General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title: ANTH/GEO/HIST/SOCS 138  
GE Area: Area S

Results reported for AY 2014-2015  
# of sections: 4  
# of instructor: 1

Course Coordinator: Wendy Rouse  
E-mail: wendy.rouse@sjsu.edu

Department Chair: Carlos Garcia  
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 to <curriculum@sjsu.edu>, 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 GELO(s) were assessed for the course during the AY?

GELO 2: Students will be able to describe historical, social, political, and economic processes producing diversity, equality, and structured inequalities in the U.S.

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

Students were informally assessed through a jigsaw activity that asked them to examine various pro and anti-slavery arguments in order to understand the social, political and economic processes that led to the formation of structured inequalities in the United States (GELO2). This served to introduce students to the complexity of the issue. Later in the semester, students were formally assessed through a midterm exam that included multiple choice, short answer and essay questions. The essay portion asked students to write a 500 word essay using primary source documents to respond to the following prompt: How did supporters and opponents of slavery in the nineteenth century use legal, social, religious, and economic arguments to defend or refute the institution of slavery. This then assessed students understanding of the deeper issues following the completion of the unit. In this manner, students were asked to consider the social, political, and economic processes that produced structural inequality especially as it related to slavery.

The results of the formal assessment midterm exam were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Percentage of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exceeds Expectation</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meets Expectation</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially Meets Expectation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fails to Meet Expectation</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The lessons learned from this assessment were that

- Students gained a thorough understanding of the “structured inequalities” between blacks and whites during the 19th century. Having students read and analyze the *Declaration of Independence* earlier in the course, helped them see that actions didn’t always match rhetoric throughout American History; and how societies struggle with diversity & equality issues.
- Students need more practice in organizing and writing in-class essays. The breakdown of arguments during the lesson on the Pro/Anti-Slavery arguments into political/legal, economic, social/cultural, biological, allowed the students to organize their essay more easily & quickly. However, students need additional practice structuring arguments and writing essays.

(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.)

This is the second time this assessment was used. The Expert Jigsaw, was added to the lesson as a way of scaffolding the analysis of primary sources and structuring an argument. This worked well to provide students with additional support in helping them to able to describe historical, social, political, and economic processes producing diversity, equality, and structured inequalities in the U.S. Their analysis of primary sources improved overall. Next year, if time permits, students will practice additional opportunities for writing essays in this manner and making additional connections to the theme of structured inequalities tying past to present.

**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/GELOs), Content, Support, and Assessment? If they are not, what actions are planned?

All sections of the course are still aligned with the area Goals, Student Learning Objectives (SLOs/GELOs), Content, Support, and Assessment. The only actions that are planned for 2015-2016 are to continue to work with the instructors in SSTP core courses (SOCS 137, SOCS 138 & SOCS 139) to align our instructional strategies especially with regard to the GE SLOs.

(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.

Through the jigsaw activity the writing assignment is scaffolded to allow students the opportunity to practice processing primary source documents and to work with peers in evaluating this material. The instructor is able to provide oral and written feedback that helps students to better structure their writing. The thesis paragraph checklist further helps students identify which specific areas of their writing need further development. Following the written exam, students are provided with written feedback including areas for future growth in developing their writing. The
writing assignments in this course more than meet the minimum 3,000 word writing required with reflection papers at 500 -600 words, a lesson plan assignment at 1,500 to 2,000 words, two exams at 1,500 words and an individual research project at 2,500 to 3,000 words.

*Please note this course is cross-listed as Anth/Geog/Hist/Socs 138 with Social Sciences as the home department.