**General Education Annual Course Assessment Form**

Course Number/Title: Phil 110: Science, Technology and Human Values   GE Area: V

Results reported for AY: 2015-2016   # of sections: 4   # of instructors: 1

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Department Chair: Janet Stemwedel   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 GELO(s) were assessed for the course during the AY?

**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.**

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

This course surveys the historical context of ideas and cultural traditions that give rise to a variety of technological innovations and advancements. While the majority of the students in Phil. 110 are accustomed to using a variety of technologies on a regular basis, often they are unaware of the historical and cultural origins of these technologies. In the course mathematical time and the invention of the mechanical clock, are traced from their roots in medieval Europe and the monastic tradition. While history is replete with examples of alternative forms of timekeeping, it was not until the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance that a mechanized form of timekeeping was widely used by communities across Europe. In reading “The Monastery and the Clock,” from Lewis Mumford’s *Technics and Civilization* (1934), students learn of the religious life and cultural traditions of people living in monasteries, and their need for precisely observing religious ceremonies and holidays. The first mechanical clocks soon spread from the monastery to surrounding cities, where eventually their use became attached to the affairs of commerce and secular society. This had a lasting impact during industrialization of Europe, and later, the United States and American culture. The mechanical clock’s influence in unifying and synchronizing the actions of people at a distance cannot be underestimated when we critically engage our own cultural practices in America. The students were keenly aware of this fact when they also examined their own use of digital timekeeping, for example, from their use of cell phones.

In assessing the SLO 2 learning outcomes, students are given a research paper, a midterm exam, and a final exam, all of which aid in demonstrating their mastery in applying these concepts. These
activities are also reinforced throughout the semester with in-class writing assignments, group discussions, and class-wide dialogue. As indicated by the students’ performance on these assignments, which is within the A to B grade-range, the vast majority of students are meeting the SLO 2 requirement with above-average results.

(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.)

The Philosophy Department at San Jose State has hired Dr. Daniel Susser, whose area of specialization is the Philosophy of Technology, to teach Phil. 110 starting in the Fall of AY 2016-2017. Dr. Susser’s expertise in cyber security and computer privacy will most certainly enhance the course content while meeting its SLOs.

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, Janet Stemwedel

(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 110 in AY 2015-2016 were: Fall 2015, sec 01: 44, sec 02: 45; Spring 2016, sec 01: 40, sec 02: 40. The enrollment limit for Area V is 40. 45 is 12.5% more. So, two sections were somewhat larger. In this class students are supposed to write a minimum of 3000 words. In all sections of Phil. 110, regardless of size, the instructor allows all students the option to submit their research paper early for feedback, in order to give them the opportunity for extra revision. This typically happens a week before papers are due. For their research papers, which are roughly 1500-2000 words in length, he requires a 1000 word prospectus discussing the topics of their research. This is due roughly one month prior to the date of the final edited version. He gives written feedback on both the prospectus and the final edited version of their research paper. Lastly, he has a rewrite option to those who perform very poorly. The total revised word count for the prospectus and research paper alone is roughly 2500-3000 words. This count does not include in-class writing assignments, the written midterm, and written final exam.

The larger classes do not pose a problem for getting sufficient feedback. If sections are exceptionally oversized, and even sometimes when they are just 12 per cent above the limit, 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 reread 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. This course regularly falls in this category.