General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title  Hist 100W            GE Area  Z

Results reported for AY 2014-2015    # of sections: 2 in S15  # of instructors: 2 in S15

Instructor/Course Coordinator:  Mary Lynn Wilson/Patricia Evridge Hill

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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 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 SLO(s) were assessed for the course during the AY?

SLO 1: Students shall be able to produce discipline-specific written work that demonstrates upper-division proficiency in: language use, grammar, clarity of expression

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

This SLO was assessed using three 7-12 page papers. The whole writing process for each paper was graded as it was completed. These three papers and all their parts were about 70% of the final grade of the class. The primary sources for the first two papers were assigned, but the student needed to research the sources for the third paper. Language use, grammar, and clarity of expression improved for all students during the semester. The main grammar problems were possession, pronoun/antecedent agreement, and comma usage. At the beginning of the semester, many students confused words with similar sounds. As the semester continued fewer students did this. Clarity of expression was one of the most difficult problems for students. Many started the semester with unnecessarily wordy sentences/paragraphs/papers. Students were asked to rewrite all papers based on instructor comments.
One-fifth of the class did not finish the course. Most of these students did not submit work after the first few weeks of class. Three-fifths of the class did average work, but most of these improved their grammar and usage a great deal during the course. One-fifth of the class did good work and flirted with excellent work during the semester. Some of these students were proficient before the semester started and others improved as the semester continued.

(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.)

I will emphasize grammar the first few weeks of school. Also, when I teach 99, the course that is the prerequisite to 100W, I will teach sentence diagramming to force students to learn grammar in a new and different format, so they don’t block out the information that they think that they already know.

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? Yes.

(5) This course is capped at 25 students.
General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title __History 100W_______________ GE Area ___Z__________________________

Results reported for AY 2014-2015 # of sections: 2 in S15 # of instructors: 2 in S15

Instructor/Course Coordinator: Libra Hilde/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 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 SLO(s) were assessed for the course during the AY?

SLO 1: Students shall be able to produce discipline-specific written work that demonstrates upper-division proficiency in:
   i. language use
   ii. grammar
   iii. clarity of expression

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

All of the assignments for History 100w strive to achieve the goals of SLO1. Students are required to write three papers, of roughly 5, 10, and 15 pages, and for each paper they must hand in a thesis statement, and two drafts (one of roughly half the final page length, and one full draft). For the first paper, they are given a packet of primary sources (WWII propaganda posters, or early 20th century women’s suffrage propaganda cartoons), and they choose their own topic and thesis. For the second paper they read book length slave narratives and write a comparative paper on a topic of their choosing. The third paper is a research project. For each paper, we repeat the basic building blocks of effective writing—choosing an effective analytical thesis, building an argument, writing an introduction, choosing and integrating evidence, analyzing and interpreting evidence, writing a conclusion, editing, and revising. All three papers are discipline specific, primary source based analytical essays. The students also do peer editing on all three full rough drafts in an effort to teach them further editing and revising skills.

For all three papers, and on each draft, the focus is revision on multiple levels (thesis, analysis, argumentation, evidence, and mechanics). I make extensive comments on each draft in order to encourage the students to improve their analytical sophistication, and line-by-line editing. My comments ask them to think carefully about word choice, grammar, and clarity. I also have several in-class assignments that focus on elements of effective writing. In particular, we work on
streamlining and condensing long passages and confusing sentences, using active rather than passive voice, introducing quotes effectively, reducing redundancy of words, phrases, and sentence structure, and effective transitions. At every stage of this process, and the focus of the course is on writing as a process, students are pushed towards greater analytical sophistication at the same time they are pushed towards greater clarity of expression.

In the Spring of 2015, in a class of 26, all but two students passed the class. One of those students was probably the strongest writer in the class, but she failed to complete the final paper. The other had weaker writing skills and also dropped out mid-way through the class. Of the remainder, four earned A level grades (1 A, 3 A-), 15 earned B level grades (3B+, 10 B, 2 B-) and 5 earned C level grades (3 C+, 2 C). The grading is set up to reward hard work and thus students earn many points for handing in every draft and in-class assignment. Even if they earn lower grades on their final papers, the process of creating and editing drafts hones their writing skills. By the end of the class, most have markedly improved their language use, clarity of expression, and grammar.

(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.)

I will not be teaching History 100 in the upcoming year. However, the next time I teach the course, I do not plan to modify the assignment structure or schedule. I believe the focus on process and on constant revision is the best way to teach writing skills. What I would like to modify is the sources used for the first two papers.

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? Yes.

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