**General Education Annual Course Assessment Form**

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

Results reported for AY: 2017-2018  # of sections: 6  # of instructors: 2

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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 1: Students shall be able to compare systematically the ideas, values, images, cultural artifacts, economic structures, technological developments, or attitudes of people from more than one culture outside the U.S.

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

The aim of PHIL 110 is to show students that science and technology are not isolated, self-governing enterprises. Rather, like all human endeavors, they are situated in social, cultural, and political contexts, which shape scientific research and technological development, and which in turn are shaped by them. Given how central certain ideas about technology are to contemporary American culture, giving students the opportunity to think about how other cultures relate or related to technology is essential for creating critical distance. To that end, students read Carl Mitcham’s “Three Ways of Being-With Technology” early in the semester. In that essay, Mitcham examines three different cultural understandings of technology: a skeptical view taken by Ancient Greek philosophers, an optimistic view adopted by many Western thinkers during the Enlightenment, and what Mitcham calls a kind of “uneasiness” about technology characteristic of the Romantic period. At the end of the semester, students returned to Mitcham’s essay and were asked to evaluate their own relationship with technology through one of the lenses Mitcham offers.

In order to assess the SLO 1 learning outcomes students engaged in a variety of assessments. They wrote in-class reflections, conducted small-group discussions, took unannounced quizzes, and wrote three papers. The first two papers developed students’ ability to analyze and construct philosophical arguments. In the third and final paper, students put these skills to work evaluating their own cultural understandings of technology, describing them using some of the conceptual frameworks discussed throughout the course. As indicated by the students’ more than satisfactory performance on this range of assignments, the majority of students are meeting the SLO 1 learning objective.
(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.)

This course has been updated substantially over the past two years—including everything from reading assignments to assessment structure. Happily, we have observed a marked increase in the quality of student papers over this time, and therefore we believe the effectiveness of the current course design and methods of assessment are much improved.

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 2016-2017 were: Fall 2015, sec 01: 40, sec 02: 62; Spring 2016, sec 01: 48, sec 02: 45, sec 03: 45. The enrollment limit for Area V is 40. 45 is 12.5 % more, and 62 is 55% more. So, several 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 (which is 1500-2000 words in length) early for feedback, in order to give them the opportunity for extra revision. This typically happens a week before papers are due. He gives extensive written and oral feedback upon request, meeting with students individually to ensure the feedback is understood. Students write three papers. The first, short paper has a 500-word minimum word count; the second paper is at least 1000 words; and the final paper is required to be at least 1500 words long. This count does not include in-class written reflections, reading response questions, and written group work. Thus the total word count for the semester is well above 3000 words.

The larger classes do not pose a problem for getting sufficient feedback. 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. This course regularly falls in this category.