General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title: ANTH 011 Cultural Anthropology
GE Area: D1

Results reported for AY 2012-2013
# of sections: 8
# of instructors: 2

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Department Chair: Chuck Darrah
College: Social Sciences

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?

Student Learning Objective #4: Students shall be able to identify and analyze the social dimension of society as a context for human life, the processes of social change and social continuity, the role of human agency in those social processes, and the forces that engender social cohesion and fragmentation. **Students will be able to recognize the interaction of social institutions, culture, and environment with the behavior of individuals.**

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

Instructors use assignments in which students read ethnographic studies of other ways of life using a reading guide and then participate in structured group discussions designed to help them: (1) grasp the concepts of agency, social structure, and economic mobility; (2) identify cultural contradictions that affect the conduct of daily life; and (3) utilize anthropological methods. In 2012-2013 students worked with the books *All Our Kin* and *Gift of the Bride*. In different ways, these books helped students think more critically about the institution of marriage and economic mobility. For example, *Gift of the Bride* allows students to compare and contrast the dowry system and wedding gifts in modern American weddings (registry’s, gifts intended to get a household started). They learn they have stereotypes and prejudices about arranged marriages and that (surprisingly to them) they tend to be longer lasting than Western love marriages. *All Our Kin* allows students to understand the economic underpinning of marriage and domestic arrangements.

The ultimate goal of these assignments is to develop student skills in operationalizing social analysis as a marketable skill, one that is relevant and applicable to many organizational and community settings. Students perform well at analyzing the ethnographic materials presented, but find it difficult to apply it in new contexts. This is not surprising, since such higher-order cognitive skills require lengthy practice. Nonetheless, the assessment suggests that students are at least making tentative progress in “stepping back” from the social contexts in which they find themselves and being able to search for social conditions that affect individual decision making.

(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.)

The instructors plan to build more dedicated time in the syllabus for group work and to discuss the material, and to begin framing the assessment goal earlier in the semester in order to use its full 16 weeks to develop skills in operationalizing concepts.
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?

This assignment and variants of it have long been used in anthropology courses; the “technology” is familiar. The assignment and assessment is clearly linked to the SLO and to the larger goals of social analysis. The instructors meet to discuss assignments, study guides, discussion prompts, etc. and I am confident that the classes are taught comparably and that the SLO is being assessed in a way that supports continuous adaptation to a changing student population.