General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title: Philosophy 10: Introduction to Philosophy
GE Area: C2

Results reported for AY 2013-2014

# of sections: 17
# of instructors: 9

Course Coordinator: Carlos Sanchez
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Department Chair: Peter Hadreas
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, 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?

We assessed SLO 2: Letters courses will enable students to respond to significant works by writing both research-based critical analyses and personal responses.” We are in agreement that an introductory level philosophy course should involve research-based critical analyses and personal responses.

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

Requirements varied from section to section, and semester to semester. However, all sections required at least 1 research based paper, or term paper, to be written in an appropriate style. A rough draft, or outline, served as a preliminary evaluation of student writing, while a final research-based paper serves as a post-test, or indication of progress/failure.

12 of the 17 sections for the AY Year reported requiring a final research paper. The majority of students were not familiar with the structure of such a paper or the labor required to complete it. About 60% did not understand that a critical response requires more than a summary of the reading, but an engagement with the topic at hand. About 20% were familiar with style requirements; another 10% were unfamiliar with a college-level research paper.

The final Term papers revealed a significant improvement. By the end of the semester, about 70% of the students were able to properly engage the literature in a critical and philosophical way, writing well crafted research papers; another 30% were incapable of sustained critical analyses of the texts. Much more attention was paid, than previous years, to the threat plagiarism. Students were mostly well aware of the temptation. While the papers varied in grades and quality, it was clear that the students were aware of their task.
(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.)

Instructors agreed that the course itself should not be modified, that we are teaching the right things and going about it in the right way. However, we decided that the next time we assess SLO 3 more sections will be involved.

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 - Peter Hadreas, Department Chair

(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.

The instructor of record provides feedback and grades all writing assignments. The instructor of record, welcomes, if not requires, first drafts of all writing assignments and provides feedback on drafts. If sections are exceptionally oversized they are graded by the instructor of record with the assistance of an Instructional Student Assistant. The Instructional Student Assistant must be approved both by the Instructional Assistant Coordinator and the Philosophy Department Chair for their excellence in both composition and their expertise in the field of the philosophy at issue. Whenever an Instructional Student Assistant (ISA) aids in the grading of a large course, s/he provides feedback along with grading. In all cases, when the help of an ISA is employed, the instructor of record must explicitly notify the students of the class that some writing assignments have been graded and feedback has been provided by an ISA. The instructor of record then, if so requested by a student, must reread, provide additional feedback, and regrade the written assignment, if a grade revision is warranted.