General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title ______ ARTH 72 ____________ GE Area ____________ C1

Results reported for AY 2013-2014 # of sections 4 # of instructors 2

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Department Chair: Anne Simonson 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, by the department chair, to the Office of Undergraduate Studies, with an electronic copy to the home college by September 1 of the following academic year.

Part 1
To be completed by the course coordinator:

1) What SLO(s) were assessed for the course during the AY?
   All.

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

   Students in ARTH 72 have a wide range of backgrounds and competencies in design knowledge and writing. Per its Catalogue description, the ARTH 72 “Considers the cultural role of design in addressing human needs in shaping the environment, in providing shelter, clothing, utilitarian objects, and transportation, in visual communication for political and entertainment purposes.” To accomplish this, the course uses contextual and visual analysis of specific designed objects within their specific cultural contexts. It can be particularly challenging to students with reading comprehension problems or those with difficulties in abstract thinking.

   Quizzes and examinations assessed the following learning outcomes: ability to translate visual perception into verbal communication; recognizing basic issues inherent to designed objects in general; knowledge of aesthetic qualities and social contexts; and understanding of basic themes and problems in design. Written assignments, in addition to fulfilling basic GE writing requirements, assessed the following additional learning outcomes: writing clearly and effectively using terminology appropriate to the field of design; ability to interpret designed objects from multiple points of view; learning the design characteristics of examples studied; knowledge of the issues related to and accomplishments of diverse cultures as reflected in examples of design; and understanding of how design is affected by its cultural and historical contexts.

   Student success in achieving learning outcomes was assessed in two ways. First, written assignments were assessed for evidence of improvement in three areas: style, organization and content. Improvements in style and organization provided evidence that students were increasingly able to write clearly and effectively on a variety of topics. Improvements in content showed specifically that students were able to interpret designed objects using the conceptual tools and historical information learned in the course. Second, quizzes and exams were assessed for both knowledge of design issues and ability to translate visual perception into verbal communication. Students were required to know the definitions of key concepts and be able to apply these concepts meaningfully to examples of design that they might never before have seen. This application of knowledge required increasingly sophisticated skills in formal analysis in recognizing, describing and discussing.

   Many students in this course are challenged because of their lack of basic skills writing and reading comprehension. Minor improvements could be found among such students, but a single course, such as this cannot make up for a missing foundation in these areas. Such students, however, were able to
assimilate concepts based on key terms and learn skills in formal analysis. On this narrow basis, learning outcomes as whole were successful. On the broader, more subtle level of intellectual synthesis, the results were mixed and harder to measure.

In Spring 2014 and through the summer, ARTH 72 instructors and course coordinator met to standardize readings for the course and increase its coverage of contemporary design. The result will be published through a Textbook Alternative Project (TAP) Grant awarded to the Course Coordinator in May 2014. The TAP resources will be used in all sections starting with the Spring 2015 semester. It continues cooperative efforts to ensure continuity, including a similar revision to content undertaken in 2011-2012 to include new readings and assignments intended to reduce the total number of key concepts and terms to be learned while also intensifying the depth of study in each conceptual area. Continuity across sections for this important undergraduate course is provided by close consultation with the course coordinator, classroom visits and review of course materials. All sections used the same standard design history survey textbook, Raizman’s History of Design, 2d. ed., either as a required or recommended reading; since Fall 2013, this textbook has been required in all sections and will continue as an optional textbook. (Its key chapter will appear in the Tap textbook as permitted by copyright.) These changes have made learning outcomes easier to assess and improved assessed learning outcomes and, in the process, increased student satisfaction with the course. Difficulties with abstract thought were overcome through repeated application to concrete examples, both in class discussion and in assessed work. During the period being assessed, one instructor introduced changes that required all students to give multiple short presentations and promised increased student interaction with course material. In practice, however, these proved too brief to adequately convey knowledge or otherwise benefit the class as a while, and assignment has been discontinued.

In all sections, course materials, including images, course materials and assignments were enhanced through an optimal combination of the extensive resources of the Visual Resources Library and the Canvas instructional shell. These modifications appeared to enhance student learning and satisfaction with the learning environment.

(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.)

None.

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 (SLOs), Content, Support, and Assessment? If they are not, what actions are planned?

Yes.