General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title MUSC 120 – Worlds of Jazz  GE Area: S

Results reported for AY 2015-16  # of sections 3  # of instructors 2

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Department Chair: Fred Cohen  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 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 6 (unique to MUSC 120); students will compare and contrast the ways in which European and African musical traditions differ, and how the fusion of these two styles forged a new musical identity for the United States at the turn of the twentieth century.

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

The results of assessment for SLOs 6 continue to be positive, with the vast majority of students demonstrating understanding of this SLO by the end of the semester. There are some students who struggle with some terminology used in the course (musical terminology that they may have not encountered before such as: tempo, dynamics, etc.); but these problems generally disappear by midterm.

Writing assignments (concert reports and a major research paper) continue to be of utmost importance in this course for helping students to understand the course’s SLOs. The concert reports the students write are based on live jazz concerts they are required to attend, which allows the students to see firsthand and in real time the musical end result of some of the cultural fusions upon which MUSC 120 focuses.

One major issue continues to arise each semester in virtually every section of this course: A large percentage (about 30%) of students come into the course with apparent deficiencies in basic writing skills and demonstrate problems with spelling, grammar, syntax, etc. As this course is assessed primarily through writing, this poses a significant challenge to these aforementioned students. The instructors of this course have found that the best way to help these students is to offer them the option of submitting assignments to the instructor early in a “rough draft” format, so that they may
receive feedback on their writing before submitting the assignment for class credit.

(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.)

There are no immediate plans to modify the course at this time. We have reduced the number of sections offered from four to three (two lecture and one online) to fit the demand we seem to have from the student body for this course. These courses are usually at capacity or within 80% of capacity, which seems to be a good fit, especially for these courses that have such a broad topic and heavy writing requirement. I will continue to monitor enrollments with help from Chair Fred Cohen to maximize enrollments and effectiveness.

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.

The department has hired competent graduate student readers as needed to ensure that proper feedback is given on writing assignments in the larger sections. This is not needed every semester.