General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title: TA 13 Great Comedies in the Theatre    GE Area: C2

Results reported for 2017-18  # of sections: 2  # of instructors: 2

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Department Chair: Elisha Miranda  College: Humanities & 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 GELO(s) were assessed for the course during the AY?

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

GELO #2: Letter courses will enable students to respond to significant works by writing by research-based critical analyses and personal responses.

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

We watched the film and read the play Los Bandidos by Luis Valdes which presents Mexican stereotypes. Students then wrote 10 minutes plays that dealt with the human experience through the use of Mexican/Chicano images. Students collaborated on selecting an issue that they were excited about such as immigration or gay rights. Then they created a short “acto” a short piece that has a message for a larger audience in a public space to interact with their audience.

Students also read Tartuffe by Moliere. Not only does this represent one of the most important comedies ever written, but this was an opportunity to introduce students to a period in history most knew nothing about and a period that reflected spectacle and excesses in the society. Students were able to read in the dramatic form of poetry the marvelous characters Moliere created to reflect the upper economic level of his time. More importantly, students discussed the relationship of human character traits that often cloud one’s decision and causes individuals to make serious mistakes. They examined the religious hypocrisy of Tartuffe matched against the egotistical nature of Orgon, and compared both to human traits that carry through contemporary times. In conjunction with this unit, students studied Commedia dell’arte, one of the most important contributions of the Italian Renaissance to theatre. By portraying aspects of certain Commedia characters, students were able to see...
parallels with the characters in Tartuffe. As they discussed characters from both sources, they had to make specific character traits that often mirrored contemporary comic characters. The most important learning objective is to make sure students see characters and story as human beings as well as caricatures who make audiences laugh.

Students initially had difficulty reading and understanding the language from Renaissance texts. This is true with the poetry of Moliere as well as with the prose of Aristophanes when we read Lysistrata last fall. However, as students gradually read the scripts aloud in class and give life to the characters, they find both stories very funny. When presented in class, the farcical antics of the characters brings laughter to the students.

As with most classical scripts, this assignment is a good assessment of students’ understanding of “unusual” language, however, it takes a great deal of class time to read and interpret the script. I found this class more willing to “try” the difficult material than previous classes, and also able to digest the text more readily.

On the midterm exam, students were asked to correlate the commedia characters with selected characters from Tartuffe. Out of the 39 students enrolled in the class, approximately 95% were able to successfully answer the questions. The students who were unsuccessful with this question, did not do well on the commedia assignment or the oral reading done in class. The combination of reading and performance provides students an opportunity to become creative and innovative as they study more difficult text and at the same time develop a correlation between stories and characters from the past with stories and characters of the present.

(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.)

We will add VietGone by Qui Nguyen, a contemporary comedy about Vietnamese refugees coming to the USA after the 1975 Vietnam War. This will expand our curriculum to address the social/cultural needs of our Asian students.

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? Yes.

(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.

Yes, all sections of the course are still aligned with the benchmarks listed above.