General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title ANTH 025 Human Lifecourse in Context

Results reported for AY 2013-2014

# of sections: 4
# of instructors: 1

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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 #1: Students shall recognize the physiological, social/cultural, and psychological influences on their well-being.

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

The goal of ANTH 25 is to help students, particularly freshmen, develop a perspective on their place in society. To this end, the lectures and the reading follow the progress of the human lifecourse addressing issues common to people of all cultures. At the core of these presentations and readings is the idea of authoritative knowledge, the idea that decision-making throughout life is influenced by different kinds of knowledge such as scientific knowledge, cultural precedent, legal requirements, economic restrictions, etc. As we discuss and read about every stage of life, students are encouraged to identify conflicting types of authoritative knowledge and form habits of critical thinking which will aid them as they enter each stage.

The concept of authoritative knowledge underlies an assignment that helps students locate themselves in the complex university culture. The main research and writing project, "Choosing a Path" requires students to investigate several majors; research job qualifications, potential salary, and employment availability in different geographical markets; interview someone who holds the job the student has identified as desirable; and write a formal thank you for the interview. Students are required to identify different forms in authoritative knowledge that are salient throughout this process and to reflect upon how they affect the student’s decision making about a career and lifecourse. At the beginning of the semester, students are skeptical about this project because it requires considerable (and often uncomfortable) exploration and self-reflection, as well as extensive writing. Through research some discover that they have not questioned the "authoritative knowledge" from friends, family, and counselors that led they to select their major. Others are confirmed in their choices and motivated to do better in school, see counselors more often, join clubs in their majors, seek internships, and generally work harder because they have a goal in sight.

(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 changes are planned. Versions of this assignment have long been used in the class and it has been continuously refined over the years. It works well and the students learn a lot about themselves and their
goals. The rich content of the materials submitted by students provides the instructor with a nuanced assessment of student learning.

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?

I helped develop this course and taught it for many years; Dr. Anderson has long been the regular instructor, with the result that staffing is stable. The course is discussed regularly at our faculty meeting GE workshops and the coordinator and instructor regularly discuss emerging challenges. The course is tailored to the area goals and SLOs, and it is obviously uniformly taught. No actions are planned beyond the continuous pedagogical reflection and modifications that characterize this assignment and course itself. The chair/GE coordinator is satisfied with the content of the course, as well as its consistency with GE requirements.