**B. A. in English**

Please download this document and provide a response to each question in the appropriate section. Send your assessment reports to the Director of Assessment, Dr. Melissa Jordine ([mjordine@csufresno.edu](mailto:mjordine@csufresno.edu)). (Reports can be sent to Dr. Jordine via campus mail to mailstop SS 21). Please complete a separate report for each B.A/B.S. and M.A/M.S. program offered by the department.

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| 1. **What learning outcome(s) did you assess this year?**   SLO: Demonstrate research literacy, that is, an understanding of research methods and an ability to apply those methods in the analysis of literary texts  SLO: Demonstrate ability to apply contemporary theoretical paradigms to the analysis of literary texts |
| 1. **What assignment or survey did you use to assess the outcomes and what method (criteria or rubric) did you use to evaluate the assignment?**   The outcomes were assessed through evaluation of final papers assigned in our senior seminars (English 193T and 194T). At least one of these courses is required of every English major in their senior year. The course therefore functions as a culminating experience of sorts, and the work produced in them should represent skills and knowledge acquired not just in one class but over the whole of a student’s career as an English major. (Students often use their papers from these classes as a writing sample for graduate school admission.)  Although the topics of these seminars vary, we generally offer at least two sections each semester. The combined sample produced over an academic year is thus large enough to yield usable data.  The instructors of these sections assessed each outcome in conjunction with the normal grading process. For assessment purposes, the essays were rated on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 meaning that the paper demonstrates no ability to understand and/or apply knowledge; 2 meaning that it demonstrates some rudimentary understanding and ability; 3 meaning that it demonstrates thorough understanding and ability; and 4 meaning that it demonstrates advanced mastery. As they complete their degree programs, we might hope that all students’ papers would score a 3. A more realistic expectation, however, would be a mean of 2.5, since students (especially in the Fall semester) are taking this class while they complete their upper division work. |
| 1. **What did you discover from the data?**   In regard to research literacy, the mean was 3.38, thus significantly higher than expectations.  In regard to application of critical theory, the mean was 2.99, thus meeting (and even exceeding) expectations.  We are especially pleased that both scores represent advances from previous assessments: in 2013-14, the mean for research literacy was 2.97, and that for application of critical theory 2.62. The amount of increase does suggest, however, that students have shown more improvement in the first than in the second. |
| 1. **What changes did you make as a result of the data?**   Both the outcomes assessed deal with bodies of knowledge and skill-sets first introduced in English 105 and then developed over the range of upper division classes to which 105 serves as a pre-requisite. One recurrent problem noted in analyzing previous assessments of 105 and our upper division offerings, including the senior seminars, was that prerequisites were not being enforced and thus students were not developing their abilities in a disciplined way. We have been handling some of that through advising; we have also been able to clear up recurrent problems with the catalog and the enrollment process.  We continue to discuss, moreover, the possibility of splitting 105 into two courses, so as to allow more time for students to acquire and practice their skills as they move into more advanced work.  One other concern arose from this assessment exercise that will merit further discussion by the Department. Some of the instructors offered as commentary on the assessment process that the outcomes did not align precisely with their own individual goals for the courses they had designed. Specifically, they noted that they did not necessarily require that the final project be one that required the kind of engagement with theory and the kinds of “research” literacies associated with the traditional academic paper. Rather they allowed, and even encouraged, their students to complete their work in the seminar through a more creative or more practical pedagogical project. These alternatives, they felt, were as valuable as an academic paper, especially for those interested in creative writing or high school teaching as a future career. This is a topic we will revisit as a Department. |
| 1. **What assessment activities will you be conducting in the 2017-2018 AY**   This has not been determined as yet. It is most likely, however, that we will be looking at students’ knowledge of literary tradition, that is, their ability to parse the historical, literary, and critical contexts of the texts they are reading. One place to measure this would be in the work students produce as they begin their upper division work, having taken English 31 (Readings in British Literature), 32 (Readings in American Literature) and 105 (Introduction to Literary Analysis).  Our SOAP is still in revision. While most of the existing outcomes will like remain, it is possible that they will receive some re-definition as we go forward with discussions about the skills and types of knowledge our graduates need and the best way to make sure they progress toward that mastery. |
| 1. **What progress have you made on items from your last program review action plan?**   Most of our action items on our last program review action plan concern staffing and resource issues. To date our needs for space (both faculty offices and classroom) and funding for professional development are still unmet.  We are happy to report, however, that we have been able to make headway on one resource-related item. We have been able to hire new faculty, who not only fill the vacancies left by past retirements and allow us to teach the courses already in our program, but also bring the energy and new vision that is allowing us to re-define our program in significant ways.  That redefinition was perhaps the primary pedagogical “action item” in the plan. At this point, we have expanded our course offerings, adding four new American Literature course in the fields of African American, Chicano/a, Asian American, and Native American literatures. We are also working toward strengthening our offerings in the Teaching of Writing, a topic and skill useful for both those working toward a teaching credential and those thinking of a graduate program in Rhetoric and Composition.  We are working toward more student engagement, especially in terms of service-courses and student research opportunities, and a stronger sense of community among our undergraduates. Interest in involving students in research is one reason we chose to assess research literacy in our assessment last year. We are (as above) looking to devise new service opportunities. And we hope the reviving of the Students of English Studies Association group will also help in this regard, as well as increasing a sense of community among English majors who have so many disparate career objectives. |