






***Online Assessment Tracking Database***

Sam Houston State University (SHSU)  
2014 - 2015

**English BA**

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Goal	<b>World And Multicultural Literature (2000-Level) DRAFT</b>  Students will be exposed to the works of representative writers of various cultures and to universal themes and common concerns of literature.
Objective (L)	<b>Demonstrating Knowledge In World And Multicultural Literature DRAFT</b>  Students will read and articulate their understanding of basic concepts and approaches to world and multicultural literature.
Indicator	<b>Assessing 2000-level Writing DRAFT</b>  Reading and writing are part and parcel of each other. Essays written to analyze and/or apply literary texts suggest the depth and quality of the students' reading, as well as their understanding of the assignment. Thus, during the spring 2015 semester, we will collect writing samples of students enrolled in 2000-level (sophomore-level) classes and examine them to ascertain the effectiveness of reading that they evince. We anticipate collecting samples at random from approximately 15% of the students enrolled in ENGL 2332 and ENGL 2333.
Criterion	<b>2000-level Holistic Scoring DRAFT</b>   50% of sophomore students in ENGL 2332 and ENGL 2333 will meet the departmental criteria for academic writing that reflects critical thinking and good editing.  To assess the effectiveness of student writing abilities, English faculty will conduct an annual holistic review of representative essays produced across all sections of ENGL 2332 (World Literature I: Before the Seventeenth Century) and ENGL 2333 (World Literature II: The Seventeenth-Century and After).  NOTE: These course numbers represent a renumbering to conform with Core requirements. Formerly, ENGL 2332 was ENGL 2331 and ENGL 2332 was ENGL 2342. We have combined our reading of student papers from these two courses because either will serve to meet Core requirements, and 2332 is not prerequisite for 2333.  Holistic Scoring Procedures  1. To assure that the assessment reviews a representative sampling of writing, teachers of ENGL 2332 and 2333 sections in Spring 2015 were asked to submit a final paper significant writing from 3-4 students in each section, with these students selected at random by the department's secretarial staff. Submitted papers represent some 15% of students enrolled. (See attached memo to ENGL 2332 and 2333 instructors.)  2. Two primary readers from among the English faculty at all levels (tenure/tenure-track, lecturer, and Graduate Assistants) independently read and score each essay under review; in the case of an unreliable

result, the essay is referred to a secondary (i.e., a third) reader, who reads the essay independently, without any knowledge of the previous results (see number 5, below).

3. Each primary reader scores each essay on a 4-point scale, with a score of 4 the highest possible. The two primary scores are added to yield a total, with the final scores ranging from 8 (highest possible) to 2 (lowest possible). A combined score of 5 or higher is passing. A score of 7 or 8 indicates an excellent essay; a score of 5 or 6 indicates an acceptable essay; a score of 4 or less indicates an unacceptable essay.

4. Reliability of the two scores is assumed when both scores from the primary readers are congruent, that is, when they are within 1 point of each other. For example, a score of 6 that would be seen as reliable would mean that both readers marked the essay as a 3. A reliable score of 5 would mean that one reader assessed the essay as a 3 while the other reader assessed it as a 2.

5. Should the primary scores for an essay not be reliable—for example, a 4 and a 1, a 3 and a 1, a 4 and a 2—the essay is referred to a secondary reader. If that reader agrees with the higher score, the essay is certified as acceptable or excellent; if the secondary reader agrees with the lower score, the essay is certified as unacceptable.

## Finding

### Results Of 2000-level Holistic Scoring **DRAFT**



77% of the papers scored were assessed as having met the departmental criteria for critical thinking and good editing. Thus, we met our goal for this assessment. Below is a listing of the overall scoring of essays (N = 60, 13% of enrollment):

8 (excellent essay) = 3  
 7 (excellent essay) = 9  
 6 (competent essay) = 16  
 5 (competent essay) = 18  
 4 (unsatisfactory essay) = 11  
 3 (unsatisfactory essay) = 2  
 2 (unsatisfactory essay) = 1






## Action

### Number Of Essays Scored **DRAFT**



We initially estimated that we would read a representative sampling of essays from the sections of ENGL 2332 and 2333 totaling 15% of students enrolled. We received 13%, which, while close to the 15% target, needs to be higher. To that end, our goal will be to collect essays from 20% of students enrolled in the Spring 2016 sections of these two courses so as to collect a sample large enough to ensure reliability.

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Goal	<b>Literature And Literary Theory (4000-Level) DRAFT</b>  Students majoring in English will acquire an appreciation of various critical approaches and methodologies in studying literature and literary theory.
Objective (L)	<b>Reading Literature Critically And Writing About It Analytically DRAFT</b>  Students will be able to use various approaches and methodologies to analyze literary texts and demonstrate the ability to interpret texts by communicating their understanding of those texts in analytic essays.
Indicator	<b>Assessment Of Writing DRAFT</b>  Reading and writing are part and parcel of each other. Essays written to analyze and/or apply literary texts suggest the depth and quality of the students' reading, as well as their understanding of the assignment. Thus, during the spring 2015 semester, we will collect writing samples of English majors from 4000-level (senior-level) classes and examine them to ascertain the effectiveness of reading that they evince. Our goal is to read 25% of the essays, chosen at random, written by English majors in 4000-level literature courses. We anticipate an enrollment of some 105 students in any given long semester and so should expect to read 26 to 30 essays.
Criterion	<b>4000-level Holistic Scoring DRAFT</b>   80% of English seniors in 4000-level writing-enhanced classes will meet the departmental criteria for academic writing that reflects critical thinking and good editing.  To assess the effectiveness of student writing abilities, English faculty will conduct an annual holistic review of representative essays produced across all sections of 4000-level (senior) classes.  Holistic Scoring Procedures  1. To assure that the assessment reviews a representative sampling of writing, teachers of 4000-level sections in Spring 2015 were asked to submit a final paper significant writing from 3-4 students in each section, with these students selected at random by the department's secretarial staff. Submitted papers represent some 25% of students enrolled. (See attached memo to 4000-level instructors.)  2. Two primary readers from among the tenured/tenure-track English faculty independently read and score each essay under review; in the case of an unreliable result, the essay is referred to a secondary (i.e., a third) reader, who reads the essay independently, without any knowledge of the previous results (see number 5, below).  3. Each primary reader scores each essay on a 4-point scale, with a score of 4 the highest possible. The two primary scores are added to yield a total, with the final scores ranging from 8 (highest possible) to 2 (lowest

possible). A combined score of 5 or higher is passing. A score of 7 or 8 indicates an excellent essay; a score of 5 or 6 indicates an acceptable essay; a score of 4 or less indicates an unacceptable essay.

4. Reliability of the two scores is assumed when both scores from the primary readers are congruent, that is, when they are within 1 point of each other. For example, a score of 6 that would be seen as reliable would mean that both readers marked the essay as a 3. A reliable score of 5 would mean that one reader assessed the essay as a 3 while the other reader assessed it as a 2.

5. Should the primary scores for an essay not be reliable—for example, a 4 and a 1, a 3 and a 1, a 4 and a 2—the essay is referred to a secondary reader. If that reader agrees with the higher score, the essay is certified as acceptable or excellent; if the secondary reader agrees with the lower score, the essay is certified as unacceptable.

### Finding

### Results Of 4000-level Holistic Scoring **DRAFT**



73% of the papers scored were assessed as having met the departmental criteria for critical thinking and editing. Thus, we did not meet our goal for this assessment. Below is a listing of the overall scoring of essays (N = 33, 33% of enrollment):

8 (excellent essay) = 3  
 7 (excellent essay) = 5  
 6 (competent essay) = 5  
 5 (competent essay) = 11  
 4 (unacceptable essay) = 3  
 3 (unacceptable essay) = 5  
 2 (unacceptable essay) = 1

### Action

### Holistic Scoring Rubric

We will distribute the holistic scoring rubric of 4000 level courses for faculty to consider as they teach writing in these courses, primarily through comments on student assignments.

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## Previous Cycle's "Plan for Continuous Improvement"

- 80% of English seniors in 4000-level writing-enhanced classes will meet the departmental criteria for academic writing that reflects critical thinking and good editing.

#### METHODS OF GETTING THERE:

- Two years ago, a rule was implemented that English majors and minors must receive a C or better in all courses that count toward their English major or minor. We anticipate the effects of this rule to start showing up soon as more reflective writing. It has been too early to measure this until now.
- The English Department and MFA program will publicize the monetary award that we have established for students who write an essay about the Bearkat common reader.

- Good writers will be nominated by faculty for the Academic Success Center writing awards in the spring of 2015.
- All 4000-level professors will share with their students the departmental criteria (attached) that are used to evaluate senior-level writing.

- 60% of sophomore students in ENGL 2332 will meet the departmental criteria for academic writing that reflects critical thinking and good editing.

#### METHODS OF GETTING THERE:

- All 2000-level instructors will share with their students the departmental criteria (attached) for sophomore writing.
- Students will be encouraged to submit their essays for the Bearkat common reader contest for the monetary award established by the department for the coming year.
- We regard sophomore courses as our recruitment courses. Active recruitment efforts will commence. Every sophomore class will be visited by a recruiting professor. The side effect should be better consciousness of what English values: plenty of critical reading and reflection on the reading through writing.

- 50% of sophomore students in ENGL 2333 will meet the departmental criteria for academic writing that reflects critical thinking and good editing.

#### METHODS OF GETTING THERE:

- See above. In addition:
- ENGL 2333 students will be presented, again, the departmental list of literary terms. This, we expect, will provide the 2333 students the tools to discuss their readings in reflective writing.
- Visits to Newton Gresham Library and the Academic Success Center will be encouraged. Struggling writers will be sent to the Academic Success Center to get additional help in developing better sophomore-level essays early during the semester.

- 100% of World Literature I and II students will receive realistic feedback of their writing skills early during the semester. Especially World Literature II professors will emphasize the importance of knowing the standards of academic writing.

#### METHODS OF GETTING THERE:

- All sophomores will be given the departmental essay criteria, and these will be discussed in detail during the beginning of the semester.
- A meeting will be organized with all sophomore professors to discuss means of raising the level of students writing. The perils of grade inflation will be addressed.
- Essays will be collected from 20% of the students in both World Literature I and II to ensure comparable data. In previous years, the validity of the sample has been a problem.

**Please detail the elements of your previous "Plan for Continuous Improvement" that were implemented. If elements were not implemented please explain why, along with any contextual challenges you may have faced that prevented their implementation.**

In a college-wide assessment, the 2013-14 version of the BA in English program was reviewed by two readers in disciplines other than English. In response to this review, please note that we restructured the section dealing with 2000-level courses in world and multicultural literature.

As to specific entries in the previous cycle's PCI, we offer these comments:

1. The first goal listed in the PCI states that “80% of English seniors in 4000-level writing-enhanced classes will meet the departmental criteria for academic writing that reflects critical thinking and good editing.” Of the 4 items listed in the “METHODS FOR GETTING THERE” section, the first three were done. The fourth—“All 4000-level professors will share with their students the departmental criteria . . . that are used to evaluate senior-level writing.” I (the Interim Department Chair) cannot say with certainty that this item was completed. While all faculty were provided with the criteria, I do not know how many actually shared that list with their students. This item we will attend to in both the Fall 2015 and Spring 2016 semesters, and I will encourage faculty to provide students with a copy of the criteria and to discuss them with their students.

2. As noted, we restructured the section of this year’s OATDB dealing with ENGL 2332 and 2333, following review of our listings. This, in effect, renders moot parts of the PCI. However, I would note the following: (1) I do not know whether the departmental criteria for scoring 2000-level writing were distributed to students in ENGL 2332 and 2333. This item we will attend to in the Fall 2015 and Spring 2016 semesters, and I will encourage faculty to provide students with a copy of the criteria and to discuss them with their students. (2) We continue to encourage students to submit essays to the Bearkat common reader contest, to visit Newton Gresham Library, and to take advantage of tutoring offered by the Academic Success Center (formerly the Sam Houston Writing Center).

**Plan for Continuous Improvement - Please detail your plan for improvement that you have developed based on what you learned from your 2014 - 2015 Cycle Findings.**

1. We will maintain our efforts at encouraging students to enter on-campus writing contests, to take advantage of tutoring in the Academic Success Center, and to use Newton Gresham Library to support their reading and writing.

2. Faculty will be provided with copies of the department’s criteria for 4000- and 2000-level writing and will be encouraged to share and discuss these with students in their 4000- and 2000-level classes, respectively.

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