General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title  English 117B  GE Area V

Results reported for AY 2013-2014  # of sections 2  # of instructors 2

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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, by the department chair, to the Office of Undergraduate Studies, with an electronic copy to the home college by September 12 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# 3 Students shall be able to explain how a culture outside the U.S. has changed in response to internal and external pressures.

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

Activities (lectures, discussions, presentations, assignments etc.) in the course that address the SLOs:

Spring 2014-Krishnaswamy: Using film and literature, the course focused on the study of three geopolitical borders: U.S.-Mexico, Israel-Palestine, India-Pakistan. Several lectures, discussions and power point presentations dealt with the internal and external pressures (historical and contemporary) causing conflict in each of the three borders. Students were also required to write papers and take quizzes on the content.

Fall 2013-Sparks: The ways that cultures are transformed “in response to internal and external pressures” was a significant theme in most of the works we read and films we watched. It was also a theme of lectures and our class discussions, and a topic some students chose to explore more fully in their essays and exam responses. For example, a play we discussed early in the semester, Brian Friel’s Translations, examined how the British suppressed the native language of the Irish in the early 19th century as a way to weaken their resistance to English culture and rule, and how different responses to this external pressure among the Irish people created internal strife, as well. Similarly, two films we saw later in the semester, Cry Freedom and Whale Rider examined the ways that black South Africans and the Maori (respectively) pushed back against the European pressures on their indigenous traditions and values. Changes occurred in both societies’ attitudes about racial identity, indigenous language, and women’s roles, among other things.
Assignment used to assess the SLOs (include all guidelines/rubrics/scoring guides):

Spring 2014- Krishnaswamy): Two specific assignments were used to assess SLO#3

Research Paper: Students chose a specific border issue relating to either U.S.-Mexico OR Israel-Palestine OR India-Pakistan. They were asked to present an in-depth analysis of the internal and external causes of that particular border issue. They had to make use of at least one film and one literary text in addition to three outside sources to support their analysis.

Quiz: Embedded questions in the quiz focusing specifically on internal or external pressures fueling the border conflict.

Fall 2013-Professor Sparks: Reading Question for Cry Freedom (film based on a memoir and biography):

Directions: These are questions to think about as you watch the film and will form the basis for our discussion afterwards. These will guide our class discussion of the film, and we will take some time to write in class after we finish watching it.

Question 4: An analysis of the Soweto Youth Uprising posted on South African History Online says this: 
“The students had organised a peaceful march against the Afrikaans Medium Decree, issued in 1974, which made it mandatory for black schools to use the Afrikaans language as the medium of instruction in Mathematics, Social Sciences and Geography at the secondary school level. [...] The policy was deeply unpopular since Afrikaans was regarded by some as the language of the oppressor.” The article adds, “The Bantu Educational system was designed to ‘train and fit’ Africans for their role in the newly (1948) evolving apartheid society. Education was viewed as a part of the overall apartheid system including ‘homelands’, urban restrictions, pass laws and job reservation. This role was one of labourer, worker, and servant only. As H.F Verwoerd, the architect of the Bantu Education Act (1953) conceived it: ‘There is no place for [the African] in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour. It is of no avail for him to receive a training which has as its aim, absorption in the European community.’”

Can you see any parallels to the situation in Irish schools under British rule (for instance, as we saw the situation depicted in The Hanging Gale)? Do you think there are any parallels in American educational history? Can you think of any historical parallels in other societies? Note: In answering this, you might consider the case of Dr. Ramphele, the fiercely intelligent scholarship student and Biko supporter in the film.

Quantitative Analysis:

Spring 2014-Krishnaswamy: Scores on SLO specific criteria on Research Paper Rubric: 47% high; 43% medium, 9% low. Scores on SLO specific embedded questions in Quiz: 40% high; 49% medium; 11% low.

Total scores for SLO#3 (average of both assignments):
43% of students demonstrated a high level of achievement (B or higher letter grade); 47% demonstrated satisfactory or medium level of achievement (C grade); 10% demonstrated unsatisfactory or low level of achievement (D or F grade).

Fall 2013-Sparks: Of the 26 students in the class, 19 students rated HIGH on the Cry Freedom homework question (a score of 9 or 10 out of 10); 2 rated MEDIUM (score of 8), and 4 failed (score of 0).
Qualitative Analysis:

Spring 2014-Krishnaswamy: Based on student performance on SLO specific assignments/criteria, course content and class activities were extremely effectively in helping students understand the internal/external pressures involved in the three geopolitical borders.

Fall 2013- Sparks: Based on student performance on SLO specific assignments/criteria, course content and class activities were effective in helping students understand internal/external pressures involved in cultures outside the United States.

(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 course modifications are planned.

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. Regular review and systematic coordination by the Coordinator and the Department’s Curriculum Committee has ensured that all sections of English 117B are fully aligned with the area Goals, SLOs, Content, Support, and Assessment.