GUR Assessment:

GUR Competency Assessment Report

1) Department  Liberal Studies

2) Assessment Coordinator(s): Who is responsible for coordinating assessment in your department/unit  Rob Stoops and Andrea Gogrof, supported by Scott Pearce

3) GUR Competency Being Evaluated. #1: Analyze and communicate ideas effectively in oral, written, and visual forms.

4) Please describe the performance(s) used to assess student outcomes toward the GUR competency (performances could include term papers, pre-post exams, presentations, etc.). Syllabi, final papers, student evaluations.

5) Please describe how you analyzed those student performances. Three GUR courses were selected for examination: 123, “Western Tradition: the Modern World”; 277, “Humanities of China”; 325, “Surveillance, Voyeurism and the Culture of Suspicion.” In this assessment, we have attempted to track these projects from the templates given them in the syllabus, through the work they ultimately produce, and then to hear their thoughts about the process in their evaluations of the course.

6) Using the categories from the appropriate GUR competency rubric, describe your assessment of students’ performance toward that competency. For example, for Competency #1 you should address contextual knowledge, focused development, organization, and conventions. All three categories in Competency 1 are addressed in these (and all other Liberal Studies) GUR courses. In the essays and research papers required in these courses, students are asked to gather information from diverse sources, synthesize into a coherent whole, and then produce essays or papers. For out-of-class papers, students are encouraged to turn in preliminary drafts for comment by the professor; rewrites are often allowed, even for in-class essay exams. For some of these classes, students are required to present oral reports, analyzing and discussing texts and visual materials. Rigorous discussion in class is also required; grades are heavily based on attendance and participation.

   Contextual Knowledge: This is a key to the teaching/learning style of the Liberal Studies Department; generally good work, but improvement needed in terms of organization (see below). In terms of audience, key terms or individuals at times not clearly introduced. Focused Development: A tendency among some for tangents and wandering. Organization: Improvement needed in terms of introductions and conclusions of the essays. Conventions: Work needed on grammar and spelling.

7) Did you add any assessment criteria for this competency beyond those listed on the
rubric? If yes, please describe here. No

8) If you answered yes for (7), describe your assessment of students’ performance toward these additional criteria.

9) As you consider your data, what would be appropriate next steps to improve students’ performance toward the selected GUR competency? Please indicate any professional development resources that would help you support students’ progress toward the selected GUR competency. Contextual Knowledge: Make demands for contextualization clear in guidelines given for each paper, both orally and in written form. Focused Development: Improve clarity of paper guides for each paper that all tangents and developments need to be drawn back to central unifying theme and focus.

Organization: The Liberal Studies opposes demand for a single template for writing, since that tends to stunt both writing and thought. But again, a need to make demands clear in paper guides. Conventions: The need for improvement on grammar and spelling goes far beyond this department; it is a general issue at the university, and in K-12 before. The Liberal Studies Department works hard to lead students in conveying coherent ideas, in words spoken and on the page. We will work for improvement on these issues, raising related questions in department meetings for exchange of ideas and tactics. The university as a whole needs to address this issue, particularly in terms of how student writing can be improved.

Departmental Assessment:

Assessment Coordinator: Rob Stoops and Andrea Gogrof, with support of Scott Pearce

Departmental Mission (unchanged since it was approved Spring 2012): The WWU Liberal Studies Department serves the university and the larger community by supporting and sustaining excellent interdisciplinary teaching, learning, and scholarship in the humanities. To our students we impart a knowledge of the world’s key canons and of the power of the book, together with an ability rigorously and critically to explore, contextualize and analyze texts of various types. From our program come broad-minded and well-educated citizens, able and willing effectively to take on a variety of undertakings that serve the needs of the people of Washington and the larger world.

Departmental Student Learning Outcomes: Upon graduation, Liberal Studies Humanities majors will have
1. engaged texts of disparate origin and kind through close reading, and with a critical eye;
2. mastered multiple methods of inquiry used in the humanities disciplines;
3. developed written and oral communication skills;
4. acquired substantial knowledge of different worlds of thought and belief around the globe with a sensitivity to comparative dimensions;
5. contextualized books, works of art and other cultural artifacts within the worlds that gave them birth, and seen their influence over social, political and religious dynamics;
6. gained an appreciation of a range of manifestations of cross-cultural contact and exchanges across human history;
7. employed cognitive, analytical and communication skills which will be of use in many fields and professions beyond the university;
8. become knowledgeable and effective citizens of Washington and the larger world.

**Student Learning Outcomes Assessed This Year:**

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<tr>
<th>Assessment Measures</th>
<th>SLOs Assessed</th>
<th>Results</th>
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<tr>
<td>Examined sample syllabi and final exams (or guidelines for final papers), from</td>
<td>4, 6</td>
<td>We are overall pleased with results as they now stand. The syllabi are well organized, and show both depth and breadth of subject matter.</td>
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<td>LBRL 123, one of our core courses; LBRL 338, a cross-cultural course on “Mysticism”;</td>
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<td>LBRL 123 introduces students to a variety of models of thinking, requiring familiarity with the differences and connections between historical periods and world views, and a focus on shifting understandings of the basic concepts that define, distinguish, and connect Western traditions in the Humanities.</td>
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<td>and 378, a course examining “Religion and Society in India.”</td>
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<td>LBRL 338 is a broad, cross-cultural examination of traditions of mysticism, with particular emphasis on comparison of such phenomena in the Chinese and Abrahamic traditions</td>
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<td>LBRL 378 introduces students to five religious traditions and their long history of interaction in the complex social networks of the Indian sub-continent. For improvement: Address these SLO’s more directly in the course descriptions and course syllabuses.</td>
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<td>How to improve: Suggest a department-level meeting to discuss the goals and structure of introductory courses; and how to tie the strands of these different courses more firmly together.</td>
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<td>Reviewed samples of student work from the end of the quarter (final</td>
<td>4, 6</td>
<td>We register positive student reaction to readings and subject matter in general. The 378 field trips also met very positively.</td>
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<td>exams or final papers) and student course evaluations from LBRL 123, LBRL 338, and LBRL 378.</td>
<td>For improvement: comments on occasional tangents in class discussion; and some need to clarify expectations for papers and exams. How to improve: raise these issues in detail at department retreat in September 2014.</td>
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