General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title: FREN 102B  
GE Area: SJSU Studies Area V  

Results reported for AY: 2015/2016  
# of sections: 2  
# of instructors: 1  

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Department Chair: Damian Bacich  
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, by the department chair, to the Office of Undergraduate Studies, with an electronic copy to the home college by September 1 of the following academic year.

Part 1

To be completed by the course coordinator:

1. What GELO(s) were assessed for the course during the AY?

   GELO 2: They will be able to identify the historical context of ideas and cultural traditions outside the U.S. and how they have influenced American culture

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

Since French 102B has been offered as an online SJSU Studies Culture, Civilization and Global Understanding course focusing on Francophone cultures through literature and cinema, changes based on results from assessment data outlined below have been made to better or more accurately measure the students’ knowledge of Francophone cultures outside of the U.S. with regard to comparisons and influences U.S. society has had on them upon which the course objectives are based and around which the course assignments more closely revolve. In accordance with the assessment schedule submitted and in conjunction with GELO 7 & 8 which were evaluated in the past assessment cycle, GELO 2 was assessed again because it is one of the key or primary measurements and evaluation tools at the heart of the course and SJSU Studies, Area V in general. Based on the writing assignments, such as the three essays, a noticeable number of students continues to struggle in making these connections or comparisons because of insufficient knowledge of historical contexts of ideas and cultural traditions or an inability to implement critical thinking skills in their writing and reasoning. Even though results or assessment data of the three writing assignments and the midterm exam are encouraging, activities need to be further tweaked to get a clearer and more accurate evaluation of the students’ ability to satisfy 102B GELO 2. One of the lessons learned from the assessment was that students needed to be asked in no ambiguous or uncertain terms in their assignments to demonstrate through more concrete examples and cultural comparisons how they relate or correspond to the course GELOS. New course materials (documentaries) and questions were developed as of the Fall 2013 semester and initial evidence seems to point to a greater success rate in the number and quality of these connections. Although a small number of students is incapable or still does not adequately make the historical and cultural connections, as the data assessment below illustrates based on the newly, reworded questions, a greater percentage of students are drawing meaningful conclusions and comparisons with regard to GELO 2. This was also a result of the creation and implementation of a more detailed grading rubric.
(see below) begun in Spring 2012 to help students to more clearly identify how well these assignments addressed GELO 2 and the other course GELOs.

**Method and Assessment Tools**

The assessment data (category #1) from three writing assignments and midterm was used as an assessment tool in Fall 2015 and Spring 2016 in addition to the final exam to assess the students’ ability to address GELO 2. Grading rubric category #1, critical thinking skills, is the heart of French 102B and all SJSU Studies courses in general. Furthermore, students were given more meaningful feedback through a more transparent grading rubric serving as an integrated assessment tool tied to the course student learning objectives to improve the quality of their future and overall submissions. Detailed feedback for each category was emailed to each individual student.

Newly, redesigned grading rubric for all written assignments given equal weight in each category:

1. Quality of critical thinking skills
2. Writing skills (grammar, stylistics, etc.)
3. Organization
4. Reference to G.E. learning objectives and examples taken from American society

**Assessment data (Fall 2015)**

**Overall class performance**: Out of 19 students enrolled the first week of class, 17 remained enrolled and completed all or most assignments. 15 students (88.2%) received a passing grade (C or better), 3 students received A or A-, 12 received B+, B or B-, 0 received C+ or C and 2 received D or F. The number of grades in the highest grading range was slightly higher than in previous semesters because most students turned in assignments on time or late for partial credit.

*Overall performance on assignments assessing SLO2 in Grading Rubric with category #1:*

Writing assignment #1: 88.2% (3 A, 8 B, 4 C)
Writing Assignment #2: 82.4% (5 A, 5 B, 4 C)
Writing Assignment #3: 88.2% (4 A, 9 B, 2 C)
Midterm: 82.3% (3 A, 5 B, 4 C, 2 F)
Final exam: (5 A, 9 B, 3 C)

**Assessment data (Spring 2016)**

**Overall class performance**: Out of 22 students enrolled the first week of class, 19 remained enrolled and completed all or most assignments. 18 students (94.7%) received a passing grade (C or better),
6 students received A or A-, 9 received B+, B or B-, 3 received C+ or C and 1 received C-, D+ or F. There was a marked improvement in the number of students receiving a grade of C or better as compared to all previous semesters.

*Overall performance on assignments assessing GELO 2 in Grading Rubric with category #1:

Writing assignment #1: 79% (3 A, 9 B, 3 C)

Writing Assignment #2: 79% (3 A, 8 B, 4 C)

Writing Assignment #3: 84.2% (9 A, 6 B, 1 C)

Midterm: 89.5% (3 A, 10 B, 4 C)

Final exam: (4 A, 12 B, 3 C)

General comments: As the semester progressed, results in category #1 improved as can be seen above. In addition, improvements were the most noticeable in this category versus, for example, writing skills. One of the greatest challenges for students has been turning in on time their assignments, especially their writing assignments. As a means of helping students to turn in on time their assignments and to improve the overall quality of their writing assignments, the course schedule or calendar was modified as of Spring 2016 so that students were afforded more time between major writing assignments, such as the essays and the midterm exam. This was accomplished by requiring earlier module assignments to be turned in earlier in the semester so that the major writing assignments were spaced out more throughout the semester.

As a side note, students are asked on their final exam (last live meeting) to answer the following question as part of a larger question: “Why do you believe French 102B deserves to be offered as an SJSU Studies course in the Culture, Civilization and Global Understanding category? Students have made the following comments in the past, such as “The issues studied in this course are not limited to Francophone groups or countries; they are universal. What better reason could there be for including this course in the Culture, Civilization, and Global Understanding category?” and “This course opened my mind to so many groups of people, cultures, and issues that I think it is by far the best culture course I have taken, [and] as a Child Development major, I have taken quite a few.” In the Spring 2016 written comments section of the SOTE evaluation, a student commented: “I learned a lot about not only Francophone culture, but about culture in general. The skills and knowledge I learned in this class will be helpful my entire life.”

Although there is less direct, empirical evidence to support this conclusion, the quality of the students’ comments on the discussion board also points to improvements in the students’ ability to identify the historical context of ideas and cultural traditions outside the U.S. and how they have influenced American culture.

(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 modifications are planned in regards to GELO 2. Even though no substantive changes are indicated based on recent assessment data, given French 102B is a culture class focusing especially on cinema, the course is constantly evolving based, for example, on geopolitical events taking place throughout the world impacting Francophone cultures, as well as U.S. society. The conflicts in the Middle East serve as clear examples. I am also constantly on the lookout for new films and other
media that better illustrate the cultural connections between Francophone cultures and U.S. society in order to make substitutions whenever possible. For example, a TV interview with distinguished American historian David McCullough drawing a parallel between French and American history has been added to Module 1 since Fall 2013.

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 (GELOs), Content, Support, and Assessment? If they are not, what actions are planned?

Yes, they are. Changes planned are mentioned above by Dr. Desalvo.
- Damian Bacich, Chair, World Languages and Literatures