General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title: **LING 129: Culture, Language, and Ethnicity in the US**  
GE Area: **S**

Results reported for AY: **2015-16**  
# of sections: **5**  
# of instructors: **3**

Course Coordinator: **Rosemary Henze**  
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Department Chair: **Swathi Vanniarajan**  
College: **H & A**

**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 October 1 of the following academic year.

**Part 1**

(1) **What SLO(s) were assessed for the course during the AY?**  
SLO 3: “Students will be able to describe social actions which have led to greater equality and social justice in the U.S. (i.e. religious, gender, ethnic, racial, class, sexual orientation, disability, and/or age).”

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

**Number of students and sections:** In Fall 2015, a total of 3 sections were offered. Henze taught two sections (N= 28 and 27) and Kataoka taught one section (N=27). The total number of students in Fall was 82. In Spring 2016, 2 sections were offered. Kataoka taught one section (N=29) and Moore taught the other (N= 27). The total number of students in Spring was 56. For the 2 semesters combined, the class served 138 students.

**Assignments that addressed SLO 3:** The assignments that were used to assess this objective varied somewhat across the three instructors. They included (a) Reflective papers on videos (*Speaking in Tongues*; *Do You Speak American?*; *Crosstalk*; and *Just a Piece of Cloth*) (b) midterm and second term exams; (c) quizzes, and (d) student group presentation on *Language Myths*.

**Results of the assessment:**  
*Overall performance as measured by final grades:* In the Fall of 2015, students across the three sections did very well. Fifty-five percent earned As, 35% earned Bs, 6 % earned Cs, and none received D or F. There was one Incomplete and 2 Unauthorized Withdrawals. In Spring of 2016, overall performance was not as strong. Thirty-six percent earned As, 45% earned Bs, and 16% earned Cs. There was one D and one Unauthorized Withdrawal.

*Performance on GELO 3:* In terms of GELO 3 specifically, the assignments related to this objective indicate that almost all students met or exceeded a standard of “B” (good) performance, and approximately 55-74% across all sections met a standard of A- or A. Exceptions to this pattern are the following:

Henze found that 3 students in her 2 sections failed the midterm. She also found that students got progressively better on the video reflection assignments after receiving feedback. Initially, about 50%
showed some weakness in describing social actions that have led to greater equality and social justice, but by the second video reflection, only 30% showed such weakness.

Moore found that the one student whose work was in the C range probably did not put out the required effort to excel on the assignment. And 2 students did not turn in one of the video reflection papers.

Kataoka found that students in Fall 2015 did particularly well on group presentations, using original content based on their own research. They also wrote strong video reflections, connecting the content of the videos with relevant concepts in the course readings. In Spring 2016, however, she noted that students seemed less engaged and that a few students did not appear to digest the course readings well.

**Lessons learned from the assessment:** Moore, Kataoka and Henze met to discuss the course in Summer 2016. We discussed student performance as well as possible reasons why a few students have trouble and receive lower grades. In some cases, we think it is simply that some students do not put their best effort forward, perhaps because for many this is a GE course and not part of the major. In other cases, it may be that students need more guidance on how to develop their analyses and how to apply the learning from the course to their own lives. We also notice a persistent pattern of students not doing the readings prior to class, and ultimately trying to “catch up” on the readings at midterm and final time.

**3) What modifications to the course, or its assessment activities or schedule, are planned for the upcoming year?**

As indicated in our assessment report from 2014-15, we tried using a new book last year (David Johnson’s *Myths about Language for Educators* (2008). When we met to discuss curriculum planning for the coming year, we all agreed that the Johnson book was not very effective for this class. It had erroneous or unclear information in some chapters, and in others it needed more details and examples. Since the book was intended primarily as a source for students to do group presentations, we decided for the coming year to create a set of 7-8 short articles about language myths (some from Johnson and some from Trudgill or other sources) and include it with the regular reading packet for the course. This way students will not have to buy a separate book and we can judiciously choose the articles that work best for this class.

In 2015-16, we added reading quizzes to the assessment plan in order to increase the likelihood that students read the course materials on a regular basis. We found however that that the quizzes took up too much time in class and became a planning and grading burden for instructors. The modification we are making for 2016-17 is to simplify the reading quizzes so that they can be done online and automatically scored. To encourage closer attention to readings, we plan to spend more class time looking at specific reading passages and summarizing key facts. We have also updated the core reading packet with newer articles where possible.

**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, all of the sections align well with the area goals, SLOs, 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 SLOs for writing.

The enrollment cap for this course is 25. Instructors are allowed to go over the cap only by about 2 or 3 students. As such, this course is not a large class. Oral presentations are evaluated using two different rubrics. The first is a group presentation; this is evaluated by the presenters themselves using a “self evaluation” rubric, on which the instructor provides overall comments and grade. The other oral presentation comes at the end of the semester and is individually delivered. The instructor and two randomly selected students fill out the rubric, and results are tabulated, graded, and returned to the presenter.

Feedback on writing assignments was provided within 2 weeks of the due date. Grading rubrics were included with all writing assignment instructions so that grading was transparent and students could confirm the features/elements of good performance on particular genres.