**General Education Annual Course Assessment Form**

Course Number/Title  Phil 133/Ethics in Science  GE Area  V

Results reported for AY  2017/2018  
# of sections  2  
# of instructors  1

Course Coordinator: Janet D. Stemwedel  E-mail: janet.stemwedel@sjsu.edu

Department Chair: Janet D. Stemwedel  College: Humanities & 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) We assessed GELO 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) In both sections of the course, students learned about the ideas and attitudes of people from multiple cultures towards science, its methodologies, and its goals, and examined how these ideas and attitudes are shaped by other cultural values.

We used an essay assignment to gauge students’ ability to compare the ways cultural context led to very different attitudes about biomedical research with human subjects in Germany during World War II and in modern sub-Saharan Africa. Another essay assignment asked students to explain how cultural context shaped different attitudes from primatologists from Japan and primatologists from the U.S. about what counts as proper research methodology in field studies of primates. We used embedded questions on exams to assess students’ ability to compare how particular historical circumstances and cultural values drove attitudes towards scientific development in the Soviet Union during the period of “Lysenkoism”, in post-colonial India, and in post-Apartheid South Africa. We used embedded questions on exams to compare the ways cultural contexts led to different attitudes about research with human subjects in a study of orphans in post-Ceausescu Romania and in recent tests of Ebola vaccines in West Africa.

We felt that the majority of the student work assessed indicated that students were able to compare ideas and attitudes towards science and scientific methodology and to understand the cultural contexts that shape these ideas and attitudes. As we have seen historically, the students became more articulate in their explanations of these connections as the term went on.

(3) We feel that our current course design and methods of assessment are working for us, and plan no modifications at this time.
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 D. 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 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 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.

Sample exam questions:

1. Explain the assumptions about the duties of scientific researchers towards human subjects reflected by the conduct of the researchers who conducted the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment. Compare these assumptions to the current assumptions about the scientific duties of scientific researchers towards human subjects in clinical trials of AIDS drugs in sub-Saharan Africa. In your comparison, be sure to explain the ways historical context and cultural values shape these attitudes about the ethics of research with human subjects. (Also, be sure to explain the different attitudes that the researchers and the human subjects bring to their interaction.)

2. Different societies have different views of what scientific research is good for. Compare the national agendas for scientific research and development that emerged as India gained independence after British colonial rule and as South Africa emerged from Apartheid. Describe the cultural values and attitudes towards science (both what it had done and what it might accomplish) that drove these agendas, and discuss the historical and cultural contexts that you think are most important to understanding the differences in these agendas.