcase their work and to be proud of themselves.

The goal of French 25B class is to train second-year French learners to improve their writing skills in French while being introduced to French literature, culture and history. The organization of the class and the materials used supported and encompassed very well the SLO 1 goal. Students were aware of their progress in their writing as well as their understanding of French culture and history. It gave them an opportunity to discover an author and to understand his work according to a time period usually not well known. The articles in Le Crouton represent the themes covered in class, such as the
evolution of women’s rights, of society, of the family or the relations between parents and children, and the freedom revolution concept. Students were particularly interested in the comparison between a play and its movie adaptation, as well as the comparison between the different adaptations of the same movie through the twenty-century. It allowed them to discover to a great extent how literature and cinema (Le 7e Art) are a direct reflection of a time period, and how they mirror a particular culture and its societal changes.

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.)

Unfortunately, there was insufficient time to introduce the importance of American artists and writers present in France during this time-period, such as Josephine Baker, who symbolizes herself all the themes specified above and was one of the rare American artist who decided to stay in France during the Great Depression. This course would greatly benefit from extending the classroom contact hours to two (2) two-hour class periods a week.

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?