Annual Assessment Report AY22-23

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
Friday, November 3, 2023

- **Name(s) of all program(s) and degree type(s) assessed (Major, Minor, Graduate, or Non-Degree)** *Note:* **aggregate reports should list all programs discussed in the report**

  o English major & minor aggregate report

    ♦ Concentrations: Literature, Writing, and Comparative Literature (added to the department in 2020)

  o Reflection year review of all PLOs assessed since last APR (April 25-27, 2017)

- **Names and contact information of the faculty coordinating the assessment of each program and report**

  o Ana R. Rojas, Chair (arrojas@usfca.edu)

- **Mission Statement; note any changes since last report**

  o The study of literature and writing has long stood at the center of humanistic education. In that tradition, the department of English educates students in the rich intellectual and creative values embodied in literary works. Because literature by its very nature expresses the complex intellectual, spiritual, moral, social and psychological life of human cultures, its study is integral to the Jesuit mission of valuing "learning as a humanizing, social activity." Our inclusive curriculum fully supports "a diverse, socially responsible learning community of high quality scholarship and academic rigor sustained by a faith that does justice.

  o No changes since last report

- **Your PLOs; note any changes since last report**

  o Students will:

    1. Acquire a basic understanding of the literary, historical, social, or cultural influences that inform literary works

    2. Articulate in writing and discussion responses to literary texts, regardless of the language of the texts or instruction

3. Develop a basic critical ability to identify, interpret, and evaluate ideas and formal features of an integrated body of literary texts

4. Develop a sensitivity to the plurality of meanings within a literary text

o In 2020, the English Department absorbed the Comparative Literature major, which became a concentration with the English major, and made several curricular changes as a result, including adopting new PLOs. The above PLOs are at present the department's official learning outcomes and they are based on the Core C1 learning outcomes. These PLOs have not yet been assessed. Before this, the department had last updated its PLOs in 2013, and those outcomes have formed the basis of all assessments since. The 2013 PLOs were:

1. Students will demonstrate in writing and speech the ability to develop clear and coherent interpretive essays and original creative writing; they can articulate in writing and discussion/workshop their responses to literary and/or peer texts.

2. Students will demonstrate knowledge of and sensitivity to pluralism in response to texts that focus on diversity and social justice issues, i.e. writings that underscore the complexity of race, ethnicity, gender, class and sexual orientation.

3. Students will learn to read texts from multiple perspectives: e.g. learn differentiated readings via various contemporary critical theories.

4. Students will identify characteristics of different literary genres: novel, short fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama.

5. Students will identify differences between various historical periods and literary movements.

- **Your current Curricular Map; note any changes since last report**
  - o See Appendix (pgs. 9-10)
  - o No changes since last report

- **Your assessment schedule between APRs: a year by year list of PLOs assessed since your last APR and those to be assessed before your next APR (Contact your FDCD for clarification if needed)**
  - o PLOs assessed since last APR (April 25-27, 2017)
    - ♦ 2020-2021 – PLO #5

- ◆ 2018-2019 – PLO #4

    - ◆ 2017-2018 – PLO #3

    - ◆ 2016-2017 – PLO #2

        - ▪ [PLO #1, from 2013, was last assessed in 2015-2016, the year before the APR.]

- o PLOs to be assessed before the next APR (Fall 2025)

    - ◆ New PLO #1

- **Description of the assessment methodology**

    - o 2020-2021 – PLO #5

        - ◆ Two faculty volunteered to rate student work products: final papers from ENGL 320, a required course for students from both the literature and the creative writing tracks. After calibrating with two sample work products, the faculty volunteers rated ten total work products sampled randomly from a class of 20 students. The faculty raters rated all work products at the same standard or adjacent standards for the whole sample; in the case of adjacent ratings, the higher rating was thrown out.

    - o 2018-2019 – PLO #4

        - ◆ Three faculty members served on the assessment committee and used the final exam for the Spring 2019 semester of ENGL 192, the introductory course to the major, which is required of all Majors and Minors. There were 19 students enrolled in the course, 15 of them Majors and 4 of them Minors. 3 exams were randomly selected from among the Majors for Norming. 10 exams total, or half the class, were assessed: 6 randomly selected from the Major students and 4 from the Minor students.

    - o 2017-2018 – PLO #3

        - ◆ A portfolio of written papers – three papers per portfolio – from the Spring 2018 semester of ENGL 399 were assessed. There were 14 students in the course, and 6 students' assignments were randomly selected for assessment; another 3 students' assignments were used for norming. The portfolios were assessed by three full-time faculty members.

    - o 2016-2017 – PLO #2

♦ Essays in senior-level classes in both the literature and writing track—
ENGL 410 (Special Topics in Literature: Black Writers and the City) and
ENGL 460 (Poetry Workshop) — were assessed.

- ENGL 410

  Students in the class had to write a 12-15 page final research paper
  on one author and novel selected from a list. There were 10
  students in the class: four were graduating seniors, one was a
  sophomore; there were 5 juniors of which 2 were in the writing
  concentration. One student received an incomplete due to a
  medical leave. Another student failed to submit final work.

- ENGL 460

  Students in this class had to write a professional book review on
  one book selected from a list of options. There were 20 students in
  the class: 18 were graduating senior English majors; one was an
  English writing minor; another was a literature emphasis major.

- **Rubrics (and other instruments, if applicable)**
  - 2020-2021 – PLO #5
    - ♦ Exceeds expectations
    - ♦ Meets expectations
    - ♦ Needs improvement
    - ♦ Does not meet expectations
  - 2018-2019 – PLO #4
    - ♦ Below Expectations: More often than not, student does not correctly
      identify basic characteristics of literary genres, including novels, short
      fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama.
    - ♦ Acceptable: More often than not, student correctly identifies basic
      characteristics of literary genres, including novels, short fiction,
      nonfiction, poetry, and drama.
    - ♦ Exemplary: Student demonstrates consistent, comprehensive knowledge
      of characteristics of literary genres, including novels, short fiction,
      nonfiction, poetry, and drama
  - 2017-2018 – PLO #3

- ◆ Below Expectation: Students fail to show familiarity with at least two different literary theories; they do not show understanding of the critical issues in the field.

  - ◆ Acceptable: Students can compare and contrast at least two literary theories; they understand the critical issues in the field.

  - ◆ Exemplary: Students demonstrate superior ability to analyze texts with precision and rigor via a broad range (more than two) of literary theories; they show understanding of the critical issues and can contribute to debates in the field.

- o 2016-2017 – PLO #2

  - ◆ ENGL 410

    - ▪ Sophisticated: The essay has a sophisticated grasp of how issues of diversity and social justice function within a literary text as both form and content.

    - ▪ Acceptable: Essay has a grasp of the role of diversity in aesthetic and literary production but is not integrated fully into the essay.

    - ▪ Developing Competence: Essay addresses diversity but only cursorily or by way of content rather than as a means of inquiry.

    - ▪ Inadequate: Essay does not address diversity in any meaningful way.

  - ◆ ENGL 460

    - ▪ Sophisticated: The essay has a sophisticated grasp of how issues of diversity and social justice function within a literary text as both form and content.

    - ▪ Acceptable: Essay has a grasp of the role of diversity in aesthetic and literary production but is not integrated fully into the essay.

    - ▪ Developing Competence: Essay addresses diversity but only cursorily or by way of content rather than as a means of inquiry.

    - ▪ Inadequate: Essay does not address diversity in any meaningful way.

- **Description of your results, noting any significant findings from the data or assessment process**

  - o 2020-2021 – PLO #5

- ♦ Results

    Based on the rubric, no assignments exceeded expectations, 4 met expectations, 4 needed improvement, and 2 did not meet expectations.

- ♦ Findings

    The finding was that this PLO – on literary periodicity – no longer reflects the goals of the department and should be revised.

- o 2018-2019 – PLO #4

    - ♦ Results

        - ▪ Major: 83% (5 out of 6) of the Major students mastered the outcome at the level intended. 1.6% (1 out of 6) of the Major students did not fully master the outcome at the level intended.

        - ▪ Minor: 100% (4 out of 4) of the Minor students mastered the outcome at the level intended. 25% (1 out of 4) of the Minor students demonstrated complete mastery of the outcome.

    - ♦ Findings

        The assignment chosen for assessment turned out to be an imperfect mechanism for assessing the outcome for students. The PLO asks students to identify characteristics of different literary genres, and specifies five genres: novel, short fiction, nonfiction, poetry and drama, but the exam focused largely on poetry and drama.

- o 2017-2018 – PLO #3

    - ♦ Results

        All of the assignments appeared to have demonstrated mastery of the learning outcome: of the six, five fell into the "acceptable" category, one in the "exemplary" category, and none in the "below expectation" category.

    - ♦ Findings

        Improvement was evident from paper to paper, which shows students can become even more knowledgeable in these critical theories as they're applied to texts throughout the semester. It was clear that the course meets the department's learning outcome, but that this PLO – on contemporary critical theory – applies more to students in the Literature concentration than to those in Writing concentration.

- o 2016-2017 – PLO #2

- ◆ Results
  - ▪ ENGL 410

    Based on the rubric, 3 assignments were judged sophisticated, 3 acceptable, 2 developing competence, and none were found inadequate.

  - ▪ ENGL 460

    Based on the rubric, 15 assignments were judged sophisticated, 4 acceptable, 1 developing competence, and none were found inadequate.

- ◆ Findings

  Student work was observed to be in the top one or two areas of accomplishment within each rubric. This PLO – on diversity – reflects issues that are foregrounded in the curriculum and come up in almost every class the students take, but there are some ways to improve integration of theory and form with content.

- **Description of how the results were shared with faculty and how your department/program responded to the results, <u>including any plans for future improvement or assessment of your program indicated by the results</u>**

  - o Report results have been discussed during department meetings and retreats, including retreats in Spring 2018, Summer 2019, and Fall 2020, giving the department the opportunity to assess and revise our learning outcomes based on the results of our assessments since the last APR. Our new outcomes mirror the Core outcomes, and the department continues to work to decide whether these take into account the work of the faculty, especially since we have had significant faculty turn-over in the last 5 years. The feedback we received from our last assessment report (see below) included the recommendation to consider how our PLOs apply to the different concentrations within the major (Literature, Writing, and Comparative Literature). As a result, the department has begun discussing whether our PLOs are adequate to the different concentrations, including the relatively new track in Comparative Literature.

  - o In Fall 2022, department members began to gather and share the course learning outcomes we have each developed for our own courses, looking for commonalities that would help to illuminate the shared goals of the department; these shared goals reveal the department's collective pedagogical priorities, which should be reflected in our learning outcomes. We also began to imagine what our PLOs would look like if we had separate learning outcomes for the Literature and

Writing concentrations, since the work students produce in these classes can be quite different. In the Spring 2023, then-Chair Ryan Van Meter drew upon the data collected during the fall semester in order to produce a draft of possible learning outcomes for different concentrations; this draft currently has 3 learning outcomes common to both Literature and Writing, and 2 learning outcomes apiece that are specific to each concentration.

o The current draft does not yet consider whether the goals of Comparative Literature can be met through the PLOs for the Literature concentration, or whether we need to consider another set of outcomes for this track; we will need to meet with our adjunct Comp Lit faculty to discuss this. The department will then need to turn its attention to revised curricular maps based on our new PLOs.

● **Discussion of any significant feedback from your previous year's report and how your program responded to that feedback**

o The previous year's report noted the need to update the program learning outcomes and the department's mission statement, including considering whether to develop a single list of learning outcomes or perhaps multiple lists. It also noted the need to update the curricular maps to indicate alignment of courses with program learning outcomes; in doing so, the department needs to consider whether its range of programs and tracks requires a single curricular map or multiple maps. The report stated that the department should "ideally develop a plan for assessing those outcomes over the next several years before its next academic program review. This plan could include a tentative schedule indicating when each outcome is to be assessed, as well as some indication of courses from which student work products might be drawn." The report also noted that once the revision of learning outcomes is complete, the department may need to wait until the following year to begin collecting student work products to serve as the basis of new assessments.

o In Fall 2022, then-Chair Ryan Van Meter submitted a narrative Reflection Year assessment report detailing the process the department has gone through since the last APR to review our curriculum and to revise our PLOs. In response to the recommendation that we consider the possibility of separate outcomes for our different concentrations, he produced a draft of potential new PLOs for the department to consider (see above). Since the department's next APR will be in Fall 2025, the department may use the 2024-2025 academic year to gather student work product for our next assessment based on our new PLOs.

APPENDIX

Curricular Maps

Program Learning Outcomes X Courses	PLO1 1. Students will demonstrate in writing and speech the ability to develop clear and coherent interpretive essays and original creative writing; they can articulate in writing and discussion/workshop their responses to literary and/or peer texts.	PLO2 2. Students will demonstrate knowledge of and sensitivity to pluralism in response to texts that focus on diversity and social justice issues, i.e. writings that underscore the complexity of race, ethnicity, gender, class and sexual orientation.	PLO3 3. Students will learn to read texts from multiple perspectives: e.g. learn differentiated readings via various contemporary critical theories.	PLO4 4. Students will identify characteristics of different literary genres: novel, short fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama.	PLO5 5. Students will identify differences between various historical periods and literary movements.
Courses or Program Requirement					
English 192 -- Introduction to Literary Study	I		I	I	I
Minority Literature requirement	D	D	D	D	
English 310 -- Literature 1 (1100-1700)	D	D	D	D	D
English 320 -- Literature 2 (1700-1900)	D	D	D	D	D
English 330 -- Literature 3 (1900-present)	D	D	D	D	D
English 340 -- Shakespeare	D	D	D	D	D
Literature Track requirements:					
English 399 -- Critical Analysis	D/M		D/M	D/M	D/M
English 410 -- Special Topics in Literature & Film	D		D	D	D
English 490 -- Senior Seminar in Literature	M		M	M	M
Writing Track requirements:					
English 360 -- Intro to Writing Nonfiction	I		D	I	
English 361 -- Intro to Writing Fiction	I		D	I	
English 362 -- Intro to Writing Poetry	I		D	I	
English 364 -- Intro to Writing Oral History	I		D	I	
English 400 -- Special Topics in Writing	D		D	D	
English 450 -- Fiction Workshop	D/M		D/M	D/M	
English 460 -- Poetry Workshop	D/M		D/M	D/M	
English 470 -- Nonfiction Workshop	D/M		D/M	D/M	
English 499 -- Senior Seminar in Writing	M		M	M	
Electives:					
English 198 -- Ignatian Literary Magazine	D			D	D
English 321 -- History of the English Language	D		D		D
English 480 -- Internship in Writing and Lit.	D				

Institutional Learning Outcomes X Program Learning Outcomes	PLO1 1. Students will demonstrate in writing and speech the ability to develop clear and coherent interpretive essays and original creative writing; they can articulated in writing and discussion/workshop their responses to literary and/or peer texts.	PLO2 2. Students will demonstrate knowledge of and sensitivity to pluralism in response to texts that focus on diversity and social justice issues, i.e. writings that underscore the complexity of race, ethnicity, gender, class and sexual orientation.	PLO3 3. Students will learn to read texts from multiple perspectives: e.g. learn differentiated readings via various contemporary critical theories.	PLO4 4. Students will identity characteristics of different literary genres: novel, short fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama.	PLO5 5. Students will identify differences between various historical periods and literary movements.
Institutional Learning Outcomes					
1. Students reflect on and analyze their attitudes, beliefs, values, and assumptions about diverse communities and cultures and contribute to the common good.		X	X		
2. Students explain and apply disciplinary concepts, practices, and ethics of their chosen academic discipline in diverse communities.	X	X	X	X	X
3. Students construct, interpret, analyze, and evaluate information and ideas derived from a multitude of sources.	X	X	X	X	X
4. Students communicate effectively in written and oral forms to interact within their personal and professional communities.	X			X	X
5. Students use technology to access and communicate information in their personal and professional lives.	X				
6. Students use multiple methods of inquiry and research processes to answer questions and solve problems.	X		X		
7. Students describe, analyze, and evaluate global interconnectedness in social, economic, environmental and political systems that shape diverse groups within the San Francisco Bay Area and the world.		X			

Key:
I = Introductory
D = Developing
M = Mastery