General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title: **LING 129: Culture, Language, and Ethnicity in the US**  GE Area: **S**

Results reported for AY: **2018-19**  # of sections: **1-2/semester**  # of instructors: **3 for the entire cycle**

Course Coordinator: **Julia Swan**  E-mail: Julia.Swan@sjsu.edu

Department Chair: **Stefan Frazier**  College: **H & A**

Part 1

LLD has only one Area S course, L129, which is also an SJSU studies course. This course can be taken as an elective and SJSU studies course by undergraduate students majoring in Linguistics, but is more often taken by students who are not Linguistics majors. It is listed as a suggested inter-disciplinary for Childhood Development (CHAD) majors, and most sections of the course have at least 10-15 from Childhood Development. Students who are neither LING nor CHAD majors come to the course from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds, likely to fulfill an Area S and “SJSU Studies” requirement. The creator and long-time instructor of this course, Rosemary Henze, brought a strong background in language, cultural anthropology and social justice. Since her retirement in Fall of 2017, most sections of the course have had several new instructors. Three of the instructors hold doctorates with considerable training and scholarship in sociolinguistics, language and culture, linguistic variation, and language ideologies. The chart below summarizes enrollment and instructor history for the past several academic years:

### Number of students and sections:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructors</th>
<th>Fall 2015</th>
<th>Spring 2016</th>
<th>Fall 2016</th>
<th>Spring 2017</th>
<th>Fall 2017</th>
<th>Spring 2018</th>
<th>Fall 2018</th>
<th>Spring 2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Henze</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Henze</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Moore</td>
<td>Henze</td>
<td>Swan</td>
<td>Kataoka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kataoka</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
<td>Moore</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Gao</td>
<td>Moradkhan-&gt;Dodick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All course instructors implement similar syllabi, with comparable readings and the same types of assignments, based off of an official course description with a clearly specified amount of written content. LLD uses a Google Team Drive where instructors share assessment reports following each semester that critically considers how the GELOs and CELOs are being met and from which the course coordinator will write the annual assessment report. In most semesters, the instructors also add each other as “instructors” to their Canvas courses so that all instructors have full visibility about how the content and assignments are being given in the other sections. Given the unique expertise of the instructors, there is also a degree of autonomy granted to add supplemental reading materials, select new content or content related to current topics and events, refine prompts for writing assignments, etc. The course has been assessed in the past four years, with an annual focus on one of the GELOs:

- **2013-2014: GELO 1**, Describe how identities (i.e., religious, gender, ethnic, racial, class, sexual orientation, disability, and/or age) are shaped by cultural and societal influences within contexts or equality and inequality.

Assignments that address this objective: Reflective papers on videos (Local, USA and Dialect prejudice), Explaining Identity, the Midterm, and the Interview with a Speaker of Another Language.

- **2014-2015: GELO 2**, Students will be able to describe the history of social, political, and economic processes that have produced (and continue to produce) linguistic diversity and equality/inequality in the U.S., including factors contributing to language maintenance, language shift, or language death.
Assignments that address this objective: Reflective papers on the video (Local, USA, Just a piece of cloth, and Dialect prejudice), the Midterm, and the Student Presentation on Language Myths.

- 2015-2016: GELO 3, *Students will be able to describe social actions which have led to greater equality and social justice in the U.S. (i.e. religious, gender, ethnic, racial, class, sexual orientation, disability, and/or age).*

Assignments that address this objective: Reflective papers on the videos (Local, USA and Dialect Prejudice) the Midterm, the Student Presentation on Language Myths, and the Final Exam.

- 2016-2017: GELO 4, *Students will be able to recognize, appreciate and enact ways in which each of us can contribute to positive interactions among people of different racial, ethnic, and cultural groups in the U.S.*
  (changed to include *enact* per suggestion from 2016-2017 assessment cycle)

Assignments that address this objective: Reflection paper on the videos (Local, USA, Dialect prejudice, and Just a Piece of Cloth), presentation on Language Myths, Interview with a Speaker of Another Language, and the Final Exam.

- 2017-2018: Closing the loop

- 2018-2019: GELO 1 (this document): *Students will be able to describe how identities (i.e., religious, gender, ethnic, racial, class, sexual orientation, disability and/or age) are shaped by cultural and societal influences within contexts of equality and inequality.*

Assignments that address this objective: Critical Reflection Paper on Identity and Language

GELO 1 was assessed through Critical Reflection Paper on Identity and Language, where students were asked to reflect on their past experiences and describe (1) how their identities influenced their life experiences (or vice versa) and discuss (2) how the language they speak or language use in our society were involved in the above experience. Before turning in the final draft students engaged in peer review, where they read two other students drafts and discuss paper writing as well as the contents of each paper.

**Results of the assessment:**

For the 2018-2019 assessment cycle, three instructors provided data and commentary about how students in their sections were meeting the learning outcome being assessed. These reports contained basic assessment information such as which assignments related best to the learning outcome and how well students performed on these. Instructors also noted particular points of weakness that might need supplemental work. In most cases, the instructors saw relatively strong and high achieving students, who were early mostly B’s and A’s on the assignments most closely linked to each of the GELOs. One instructor described the Critical Reflection Papers on Identity and Language as being “highly analytical.” Two of the instructors observed similar grade distributions for this particular assignment. They shared that about 50-54% of the class earned a score in the B-range for this assignment, while a substantial percentage of students (around 30%) received higher marks (in the A range). The third instructor had begun teaching his section of the course mid-semester do to an unexpected departure and had not assessed the assignment linked to GELO 1. Across all sections of the course, the instructors felt that students illustrated strong mastery of the GELO.

One point of note relates to the number of assignments that are/are not linked to this GELO. The syllabi of the three instructors who taught the course during this cycle show good consistency, and each identifies Critical Reflection Paper on Identity and Language along with midterm and final exams as the only assignments linked to this GELO. One question is whether this GELO is also linked to other assignments. For instance, all instructors also assigned critical response essays that accompanied videos shown in class. Why are these not also linked to GELO 1? Another question is the extent to which students incorporate discussions of personal identities “within contexts of equality and inequality” as the GELO specifies. There may be additional content (in the selected videos, especially) that could solidify work toward this objective.
Lessons Learned from the Assessment:

The instructors and syllabi in use seem to be well-aligned, as do student outcomes meeting these GELOs across the different sections and instructors. Some ongoing course maintenance could be useful:

1. **Consider some type of outreach effort or encouragement for students to take this course to improve enrollment numbers, which have been considerably lower than expected for the past two years.** One suggestion could be reach out to other departments whose students might be interested in the course as an elective (Chicano/Chicana Studies, World Languages, Sociology/Anthropology, etc.) with a reminder about the course as an Area S course. Another question is whether the online course taught in Fall 2019 (to be assessed in the next cycle) has been effective. This is a very valuable course, which due to EO 1100 will no longer be a viable elective class for LING majors. Efforts will have to be made to supplement enrollment.

2. Revisit the links between assignments and GELOs. Is GELO 1 being addressed through more than one assignment?

3. Continue to use the developed course reader and assignment formats, with some substitutions for more current texts and videos.

4. One theme throughout the feedback of instructors from the past several years is developing ways for students to more actively demonstrate their knowledge. One instructor proposed using an extensive in-class activity to explicitly address students’ abilities to recognize and analyze inequality in real life settings and to enact responses that will increase positive interactions between members of different cultural groups. This could be in the form of Swan’s Critical Language Awareness case study or in the form of more explicit questions in video response prompts, as instructors see fit. Another instructor suggested for his own section that he would include essay question(s) on the midterm and/or final exam to assess students more authentically than multiple choice and T/F questions.

5. Instructors have also previously suggested that there be some discussion about how much overlap there is/should be with courses like: LING 129/LING 20/LING 122, and LING 21/LING 24. Should the courses overlap in assignments and other content? Perhaps each could have greater predictability in terms of: 1) aligning CLO’s and GELO’s to assessments, and 2) then, selecting learning activities that effectively bridge the gap between objectives and assessments.

6. Next year’s assessment schedule will focus on GELO 2.

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, the course is still aligned in all these aspects. The course coordinator has provided an extensive reflection on suggested modifications.

(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.

This course has an enrollment cap of 25 students and so the instructors are able to give individual attention to student writings.