General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title HUM 1A/B, 2A/B  Background of Western Culture and Society; Modern Culture and Social Institutions  GE Areas: A1, A2, A3, C1, C2, C3, D2, D3, F1, F2, F3

Results reported for AY_2011-2012  # of sections _2 teams 4 sections each, 1 team with 3 sections_

# of instructors __11____

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Department Chair: __Chris Jochim___  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?

We evaluated all the SLOs for the two GE areas completed in the second semester of the Humanities Honors Program, namely GE areas A2 and D3. For GE area A2, the SLOs are: 1) write complete essays that demonstrate the ability to perform effectively the essential steps in the writing process (prewriting, organizing, composing, revising, and editing); 2) write complete essays that demonstrate the ability to perform effectively the essential steps in the writing process (prewriting, organizing, composing, revising, and editing); 3) write complete essays that demonstrate the ability to use correct grammar (syntax, mechanics, and citation of sources) at a college level of sophistication; 4) write complete essays that demonstrate the ability to write for different audiences. For GE area D3, the SLOs are: 5) place contemporary developments in cultural, historical, environmental, and spatial contexts; 6) identify the dynamics of ethnic, cultural, gender/sexual, age-based, class, regional, national, transnational, and global identities and the similarities, differences, linkages, and interactions between them; 7) evaluate social science information, draw on different points of view, and formulate applications appropriate to contemporary social issues; 8) apply multidisciplinary material to a topic relevant to policy and social action at the local, national, and/or international levels.

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

In assessing writing skills, all four of the instructors of one of the four-person teams carried out the development of student writing for a research essay by dividing the assignment into three graded phases of preparing a research essay, even though each instructor gave research topics specific to areas of disciplinary emphasis of his or her choosing. Consistently across the four seminar sections of the course, professors were able to observe and evaluate the development of the essays in stages, allowing guidance in specific manageable segments, such as the ways one might approach the formulation of a thesis claim (e.g. begin by asking students to offer three different perspectives on a particular reading assigned for the course), then develop one of the perspectives into a thesis claim to research and support. Meet with students to assure their understanding of the research process, and their awareness of appropriate scholarly sources for an academic essay; generate a required number of sources relevant to the support of the thesis claim, and annotate each source to show its relevance, and after feedback, write the essay. Because every stage of the
development and writing process provided feedback, students were able to revise and improve every part of their work additively. Students also reported greater understanding of the steps to be taken in writing a research essay and why each assignment in the process was required. Students also observed that engaging in research requires preparation, and that knowing what needs to be sought in research is more understandable because of the preparatory steps leading up to it.

(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.)

Some professors have decided to include more in-class “workshopping” of the early stages of viewpoint development to lead to thesis formulation, since peer responses in small groups with instructor guidance can accomplish shared understanding of the reasons for the process. Additionally, students’ awareness of each others’ topics can lead to greater variety of topic selection among them, to avoid over-saturation of only a few topics, and thus a too limited range of thesis choices. Since these stages of research assignment development occur every semester, by the time they are revisited in these evaluations, some identifiable differences should be discernable.

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.