

Assessment Report for the English Discipline
Undergraduate College

Date of Report: September 16, 2012

Academic Year of Report: August 2011 to May 2012

Division: Visual Arts and Letters

Department: English Discipline

Faculty Members teaching Literature courses:

- Katherine Baker, adjunct faculty
- Mary Ann Macartney, full-time faculty
- Melissa Sullivan, full-time faculty

Chair: Mary Ann Macartney

Profile: 16 English majors and two English and Communication majors

There are two full-time faculty members; one part-time faculty for Literature; there are 9 part-time faculty for Reading and Writing

Courses Offered in the Assessment Period:

Fall 2011

- Survey of British Literature I
- African-American Literature
- British Women Writers II
- Seminar: Transatlantic Modernisms

Spring 2012

- Studies in Fiction
- Survey of British Literature II
- Modern American Literature
- Seminar: Jane Austen
- Senior Seminar

Departmental Factors:

This year was unusual in that there was only one graduating English major; the two English and Communication majors chose to fulfill their senior requirement through Communication.

This year was also unusual in that it was meant to serve as a transitional year. In past years, students were required to research, write, and revise a thesis on an approved topic over the course of nine months. Students were required to submit their topic in late April of junior year, were assigned a thesis advisor, and were to begin preliminary research over the course of the summer. A first, full draft was due at the end of November when students would begin extensive revision and additional research if needed. Subsequent drafts were discussed and open for peer editing within the Senior Seminar course in the spring semester. The final project was submitted approximately two weeks after the completion of the written part of the Comprehensive Exam. This final version of a minimum of fifteen typed pages was an integral part of the Senior Seminar course grade.

For this academic year, the Senior Thesis requirement was as follows: the student was asked to select a previously submitted research project from a 300-level course and extensively revise and expand that original work.

This academic year was also a transitional one in that it was the last year of distributing Comprehensive questions. The one English major and two English and Communication were given a number of questions at the end of junior year. From eight questions, the English major was to select four and treat those questions as four separate essays that had to be researched and submitted; the two English and Communication majors had to select two questions and research and submit those.

Learning Outcomes for the Major

Goal # 1

- 1). Students will develop and write a research-driven literary analysis paper during their sophomore (and/or junior) year. 75% of students will receive a 3 or better on the AACU Rubric for Written Communication.
- 2). Students will complete a Senior Thesis project that utilizes a wide-range of digital and print resources and illustrates their ability to independently develop and support their own critical analysis and research in a clear and professional manner.

75% of students will receive a 3 or better on the AAC&U Rubric for Written Communication.

Goal # 2

1. For their Major Oral Presentation in Critical Approaches to Literature or another designated 300 or 400-level course, 75% of students should receive a 3 or higher on the AAC&U Rubric for Oral Communication

2. For their formal Senior Thesis Presentations, 75% of students should receive a 3 or higher on the AAC&U Rubric for Communication

Goal # 3

1. In "Critical Approaches to Literature," or other designed 300 or 400 level courses, 75% of students will achieve a 3 or higher as their final grade.

2. On the Senior Comprehensive Examination, 75 % of students must achieve a grade of 4 or higher.

All the discipline goals are listed on each syllabus, which in turn is posted in the Epsilon course page. Additionally, they are also posted on the iWay under the Assessment tab.

Assessment of Majors

The English Discipline uses the ACC&U Rubric for Written Communication .

For this academic year, the Senior Thesis requirement was as follows: the student was asked to select a previously submitted research project from a 300-level course and extensively revise and expand that original work. After submission, this year's student's work did not achieve a 3 on the AAC&U rubric, but rather earned a 2.77.

Drawing any conclusions from the work of a single student did not seem to lend itself to substantive analysis, particularly since the requirements are being changed for seniors for the academic year, 2012-2013.

The English Discipline has also assessed Goal Three, focusing on Objective 2, Target Outcome 2. Once again, this year was a transitional one in that it was the last year of distributing Comprehensive questions. The one English major and two English and Communication were given a number of questions at the end of junior year. From eight questions, the English major was to select four and treat those questions as four separate essays that had to be researched and submitted; the two English and Communication majors had to select two questions and research and submit those.

The English major did achieve a grade of 3 on the Comprehensive Examination; however, the English and Communication seniors received grades 2.3325 and 2.335 respectively. The grades for the English and Communication majors may have been tied to the changing course requirements for the revised major.

Changes Based on Assessment

As already noted and before the academic year, 20122/2012, the discipline members had agreed to change the requirements as well as add the Information Literacy Value Rubric from AAC&U in order to strengthen all the areas as noted on those rubrics.

In the upcoming year, the Discipline will return to the Senior Thesis Presentation format, whereby all English majors as well as English and Communication majors will present their research findings to an invited audience. All students will be evaluated on the basis of the Oral Communication Value Rubric from AAC&U.

Recommendations for Improving the Assessment Process

Currently, there are no recommendations for the improving the assessment process.