UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO | College of Arts and Sciences

MFA in Writing

ASSESSMENT REPORT ACADEMIC YEAR 2018-2019

Note: Dear Colleagues: In an effort to produce a more streamlined and less repetitive assessment report format, we are piloting this modified template for the present annual assessment cycle. We are requesting an assessment report that would not exceed eight pages of text. Supporting materials may be appended. We will be soliciting your feedback on the report as we attempt to make it more user-friendly.

Some useful contacts:

1. Prof. Alexandra Amati, FDCD, Arts – adamati@usfca.edu
2. Prof. John Lendvay, FDCD, Sciences – lendvay@usfca.edu
3. Prof. Mark Meritt, FDCD, Humanities – meritt@usfca.edu
4. Prof. Michael Jonas, FDCD, Social Sciences – mrjonas@usfca.edu
5. Prof. Suparna Chakraborty, AD Academic Effectiveness – schakraborty2@usfca.edu
6. Ms. Corie Schwabenland, Academic Data & Assessment Specialist- ceschwabenland@usfca.edu

Academic Effectiveness Annual Assessment Resource Page:

https://myusf.usfca.edu/arts-sciences/faculty-resources/academic-effectiveness/assessment

Email to submit the report: assessment_cas@usfca.edu
Important: Please write the name of your program or department in the subject line. For example: FineArts_Major (if you decide to submit a separate report for major and minor); FineArts_Aggregate (when submitting an aggregate report)

I. LOGISTICS & PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Feedback should be sent to Laleh Khadivi, Academic Director (lkhadivi@usfca.edu)
2. No changes have been made to the mission statement since the last assessment report.
3. No changes were made to the program learning outcomes (PLOs) since the last assessment cycle in October 2017.
4. Which particular Program Learning Outcome(s) did you assess for the academic year 2018-2019? PLO #2 Students will be able to read as writers, applying a critical craft vocabulary as they analyze the ways in which literary meaning is developed in the works of published authors.

II. METHODOLOGY

5. Describe the methodology that you used to assess the PLO(s).

The Program used 4 packets of presentation notes from Prof. Doug Powell's Spring 2019 Poetry Seminar. The function of the presentation was, as stated in the syllabus: "Each week we are in class, you will come prepared on a

topic drawn directly from the reading. In-class presentations constitute half of your work this semester; the other half will be expressed in a portfolio of creative/critical work. Weekly you will be asked to document some form of engagement with the course materials. You have much freedom in how you prepare, keeping in mind only the allotted time you are being asked to fill: 8 minutes per class meeting."

In addition Prof. Powell gave the instructions: You want your presentation to illuminate an aspect of the book that might not immediately seem evident from a first reading. Find a thread that runs beneath the surface of the book--it can be biographically significant to the poet themselves; it can have to do with cultural knowledge or geographical or historical knowledge that the book stands upon the shoulders of; it can be a formal device or invention. It ultimately should be something that further illuminates our reading of the text.

The assignments we collected were diverse in topic and form. The function of this assignment, as per PLO #2 was to engage with the work in an independent way, using a particular theme or topic or approach to understand meaning making and to further the student's recognition of context and craft techniques that the poets employed to achieve the desired effect. The responses came in a variety of forms: essays, accumulated research, poems, visual presentations and discussion topics. Encouraging the student to guide the study and discovery of the work helps to make the valuable transition from reader to writer.

Our current full-time faculty (2) read and assessed the workshop letters according to a holistic rubric of our design. (See attached.) Each faculty member gave each letter a score from 1- 4, and those scores were aggregated into a report.

III. RESULTS & MAJOR FINDINGS

6. What are the major takeaways from your assessment exercise?

While we acknowledged that there was room for improvement, the MFA faculty found that students in the sample showed mastery of the outcome. With 7 letters being independently scored by 4 faculty members, we generated 28 total scores. Here's how those were distributed:

Level	Total # of Scores	Percentage of Scores
4 – Mastery of Learning Outcome	2	25%
3 – Mastery of Most Parts of LO	5	62.5%
2 – Mastery of only Some Parts of LO	1	12.5%
1 – No Mastery of Learning Outcome		

Though the scores were favorable, the average scores per student show more work to be done.

Presentation Letter	Faculty A Score	Faculty B Score	Average Score per Letter
A	3	3	3
B	2	3	2.5
C	4	4	4
D	3	3	3
Average Score per Faculty	3	3.25	

By looking at the average score given by faculty, you can see we were fairly consistent in our assessment despite working individually. Taking this into account, it's illuminating to see that the average scores given to each workshop letter demonstrate that over half of the letters garnered a satisfactory grade, showing mastery of most or all parts of the outcome.

IV. CLOSING THE LOOP

7. Based on your results, what changes/modifications are you planning in order to achieve the desired level of mastery in the assessed learning outcome?

This assessment does raise a question of our role as professors in guiding the students self learning and self discovers. The goal of PLO #2 is to begin the process of teaching a student how to dis-assemble a published piece to better figure out how it works – what craft elements are at play, how pacing is used, why certain images and information and not others – and in doing this, develop the ability to understand how work is made. It would be beneficial to discuss the specificity of our assignments in regards to PLO#2 on our syllabus. How can we best set up parameters that encourage the deepest and broadest discovery and understanding of the work?

Going forward, we plan to have more conversations with our full- and part-time faculty about how we can devote time in workshop classes to discuss these assignment expectations at the beginning of the semester and maintaining an policy of open dialogue as the semester goes on.

8. What were the most important suggestions/feedback from the FDCD on your last assessment report (for academic year 2016-2017, submitted in October 2017)? How did you incorporate or address the suggestion(s) in this report?

I was not privy to the suggestions/feedback from the FDCD of 2017-2018.

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS Assessment Rubric: MFA in Writing Program

4	Assignment demonstrates excellent understanding and curiosity of the artist topic and style. The approach of the presentation shows a thorough dedication to unpacking/disassembling the work to understand the intention and design. The student also produces work in direct response and engagement to the published work, and the student work is advancing on their larger program-long project.
3	Assignment shows adequate exploration of topics and themes presented in the work. The language and approach of the presentation understands the craft elements at play. While there are good attempts at unraveling the work and exposing its subtler elements, no significant leaps are made to incorporate new knowledge or influence into their own work.
2	Assignment demonstrates a poor level of curiosity or exploration of themes and aesthetics and uses a limited craft vocabulary to present it. The presentation is cursory in terms of craft vocabulary and not daring it the directions of dis-assembly and assessment of various tools and techniques employed by the writer.
1	Assignment demonstrates no clear understanding or curiosity of form or aesthetics. Language focuses on surface questions of word use or form. No incorporation of technique into personal poetry.