General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title: Philosophy 70A: Ancient Philosophy  
GE Area: C2

Results reported for AY 2017-2018  # of sections: 2  # 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 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 1: Letters courses will enable students to recognize how significant works illuminate enduring human concerns.

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

The following essay question, open book, asks students to discuss one of the most famous descriptions not only of reality, but also of the human predicament, the Allegory of the Cave. The second option also asks the students to reflect on the nature of the self and its relation to society, through Plato’s interpretation in Republic. To be adequately answered, the questions want the student to entertain not only metaphysical and epistemological concerns, but also profound ethical questions that are certainly of concern up to this day.

1) Describe Plato’s metaphysics as represented in both the "Line” as well as the Allegory of the Cave. Do a thorough job and make sure to define what a Form is as well as the Good.

Or:

Explain the three parts of the soul, its virtues and their relation to the City-State. How should they be related, both for the State and self? And what happens when they aren’t in harmony? This will inevitably involve some discussion of the idea of the just and unjust and, if you can engage it, the Ring of Gyges.
Using the final exam grades overall, the breakdown was as follows:

A to A- range 6; B+ to B range 14; B- to C+ range 9; C to C- range 6; 35 tests.

(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)

- Prof. Williamson reports: Instead of having one group do a major presentation for each section (Pre-Socratics, Socrates, Plato’s *Republic*, Aristotle, etc.), I am having groups of 5 all engaged in each section. So, for example, I have approximately 6 groups and 6 Pre-Socratic Philosophers to consider (the Milesians, Heraclitus, etc.). Each group does a concise review of each philosopher or school. I have emphasized that they are to ask questions of the class and not just deliver bullet points. This, a review sheet and a sample test question that they have to do will constitute the basis for the First Midterm which covers the Pre-Socratics and early Greek history. I plan on having groups engage the texts when we get to Plato and Aristotle. I will have each group work on a key section of, say, a half a page and explain it. In these ways, I am hoping to have the students engage with and understand the philosophers we consider.

- I have also cut back on the time I spend on the Pre-Socratics to allow for more consideration of both Plato and especially Aristotle, along with the important Hellenic groups, concentrating on the Stoics. As noted, above, the same group arrangements will hold here too. (I am thinking that not all groups will do Plato, some Aristotle and one or two, the Stoics or other groups such as the Epicureans.)

**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, Department of Philosophy

(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.

The instructor of record provides feedback and grades all writing assignments and 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 (ISA). The ISA 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 philosophy at issue. Whenever an 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. If a student is unhappy with an ISA grade the instructor of record will reread the paper, provide additional feedback, and regrade the assignment (if that is warranted.) Generally speaking, any instructor who is teaching more than 100 GE students in a semester receives ISA help.