General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title: Philosophy 104 “Asian Philosophy”       GE Area: V

Results reported for AY: 2015-2016       # of sections: 8       # of instructors: 3

Course Coordinator: Bo Mou        E-mail: bo.mou@sjsu.edu

Department Chair: Janet Stemwedel       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 September 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?

We assessed SLO 2: “Students shall be able to identify the historical context of ideas and cultural traditions outside the U.S. and how they have influenced American culture.”

To achieve this objective, the three instructors teaching this class during the 2015-16 academic year have carried out the following activities.

1) In Bo Mou’s case (two sections taught in Fall 2015 and two sections taught in Spring 2016). In Bo Mou’s sections, <1> due attention was paid to the historical and cultural contexts in which the ideas and perspectives under examination have changed and developed over time when facing internal and external challenges/pressures so that the students can understand as these ideas and perspectives in a dynamic and holistic way; <2> the students in these sections were encouraged to participate in a symposium workshop on comparative philosophy (30 April 2016) at which it was explored how some ideas in Asian philosophy have influenced American culture (such as how the Confucian conception of harmony can constructively bear on American culture); <3> each of the two term-paper-topic alternatives includes one part concerning how the relevant resources in Asian philosophy can influence or have influenced American culture (that is, how the relevant resources in Confucius’ teachings and Lao Zi’s teachings on morality can influence the moral agents’ moral cultivation in the modern [American] society or how to apply the Yin-Yang way of thinking (i.e., the Yin-Yang model of interaction and transformation) to analyzing one modern event (in modern American society and culture).

2) In Chanh Phan’s case (two sections taught in Fall 2015). Chanh’s general format in this connection is this: <1> his lectures pay attention to the influences of Asian philosophy and cultures upon the US culture and their historical contexts; <2> to evaluate their learning in this connection, the students were given the GEAT (General Education Assessment Test) in the form of short essay questions as a component of the Final Examination.

3) In Karin Brown’s case (two sections taught in Spring 2016), Karin writes, “this class is devoted to cultural traditions outside the US. The traditions taught are Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Confucianism and Daoism. The course materials include both primary and secondary sources consisting of religious and philosophical texts. The influence on American culture is taught through discussion of the Gandhian roots of the civil rights movement, the influence of the yoga tradition, and the influence of the practice of meditation.”
What were the results of the assessment of this course? What were the lessons learned from the assessment?

In the 2015-16 academic year, the activities which the three instructors have adopted to implement this SLO are these.

1) In Bo Mou’s case, such activities include <1> introducing those historical and cultural contexts when examining the Asian philosophical ideas and visions under examination, <2> some students from the section in Spring 2016 participated in a symposium workshop on comparative philosophy (30 April 2016) at which it was explored how some ideas in Asian philosophy have influenced American culture (such as how the Confucian conception of harmony can constructively bear on American culture); some of them submitted their write-ups for extra-credit points; <3> for the term paper Prof. Mou used the following assessment procedure/tools for this learning objective: <1> evaluation of how the students understand those historical and cultural contexts via paper assignment and essay questions in the exams; <2> evaluation of the aforementioned part on “how the relevant resources from Asian philosophy have influenced American culture” in each of the students’ term papers (the first and final versions). The result of Mou’s assessment for the Spring 2016 semester: <1>, 12 students of 90 have a very good command of those historical and cultural contexts (“A” category); 51 students of 90 have good understanding of them (“B” category); 27 students of 90 have yet to have good command of them (“C”, “D”, “F”, “I” and “W” categories). As for <2>, most of the students (80 of 90) provided a good discussion of the topic.

2) In Chanh Phan’s case, his general format in this connection is to give students the GEAT (General Education Assessment Test) in the form of short essay questions as a component of the Final Examination. The results of the GEAT (the objective test as one component of the final exam) for the Fall 2015 semester were: 56 (out of 57) students took the GEAT; 28 students of 56 got the “A” grade range; 17 students got the “B” grade range; 6 students of 56 got the “C” grade range; 2 students got the “D” grade range; 3 students got the “F” grade range.

3) In Karin Brown’s case, the assessment was conducted through exams and papers. For example, one of the midterm questions was: “Explain Gandhi’s interpretation of the precept of no-stealing in the selection from All Men Are Brothers”. Students learned both about the historical context of Gandhi’s views on non-violence and its application to a current socio-economic issue - poverty.

(2) 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 to the course and its assessment activities are planned for the upcoming year.

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 – Janet Stemwedel, Department Chair

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 GELOs for writing. The enrollments for 104 in AY 2015-2016 were:
Two sections were more than 10 per cent above the enrollment limit, roughly 12.5 per cent. This does not pose a problem for getting sufficient feedback. The instructor of record provides feedback and grades all writing assignments and welcomes, if not requires, first drafts of all writing assignments and provides feedback on drafts. If sections are exceptionally oversized they are graded by the instructor of record with the assistance of an Instructional Student Assistant (ISA). The ISA must be approved both by the Instructional Assistant Coordinator and the Philosophy Department Chair for their excellence in both composition and their expertise in the field of philosophy at issue. Whenever an ISA aids in the grading of a large course, s/he provides feedback along with grading. In all cases, when the help of an ISA is employed, the instructor of record must explicitly notify the students of the class that some writing assignments have been graded and feedback has been provided by an ISA. If a student is unhappy with an ISA grade the instructor of record will rereads the paper, provide additional feedback, and regrade the assignment (if that is warranted.) Generally speaking, any instructor who is teaching more than 100 GE students in a semester receives ISA help.