### General Education Assessment Schedule

**Area F1-F2-F3: AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS AND CALIFORNIA GOVERNMENT**

**Course Prefix and Number:** _____  **Course Title:** African Americans in Dev & History and Govt USA

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**Submission Date:** 10/1/2012  **College:** CoSS

| GE Student Learning Objective | When was this SLO assessed?  
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| SLO 1-5                      | Spring 2012

Although Undergraduate Studies’ development of the SLOs for F1-F2- & F3 GE courses is currently underway, we are pleased to report that the quality of student essay writing in AFAM 2A/2B has improved significantly. During the past three years we provided early feedback on student writings using a “buzz essay,” an exercise that requires students to handwrite a response to a prompt on material from the first week of lectures. We provide students feedback within two weeks. We grade spelling, grammar and composition of this one-page essay on a 10-point scale. Although most students score from six to seven points out of 10 on the first buzz essay, the spelling and grammar errors decrease by the timing of the 2nd buzz essay, and continue to appear in only 5-10% of the 70-80 students' final essay assignment. Additionally, we provide tips on how to use Microsoft Word’s tools for checking spelling and grammar, constructing bibliographies, and referencing scholarly works, which increases their skills in this area and produces stronger grades on their end-of-term research paper.

- The short 1-2 page, in-class buzz essays assigned during the first two weeks of the semester help faculty to identify students who may have serious writing challenges and refer them to the Writing Center.
- Our feedback informs students of our expectations, their shortcomings, and the requirements for good grades. Additionally, students learn to proof their papers more carefully before submitting them for a grade.
- Although faculty must spend more time reviewing and grading intermediary stages of students’ writings, our focus on process (research proposal, outline, bibliography, etc.) has rendered higher quality final papers with fewer errors.
- Our new approach to meeting the GE writing requirement has engaged students’ imagination and helped them to focus on the content and quality of their writing, rather than the number of required pages.
- More students complete the final research essay assignment in our lower GE courses (AFAM 2A/2B).
- More student papers evidenced in-text citations, footnotes, endnotes, and a correctly formatted bibliography.