



## 2008-2009 Assessment Plan Report

### **PROGRAM ASSESSMENT REPORT AY 2008-2009**

**Report Date:** July 25, 2009

**School/College:** Arts and Sciences

**Department/Program:** Modern Languages / Comparative Literature and Culture

**Person completing the Report:** Anne Mairesse

1. **Overview Statement:** Briefly summarize the assessment activities that were undertaken this academic year, indicating:

**Q: Which program learning outcomes were assessed this year?**

**A:** At the end of the Academic year 2008-09, and for the first time after completion in Summer 08 of the Assessment plan for CMPL, it was decided to assess Learning outcomes of Goal 1:

**Goal:**

1. **To engage in comparative analysis of literary texts and other cultural artifacts that seek to enhance our understanding of cross-national cultural commonalities and differences**

**Defined:** To demonstrate a basic critical ability to identify, evaluate, and compare the ideas and formal features of major artistic works and figures, the contexts in which they are produced, and the perspectives they represent.

**Measurable Outcomes:**

- a. Apply analytical skills to the interpretation of a wide spectrum of cultural phenomena, including literature, art, music, film and popular media.
- b. Identify and compare major artistic and cultural figures of different regions of the world, showing sensitivity to the plurality of meanings they offer
- c. Situate the Arts in the context of their historical, cultural, and aesthetic traditions, while recognizing the limitations of such categorizations



## 2008-2009 Assessment Plan Report

### Performance Rubrics:

	Very Poor Achievement of Outcome	Average Achievement of Outcome	Very Good Achievement of Outcome
a.	Students still struggle when trying to analyze complex material; a dependence on book report versus argument and an inability to develop their own thesis when ask to write or discuss independent ideas.	Students can evaluate and compare texts through a range of critical approaches and can apply analytical strategies (learned through literary analysis) to non-literary texts of a designated region or part of the world, including news media, film, advertisements, visual arts, performance, etc. Students can develop and carry out independent reading and research beyond the knowledge and understanding provided in the classroom.	Students can evaluate the function of different stylistic devices within a text and can uncover nuanced and multilayered meanings and complexities of a text (or artistic work) through various modes of inquiry. They can begin to assess competing claims of interpretation of a text or other work or art independently and with confidence.
b.	Students have only the most cursory understanding of essential works and figures relative to a region of the world, within a genre, or relative to a theme. Mistake in differentiating between cultures occur often.	Students demonstrate an understanding of major artistic works and figures as well as the essential characteristics that enable to compare trends, periods, movements or names within an intellectual tradition of a country or region of the world that influences them. .	Students demonstrate a depth of knowledge and breadth to compare major artistic works and figures of a country or region of the world.
c.	Students blur essential distinctions between cultures of different regions of the world. A lack of sophisticated thought is often linked to sloppiness, disinterest and repetitive errors in argument.	Students recognize key terms specific to a culture and region of the world. They can compare and contrast artistic works from different eras, including those that represent important trends and movements from the same period, while also demonstrating knowledge of the significant events that have impacted a culture or region of the world across the centuries. They are aware by now that conventions and canons may be questioned.	Students regularly show a command of recognizing particularities of individual intellectual traditions within a culture or region of the world.



## 2008-2009 Assessment Plan Report

### **Q: Who in your department/program was involved in the assessment of the above learning outcomes?**

Anne Mairesse, director and instructor, Comparative Literature and Culture Program. In consultation with Ms. Shawn Doubiago, Instructor, Introduction to Comparative Studies.

### **2. Please Answers the Following Questions for Each of the Student Outcomes Assessed:**

#### **a. What did you do?**

Describe clearly and concisely how you assessed the learning outcomes that were evaluated this year (e.g., measures, research methods, etc.). [please use bullet points to answer this question]

- To assess Goal 1 of the Major in Comparative Literature and Culture, I looked into students' learning upon completion of the first Core required course for the Major across sections: Introduction to Comparative Studies - CMPL 0186-200 section 01 and 02 Spring 09.

#### **Importance of reviewing students' performances in CMPL 0186200 for Assessment Report:**

- CMPL 200 is the first of three (3) Core course required for the Major in Comparative Literature and Culture. It is a foundation course, and a pre-requisite for upper-division courses in CMPL.

- For this evaluation, I made a random selection of weekly Reflective Entries on different topics assigned at the beginning, middle and end of the semester, which allowed me to assess students' progress in the following areas:

- reading, writing, analyzing a text

In reviewing R.E.s I looked for evidences and progress in:

- Adherence to assigned question or topic (also as an indication of active / engaged reading of assigned material).
- Clarity of expression, argumentation
- Implementation of analytical tools and methods
- References to theory (Is theory applied to practice?)
- Identification of a thesis with supportive / substantiated arguments
- Originality and development of ideas / independent thinking



## 2008-2009 Assessment Plan Report

- Writing skills (grammar, syntax, style, integration of quotes, punctuation and other mechanics)

I divided R.E.s in three sub-categories according to point allocations: (5-4 points) High, (4-3 points) Average, (1-2 points) Poor.

- For this evaluation I also collected 40 Midterms and 40 final exams administered in two different sections of the course: that is half the total number of exams (midterm and final combined) administered in each section. I divided them according to three categories according to their grades: High, (A, A-) (B+, B) Average and (B-, C) Poor.

- I outlined and assessed content of R.E.s, Midterm and Finals in each category (high, average and poor) to determine whether the content of the rubrics were met.

- I analyzed and assessed the data provided in R.E.s, midterms and finals I classified under data with High achieving grades, which I matched with the different categories and the content of rubrics outlined in the Assessment.

- I analyzed and assessed the data provided in R.E.s, midterms and finals I classified under data with Average achieving grades, which I try to match with the different categories and the content of rubrics outlined in the assessment.

- I analyzed and assessed the data provided in R.E.s, midterms and finals I classified under data with Poor achieving grades, which I try to match with the different categories and the content of rubrics outlined in the assessment.

### **b. What did the faculty in the department or program learn?**

Summarize your findings and conclusions as a result of the assessment indicating strengths and weaknesses in student learning demonstrated by this assessment.

- I noted that R.E.s with High point average written toward the end of the semester addressed most items outlined above, while R.E.s. with low point average reflected partial reading of the assigned material, and occasionally, no reference to the assigned reading.

- Rather than a lack of understanding of the material, or poor analytical and writing skills, review of R.E.s with low point average exemplify a direct link to a student's lack of engagement or motivation for completing a reading assignment, a necessary prep work, which would otherwise enable her/him to write a significant and successful R.E.



## 2008-2009 Assessment Plan Report

- Review of Midterms and Finals helped with students' learning in two distinct areas reflecting their knowledge:

- 1) factual knowledge: short questions about author, text, movement, definitions, historical context, period, genre, themes, cultural knowledge about society, direct or indirect influence, legacy, etc.
- 2) analytical and critical skills: essays relating theory to practice and textual analyses.

Findings: students who demonstrate excellent or good analytical and critical skills in writing do not all perform equally well when answering short factual questions requiring memorization (dates, definitions) or other factual knowledge.

Students with fair to poor knowledge of the reading material and limited analytical and writing skills, often score better when answering short factual questions.

### **Findings applied to Rubrics for Goal 1:**

- I found that students' data in the category identified as High achieving grades matched the content listed under Average Achievement of Outcome for rubrics a)\*, b), and c) as outlined below:

a) Students can evaluate and compare texts through a range of critical approaches and can apply analytical strategies (learned through literary analysis) to non-literary texts of a designated region or part of the world, including news media, film, advertisements, visual arts, performance, etc. Students can develop and carry out independent reading and research beyond the knowledge and understanding provided in the classroom.

*\*with some reservations about the last part of rubric a) on the ability to carry out "independent reading and research..." This part which could not be assessed through reviewing R.E.s and exams needs to be reviewed through independent research students undertake for their Senior theses.*

b) Students demonstrate an understanding of major artistic works and figures as well as the essential characteristics that enable to compare trends, periods, movements or names within an intellectual tradition of a country or region of the world that influences them. .

c) Students recognize key terms specific to a culture and region of the world. They can compare and contrast artistic works from different eras, including those that represent important trends and movements from the same period, while also



## 2008-2009 Assessment Plan Report

demonstrating knowledge of the significant events that have impacted a culture or region of the world across the centuries. They are aware by now that conventions and canons may be questioned.

- I found that students' data in the category identified as Average achieving grades matched the content listed under Very Poor Achievement of Outcome for rubrics a), b), and c) as outlined below:

- a) Students still struggle when trying to analyze complex material; a dependence on book report versus argument and an inability to develop their own thesis when ask to write or discuss independent ideas.

- b) Students have only the most cursory understanding of essential works and figures relative to a region of the world, within a genre, or relative to a theme. Mistake in differentiating between cultures occur often.

- c) Students blur essential distinctions between cultures of different regions of the world. A lack of sophisticated thought is often linked to sloppiness, disinterest and repetitive errors in argument.

- I found that students' data in the category identified as Low achieving grades occasionally matched, but only in part, the content listed under Very Poor Achievement of Outcome for rubrics a), b), and c) as outlined above.

- Most and foremost, it is important to take into account that the learning outcomes outlined in the Assessment are not meant to match the achievement level of the student body tested at the end of an Introductory course into the Major, regardless of their interest or lack of interest in the Major in CMPL.

- It is important to keep in mind that very few students enrolled in the course reviewed, Introduction to Comparative Studies are CMPL majors. The majority of students enrolled take this course to fulfill their Literature Core Requirements. In addition, the course enrolls all classes of students, from Freshman to Seniors, and mixing various levels of preparedness, maturity, or motivations. The data provided from this course does not allow for an accurate evaluation of students' learning for the Major in CMPL. At best, it indicates a learning curve for entering CMPL majors that needs to be reassessed at the end of their senior year.

- It is also important to note that all declared majors in Comparative Studies have achieved the best possible grade in the introductory course hereby reviewed. Conversely, none of the students with low achieving grades have been identified as majors in CMPL.



## 2008-2009 Assessment Plan Report

- In conclusion, this report establishes that on average, students' knowledge as assessed after completing Introduction to Comparative Studies meets learning outcomes outlined in Goal 1. Students demonstrate the basic skills required to advance to the higher level of Critical Analysis (CMPL 390).

**c. What will be done differently as a result of what was learned?**

Discuss how courses and/or curricula will be changed to improve student learning as a result of the assessment. Include a discussion of how the faculty will help students overcome their weaknesses and improve their strengths.

Introduction of Introduction to Comparative Studies as Freshman Seminar in Fall 09 will foster a better learning environment with reduced enrollments from 40 to 16 students in the class. It is my hope that it will attract more students into the major.

It might be advisable to review or add one Goal to the original assessment plan for CMPL:

Integrate or better articulate emphases on literary theory, methods and skills for critical and analytical reading and writing, with the cultural knowledge of the different regions of the world represented in literature and the arts.

- 3. Attach a copy of the components of the department/program assessment plan that have been modified since its initial submission:**
- a. Program Mission
  - b. Program Learning Goals
  - c. Program Learning Outcomes
  - d. Program Learning Rubrics aligned with outcomes
  - e. Curriculum map that shows the courses that pertain to the outcome

**Please return to: Provost Office by June 1, 2009**

**You can send your replies as either a Word attachment (to: [marin@usfca.edu](mailto:marin@usfca.edu)) or as a hard copy to: Provost Office, Lone Mountain Rossi Wing 4<sup>th</sup> floor.**

**If you have any questions, please contact: William Murry, Director of Institutional Assessment ([wmurry@usfca.edu](mailto:wmurry@usfca.edu) or x5486).**