Department: World Languages and Literatures
Program: French M.A.
College: Humanities and the Arts
Website: <list URL for home page> http://www.sjsu.edu/wll/programs/objectives/

Program Accreditation (if any): N/A
Contact Person and Email: Jean-Luc Desalvo  Jean-Luc.Desalvo@sjsu.edu

Date of Report: May 28, 2015

Part A
1. List of Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)
   1. Analyze cultural productions from the following perspectives:
      a. Historical and cultural
      b. Linguistic and stylistic
      c. Literary and literary theory.
   2. Improve ability to develop a thesis of a scholarly nature on a special topic.
   3. Become more proficient in making scholarly presentations at public venues.
   4. Become more proficient at using research tools for academic papers at graduate level and at processing collected data in compliance with academic standards.
   5. Improve ability to use interdisciplinary approaches and make connections between cultures and languages.
   6. Improve knowledge of the French-speaking world.
   7. Become proficient using technology for scholarly research and presentations.

The French faculty meet at least once per semester, typically near the end of the semester, to discuss the students’ overall performance in the French M.A. Program based on the courses offered in a given semester. The wording of the French M.A. PLOs is periodically revised to make them more proactive in demonstrating what the students are able to accomplish and how they meet the various PLOs. At its Spring 2011 assessment meeting, the French faculty proposed two major changes aimed at making the students more aware of the competencies they are expected to demonstrate at various junctures of their coursework and with regard to the French M.A. PLOs. The changes were:

- to reword the PLOs descriptors as outcomes, emphasizing what the students will be able to accomplish and how they will meet the learning objectives;

- the adoption in all courses of a grading rubric according to the following four criteria – 30% for 1. content, 30% for 2. organization, 20% for 3. academic standards, 20% for 4. grammar & spelling.

The positive effect on French M.A. student performance of these assessment strategies and activities continues to be monitored and evaluated closely as to their long-term benefits. These
strategies were put into place as a means of ensuring a more standardized level of proficiency, more clearly defined expectations with regard to the overall program and specific course learning objectives and greater fairness in grading. The adoption in all M.A. courses of a common grading rubric has been an effective, on-going means of assessing student proficiency in meeting the French M.A. PLOs and creating greater cohesion and accountability across the French M.A. curricula. In addition, more clearly defined criteria and guidelines for written assignments and oral presentations have been implemented and appear in all graduate green sheets and in Canvas (see also newly revised PLOs on Department and UGS website). For example, new assessment tools in the form of targeted exercises leading up to the end-of-semester research paper were specifically designed and implemented to evaluate the students’ ability to incorporate literary and critical theory in their writing assignments as well as utilize research tools and draft assignments in compliance with academic standards.

2. **Map of PLOs to University Learning Goals (ULGs)**

**Specialized Knowledge**
- Depth of knowledge required for a degree, as identified by its program learning outcomes.

**PLO 1**
- Analyze cultural productions from the following perspectives:
  - a. Historical and cultural
  - b. Linguistic and stylistic
  - c. Literary and literary theory.

**PLO 6**
- Improve knowledge of the French-speaking world.

**Broad Integrative Knowledge**
- Mastery in each step of an investigative, creative or practical project (e.g. brainstorming, planning, formulating hypotheses or complex questions, designing, creating, completing, and communicating).
- An understanding of the implications of results or findings from a particular work in a societal context (e.g. social or economic implications of a scientific finding).
- Students graduating with a baccalaureate degree will have demonstrated an understanding of critical components of broad academic areas, the arts, humanities, social sciences, and sciences and their integration.

**PLO 2**
- Improve ability to develop a thesis of a scholarly nature on a special topic.

**PLO 3**
- Become more proficient in making scholarly presentations at public venues.

**Intellectual Skills**
- Fluency in the use of specific theories, tools, technology and graphical representation.
Skills and abilities necessary for life-long learning: critical and creative thinking, effective communication, conscientious information gathering and processing, mastery of quantitative methodologies, and the ability to engage effectively in collaborative activities.

PLO 7  Become proficient using technology for scholarly research and presentations.

Applied Knowledge
- The ability to integrate theory, practice, and problem-solving to address practical issues.
- The ability to apply their knowledge and skills to new settings or in addressing complex problems.
- The ability to work productively as individuals and in groups

PLO 4  Become more proficient at using research tools for academic papers at graduate level and at processing collected data in compliance with academic standards.

Social and Global Responsibilities
- The ability to act intentionally and ethically to address a global or local problem in an informed manner with a multicultural and historical perspective and a clear understanding of societal and civic responsibilities.
- Diverse and global perspectives through engagement with the multidimensional SJSU community.

PLO 5  Improve ability to use interdisciplinary approaches and make connections between cultures and languages.

Although some of the PLOs overlap in more than one ULG because of their interdependent and progressive nature, this is the most distinct and precise means of associating and assigning discreet French M.A. PLOs to University Learning Goals based on the specialized knowledge/skills criteria and the spirit of each ULG.

3. Alignment – Matrix of PLOs to Courses

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Previous assessment data also points to the need at the program level for students to further develop their information literacy and to learn how to properly document sources using an appropriate style.
guide, such as MLA. Students need to become more proficient and savvy at using internet and non-internet sources for the purpose of scholarly research. This new focus is clearly articulated in a standardized grading rubric for research-based writing assignments and will continue to be closely monitored by the French faculty for its overall effectiveness and impact on the program learning objectives and adjusted, if necessary, in the longer term. For example, this is especially true when students are asked to articulate or demonstrate the interrelatedness of knowledge between French courses, such as in culture and literature, by building on the body of knowledge which they have acquired in previous French courses and other university courses for that matter and by making the appropriate connections and drawing the necessary conclusions (PLO 8).

5. Student Experience

As of Fall 2013, a statement about the Program Learning Outcomes of the French Program appears in all course syllabi calendars as a discussion item for the first day of instruction. Furthermore, course activities are identified and tied closely to Program Learning Outcomes. PLOs are also clearly identified on the Department’s website under the French Program. Midterm course evaluations, informal surveys and SOTE results are taken into account when evaluating the effectiveness of on-going assessment strategies and the need for modifying and developing future assessment activities.

Part B

Item 6. Graduation Rates by Entering Cohorts: World Languages and Literatures

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As outlined above based on the assessment schedule and as a means of assessing PLOs 1 through 4, especially in the grammar/composition foundation courses such as French 101A, French 101B and 101C, in addition to the analysis of computerized placement exam scores at the beginning and at the end of the respective semester, the most significant and beneficial modification has been the addition of TEF training exercises as class activities, mid-semester and final tests. Demonstration of listening comprehension at the advanced levels (ACTFL advanced low and superior, and CEFRL C1-C2) are routinely evaluated as part of the course grade. Specific listening comprehension tests/activities have been developed in order to evaluate various PLOs. Data is being collected in the form of oral test results conducted in class for further evaluation as to its long-term, overall program implications and benefits. Vocabulary building exercises, more frequent reading and listening comprehension exercises and testing by incorporating more vocabulary, reading and listening comprehension questions into the classroom activities and tests along with the testing of their knowledge of French grammar are being closely monitored as to their effectiveness in improving student success in more advanced courses and, likewise, in addressing perceived weaknesses in student performance in these courses. More emphasis is being placed on translation to compare English and French grammatical structures in support especially of PLO 1 and PLO 2. Preliminary data in the form of improved scores on exercises, quizzes, tests and writing assignments from prior semesters suggests that this renewed focus or emphasis has been successful.

6. Assessment Data
7 graduate students were enrolled in FREN 140A: 3 cond. classified French M.A. (one dropped at mid-semester); 3 classified French M.A.; 1 Spanish M.A.

N. B. FREN 140A students were deeply affected by the loss at mid-semester of their instructor, Prof. van Hooff. One graduate student dropped the class, a second one decided to complete the class without doing the additional work required for graduate credit and eventually dropped the program after the semester, and a third one could not complete the final exam and the term project.

PLO #1a: Analyze cultural productions from literary perspectives

Assessment of this PLO is based on two text analyses and one dissertation on Le Docteur Pascal. It must be noted that the students only received the grading rubric for essay writing (implemented throughout the curriculum in 2011) only after this instructor took over and they had already turned in their first essays.

The students wrote two ‘text analyses,’ actually essays, on two literary works: La petite Fadette and Un cœur simple. They had received guidelines on how to compose their essays. The guidelines were the same as for the B.A. level and did not address specific M.A. objectives. In the first essay, most students followed the guidelines for the general outline of their work; they were able to write summaries and most of them analyzed the characters and the plots, but except for three students, the others did not understand how to develop a literary analysis of a novel or short story. Introductions included irrelevant facts, most of them copied from the Internet; summaries of the plots were too long, and focused on minor facts rather than on significant ones, and did not relate to the following developments on characters and stories. Analyses were too sketchy, when there were any.

The students were allowed to revise their first essay following suggestions made by this instructor. They paid more attention to style and vocabulary and used spellcheckers before turning in their papers. Quoted passages from the novels or websites were clearly indicated by quotation marks and bibliographical references. In their second essay all the above aspects were improved for the majority of the graduate students who remained in the class.

The dissertations on Le Docteur Pascal showed a better understanding of literary analysis in four (4) students out of seven (7) French M.A.s. Three graduate (3) students did not complete or failed this assignment and will not be able to apply the course toward their M.A. programs.

This instructor noticed that one graduate student used unauthorized assistance, having tutors review and correct his/her compositions before turning them in. This individual was notified to stop that practice.

Other students who had copied passages from the Internet without proper attribution in their first paper and who received lower grades for doing so did much better in the second paper and the dissertation.
Recommendations

1. All literature courses need to provide more structured instruction in writing literary analysis at the M.A. level. The French faculty should use the same guidelines in all literature classes.
2. Continue to assign dissertations as additional, summative term papers for graduate credit in upper-division literature courses. This type of assignment is the best way to develop both expository and argumentative writing skills.
3. Distribute the grading rubric for M.A. written assignments at the beginning of the semester and grade the papers following the rubric in order for the students to identify the items they need to improve.

Assessment data continues to highlight the need for students to better or more clearly articulate or demonstrate the interrelatedness of knowledge between French M.A. courses, such as in culture and literature, by building on the body of knowledge which they have acquired in previous French B.A. and M.A. courses and other university courses for that matter and by making the appropriate connections and drawing the necessary conclusions.

PLO #7: Use technology for scholarly research and presentations.

Assessment of this PLO is based on one exposé and one term paper.

Exposé

For the exposé, the students had to choose their topics from a list prepared by the first instructor. They were strongly encouraged by that instructor to use Powerpoint for their presentations and received general guidelines on the proper use of the software and how to deliver their exposé. The students were supposed to send their Powerpoint files to the instructor at least one week before their scheduled exposés. Three (3) M.A. students enrolled in the class followed the rules and sent their Powerpoint a week before their scheduled time for presenting. As a result, they received feedback from their instructor, were able to improve the presentation content and to rehearse their delivery. The three made excellent presentations. Among the other four M.A. students, three did poorly in content, proper use of the software and Internet resources, as well as presenting orally. One graduate student only found out on the last day of class that s/he had not given the instructor the date to do the exposé, and therefore could not do it.

Dissertation

The summative dissertation on Le Docteur Pascal showed much better understanding of the use of Internet for scholarly research. The graduate students who completed this assignment, with one exception, did particularly well processing information from books and websites, and referencing it according to the MLA style guidelines.

Recommendations

1. Give detailed guidelines on using presentation software as a tool for delivering exposés, and not as a copy of the text that presenters simply read in front of the class.
2. Stress the intellectual, communicative purpose of an exposé; grade this assignment on contents and respect of academic integrity standards, rather than on the ability to use software.
3. Make the quality of oral expression a criterion in grading exposés.
4. Distribute guidelines on using web-based resources for exposés and research papers.

**Assessment French 170 Spring 2015**

**PLO #1b Analyze cultural productions from the linguistic and stylistic perspectives**

Assessment of this PLO at the M.A. level is based on two summative assignments: 1) a final take-home exam in which there were three essay questions and one analysis exercise consisting of describing the translation techniques used in ten pairs of translated sentences; 2) one additional translation accompanied by a commentary on the translation techniques the students applied in their work. In both assignments, the students needed to (1) identify the parts of text they commented on using linguistic terminology learned during the semester; (2) describe the translation techniques featured in the text using the descriptive method and terminology they had learned during the semester.

The students received extensive instruction in comparative stylistics theory and practice throughout the semester. They attended weekly lectures and demonstrations and did weekly exercises as homework. The last four lectures and assignments specifically focused on terminology and on the linguistic analysis of translated texts. The students also took four objective tests that required understanding the descriptive language used to compare sentences translated from both English and French into the opposite language. These assignments and quizzes were formative and are not being considered in this assessment.

Seven (7) M.A. students showed good to excellent mastery of this PLO in question #4 of the summative assignment. Five (5) French M.A. students showed good to excellent mastery of this PLO in the analysis of their additional translation. One (1) student only showed average ability to complete the linguistic analysis component of the additional assignment. One (1) English M.A. student was not required to complete this additional assignment.

**PLO #7 Use technology for scholarly research and presentations.**

Assessment of this PLO at the M.A. level is based on 1) summative assignment question #3 which specifically required to evaluate translation resources that the students had been asked to explore and use during the semester; 2) on a three-part report the students had to write on additional readings in translation theory: “The Translator’s Task” by Walter Benjamin, and chapter 4 of _After Babel_, by Georges Steiner.

A. Evaluation of Translation Resources

Several online dictionaries and translation tools were demonstrated and recommended for the students to explore and use for their assignments. These included WordReference, Thesaurus.com, TLFi, Littré,
Larousse, Dictionnaire des synonymes, Atlas sémantique visuel, and some useful websites to search for idioms and proverbs. The demonstrations stressed the quality and quantity of information provided by the online tools, as well as their grammatical, semantic, idiomatic, and stylistic reliability. The demonstration showed how to search the sites in order to find the appropriate answers to the translation questions. The students were trained to read through the dictionary entries instead of taking the first translation being offered, to interpret the grammatical abbreviations, and personalize some websites for future use.

The final assignment included one question requiring an evaluation of these online translation tools. The students were expected to be able to report on their use of these websites, i.e. write an evaluation of how these sites could help them with their translation needs. The M.A. students did well on this question, but only two understood the point of the question and wrote evaluations that could be useful for their peers and future students.

B. Report on Additional Readings

As for the additional assignment, five (5) out of seven (7) students did extensive research on the two authors and their theories, using relevant internet websites, and quoting them according to academic standards. One student (1) did not complete the assignment and will not be able to apply this class toward her M.A. program. One (1) English M.A. student was not required to complete this assignment.

Comments

A. General Question in the Final Assignment

Even though the M.A. students are generally aware of the Internet reliability issues, they tend to limit themselves to the sites they already know, which don’t always match the course’s topics and needs. They are also reluctant to consult multiple resources. For example, several students relied mainly on Linguee or the Larousse online bilingual dictionary to do their translation projects; yet these two were hardly sufficient since the texts to be translated contained numerous idioms that required more extensive research and the consultation of several other dictionaries. Only a few students used and commented on Thesaurus.com, Dictionnaire des synonymes and the Atlas sémantique.

B. Additional Reading and Report for French M.A. Students

All M.A. students were also taking FREN 202 in which they received instruction on how to do research for a paper and how to process information retrieved from the Internet. This training was reflected in their report on Benjamin and Steiner.

Recommendations

1. How to Do Internet Research : The French faculty could use a common list of good practices to distribute in each of their courses and post on their website. We can also direct the students to one of the many already developed guides, such as How to Do Internet Research
2. One good practice to recommend students to adopt is to keep a record of the websites they consulted during their research, along with a short evaluation of the contents. The file should contain the passages to be quoted in the paper, already put in quotation marks. Each entry should contain the appropriate bibliographical information, as well as the dates the sites were consulted.

3. Two issues using word processing software and Lockdown browser came up during the semester: a.) Some students who did not know how to configure Windows with the US International keyboard in order to type accented characters. As a result, they did poorly on the online tests that were set up to be taken with Lockdown browser, an application that prevents users to browse out of the test page. Graduate students are expected to have learned how to configure their system to access accents with their keyboard as early as the elementary classes 1A-1B- and 25A-25B, and our Media Center computer systems are configured to use the US International keyboard. The best solution is to direct students to the department website where they can download the guide that was developed for that purpose; b.) A few students had to learn to use the footnotes in Word. This is another skill that is expected of entering graduate students.

French 202 Spring 2015

PLO #1a Analyze cultural productions from historical and cultural perspectives

Assessment of this PLO was based primarily on the midterm and final exam. In addition to responding to a series of short-answer cultural and historical identification questions, students were required on the midterm exam to respond to two essay questions to demonstrate their knowledge of the French-speaking world by clearly identifying cultural and historical characteristics and contexts dealing with Francophone countries. Out of a total of six graduate students, two received an A, two an A-, one a B+ and one a B on the midterm exam.

On the take-home final exam, students were asked to reflect in two essay questions on how French-speaking countries share cultural, linguistic and historical similarities and differences with one another and to identify the factors which account for these similarities and differences. Out of a total of six graduate students, three students received an A, one an A-, one a B+ and one a B on the final exam.

PLO #6 Improve knowledge of the French-speaking world

Assessment of this PLO was also based primarily on the midterm and final exam. In addition to responding to a series of short-answer cultural and historical identification questions, students were required on the midterm exam to respond to two essay questions to demonstrate their knowledge of the French-speaking world by clearly identifying cultural, linguistic and historical characteristics and contexts dealing with Francophone countries. Out of a total of six graduate students, two received an A, two an A-, one a B+ and one a B on the midterm exam.
On the take-home final exam, students were asked to reflect in two essay questions on how French-speaking countries share cultural, linguistic and historical similarities and differences with one another and to identify the factors which account for these similarities and differences. Out of a total of six graduate students, three students received an A, one an A-, one a B+ and one a B on the final exam.

**PLO #7 Become proficient using technology for scholarly research and presentations**

Assessment of this PLO was based primarily on student oral presentations and end-of-semester research papers. Out of a total of six graduate students, four students received an A and two a B+ on their oral presentations. However, on their end-of-semester research papers, students were not overall as consistent in meeting this PLO outcome: two students received an A, two an A-, one a B and one a B-.

As was noted in previous M.A. assessment reports and in French 170 above, closely aligned with becoming proficient at using technology for scholarly research and presentations so that students are proficient at using research tools for academic papers at the graduate level, students must be made aware of what these standards are, which research tools are the best to use, which ones are not recommended, how to process the information in order to support their own argumentation, and finally how to organize their work in a form that meets academic standards. FORL 200 was created to address this issue for both the French and Spanish M.A. programs. Graduate students are encouraged to enroll as early as possible in FORL 200 upon entering their respective graduate program. PLO 7 stands out as a major weakness in French 202 and a number of other courses because several students did not seem to have received this kind of preparation before entering our program. Furthermore, as a result of an excessive dependence by students on purely internet websites whose reliability, authenticity and comprehensiveness are often dubious when doing their research for their scholarly presentations and research projects, students are now required to include at least three non internet sources, such as books and articles which may include sources from online databases, such as MLA and JSTOR, instead of relying solely on internet websites. As a means of making students more proficient in using technology for scholarly research and presentations, students are highly encouraged to meet one-on-one with the librarian, Toby Matoush, to get more individualized help from the librarian when conducting their research. Students are also required at various junctures in the semester to hand in a preliminary bibliography and a report detailing their scholarly research progress. Perhaps the greatest weakness in the students’ work was, however, their inability to formulate a concise thesis statement on their own. It appeared that if greater emphasis were put on making the students more proficient at locating the best information sources, and at processing it for their oral presentations and research papers, it would have beneficial effects on the other learning outcomes as well.

In courses requiring research papers, such as French 202, the faculty implemented formative assignments in bibliography and gave progress reports to the students on various stages of their projects. The students were evaluated on their ability to locate and use the best resources available to them in library or online (e.g. bibliographical indices, MLA bibliography, JSTOR and other databases). Then, they practiced incorporating the information in compliance with academic standards, using citation standards, footnotes, paraphrases. Their ability to process the information in order to support their opinions and theses was reflected in their grades for their papers at various junctures as required.
7. **Analysis**
As stated above, the most urgent need overall is to help students have more opportunities to develop further their analytical skills to the level expected in graduate studies. Students also need to better or more clearly articulate or demonstrate the interrelatedness of knowledge between French M.A. courses, such as in culture and literature, by building on the body of knowledge which they have acquired in previous French B.A. and M.A. courses and other university courses and by making the appropriate connections and drawing the necessary conclusions.

8. **Proposed changes and goals (if any)**
In addition to the recommendations above as they relate to individual courses or course sequences and as noted in previous assessment reports, in order to continue to make the students more aware of the outcomes they should be able to demonstrate at the end of their studies, we will continue to distribute the *Assessment of Learning Outcomes* chart that we developed, and we will ask all students to rate themselves on a scale from 0 to 5 in regard to each program learning objective. The faculty will also rate each student's ability based on the demonstration the students will make in their individual courses and summative assessment. All graduate course syllabi must state the projected outcomes or competencies and how the students will have to demonstrate that they have reached the objectives. Comprehensive exams are in the process of being redesigned in order to include more demonstration of abilities acquired during coursework.