General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title: Philosophy 104 “Asian Philosophy”      GE Area: V

Results reported for AY: 2013-2014 # of sections: 3 # of instructors: 3
Course Coordinator: Bo Mou E-mail: bo.mou@sjtu.edu
Department Chair: Peter Hadreas College: H & A

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?

We assessed SLO 2: “Students shall be able to identify the historical context of ideas and cultural traditions outside the U.S. and how they have influenced American culture.”

To achieve this objective, 1) in Bo Mou’s case, the course <1> pays due attention to the historical and cultural contexts in which the ideas and perspectives under examination have changed and developed over time when facing internal and external challenges/pressures so that the students can understand as these ideas and perspectives in a dynamic and holistic way; <2> discusses how Asian philosophical ideas and visions bear on Western/American philosophy via comparative approach, specially speaking, and American culture and society, generally speaking. 2) In Chanh Phan’s case, his lecture pays attention to the influences of Asian philosophy and cultures upon the US culture and their historical contexts; to evaluate their learning in this connection, the students were given the GEAT (General Education Assessment Test) in the form of short essay questions as a component of the Final Examination. 3) In Anand Vaidya’s case, the students learned about the classical Indian school of philosophy known as the yoga school; students were asked to read a text on the school, watch a movie on the history of the yoga school and its influence on the American yoga exercise movement; the lecture, movie, and discussion of the school covered how the modern exercise movement of yoga in the US had emerged from the classical yoga school, how it was similar, and how it was different. Students had to discuss this in their first exam on classical Indian schools of philosophy.

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

In the 2013-14 academic year, the activities which Bo Mou adopted to implement this GE LO include <1> introducing those historical and cultural contexts when examining the Asian philosophical ideas and visions under examination and <2> organizing a special discussion forum on how Asian philosophical ideas and visions have influenced Asian-American cultural tradition and American culture and society. Bo Mou used the following assessment procedure/tools for this learning objective: <1> evaluation of how the students understand those historical and cultural contexts via paper assignment and essay questions in the exams; <2> evaluation of the students’ presentation handouts and their presentation participation in the discussion forum on the theme “How Asian philosophical traditions bear on American culture and society”. The result of Mou’s assessment for the Spring
semester 2014 is this: as for <1>, about 29% of the students have very good command of those historical and cultural contexts (“A” category); about 55% of the students have good understanding of them (“B” category); about 16% of the students have yet to have good command of them (“C”, “F” and “I” categories). As for <2>, about 79% of the students (30 out of 38) submitted carefully written handouts and gave their good presentations at the discussion forum.

Chanh Phan gave students the GEAT (General Education Assessment Test) in the form of short essay questions as a component of the Final Examination. The results of the GEAT for the Spring semester 2014 show themselves as follows: 34 (out of 35) students took the GEAT; grade "A": 12 students; grade "B": 6 students; grade "C": 4 students; grade "D-F": 12 students. The activities for the partial fulfillment of the SLO2 consisted of the following: 1) Students were advised to watch the American movie "Kung Fu Panda" (Pt I) at home to answer two GE questions: a) Which Asian culture and philosophical school can be interpreted to have influenced the making of the movie? b) How and what can the movie be interpreted to have influenced the US culture? 2) An online quiz was given to assess these two SLO2 questions. 3) Selected features of the movie were shown in class and class and discussions of each. 4) The GEAT was the objective test as one component of the Final.

Anand Vaidya gave the following overall assessment via the exam questions: (i) 30% strongly understood how to think about how Asian philosophies have influenced American culture -- that is they both displayed correct identification of a tradition and explored more than adequately how it influenced American culture; (ii) 50% somewhat understood how to think about how Asian philosophies have influenced American culture -- that is they understood with competence of application but not through extended exploration; (iii) 20% either failed to show that they understood or simply in their attempt appeared to not understand. In the aforementioned case of how the students learned about yoga, most students were highly impressed by the divergence between the classical yoga school of philosophy and the contemporary yoga movement; they learned that while the original founder of the school, Patanjali, focused on how yoga was a way of calming the mind and focusing intuition through concentration, modern yoga in America was largely about improving the body; some students wrote essays on the subject discussing whether they thought that the modern American movement of yoga was misappropriating classical Indian yoga; they also argued about whether the appropriation or misappropriation was good or bad.

(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 to the course and its assessment activities are planned for the upcoming year.

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 – Peter Hadreiras, Department Chair

(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."