Core Curriculum Assessment Report  
2013_14

Department: History  
Representative: Morris Bian

Course Name / number: HIST1210/1217, HIST1220/1227

1. **AGSC Content Area of Alignment:** Area IV: History, Social and Behavior Sciences
2. **SLO(s) being assessed:** Student will...
   
   SLO 8: Students will be informed and engaged citizens of the U.S. and the world.
   
   SLO 9: Students will understand and appreciate diversity of an within societies of the U.S. and the world.

3. **Assessment Method(s):**
   
   [Explain how assessment for the measures associated with this SLO - not grading for the course as a whole - was conducted. You may cut/paste rubrics for inclusion here, identify faculty reviewing committees, or identify specific kinds of test questions important to your method. Is this the method you initially planned to use? Provide a separate paragraph for each method].

   The Technology and Civilization program assessed achievement of the two SLOs directly through essays and indirectly through surveys. Faculty members included essay questions addressing each SLO in their finals in both terms (Appendix A: Direct Assessment Essay Questions: Fall 1011, Spring 2012). At the end of the fall term, they administered a survey but for the spring term, faculty administered a survey both at the beginning and at the end of the term. The survey consisted of ten statements which students answered by filling in scantron bubbles. The program coordinator read and assessed the essays using the attached rubric (Appendix B: Direct Assessment Essay Rubric). The Office of Information Technology processed and collated the scantron survey results.

4. **Findings: What assessment data did each assessment method produce?**

   Direct assessment: A total of 338 students enrolled in the Technology and Civilization program in the academic year 2011-2012: 185 students in the fall and 153 students in the spring. The program coordinator selected 18 essays in the fall and 15 in the spring (10%) using a random letter generator. Faculty members photocopied selected essays and submitted them to the coordinator for assessment. Assessments of student answers to essay questions are combined in the chart below for fall and spring terms. Following the rubric, the program coordinator graded each category on a scale of 5-1, attempting to assess how well students demonstrated that, for SLO 8, they were informed, analytical, and engaged, and for SLO 9, that they recognized diversity, made meaningful distinctions, and demonstrated awareness of the need for diversity. See attached full report for data.

   Indirect assessment: While ten percent of Technology and Civilizations were sampled for the direct assessment, one hundred percent were surveyed for the indirect assessment. At the beginning of the fall term and at the beginning and end of the spring term, faculty members distributed a list of ten questions, which students answered by filling scantron bubbles. In the fall 178 students completed the post-course survey; in the spring 148 students completed the pre-course survey while 141 completed the post-course survey. The pre-survey attempted to elicit how students assessed their own level of awareness while the post-survey attempted to measure how or if the course changed it. Both pre- and post-course surveys are attached (Appendix C: Assessment Survey Statements: Pre- and Post-Course Surveys). Generally speaking, we found the results of the surveys unenlightening and largely incongruous with the results of the essays. Combined in the chart below are the mean or average rankings for the academic year under review. For each of the ten statements or questions students had five choices: A=Disagree Strongly, B=Disagree, C=Neutral, D=Agree, and E=Agree Strongly. Following standard practice the list was presented in reverse order with the first choice, “A,” registering highest disagreement and the last choice, “E,” registering the most agreement. One explanation for the relatively low mean values across surveys may be that students assumed that “A” represented highest approval and “E” the lowest. Nevertheless a majority of students on all three surveys registered “neutral,” “agree,” and “agree strongly” responses. See attached full report for data. Only three questions, one on each
survey, received a mean score of 2.5, and none higher. In fall 2011, 54% of 178 students “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that “The course helped me apply the lessons of the past to contemporary issues” (Statement 4), a position reinforced in the sampled essays. In spring 2012 on the pre-course survey for the same statement, 49% either “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that “I apply the lessons of the past to contemporary issues.” On the post-course survey 73% of 141 students either “agreed” or “strongly agreed” but the statement received a mean score of 2.1. Statement 7 received the highest score (2.5) in the spring post-course survey. Fifty percent of students surveyed believed that that “The course gave me a new appreciation for cultures and religions other than my own.” The “neutral” response recorded by 49 students (34.8%) bumped up the mean value. The value contrasted favorably with the reciprocal pre-course survey question, “I appreciate cultures and religions other than my own,” which received a mean value of 1.9. These two statements suggest that students entered the course with some knowledge of diversity (constructed perhaps as non-American) and that the course augmented that knowledge, expanding their awareness and appreciation. The essays demonstrated that students want even more exposure to non-American, non-European cultures. Also noteworthy was the student response to statement 8: Pre-Course: “I value intercultural diversity”; Post-Course: “The course increased my awareness of intercultural diversity.” The mean value increased from 2.0 in the pre-course survey to 2.4 in the post-course survey. Here again is evidence that the spring term, ostensibly perceived as Eurocentric, actually broadened students’ perspectives on diversity, broadly conceived and defined.

5. **How did you (or will you) use the findings for improvement?**

[What questions / issues / concerns did your data raise for the faculty teaching the course? What discussion did the faculty have about the findings? What future actions to improve student attainment of this outcome will the department / program take as a result of this analysis?]

What the sampled essays suggest was a mixed record of satisfaction and disappointment. For both fall 2001 and spring 2012, the essays demonstrated that students had become informed and engaged. They wrote, sometimes eloquently, on historical topics from antiquity up to the present, situating issues and artifacts in appropriate contexts and relating them to current circumstances. Even when they struggled with historical details they formed meaningful associations. Even as they struggled with the meaning of diversity they nevertheless acquired awareness and sensitivity to religious, class-based, and gendered differences. The Technology and Civilization faculty intend to incorporate ideas students shared with them in order to improve course outcomes and program goals. Additionally faculty members intend to make learning outcomes clearer to students, particularly SLO 9 and the concept of diversity. Faculty members also need to address the problem several spring term students displayed in their essays namely their struggle to recall events accurately and chronologically. Faculty members should also rethink their assessment essay questions for both fall and spring.

6. **Additional Comments:**

[What else would you like the Committee to know about your assessment of this course or plans for the future?]

None

7. **Committee Comments**

Mean of rubric score = 3.48 (out of 4) Lots of details were presented about direct and indirect assessment. The details were also presented about the rubric and student responses. A detailed report was attached by stopped at page 11 before Appendix A to E. Lengthy report describes methods in great details. Excellent for assessment! However, could not find appendices in the attachment. In spite of this, the report does provide a
clear description of all methods. It was obvious that the person who wrote the attached assessment report was well informed as to the course material and this implies much discussion with relevant faculty. It was rather complete. Did the faculty meet to discuss? Of the thirteen sections how many of the faculty are on this committee?