General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title: Phil 134/Computers, Ethics & Society
GE Area: V

Results reported for AY 17/18 # of sections 14 # of instructors 3

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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 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?

GELO 1:
Students shall be able to systematically compare 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?

Phil 134 provides students with a voice for analyzing computer-related ethical issues of concern for both technology users and for computer programmers and software developers. These ethical problems very often occur on a global scale as current events in different countries and areas, and students learn to apply ethical frames to compare computer-related problems in different countries. Students also learn to recognize historical and cultural values that shape different computer problems in different places.

This year, students compared China’s Firewall and Sharp Eyes projects that restrict rights of Chinese citizens; with EU’s GDPR that expands technology user rights, and with the UK problem of Cambridge Analytica and user abuse of rights. Students also analyzed the betrayal of utilitarian values that China’s internet restrictions impose; contrasted with the suggestion of a utilitarian approach to use of technology that meets with Islamic spiritual values of harmony with nature, and with the Arab Spring’s potential democratization of the Arab world through use of social media.

The course was assessed through discussion posts, short essays based on discussions, individual ethical analyses of current cases, and through exam questions. Students did very well generally, although some further explanation and research were needed to convince students of the scope of China’s recent technology laws and projects.
(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.)

EU’s GDPR has been incorporated as a permanent global governance reading for this course since it impacts all future design implementation for software developers and coders whose work products are used on a global scale. Also, more attention will be given to the history of computer technologies so that students can make sense of the philosophical and value-laden assumptions that have informed the design and manufacture of these technologies.

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?

All sections of 134 are aligned with GELOs for area V, and specifically here with GELO 1.

(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.

All sections of 134 are completely online classes. Those sections with larger student enrollment are diligent in providing repeated feedback and opportunity for revision. The total aggregate of writing exceeds 8000 words for each student.

One instructor offers a total of four long-writing assignments and six short-writing assignments, in addition to weekly peer-to-peer class discussions through the Canvas platform. In order to satisfy the requirement for students to practice and revise their writing, students are allowed and encouraged to revise and rewrite up to 3000 words from both long-writing assignments (the two papers) and the six short-writing assignments.

The other instructor requires revision of written work for 2 major case analyses. Students are also required to write an initial revision of work on a Rough Draft of a case analysis Term Paper. All students are then given graded feedback for this Rough Draft, & then required to submit an Edited Final Term Paper.

Graders are used only for shorter midterm & final exam essays, & for one “readings” discussion.