Department: English

Assessment Coordinator: Bruce Goebel

Departmental Mission: The mission of the English Department is to offer a rigorous and engaging learning experience in the study of English; to facilitate reflective reading informed by a variety of cultural contexts, genre conventions, scholarly inquiry, critical analysis, and creative thinking; to produce innovative scholarly and creative work in a variety of genres that advances our understanding of language, literature, writing and media; to support a collaborative and student-centered learning community that welcomes diverse backgrounds and perspectives, fosters social responsibility, and celebrates life-long learning; and to provide service to the university, state, and global community.

Departmental Student Learning Outcomes:

All English graduates should be able to:

1. Write effectively in a variety of genres using appropriate conventions.
2. Read accurately and critically in a variety of genres and media in relation to a variety of discourses, cultures and historical periods...
3. Understand similarities and differences of language systems and social discourses, the subfields of linguistics, and some tools and techniques in linguistic and rhetorical analysis.

Literature Emphasis Major Graduates should be able to:

4. Understand and apply a range of critical and cultural theories.

GUR (liberal arts & sciences) Learning Outcomes

5. __________
6. __________
English (cont.)

Student Learning Outcomes (Departmental and GUR) Assessed This Year:

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| Student performance was assessed in ENG 202 using double readings of critical essays using the following rubric: | SLO 1 | First, it important to note that for every trait on the rubric, a substantial majority of student papers either met or exceeded the standard. That said, a clear pattern emerged in those papers that did not meet standard in relation to several traits on our rubric (see attached rubric chart). Those papers generally had a:
  * a weak, unfocused thesis
  * a sequence of claims that was too broadly thematic and obvious
  * plot summary or lists for evidence
  * no explanation or analysis of the evidence |
| • Has a clear, significant thesis |  | |
| • Contains an effective sequence of claims to support the thesis |  | |
| • Body paragraphs (or clusters of paragraphs) that:
  o Make significant claims to support the thesis
  o Provide sufficient evidence to support those claims
  o Explain/Analyze the evidence in relation to the claim
  o Use transitions effectively |  | |
| • Employs secondary sources effectively (if required) |  | |
| • Cites sources correctly (if required) |  | |
| • Is written in clear prose |  | |
| • Is free of errors in spelling, grammar, and conventions unless used for effect |  | |

Changes as a Result of Assessment:

In direct response to our assessment, the department agreed on the following guidelines for teaching writing in ENG 202. Instructors should:

1. use the following thesis description and spend time unpacking its meaning:
   * A focused, arguable thesis, informed by critical reading and research, that examines a question or problem about the literary text(s) from a new or different perspective.*
2. carefully explain and model for students how a sequence of claims or warrants can be used to construct an argument that is not simply a list or a statement of obvious plot developments.
3. explain and model for students how to attend to genre issues of language, form, and style
4. help students recognize that texts are intentionally constructed, that all texts effectively offer arguments about the world, and that the students have a right to take part in that argument in an informed way.
5. incorporate some critical essays about the literature to serve as both models and secondary sources.
6. incorporate some exploration of non-contemporary literature.
7. introduce the idea of scholarly research.
8. include a sequence of writing assignments that builds critical skills, such as:
   • A short close reading of a passage or poem using appropriate literary language,
   • A short essay in which they situate themselves in relation to a literary text and a critical essay,
   • A longer critical essay that requires the incorporation of secondary sources.

In addition, the department agreed to change the wording of the course description of ENG 202 to more accurately reflect the learning objectives of the course.

The department has approved the following catalog description change for ENG 202 and submitted it for approval:

* A writing course designed to help students develop the skills of close reading and careful analysis of literary texts, with particular attention to how language, style, and form contribute to a text’s social or political claims. Introduces students to the challenge of situating themselves in relation to a literary text and the critical conversation about that text, and crafting multi-draft critical essays with a focused, arguable thesis supported by thoughtful sequence of claims and carefully selected textual evidence.*