“Closing the Loop” Reporting Template

Department: Theatre Arts

Departmental Mission:

The faculty and staff of the theatre arts department are committed to a liberal arts approach to theatre education while maintaining a balance of both academic and practical approaches to the art of theatre. We strongly believe in the value of academic rigor which in turn supports and maintains productions of the highest standards. We promote a global, diverse and collaborative view of theatre education, and strive to train artistic leaders in their chosen theatrical disciplines who will further contribute to the craft.

Program Goals:

Each undergraduate theatre arts major is grounded in generalist fundamentals of theatre arts and chooses one or more areas of specialization (acting, directing, dramatic writing, educational theatre, technical theatre design and/or management). In addition to preparing majors for careers in the academic or professional theatre, the lessons acquired through this course of study are readily transferable to careers in teaching, law, business, social services and other areas where inter- and intra-personal skills are required.

The following goals are central to the undergraduate degree in theatre arts, and are communicated to students through the general university catalogue, the departmental website and specific course syllabi:

- Knowledge of major works of dramatic literature representative of diverse cultures.
- Knowledge of the history of theatrical production—its styles, conventions and social context—from the ancients to the present day.
- Knowledge and application of the means by which theatrical production is realized.
- Knowledge of the role of theatre in shaping our past, present and future

The mission and goals of the theatre arts department align with the overall university mission to provide teaching “which embraces the liberal arts and professional preparation.” The pedagogical approach of the theatre arts department also embraces the university’s overall goal to “nurture the intellectual, ethical, social, physical and emotional development of each student” as well as create “graduates who are skilled communicators, able to critically analyze and use information, able to recognize and address the complex issues of the modern world, and who are willing to serve as responsible stewards of natural resources.”
Program Objectives:

In addition to the goals of the content knowledge areas, students completing the degree in theatre arts should be able to:

- Analyze and interpret dramatic literature and performance from the standpoint of designer, performer, director, playwright or critic.
- Use the tools and technology basic to theatrical production safely and efficiently.
- Function effectively as a member of a collaborative team in the preparation and realization of a public performance.

Three Specific Student Learning Outcomes Assessed, 2009-2010

- Knowledge of major works of dramatic literature representative of diverse cultures (A).
- Analyze and interpret dramatic literature and performance from the standpoint of designer, performer, director, playwright or critic (B).
- Function effectively as a member of a collaborative team in the preparation and realization of a public performance (C).

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1Rotation of assessment of outcomes and goals. Other three will be focus of 2010-2011 year.
### Theatre Courses:
#### Learning Objectives/Goals and Relation to Overall Departmental Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THTR 380 Theatre History I (GUR)</th>
<th>Assessment Activities/Tools Used in Course</th>
<th>Outcome of Assessment</th>
<th>Planned Program Improvements and Elements that are Working Well</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relative objectives from syllabus:</strong></td>
<td>1. Play Diary Project/Rubric (A)</td>
<td>1. Students are reading the plays but not asking themselves the right questions for comprehension and critical thinking. 2. Dramaturgy portfolios are an excellent measurable assessment of student critical thinking, analysis, collaborative and interpretive skills. 3. Traditional multiple-choice exams do not mesh with non-traditional learning styles of theatre students. Creative testing—i.e., performance-based assessment and multiple modes of testing—are needed.</td>
<td>1. Creation of “Reading a Play” lecture/handout to assure students know what to read for; vast improvement following quarter in Play Diary critical thinking. 2. Midterm performance project of group Asian Theatre assignment; Group Performance Rubric; dramaturgy portfolio of script, character analysis, costume, set, lighting, sound design, directors notes and group research. 3. Grading rubric; redesign of exam to allow for success of different learning styles (combination of essay, multiple choice and sketching).</td>
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<tr>
<td>To acquire increased knowledge of major contributors, controversies and conventions of ancient Greek to renaissance theatres (A)</td>
<td>2. Asian Theatre Group Projects/Performances (B,C)</td>
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<tr>
<td>To develop tools for recognizing and exploring the relationship between theatre and culture (A,B)</td>
<td>3. Final comprehensive exam (A,B)</td>
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<tr>
<td>To learn to read classical dramatic literature both for connections and divergences, both as cultural artifact and potential blueprint for contemporary performance (A)</td>
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<th>THTR 381 Theatre History II (GUR)</th>
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<td><strong>Relative objectives from syllabus:</strong></td>
<td>1. Play Diary Project/Rubric (A)</td>
<td>1. Students are reading the plays but not asking themselves the right questions for comprehension and critical thinking. 2. Traditional multiple-choice exams do not mesh with non-traditional learning styles of theatre students. Creative testing—i.e., performance-based assessment and multiple modes of testing—are needed.</td>
<td>1. Continue to include Play Diary project 2. Grading rubric; redesign of exam to allow for success of different learning styles (combination of essay, multiple choice and sketching).</td>
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<tr>
<td>To acquire increased knowledge of major contributors, controversies and conventions of French Neoclassicism to the beginnings of the Modern Era (A)</td>
<td>2. Final comprehensive exam (A,B)</td>
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<td>To develop tools for recognizing and exploring the relationship between theatre and culture (A,B)</td>
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<td><strong>Relative objectives from syllabus:</strong></td>
<td>1. “But I Think” critical thinking writing assignments (B)</td>
<td>1. Many students are severely lacking in good critical thinking and writing skills, tending to “parrot” information rather than make connections. 2. Dramaturgy portfolios are an excellent measurable assessment of student critical thinking, analysis, collaborative and interpretive skills. 3. Traditional multiple-choice exams do not mesh with non-traditional learning styles of theatre students. Creative testing—i.e., performance-based assessment and multiple modes of testing—are needed.</td>
<td>1. Continue to assign critical thinking writing, two essays per class; in future will post critical thinking tools on Blackboard course site. 2. Outstanding retention, evaluations of project relevance and student involvement as culminating history series project and performance; developed more comprehensive “group collaboration project” rubric; Blackboard course group discussion forums for grading participation in project; final dramaturgy portfolio of script, character analysis, costume, set, lighting, sound design, directors notes and group research. 3. Continue to assess student comprehension via final exam focusing on of different learning styles (combination of essay, multiple choice and sketching).</td>
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<td>To acquire increased knowledge of major contributors, controversies and conventions of the Modern Era to the present (A)</td>
<td>2. Group “Isms” Projects/Performances (A,B,C)</td>
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<td>Theatre Courses: Learning Objectives/Goals and Relation to Overall Departmental Objectives</td>
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| **THTR 212 Introduction to Stage Technology**  
Relative objectives from syllabus:  
- To introduce the theater student to the fundamental principles and techniques used in the technical production of theater- dance and music performances (B,C).  
- To introduce the subjects of production organization, the design process, scenic construction, lighting technology, audio recording, and live sound reinforcement (B,C).  
- To promote an awareness of the basic skills needed and technologies used to produce a live performance event (C)  

1. 15 hours required laboratory time working hands-on departmental production or in scene shop/design lab (C)  
2. Using Spoon River Anthology as text, students will complete 3 separate interpretive design projects; emotional response paper and scenic design, lighting design and sound design (B)  

1. Student collaboration defines success of the technical support—the assessment is the outcome; a midterm and final exam test knowledge and skills gained in lab.  
2. Students are being required to interpret dramatic literature in a number of ways, including critical thinking through writing, visual design and audio technology.  

1. Student skills are assessed in the moment, and knowledge is assessed by midterm and final exams. This system works well as a check-and-balance between comprehension and application.  
2. Tying three separate tech projects together with one script is extremely effective; student application and retention of subject matter and technique is evident in their final projects. |
| **THTR 428 Dramatic Literature: Radical Theatre and Theatre of the Oppressed**  
(Note: special topics course based on Praxis. Writing Proficiency course.)  
Relative objectives from syllabus:  
- To mix intensive readings and discussion from the canon of social change theatre with experimental exercises, resulting in an experience of both theory and practice (A,B,C).  
- To provide students with a working knowledge of the theory and practice behind the social change theatre of the 1960s through the current explorations of Theatre of the Oppressed in its varied forms (A).  
- To provide a forum to investigate the performative aspects of social change theatre (C).  

1. Response to the daily readings in the written form of one quote and one question (Q & Q) for class discussion (A).  
2. Blackboard online journal. These entries consist of Q & Q and your subsequent, post-class thinking on initial responses to the reading; written instructor responses to journals (B).  
3. Creation/participation in a Happening, a Telling Selves performance and in-class Image and Forum theatre exercises; Rubrics for each performance/exercise (C).  
4. Final Paper Project: thesis, outline, drafts due throughout course of quarter; had noticed in previous THTR 428 course that students did not know how to write, so the Writing Center was integrated into the course to give workshops and provide writing cohorts (A,B).  

1. Found that this assessment solved the problem of “who has done the reading?” via a selected quotation as well as a question the students have after completing the reading.  
2. Online journals were quite effective, though with 38 students in the course it was difficult to keep up responses.  
3. These praxis projects are extremely successful; comprehension of, investment in and retention of materials demonstrated in performance projects was incredibly high.  
4. Assigned writing partners within the class to help students stay on task and get additional feedback; students were given in-class special workshops from Writing Center faculty on thesis writing and basics of citation – saw dramatic improvement in drafts; in future, will recommend to all colleagues teaching THTR 428 or WP class to follow this successful example.  

1. Continue to add “Q and Q” format into other reading-based courses as method to assess comprehension prior to testing.  
2. In future, writing partners will respond to journals as well to help with timely peer response to online journals; can also serve as assessment of peer contribution to course.  
3. Praxis is a process by which theatre students learn best, and the more courses and experiences we can offer in this genre, the stronger student retention and commitment to courses and the department will be.  
4. The Writing Center will become an integral aspect of theatre WP writing courses across the boards as a resource for professors and students.
### Theatre Courses:
Learning Objectives/Goals and Relation to Overall Departmental Objectives

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<th>Beginning Acting (THTR 160)</th>
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<td>Relative objectives from syllabus: No objectives listed at this time directly link with overall departmental goals. The closest identified objective of the course that links with departmental goals is: “To foster appreciation of the collaborative art form that is theatre” (C). The goals are embedded in the course, but need to be clearly defined for the students</td>
<td>Performance assessment rubric for midterm.</td>
<td>The rubric is clear but students do not get a copy of it before they are graded by it.</td>
<td>Rubrics will be created for both midterm and final performances and be included in the syllabus and online Blackboard course starting fall, 2010. Note: Departmental goals and outcomes will be linked to course goals in syllabus starting fall, 2010.</td>
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**Related “Closing the Loop” Activities**

**Online Senior Exit Survey: Launched spring, 2010**

The Senior Exit Survey is a seventeen-question formal assessment of the program, courses, career/graduate school preparedness, and suggestions for improvement as well as a tool for better identifying the demographic of students choosing the WWU Theatre Arts department. Sixteen graduating students were surveyed spring, 2010. As a first-time test, the survey was sent to all graduating seniors for spring quarter 2010, not the entire 2009-2010 graduating class. Sixteen responses is too small of a data pool to be fully conclusive, so the department will need to gather at least another four quarters worth of responses to get a better overall picture. Yet the findings were of keen interest. Some of the findings included:

- The top three reasons for choosing WWU Theatre were program offerings/coursework, quality of the program, and faculty.
- Out of the fourteen responses to the effectiveness of departmental advising, eight responses noted a desire for more initial advising/clearer advising early-on in academic career.

Based on these early findings, protecting the integrity of our program and courses is a top priority; keeping faculty accessibility and mentorship is key to our success. All majors will be required to make an advising appointment with chosen advisor at the time they declare and within one week of declaration of major.

**Online Student Survey: “Departmental Perceptions”: Scheduled launch in fall, 2010**

The “Departmental Perceptions” survey is intended for all theatre students as a measure of course availability and appropriateness, connections between coursework and productions, faculty mentorship and advising, and suggestions for improvements from students currently in the program as opposed to exiting it.