General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title  Performing Culture and Society       GE Area  D1
Results reported for AY 2013-14  # of sections 3  # of instructors 2
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Department Chair:  Deanna Fassett  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
(1) What SLO(s) were assessed for the course during the AY?

SLO 4: 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?

For SLO 4, students create a performance and write a paper that focuses on how social institutions, culture, or the environment impact human behavior in invisible or taken-for-granted ways. That is, the focus of the assignment is to make visible (i.e. foster awareness and understanding) the implicit and underlying social forces that guide behavior. Students write the first part of the paper (1-2 pages) before their performance describing the particular social institution, cultural practice, or environment they selected, why they selected it, and how they developed their performance to communicate the hidden or taken-for-granted meanings and social forces associated with the institution, practice, or environment. Following the performance, students write the second part of the paper (2-3 pages), focusing on two other student performances that addressed the two dimensions different from their own (i.e. if the student performance was on social institutions, they are required to write about two performances that focused on cultural practices or the environment).

For the performance part of the assignment, students are assessed based on the extent to which the (1) central themes of the performance is clear, (2) the performance makes the strange familiar in a specific, new and unfamiliar way, and (3) the performance is competently executed, and (4) the performance utilizes a combination of symbols to communicate to the audience (i.e. music, sound, lights, props, costume, blocking, mediated technology, etc.). Based on the grades for the performance part of the assignment, students were mostly successful in accomplishing SLO 4:

Out of 65 students assessed
33 earned a B+ or better (51%) on the performance
31 earned between a C (111/150) and a B (48%)
0 earned between a D and a C
1 failed to complete the learning objective (1%)

For the paper part of the assignment, students are assessed based on the extent to which they (1) analyze how their symbolic elements communicated their central theme with the audience, (2) analyze their classmates’ use of symbolism and performance techniques, and (3) write competently in terms of grammar and mechanics. Based on the grades for the paper part of the assignment, students were mostly successful in accomplishing SLO 4:

Out of 65 students assessed
22 earned a B+ or better (34%) on the paper
28 earned between a C (111/150) and a B (43%)
14 earned between a D and a C (22%)
1 failed to complete the learning objective (1%)

Here are two quotes from student reflection essays on Learning Objective 4:

“To make the way we perform in these situations visible, many of the performances used hyperboles of strange and common behaviors or went against the grain of the proper way to perform in culture. For example, there is a huge emphasis on weight and body image in our culture. In one of the performances of culture, the performer had a scale chained to their leg that followed them around throughout the performance to expose this idea of body image always in the back of our minds.”

“What happened to be especially useful in terms of learning the material was the small activities that would follow up shortly after submitting a reading review assignment online. By doing little performances and activities in class that got people talking or thinking outside of the box about things in our society helped me look at regular things that happen in everyday life and realize how ridiculous some of the things can be.”

(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 modifications planned

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, the course coordinator and instructors are doing an excellent job keeping the goals, SLOs, content, support, and assessment consistent across sections. Regular communication
between the coordinator and instructors and between the instructors maintains continuity within and across sections.

(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.

We cap enrollment in Comm 21 to 25 students, allowing instructors to add only two students beyond the cap. Since we do not offer larger sections, students are able to receive thorough feedback and engage in practice and revisions of their writing within the current configuration of the course and workload of the instructors.