

English BA

Literature And Literary Theory (4000-Level)

Goal Description: Students majoring in English will gain an appreciation of specific critical approaches and methodologies in studying literature and literary theory.

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Reading Literature Critically And Writing About It Analytically

Learning Objective Description:

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. Students will have an opportunity to write analytical and critical discussions of literature.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Assessment Of Writing

Indicator Description:

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 Description:

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.

Findings Description:

88.24% 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 = 17):

- (excellent essay) = 7
- (competent essay) = 8
- (unacceptable essay) = 2

Although we fell short in our goal for the number of artifacts gathered, we collected more this year than last (17 this year, 9 last year). The department is going to continue to explore more effective ways of gathering artifacts from individual courses in order to reach the 25-30 essays to evaluate in our holistic rubric. We believe that will give a more accurate overall assessment.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Action: Gathering data and artifacts

Action Description:

Much of our assessment is dependent on gathering good artifacts for evaluation and scoring. However, we are still not getting the samples that we need. Therefore, the department will appointment a committee, whose charge is to oversee the gathering of data and artifacts for our yearly assessment cycle.

World And Multicultural Literature (2000-Level)

Goal Description:

Students will be exposed to the works of representative writers of various cultures and to universal themes and common concerns of literature. Students will have an opportunity to facilitate the social, political, and religious tenets reflected in the primary works read.

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Demonstrating Knowledge In World And Multicultural Literature

Learning Objective Description:

Students will read and articulate their understanding of basic concepts and approaches to world and multicultural literature.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Assessing 2000-level Writing

Indicator Description:

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 Description:

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.

Findings Description:

77.14% 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 = 35)

(excellent essay) = 6

(competent essay) = 21

(unsatisfactory essay) = 8

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Action: Gathering data and artifacts

Action Description:

Much of our assessment is dependent on gathering good artifacts for evaluation and scoring. However, we are still not getting the samples that we need. Therefore, the department will appointment a committee, whose charge is to oversee the gathering of data and artifacts for our yearly assessment cycle.

Update to Previous Cycle's Plan for Continuous Improvement

Previous Cycle's Plan For Continuous Improvement (Do Not Modify):

Although the department wishes to continue many of our current practices that our successful, it recognizes that there are areas that need to be re-thought, revised, and re-evaluated. In the upcoming year we are going to address a number of issues and take the following actions: 1) Have a full BA curriculum review and make updates to our current curriculum. 2) Due to declining numbers in the major, our recruitment and retention committee will actively implement recruiting initiatives to increase numbers. 3) With the increase demand for online coursework, the department will make decisions on what role online learning has in our department and to what degree we should alter current offerings to increase our online presence. 4) The department will find ways, both through curricula and through future hiring, to increase diversity in our department. The department believes these are major areas where we can improve and better serve student needs and make the program more attractive to potential students. In addition, the department will use tenure and tenure-track faculty to teach some sections of Composition courses. This assignment will be conducted on a rotating basis that will be fair to both adjunct and tenured faculty.

Update of Progress to the Previous Cycle's PCI:

The following are updates of progress in the previous PCI:

1) The curriculum committee did not meet during the previous cycle; however, a new committee has been formed and undergraduate curriculum will be reviewed.

2)The current strategy for recruiting will be stronger promotion of the department at the university level.

3) Strategies for diversity hires are still being discussed.

Plan

Closing Summary:

Because the major issue regarding the BA in English is declining majors and minors, our current PCI will focus on this issue. We are planning the following measures:

- 1) Revise curriculum to better align with student interest, while still retaining program philosophy and standards.
- 2) Expanding the program's emphasis on undergraduate research and study abroad opportunities.
- 3) Establishing more opportunities for student engagement. We feel that building a community among our students will help retention and recruitment.
- 4) Establishing better ways to highlight student achievements across campus.