General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title  Phil 12/ Philosophy of the Person__GE Area E

Results reported for AY 2014-15  # of sections 4  # of instructors 2

Course Coordinator: Karin Brown  E-mail: karin.brown@sjsu.edu

Department Chair: Janet Stemwedel  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 October 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? (This should be in agreement with the Assessment Schedule on file with UGS (http://www.sjsu.edu/ugs/faculty/assessment/ge/Schedules). If not, please submit a revised Assessment Schedule for the course.)

SLO 1: Students will be able to 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?

Prof. Karin Brown writes: The subject matter of the causes and conditions of well-being were well analyzed and grasped. The material was distributed in the following manner. The relation between the concept of the self and well being as well as the relation between meditation and health was taught using the Upanishads and the Dhamapada. Emphasis was placed on the physiological benefit of meditation. The Republic and the Nicomachean Ethics were used to discuss the relation between morality and well being. The relation between spirituality and well being was explored in St. Augustine. The relation between psychology and happiness was taught through Sartre and Kierkegaard. This time, as an experiment we read Erich Fromm’s book To Have or To Be. This was very successful. Students benefited from reading an entire work (rather than selections) and Erich Fromm is an excellent psychologist and social critic.

Prof. Paul Bashaw writes: Text excerpts were used from Plato’s Republic, which asks students to consider morality and our relationship to others at school, with the context of family and work, and with friends and foes. Both discussions and short response papers helped students synthesize ideas and considerations. Freud’s Interpretation of Dreams challenges students to consider the unconscious mind and inner forces beyond our awareness. Students answer test questions as to how the unconscious can influence decision-making and thereby our society, literature and art. Both Kierkegaard and Nietzsche offer students the topic of existentialism and what it means to develop a Self.
(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.)

In the Fall of 2015 we will incorporate Hilary Putnam’s *Turing Machines* as an experiment in Prof. Gidding’s course. This work ensures students consider all three aspects of this SLO: the physiological comparison of the body to the machine, the human mind/brain to the machine’s ‘digital’ brain, and the social-cultural consequences of each. Students will be asked to consider how our bodies and brains are different from or similar to machines as Turing created them. The question “Can machines think?” is explored by Putnam through the explanation of the “imitation game” where three people are a part of the game. Student group discussions debate the limitations of the machine in comparison to the human body. This allows discussion as to how important the body is to the mind. Disabilities of mind and body are examined in this context. Discussion of machine programming helps us ask how social-cultural systems and institutions may program humans. Students write papers, which critically examine this question. Putnam posits the brain as a digital computer with causal powers much the same as the machine. This helps students reflect on their own agency via their body-mind, and how this influences well-being. Both tests and papers are assigned to these questions.

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 - Janet Stemwedel

(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."