1. **AGSC Content Area of Alignment:** Area IV: History, Social and Behavior Sciences

2. **SLO(s) being assessed:** Student will:

   SLO 2: Students will be able to read analytically and critically.
   
   SLO 3: Students will be able to critique and construct an argument effectively.
   
   SLO 8: Students will be informed and engaged citizens 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.]

   For SLO 2 on reading critically and analytically, we used 3 types of assessment methods: (1) exam questions were designed and administered to determine if students were able to explain critical points in the assigned reading materials (used only in HONR 1027), (2) students were assessed in terms of whether they located and critically cited the required number of scholarly articles in their term papers (used only in HONR 1027), and (3) students were assessed using grading rubrics for their term papers, in terms of critical reading of the scholarly source articles for the term papers (used in both HONR 1027 and 1037). For SLO 3 on constructing effective arguments, we used grading rubrics for the term papers in both courses, that evaluated the extent to which students argued effectively for the points they made in their term papers. For SLO 8 on becoming citizens of the world, we also used grading rubrics for the term papers in both courses, that assessed the extent to which students clearly addressed societal and global issues. The term papers for HONR 1027 in Fall 2011 were assessed as to how they addressed issues of food and water sustainability, and the term papers for HONR 1037 in Spring 2012 were assessed as to how they addressed life cycle analyses of consumer goods and related them to environmental and social issues in sustainability. We then compiled the student answers to the above exam questions on critical reading (SLO 2), the numbers of scholarly articles cited in the student term papers as part of their critical reading skills (also SLO 2), and the student scores on the term paper grading rubrics (SLO 3 and 8). The instructors for each course examined these results as a group, and discussed how to improve student achievement of the above SLOs in next year’s courses, and also how to assess these improvements. Here are the 4 exam questions used to assess SLO 2 on critical reading skills: (1) According to the article we read by Jared Diamond, what happened to the people of Easter Island? a. They migrated to another island when resources dwindled. b. They successfully adapted to climate change by changing their irrigation system. They have yet to reach the carrying capacity of the island and continue to thrive. They have experienced population decline because they overused their resources. (2) In the article Coming in to the Foodshed, the authors distinguish the “foodshed” concept from that of a “watershed.” What do they say is the primary difference between a foodshed and a watershed? a. It is easier to maintain. b. It is more susceptible to overuse. c. It is more cultural than natural. There is no difference. (3) In chapter 6 of Enough, the authors argue that U.S. Food Aid: a. Should focus on more exports of U.S. goods to Africa over the next ten years, to meet the needs of a growing population in Africa. Is helpful to rural Ethiopian farmers because it increases demand for their products. Is a drain on the U.S. economy because it exports to foreign countries the crop surpluses that are badly needed at home. Undermines African economies, and disadvantages local African farmers, because it lowers the price of locally-produced products. (4) In the book Enough, the authors state that Ethiopia’s water supply problem is not that they don’t have _____________ water, instead their problem is _______________ to water (fill in the blanks). (5) Here are the 3 grading rubrics used for assessment of SLOs 2, 3 and 8 in the student term papers: HONR 1027 and 1037 | SLO 2: Students will be able
to read analytically and critically. Assessment Rubric for Term Paper [see attached file for clearer rubric tables] Measure54321Score
Acceptable Sources
Group shows full comprehension of how to identify and select scholarly sources for use in the paper. Group shows an acceptable comprehension of how to identify and select scholarly sources for use in the paper. Group fails to identify and select scholarly sources for use in the paper. Identify Argument
Group shows full comprehension of the arguments presented within the reviewed body of literature. Group demonstrates some ability to identify the arguments presented within the reviewed body of literature. Group fails to identify or comprehend the arguments presented within the reviewed body of literature. Summarize and Analyze Text
Group is able to cogently summarize, synthesize, and analyze the information presented in cited sources. Group is able to cogently summarize the information presented in cited sources. Group does not understand the literature cited, or does not summarize the information presented in these texts. HONR 1027 and 1037 | SLO3: Students will be able to critique and construct an argument effectively. Assessment Rubric for Term Paper

Measure54321Score
Summary
The paper offers a cogent summary of the arguments and data that emerged throughout the literature review. The paper briefly summarizes the arguments and/or data that emerged throughout the literature review. The paper fails to provide a summary of the literature cited and offers no coherent critique of the information presented. Composition
Writing style is clear, concise, and points are supported with highly relevant and well-described evidence or examples. Group is somewhat able to articulate their ideas, and some supporting evidence or examples are provided. Grammar, vocabulary, and sentence composition are poor, and ideas are poorly articulated and difficult to understand. Construction
Group is able to organize and develop their argument(s) clearly and succinctly. Group demonstrates some ability to organize and develop their argument(s) but has lapses that render the argument less effective. Group demonstrates poor ability to organize and develop their argument. HONR 1027 | SLO8: Students will be informed and engaged citizens of the United States and the world. Assessment Rubric for Term Paper | Fall 2011

Measure54321Score
Informed Group demonstrates full understanding of the triple bottom line and how it ties into their assigned topic. Group demonstrates general familiarity with the triple bottom line as it ties into their assigned topic. Student fails to understand the triple bottom line as it ties into their assigned topic. Engaged Group demonstrates a full awareness of and the ability to engage with a major international or national sustainability-related issue. Group demonstrates partial awareness of and an average ability to engage with a major international or national sustainability-related issue. HONR 1037 | SLO8: Students will be informed and engaged citizens of the United States and the world. Assessment Rubric for Term Paper | Spring 2012

Measure54321Score
Informed Group demonstrates full understanding of their assigned object’s lifecycle and how it ties into sustainability. Group demonstrates general familiarity with their object’s lifecycle as it ties into sustainability. Group fails to demonstrate understanding of their object’s lifecycle as it ties into sustainability. Engaged Group demonstrates a full awareness of and the ability to engage in lifecycle research and group understands the broad implications of this analysis. Group demonstrates partial awareness of and an average ability to engage in lifecycle research. Group shows partial understanding of the broad implications of this analysis. Group demonstrates minimal awareness and low ability to engage in lifecycle research and minimal understanding of the broad implications of this analysis.

4. Findings: What assessment data did each assessment method produce?
Findings: In terms of assessing SLO 2 on critical reading skills, we obtained exam question results from 2 of
the 4 class sections, about half the class. Of this group of 30 students examined on the midterm exam, all of them answered correctly the 2 exam questions on critical reading skills. One the final exam questions, almost all of them answered correctly. This indicates that they were doing the readings, and able to answer analytical questions about the course readings. In order to develop and assess a higher level of reading skills, we plan to use more complex exam questions in 2012-13, and to work with the students in discussion sections on skills for critical reading of texts. Results of Exam Questions to assess critical reading skills (SLO 2, used in HONR 1027)[see attached file for clearer charts and tables] Total correctTotal incorrectMidterm: Q1 300Midterm: Q2 300Final Exam: Q3 360Final Exam: Q4 342In terms of the students being able to locate and properly cite scholarly reading sources, almost all of the approximately 30 student assessed (3-4 students per group in 9 groups that worked on term papers together) were able to locate the required number of 6 articles. In addition, many of them read and used non-peer-reviewed sources such as websites. Results of Assessment of Students’ Peer-Reviewed Article Searches (SLO 2, used in HONR 1027)FINAL RESULTSStudent Group# PR articles# Not PR Other % Success in citing 6 peer-reviewed articlesGroup 1 6 1 2 100%Group 2 6 0 1 100%Group 3 7 1 2 100%Group 4 4 7 1 2 117%Group 5 9 1 7 150%Group 6 6 1 3 100%Group 7 6 1 0 100%Group 8 6 2 0 100%Group 9 5 5 0 83% However, students did not perform as well in terms of the more qualitative assessments of critical reading comprehension used in the grading rubrics, such as cogent synthesis of the arguments presented in written literature (see grading rubric categories above), in that about a third of them received below average scores in this grading category (see graph below under SLO 2). Results of term paper grading rubric assessments for SLO 2, 3, and 8 in HONR 1027: [see file attached for graph]Students performed better in the spring semester course (HONR 1037) in critical reading skills, in that many of them received excellent scores for SLO 2 outcomes:Results of term paper grading rubric assessments for SLO 2, 3, and 8 in HONR 1037: [see file attached for graph]In terms of SLO 3 on construction of effective arguments, the students’ performance was mediocre during both semesters, as seen in the 2 graphs. Few of the students presented excellent, clear arguments for the points they made in their term papers. We clearly need to work with students this next year on developing their skills for making effective arguments. Finally, in terms of SLO 8 on being engaged citizens of the community and world, students did very well in both semesters in how they connected their term paper topics with major local and international issues, and with all 3 systems considered in sustainability (economics, social systems, and ecosystems). They also engaged the broader implications of their term paper topics. So, we feel as instructors that we have been successful in connecting these students with major societal issues and helping them to become citizens of the world through these courses.

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 action to improve student attainment of this outcome will the department / program take as a result of this analysis?]

During group discussions by the instructional teams for both courses, we decided to introduce simple pre- and post-test questions at the beginning and end of each course, to gauge students’ awareness about major sustainability issues. This will allow us to better assess whether they come into our courses as highly aware citizens about these issues, and the extent to which they add depth and breadth to their awareness during each course. We plan to retain the exam questions on critical reading comprehension, as we feel this allows us to determine if students are critically reading the assigned articles. However, we plan to design more
complex exam questions to more fully test critical reading skills. We also plan to add course exercises that further develop students’ reading and critical argument skills, and will continue to assess these skills using grading rubrics for student term papers.

6. Additional Comments:
[What else would you like the Committee to know about your assessment of this course or plans for the future?]
Overall, we felt that the assessment strategies we used were fairly effective in determining student achievement of learning outcomes. They revealed several areas where students need further instruction and exercises to develop skills for critical reading and development of arguments, which will allow us to work on these areas in courses next year.

7. Committee Comments
Mean of rubric score = 3.84 (out of 4)They are, with the caveat that the exam questions show the mastery more of facts of the class rather than whether students could "explain critical points in the assigned reading materials." There's no explanation in multiple choice -- that said, they tested this particular SLO from a variety of angles, which mitigates this point some. 'Seems to be more in the area of simple recall than analysis or synthesis of ideas'This submission clearly shows discussion among the faculty. /One of the strongest examples of discussion among faculty