General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title  
FREN 25A  
GE Area  
C2

Results reported for AY  
11-12  
# of sections  
1  
# of instructors  
1

Course Coordinator:  
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Department Chair:  
Damian Bacich  
College:  
Humanities and 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?

SLO 2: Respond to significant works by writing both research-based critical analyses and personal responses.

The students read short stories and excerpts from novels and essays by Eugene Ionesco, Simone de Beauvoir, Antonine Maillet, Azouz Begag, and Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt. They answered comprehension questions, essay questions, wrote four compositions as homework, and one composition as in class final exam. The total amount of written work was more than 2000 words.

The subject of the four homework compositions and the final exam were designed to bring the students to summarize an author’s opinion, express their own opinion, and support it with arguments:

1. Discuss the relationship between father and child as shown in Ionesco’s short story, and compare it with the American adult approach to children.
2. What role does language play in one’s identity? What other elements contribute to shaping identity? What are the most important factors according to you?
3. Do you agree with Simone de Beauvoir that men’s and women’s behaviors and aspirations are mainly defined by society? Justify your answer.
4. Why do some young adolescents get in trouble? Is it always in order to have easy money? What is at the root of youth delinquency?
5. Explain how Mr. Ibrahim, without being a teacher, is a good educator for Momo, whose family context could drive him to become a delinquent and perhaps a criminal. Make comparisons with other texts you read during the semester.

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

The students were clearly interested in most of the readings (except for the excerpt from Antonine Maillet, which does not do justice to her novels) and in writing the essays.
The class average for the final composition was 85%. Even though some students received Cs and Ds during the semester, they stayed in the class and did all the assignments.

We spent less time on reviewing grammar concepts and more time on preparing the essays in class. We focused on 20th century authors and contemporary issues such as immigration, identity, gender, adult-child relationship, and education. These themes seem to be inspirational for the students who can draw from their own experiences as well as from other subjects they have studied at SJSU.

Although this is a challenging way of fostering progress in essay writing in French at this level, it does yield good results. The students become proficient in the subject faster, they learn to use the linguistic and cultural resources in a productive manner to enrich their style and find ideas to discuss in their papers.

The final in-class composition definitely serves as an overall or overarching summative assessment and makes the students conscious that they must train themselves to efficiently write essays.

(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.)

1. Find a more representative excerpt from a work by Antonine Maillet. This author deals with themes such as displacement of population, resilience, identity, that fit very well with the other texts we study, but the excerpt included in the textbook is too difficult.
2. Do the comprehension exercises in class as preparation for the essay writing rather than assigning them as homework. Several students struggled with this part of the assignments while they did better writing their essays.
3. Simplify the grading rubric for the compositions and align it with the one used in FREN 25B.

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, they are.
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?**

*SLO 1: Letters courses will enable students to recognize how significant works illuminate enduring human concerns.*

*SLO 3: Letters courses will enable students to write clearly and effectively. Writing shall be assessed for correctness, clarity, and conciseness.*

SLO 1: Letters courses will enable students to recognize how significant works illuminate enduring human concerns.

The students wrote four essays on topics designed to help them become more proficient at describing and discussing modern art. Reference was often made to this learning objective during the lectures and class activities. This helped the students understand the purpose of the assignments and become more curious about how other people might have commented the same works.

We studied post-impressionist and cubist artists Edgar Degas, Paul Cézanne, Paul Gauguin, Suzanne Valadon, Sonia and Robert Delaunay, and Picasso, poetry by Charles Baudelaire, and films by Agnès Varda.

Changes in literary and artistic esthetics were presented in their context, with emphasis on women artists, modern technology, changes in the urban landscape of Paris, and the artists’ response to wars and oppression.

While the textbook was the first source of information on the artworks and artists we studied, we also watched several 30 minutes films from the *Palettes* series (available at IRC) on Cézanne, Gauguin, and Picasso, and a feature-length film on Gustave Eiffel, that provided the students with the context in which modern art developed in Paris, attracting many artists at the beginning of the 20th century.
SLO 3: Letters courses will enable students to write clearly and effectively. Writing shall be assessed for correctness, clarity, and conciseness.

The emphasis was put on essay organization and structure at the beginning of the semester. Except for a few students, most had already taken composition courses in English and were able to apply skills learned in these other courses. We gave more attention to describing paintings and sculptures, and finally to apply critical thinking. Throughout the semester students were reminded to closely relate the artists and the works they studied to their historical contexts.

One class session per week was devoted to reading and doing comprehension exercises on essays included in the textbook, as preparation for the composition assignments. In small groups the students presented examples of artworks they wanted to write about and discussed their outlines and ideas.

In addition to writing four essay papers on assigned topics, the students wrote short essays in class after reading and discussing a text or a painting. During the last three weeks, these in-class compositions served as preparation for the final exam. The final consisted of answering essay questions on artists and works of art that we had studied during the semester. The students did not have the questions before the final exam.

A rubric was distributed to the students at the beginning of the semester:

- 30% Structure: introduction, body, conclusion; 3 sections for the body, 1 paragraph per artist or artwork being commented.
- 30% Content: Description and commentary; use of ARTSTOR; use of learned vocabulary
- 20% Presentation: handwritten or typed, with accents, double spaced
- 20% Grammar, spelling, style

This allowed the students to be more attentive to the clarity, organization, and grammatical accuracy of their compositions.

The students could rewrite their first two compositions. Some were allowed to rewrite the third one for practice only.

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

The class average for the four compositions written during the semester was 74% and for the final composition 82%. Some students received Cs and Ds during the semester, but they stayed in the class and did all the assignments.

For the majority of students, modern art was completely new and in many ways challenged their notion of art as representation of beauty, but after a few weeks, they began to be interested in the stories being told in the paintings. By the time we introduced Guernica, all students in the class had learned that painters have stories to tell and use their art to comment on their world. Changing the esthetic canon is more than a mere provocative gesture: it often reflects – as Cubism did at the beginning of the 20th century – the hope for a better world brought by science and technology and the shattering of that hope by the same forces.
Although this is a challenging way of fostering progress in essay writing in French at this level, it does yield good results. The students become proficient in the subject faster, they learn to use the linguistic and cultural resources in a productive manner to enrich their style and find ideas to discuss in their papers.

The final in-class composition definitely serves as an overall or overarching summative assessment and makes the students conscious that they must train themselves to efficiently write essays.

(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.)

1. Have the students rewrite their first essay in class in order to guide them more closely in their revision work.
2. Reduce the program to graphic artists, and include American artists who lived in Paris during the first half of the 20th century.

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, they are.