General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title: Sociology 57 Community Involvement/Personal Growth    GE Area E

Results reported for AY: 2012-2013    # of sections: 1/semester    # of instructors: 1

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Department Chair: Wendy Ng    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?

SLO 2: Students will be able to recognize the interrelation of the physiological, social/cultural, and psychological factors on their development across the lifespan.

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

The component of the course that contributes the most towards students’ learning about physiological, social/cultural, and psychological factors involved in development across the lifespan is the service-learning component. Students are required to complete a minimum of 24 hours of service-learning with one of our community partners. Examples of the partner agencies this course works with are Third Street Community Center, Project SHINE, Veggieution, Fuerza Escolar (FE) and Strive For College (which are both affiliated with the Cesar Chavez Community Action Center on our campus), YMCA, and others. In these service placements, students are able to interact with people in various stages of physiological and cognitive development. They work with clients from various cultural/ethnic and religious backgrounds as well. The work they do often involves tutoring children and/or elders involved in some form of formal education (K-12 schools, and preparation for US citizenship examination, for example). It also includes teaching/participating in sports and recreational activities, providing child-care, providing nutritional assistance, services for low-income families, etc. Through this service experience, they are able to learn about the broader cultural and social dynamics affecting the clients in their quest to improve their life chances and life experiences. Many of the clients are from immigrant families, lower socioeconomic strata, and are English language learners. Students are able to learn first hand how these cultural dynamics pose challenges for the clients in their day-to-day lives. They are also able to see how clients benefit from the services they receive; benefits include an increased understanding of the broader American culture and English language, increased knowledge of healthy lifestyle habits, and improved social skills. Thus, students get to see first hand how social/cultural, psychological, and physiological factors interrelate with regard to clients’ development.
In addition, students learn to evaluate the interrelation of these factors in their own lives. They become more aware of the various stages of their own development across the lifespan, and learn about processes they can anticipate in their own futures. The course readings are designed to help facilitate the understanding of development across the lifespan. Reading assignments include the works of Erik Erickson and Abraham Maslow (with a focus on lifelong socialization); several chapters of the Korgen and White text which address socialization, culture, and social/cultural capital; an article from Ron Takaki addressing the dynamics of multiculturalism and cultural competence in society; works from Robert Putnam on social and cultural capital; readings on the work of Jean Piaget regarding cognitive development; and research regarding the link between physiological health, social interaction, and psychological well-being (House, Landis, and Umberson). Class discussions are designed to allow students to share what they learn in their service sites with each other; those who work with elders are able to share what they learn about life course development with those who work with youth, and vice-versa. This helps each student to broaden their perspective on what they have read or what they experience in their own service site.

The written assignments that best help to assess the students’ learning include the formal journal assignments and the assessment papers, particularly the post-assessment paper. In the formal journal assignments, students are asked to respond to questions that address the various challenges the clients face in relation to concepts discussed in class or addressed in the reading assignments. The post-assessment paper instructs students to describe their learning experiences throughout the semester; many directly address the specific learning objectives in their papers, and how their service learning experience helped them to meet the objectives. For SLO #2, many report that readings on socialization processes, as well as on Social Support theory and Activity theory (House, et al), help them to better understand the stages of development the clients of their service sites are experiencing. They come to understand the link between social support and physical/psychological well being across the life span, and the role that culture plays in developing an understanding of the society in which we live.

(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.)

Planned modifications for this course are minimal; the only needed modification is to continue to present up-to-date research data that highlights the interrelation of the aforementioned factors, and their impact on personal development across the lifespan.

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?

All sections are coordinated. The department offered this course (1 section) Fall 2012 and Spring 2013, and taught by only one instructor who serves as course coordinator.