General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title ____134___________________________ GE Area ____V________

Results reported for AY ____2013-14_________ # of sections ______ 8 ______ # of instructors____1_____  

Course Coordinator: Rita Manning   E-mail: rita.manning@sjsu.edu 

Department Chair: 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?

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.

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

This SLO was measured by including readings and lectures on the Hobbesian theory of ethics of rights, which had a strong influence on American culture. It was assessed by having students write a case analysis & in final Term paper analysis. While students mostly understand the concept of rights in American society, some have trouble understanding the cultural and historical context of Hobbes’ extreme views on a state of nature and the more relevant Lockean rights influences on American democracy. Early on, despite my notes, 40% of students failed to understand that “state of nature” is superseded by civilized, governed society. 25% also failed to understand that rights theory does not signal carte blanche for any and all manner of allowed behavior. By the final project, 90% of students understood the difference between a state of nature & civilized society, and 98% understood that rights theory is balanced by duties, and all students understood that the idea of rights was not an American invention, but in large part the product of the European Enlightenment tradition.

(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 order to increase early understanding, and to give a better context of influences of European rights theory & society on American standards of inalienable rights, I will add a more complete historical background in my notes on Hobbes. One student commented this past year, that she had never considered how rights theory evolved from rebellion against divine rights of kings (re my comments in intro to Hobbesian society) . Her appreciation of this insight makes it evident that this philosophy course can provide some historical background on the relationship between ethics and society that students are not getting in other classes. The point is to have students understand how values progress in societies while many of those values are nonetheless universally shared & timeless.

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 Hadreas, Chair, Department of Philosophy

(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.”