General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title: Linguistics 20: The Nature of Language   GE Area: Area D1
Results reported for AY: 2016-2017   # of sections: 3   # of instructors: 3
Course Coordinator: Scott Phillabaum   E-mail: scott.phillabaum@sjsu.edu
Department Chair: Swathi Vanniarajan   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 to <curriculum@sjsu.edu>, 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 GELO(s) were assessed for the course during the AY?

GELO 4: Students will be able to 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?

Almost every element of this course is aimed at GELO 4, since we explore how language is shaped by the interaction of speakers and the sociocultural environments in which they live. Topics explored include morphology, phonetics, semantics, gendered language, conversational style, register, slang, bilingualism and language standards. In addition to the midterm and final exams, students are evaluated on five field assignments (FA) which require them to engage with language used in various contexts: their own experiences, neologisms, song lyrics, written speech events (advertisements) and service encounters they have off campus.

Even though most of the students speak more than one language, this class explores language in a way that is new to them. However, they learn the concepts relatively quickly, no doubt because the topics deal with ways that everyone uses language and so students can readily apply them to their own lives. Progress can be measured by comparing the scores of FA2 and FA5; FA1, which is largely a self-description, is ignored here. FA2 requires students to find three neologisms, define and explain their use, and place them in the social context in which they arose. FA5 requires that they transcribe six service encounters that they have off campus, and then analyze the language used by the service providers. Scores for FA2 show a fairly broad distribution. The lower scores show problems in following instructions as well as the basic unfamililiarity all students have with this new type of linguistic analysis. Scores for FA5, a much more complex assignment, show remarkable improvement. In their analyses students explored how linguistic behavior interacts with social institutions, culture, and environment. The successful analysis demonstrated the student’s insights
into this interaction. Thus, by the end of the semester, students showed that they had achieved a basic understanding of analyzing linguistic interaction within a given sociocultural environment.

(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.)

At present, no modifications are planned for this course. Each semester, instructors will continue to strive to create assessment activities that require students to work with actual language data as a means to make sense of course concepts. As these assessment data show, students learn best when they are able to relate course concepts to their actual lived experiences.

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, all 3 sections aligned with the area goals, Student Learning Objectives (GELOs), Content, Support, and Assessment.

(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.

Not applicable as the class enrollment cap is 25.