General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title: Hist 100W  Writing Workshop      GE Area Z

Results reported for AY 2012-2013  # of sections: 2    instructors: 1 (Hilde)

Course Coordinator: Patricia Evridge Hill    E-mail: Patricia.Hill@sjsu.edu

Department Chair: Patricia Evridge Hill    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?
   Two course-specific SLOs were assessed this year.
   a) Students will be able to read and write analytically and imaginatively.
   b) Students will be able to write extemporaneously in subjects in the discipline and related fields.

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

The first SLO was assessed through the first of three significant essays required during the semester. For this five-page essay based on primary sources provided by the instructor, the emphasis is on textual analysis and historical interpretation of primary sources rather than on research or historiography. Fall students used venereal disease propaganda posters from WWI and WWII. In the spring, students used either WWII propaganda posters or pro and anti women’s suffrage propaganda from the early twentieth century. The assignment requires that students evaluate obviously biased sources created with the intent of motivating the public or altering behavior, one of the critical problems of historical interpretation. In addition, these are visual sources, so students must think about how arguments can be made in different forms and with different medial and materials.

Both classes performed well on this assignment. They learned to identify and analyze bias and manipulation in basic sources, particularly in visual sources. In the fall, all 26 students earned passing grades, as did all 27 students in the spring. Grades were fairly high with only a few Cs each semester. A lesson learned was that students found later assignments in which their analyses were based on more nuanced sources much more difficult. Fewer each semester were able to analyze clearly or write imaginatively when sources were more challenging. In addition, some had difficulty locating challenging primary sources related to their topics.

The second SLO was assessed through a series of “quick write” exercises in class on topics provided by the instructor. Students’ preparation was limited to what they had read while preparing the first two papers in the course. Most found themselves capable of writing extemporaneously on topics they had
read about fairly recently. These exercises help students overcome anxiety about their writing.

(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 changes are planned.

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.