Course Number/Title: E10: Great Works of Literature

GE Area: C2: Letters

Results reported for AY 2014/5 # of sections: 3 # of instructors: 2

Course Coordinator: BALANCE CHOW E-mail: balance.chow@sjsu.edu

Department Chair: Shannon Miller College: Humanities and 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 SLO(s) were assessed for the course during the AY?

SLO 3 (Letters courses will enable students to write clearly and effectively -- Writing shall be assessed for correctness, clarity, and conciseness) was assessed for the course during the AY; furthermore, it should be noted that throughout the course, both SLO 1 (Letters courses will enable students to recognize how significant works illuminate enduring human concerns) and SLO 2 (Respond to such works by writing both research-based critical analyses and personal responses) were also addressed / assessed as integral or additional to SLO 3.

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

Specific Assignments: brief description of guidelines/requirements etc.

All class activities (reading, lectures, discussions, presentations, writing, research, and exams) in the course address this and other SLOs as described in the greensheet. Part of the course grade was based on specific essay-type questions (whether in an exam or as a take-home essay) designed to demonstrate the student’s ability to write clearly, correctly, and effectively when analyzing and discussing works of literature. In some instances the essay-type assignments incorporate a library research component as well.

For example, in Professor Rohi Voora’s E10 (F2014), the essay assignment was as follows:


Writing Instructions: Read this story and then write a complete, organized essay, 2-3 pages in length (800 words or more), in which you address these content areas:

- Name the author, the story title, and the topic.
- Who are the characters and what do they represent?
- What is the central conflict of this story? (Do not retell the whole story – condense and pinpoint your answer).
As another example, in Professor Balance Chow’s E10 (F2014), the essay assignment (with a research component -- SLO 2) requires students to explore an enduring theme (SLO 1):

Write an essay of about 1200 words related to one of the Great Works of Literature studied by analyzing and responding to a significant aspect (passage / episode / scene / action / theme / imagery / form / character) of your favorite text, to be chosen from the following list: Shanameh, One Thousand and One Nights, Epic of Son Jara, Death of Ivan Ilyich, Metamorphosis (by Kafka), and Things Fall Apart. Use the following template as a guiding outline for your analysis / response as you write the essay.

1. A brief commentary on general aspects of the author (compiler/performer), the text (poem/story/novel), and its contexts (time and place; cultural background; mission / objective). Also comment on the literary aspects such as form, structure, symbols, or artistic features.

2. Review some significant events, characters, or episodes which you will focus on for your analysis and response in #3 below. Provide summaries of the main scenes or main plot of the text/story first; include memorable quotes if appropriate.

3. Explore significant themes, issues, and ideas in the text/story, in terms of one or more of the following aspects:
   (a) The culture/society (including practices and beliefs) represented in the text, and/or
   (b) The historical significance of the characters portrayed in the text, and/or
   (c) The relationship between the events described in the text and the world we live in today, and/or
   (d) The important insights / messages the text is able to communicate to the modern reader, and/or
   (e) The great ideas in the civilization/culture exemplified in the text, and/or
   (f) The unique literary or aesthetic qualities of the text, and/or
   (g) The relationship between the text you have chosen and another text, in terms of similarities, differences, connections, and relative merits.

   Make an argument about what the text is saying about one of these themes, issues, or areas of interest.

4. Research requirement: Provide ideas, discoveries, or criticism from at least 3 external sources that can be included in your discussion. You may include what scholars say about Things Fall Apart and quote from them in order to support your analysis of the story. The research may also include conflicting opinions that need to be judged critically by you or your readers. INTEGRATE THIS RESEARCH INTO the essay (i.e., this research information can be inserted anywhere in your paper); use the MLA citation format and provide a Works Cited page for all of your sources.

5. Provide a title for the essay. Your title should contain two parts: one showing the topic, and the other showing your main idea about the topic (e.g., Heroism in Ancient Times [topic]: From Violence to Humanism [main idea]; The Power of the Curse: Vengeance as Justice in Greek Mythology).

How assignment was scored (rubric? Breakdown of grade assigned to show how this particular slo was targeted.

Typically, essay-type writing assignments are scored according to Departmental guidelines:

The “A” essay will be well organized and well developed, demonstrating a clear understanding and fulfillment of the assignment. It will show the student’s ability to use language effectively and construct
sentences distinguished by syntactic complexity and variety. Such essays will be essentially free of grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors.

The “B” essay will demonstrate competence in the same categories as the “A” essay. The chief difference is that the “B” essay will show some slight weaknesses in one of those categories. It may slight one of the assigned tasks, show less facility of expression, or contain some minor grammatical, mechanical, or usage flaws.

The “C” essay will complete all tasks set by the assignment, but show weakness in fundamentals (usually development), with barely enough specific information to illustrate the experience or support generalizations. The sentence construction may be less mature, and the use of language less effective and correct than the “B” essay.

The “D” essay will neglect one of the assigned tasks and be noticeably superficial in its treatment of the assignment—that is, too simplistic or short. The essay may reveal some problems in development, with insufficient specific information to illustrate the experience or support generalizations. It will contain grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors that render some sentences incomprehensible.

The “F” essay will demonstrate a striking underdevelopment of ideas and insufficient or unfocused organization. It will contain serious grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors that render some sentences incomprehensible.

**Quantitative data/analysis: grades/percentages/scale of high-low**

The results from the E10 sections taught by Prof. Voora and Prof. Chow in Fall 2014 were typical:

**Quantitative DATA (include only SLO-specific scores for assignments quoted above):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Students (Voora)</th>
<th>Students (Chow)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Qualitative Analysis (include only SLO-specific comments):**

*To quote Prof. Vora:* “Most students understood the story and responded to it adequately, going beyond the literal level to a much deeper level; however, some students missed the point and were unable to dig below the superficial layer. At least one student misread the story and responded inadequately.”

*To quote Prof. Chow:* “More than 2/3 of the class performed well, earning mostly B grades and above. A small group of students struggled and needed extra help to perform at a level expected of college work.”

**Lesson(s) Learned**—The coordinator notes that the quantitative and qualitative data above are consistent with previous patterns. Class size (as well as classroom space for the size of the class) remains a major issue. One instructor teaching a section of E10 in Spring 2015 complained that his classroom did not have enough space for chairs, desks, and group activities for the 40 students enrolled when all were present.
(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.)

No major changes anticipated. Coordinator recommends a lower cap of 35 instead of 40 students.

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.

(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 SLOs for writing.

Oral Presentations

In some sections of the course (taught by Prof. Chow), students were instructed to give an oral presentation on a great work of literature they would like to share with the class. The presentation, worth 10% of the overall grade, was assessed as follows.

Grades for the presentation will range from A to C and will be awarded based on:

(A) Solid content materials, especially interesting ideas;
(B) Coherent and organized presentation;
(C) Generating interest & leading to comments/responses;
(D) Description of the presentation experience, with critical reflections on how to improve.

The Department encourages instructors of the course to incorporate oral presentations to enhance student learning. However, a class cap of 40 poses a major obstacle to the effective use of oral presentations.

Writing

Students receive frequent and thorough feedback on their writing during the course as the content materials of E10 (Great Works of Literature) are mastered by way of personal as well as analytical and expository written assignments. Instructors teaching E10 often conduct essay-writing and library research workshops as components of their classes; the writing center has also been used as a means to help students improve their writing skills. The use of graduate assistants, resources permitting, would likely enhance the achievement of the writing-related SLO.