

MAPS Assessment for 2009-10

Program Learning Goals:

GOAL 1: TO MASTER THE ANALYTICAL TOOLS AND STRATEGIES NEEDED FOR A GRADUATE-LEVEL APPROACH TO THE INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDY OF THE ASIA PACIFIC

Learning Outcomes and Rubrics:

Students will be able to demonstrate their understanding of methods of reading, discussing, researching, and writing that transcend simple polarities and conventional wisdom about the seminar topic, that interrogate agendas and reveal the limits of existing academic and other discourse, and that seek to consider all available views on the way to drawing conclusions.

GOAL 2: TO GAIN AN UNDERSTANDING OF AND ABILITY TO ARTICULATE FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES AND THEMES IN THE STUDY OF ASIAN CULTURES AND SOCIETIES AT THE GRADUATE LEVEL WITHIN THE SIX SEMINAR DISCIPLINES, AND ENCOMPASSING AT LEAST THE CORE CULTURAL AREAS OF CHINA, JAPAN, AND KOREA

Learning Outcomes and Rubrics:

Students will be able to demonstrate in their writing and discussions an understanding of the key issues and concerns of the six seminar disciplines as they relate to graduate-level study of East Asia.

GOAL 3: TO INTEGRATE AN UNDERSTANDING OF RELEVANT ETHICAL, GENDER, AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS INTO THE EXAMINATION OF CRITICAL ISSUES AND THEMES WITHIN THE PROGRAM CURRICULUM

Learning Outcomes and Rubrics:

Students will be able to demonstrate in their engagement with the course material an understanding of the role played by discourses of rights, race, gender, and the environment within the study of the Asia Pacific.

1. 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]*

Literature of East Asia:

- A midterm examination was given at the eighth week of the term, which tested students' knowledge of the pre-modern East Asian literature covered up to that point in the course readings and class discussions; in particular, it stressed themes, forms, and literary genres that were prominent across the region, and not unique to a single national tradition.

Learning Goal 2 was evaluated through the following midterm essay questions:

1. How do the works of Ihara Saikaku, Chikamatsu Monzaemon, and Ejima Kiseki differ from earlier fictional tales of the Heian and Kamakura eras, in terms of their interest in the domains of money, business, and labor? Discuss a few examples of their writings, and specifically address how they reflect the socioeconomic changes that transformed Japanese cultural and literary life during the early-Tokugawa period.
2. Song dynasty writers like Li Qingzhao and Su Shi, and Ming authors like Zhang Dai, speak of the literati's problematic attachments to material things such as paintings, calligraphy, or ancient artifacts, or to the cultured homes, gardens, and scenic places they lived in or visited. Compare the works of a few of the authors who wrote on such topics, for the ways in which they address these issues, and also how they choose to resolve them in their own lives.

Learning Goal 3 was addressed in the following midterm essay questions:

3. Compare Heian writings by *nyōbō* (court ladies) such as diaries and tales, with the memoirs and other works by Korean court women of the Yi dynasty such as Lady Hyegyong and others. How are the experiences of these women as members of their respective royal courts comparable, or not? Do you find commonalities in terms of their interests in specific sorts of experiences or topics, or their attitudes toward questions of relative social status or their mistreatment by male relatives?
 4. Discuss the theme of poverty and making ends meet in the poetry of Tao Qian, Du Fu, and Su Shi. How is hunger and survival "poetic", and how do their presence in the works of such poets serve to reinforce some of the politically oriented themes and concerns of the Chinese poetic tradition, such as the desire for a good government, justice, and peace?
 5. At the end of "Love in a Fallen City", the narrator concludes that Liusu's conquest of Liyuan is just like that of the legendary beauty that "fells cities and kingdoms" (*qingcheng qingguo*). Discuss this ironic treatment of her as a dangerously voluptuous woman, and compare it to the portrayal of more traditional Chinese or Vietnamese romantic women, such as Kieu, Ren, Yingying, or Du the Tenth.
- Approximately 65% of the students answered these questions at an excellent level of achievement (90% or above); 18% performed very well (85-90%); and 18% did well (80-85%).

- A final term paper was assigned on a topic of the student's choosing, but within the parameters of the literary cultures of East Asia. It required students to gather primary materials in translation (or in the original languages, if applicable) as well as relevant scholarship, and to formulate and defend a thesis. This paper assignment was designed (primarily though not exclusively) to address Learning Goal 1. The topics of the papers, along with their grades, are as following:

The Power of Jin Yong: *The Deer and The Cauldron* and Chinese martial arts (A-)

Qian Zhongshu's *Fortress Beseiged* (1947): What has been besieged? (A-)

Lu Xun's *Diary of a Madman*: An analysis (B)

The Harp of Burma (1948): A Solution for a Physical World? (A-)

The Contributions of Tanizaki Jun'ichirô (B+)

Japanese Children's Stories (A-)

The Korean Conflict: An East-West Perspective (A)

The Dwarf (1978): A Reflection of South Korean Society (A)

Lu Xun's Criticisms of Chinese Society (A)

Yasunari Kawabata and Two of His Famous Works (A-)

Yu Hua's *To Live* (B+)

Naomi and Tanizaki Jun'ichirô (A)

Eileen Zhang and Qiong Yao: A Comparison (B)

Wang Anyi's *Song of Everlasting Sorrow* (1996) (A-)

Su Shi and his Poems (B+)

Nakagami Kenji's Fiction (A)

- In addition, each student was assigned to lead one class discussion during the semester; they prepared questions to be given as discussion prompts, and organized small group and plenary discussions to facilitate efficient use of class time, and to adequately cover the assigned readings. This assignment was used as a measure to evaluate all three Learning Goals, but especially Learning Goals 1 and 2. The performance of the students was graded as follows: excellent (60% of all students), good (25% of students), and fair (15% of students).

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.

Literature of East Asia:

The strengths of student learning as demonstrated in the assignments described above are as follows:

- Students' level of retention of the materials covered in the first half of the course, prior to the midterm, ranged from good to excellent. With a few exceptions, a majority of the answers were well written and coherent, demonstrating that the students were capable of absorbing and analyzing the considerable variety of topics and forms of traditional literature to which they were exposed. Moreover,

they did particularly well on the question prompts (3-5) that addressed Learning Goal 3, and articulated creative, well thought-out ideas on issues of gender, ethics, and social disparity.

- The results of the final paper were somewhat less uniform than those of the exam. While all students performed adequately or better, the range was somewhat larger than was expected. While some of the papers were highly competent in all areas, including research, argumentation, and writing skills, several were deficient in either the quality of writing, or the use of primary and secondary sources.
- Oral performance, whether as a discussion leader or a member of the class, also varied considerably, although here the great majority of students performed at the level of “good” or better. Some students put considerable effort into class preparation regardless of whether they were assigned to lead or not, and their contributions resulted in a number of lively discussions.

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.

- The MAPS program faculty and staff are currently in the process of analyzing and discussing the recommendations of the External Reviewers’ Report, and any possible changes to the curriculum are being considered in the light of such discussions. Since the Report was only received in June 2010, we have delayed implementation of revisions until Fall 2011. That said, several minor modifications, based on the experiences of 2009-10, will be introduced next year:

Literature of East Asia:

- Greater use of on-line discussion groups may facilitate learning. The instructor is integrating Wiki-based course materials into his curriculum, which he hopes will stimulate greater participation and preparation among the class as a whole.
- The scope of the course readings will be narrowed somewhat, to bring greater focus to the thematic emphasis on literary works as a window on and mirror of social and cultural changes of the past century.
- Preparation of the final paper, including choice of a topic, preparation of a bibliography, and writing of drafts, will be stressed earlier in the semester. Some of the obstacles to producing a superior paper are probably attributable to procrastination, and thus seem amenable to correction by requiring these items earlier in the term.

