General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title  E169: Ethnicity in American Literature               GE Area     S

Results reported for AY 2015/6 # of sections 1 # of instructors 1

Course Coordinator: ____BALANCE CHOW___________ E-mail: _balance.chow@sjsu.edu____________

Department Chair: __Shannon Miller ________________ College: __Humanities and 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 SLO(s) were assessed for the course during the AY?

SLO 1: Students will be able to describe how identities (i.e. religious, gender, ethnic, racial, class, sexual orientation, disability, and/or age) are shaped by cultural and societal influences within contexts of equality and inequality.

To achieve SLO1 in her class, accordingly, Prof. Karim required students to: give oral presentations (accompanied by a written report) based on close readings of the texts; analyze the texts to offer a critical understanding of the ways that “ethnicity, race, culture” are articulated in the text; conduct group work that involved similar activity; write essays as an extension of the above by way of argumentation or persuasion supported by close reading. To evaluate their success, students were given a midterm and a final exam,with questions pertaining to identification of facts, analysis of passages in terms of their significance to the author, the larger text, and the cultural and historical context.

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

Specific Assignments: brief description of guidelines/requirements etc.

The course guidelines call for all class activities (reading, lectures, discussions, presentations, writing, research, and exams) to address this and other SLOs as described in the greensheet. In practice, part of the course grade can be based on a specific essay-type question in the exam designed to demonstrate the student’s ability to accomplish SLO 1.

The following is an example of the several midterm essay prompts used in E169 (F2015) taught by Prof. Karim:

Write an essay in which you discuss the process by which two or more narrators/characters of the books we have read thus far come to terms with their respective ethnic/racial identities. You may use Go Tell it on the Mountain, China Men, No-No Boy, or Zoot Suit in describing those processes. Design your essay around one or
two themes such as racial prejudice, assimilation, resistance to assimilation, language, alienation, gender roles, inter-generational conflict or whatever you see as important in these novels.

Professor Karim required thoughtful organization, careful proofreading, attention to quoting and citation and a clear thesis supported with examples from the texts; students were also expected to follow the MLA guidelines for college essay.

**Exactly what students had to demonstrate on assignment to show achievement of the SLO**

The coordinator notes that students taking the course generally write multiple essays (total of no less than 5,000 words) to demonstrate their competencies as readers of literary texts, with skills developed toward the mastery of the social, historical, cultural, and literary contexts of the texts studied. Typically, this kind of assignment requires that students should be able to analyze, explore, and interpret, by means of comparative study and/or argumentation, the inter-ethnic and inter-cultural social relationships found in the reading materials. Their ideas are expected to be argued vigorously and supported with evidence derived from the texts.

**How assignment was scored (rubric? Breakdown of grade assigned to show how this particular slo was targeted.**

Prof. Karim required students to write about 1250 words for the SLO-targeted essay and graded it on a 50-point scale. Students were graded both on their ability to engage the text, as well as on the organization, grammar, ability to closely read a text to determine significant themes, motifs, and culturally significant representations. Students had to demonstrate, by way of disciplined textual analysis, their ability to present a cohesive and organized argument about their specific reading of the text.

**Quantitative data/analysis: grades/percentages/scale of high-low**

The following results are from Prof. Karim’s class taught in Fall 2015:

- 20 students receiving A on essays (45-50 points) -- 55+% of the class
- 10 students receiving B on essays (35-45 points) -- 27+% of the class
- 6 students receiving C, C+ on essays (25-35 points) -- 16+% of the class

**Qualitative analysis:**

The coordinator notes that the results are gratifying in that few if any students failed to achieve the SLOs assessed.

**Lesson(s) Learned --**

To quote from the instructor’s reflections: “GE students are often not as well prepared with the close reading of texts—(more so with non-English majors), and thus they require more help with preparation for the essays. Class discussion and presentations are designed to give them the beginnings of developed ideas based on close readings which ultimately can be useful in the develop of midterm and final essays. I find that the SLO based on close reading, particularly of texts and contexts unfamiliar to our students is more challenging. I think the outcome, however, is that they are often exposed to cultures and ideas that are important for their education.”

(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.)**
No changes anticipated.

**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.

(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 SLOs for writing.

**Oral Presentations**

The Department encourages instructors of the course to incorporate oral presentations to enhance student learning; the evaluation of oral presentations depends on the instructor. For example, it may be worth 10% of the overall grade and rated A, B, and C based on content, organization, delivery, and interaction. In Prof. Karim’s case, oral presentations (together with follow-up reports) were 15% of the course grade.

**Writing**

Students receive frequent and thorough feedback on their writing during the course as the content materials of E169 (Ethnicity in American Literature) are mastered by way of personal as well as analytical and expository writing assignments. Instructors teaching E169 often conduct essay-writing and library research workshops as components of their classes; the writing center has also been used as a means to help students improve their writing skills. The use of graduate assistants, resources permitting, would likely enhance the achievement of the writing-related SLO.