

# **Unit Plan for Assessing and Improving Student Learning in Degree Programs**

**Unit:** Comparative and World Literature  
**Unit Head approval:** Jean-Philippe Mathy

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## **SECTION 1: PAST ASSESSMENT RESULTS**

### **Brief description of changes or improvements made in your unit as the result of assessment results since 2000.**

Since 2000, the Program in Comparative Literature has been renamed the Program in Comparative and World Literature to reflect changes in the discipline as a result of the increasing globalization of literary, cultural and film studies in this country and abroad. The name change reflected a change in the curriculum, both in term of course contents and teaching methods. As a consequence we offer two majors at the undergraduate level: the major in Comparative Literature centers on placing two or more literary and cultural traditions, studied in the original languages, into dialogue, while the major in World Literature is for students who want to place literature and culture in a comparative context, but without a specific language requirement.

We have also changed the name and description of our undergraduate survey courses, formerly divided along "Western" and "non-Western" lines, in order to better reflect the changes in the way world literatures and cultures are studied and characterized in a postcolonial situation. General Education courses on "Western" literature are now courses on the literatures of Europe and the Americas, while courses fulfilling "non-Western" requirements are devoted to the literatures of Asia and Africa.

## **SECTION 2: REVISED ASSESSMENT PLAN**

### **(a) PROCESS: Brief description of the process followed to develop or revise this assessment plan.**

The assessment coordinator, a member of the unit faculty, attended all the workshops offered in the fall and early spring, and met with the unit Director in February to study the previous assessment plan and design the new one. The draft of the plan was sent to the faculty and discussed and edited during a faculty meeting in March. We also used the results of a graduate student survey conducted in the fall.

### **(b) STUDENT OUTCOMES: List Unit's student learning outcomes (knowledge, skills, and attitudes).**

**Undergraduate majors**

- \* comparative understanding of national literatures in the context of a globalizing world
- \* ability to situate texts in their cultural and historical contexts
- \* appreciation for the aesthetic qualities of literary texts
- \* awareness of influential critical and interpretive methods
- \* general understanding of the conventions of literary genres and of the major developments in literary history
- \* general understanding of the historical developments of at least two literatures
- \* acquisition of analytical and critical thinking skills
- \* ability to express oneself orally and in writing in a clear, coherent and persuasive manner
- \* ability to construct interpretive arguments
- \* ability to participate in 200- and 300-level literature and culture courses in at least one foreign language

### **Graduate students**

- \* ability to interpret and compare texts from different historical periods and cultural/linguistic areas
- \* ability to take graduate courses in English and at least one (MA) or two (PhD) foreign languages, and reading knowledge of one additional "research" language.
- \* extensive competence in the history of one literature
- \* specialized (period focused) knowledge of two other literatures (Ph.D.)
- \* familiarity with a broad range of literary, critical and cultural theories and methodologies
- \* familiarity with a broad range of theories, methods and strategies in the teaching of comparative and world literature
- \* ability to understand and contribute to issues and debates in the field of comparative and world literature
- \* ability to teach courses and direct research in the field of comparative and world literature

### **(c) MEASURES AND METHODS USED TO MEASURE OUTCOMES:**

#### **Undergraduates**

- \* portfolios (sample papers from advanced literature classes). The Program will keep one paper per year and per student on file to evaluate student progress. Student portfolios will be evaluated every three years by a faculty committee who will make recommendations to the Director.
- \* periodic review of ICES results to evaluate how undergraduate courses reflect instructional goals
- \* Senior surveys:
  - collect mean GPA of each graduating class
  - review GRE and LSAT scores of CL majors
  - collect number and kind of honors received per degree candidate

- devise and distribute an exit survey of all graduating seniors to evaluate completion of instructional goals, assess personal satisfaction and academic experience, and gather data on the graduate and professional schools the students will attend upon graduation.

## **Graduates**

- \* completion of distribution requirements for the M.A.
  - \* completion of Preliminary Examinations
  - \* completion of Pro-seminars in the teaching of comparative literature
  - \* review of ICES evaluations of courses or sections taught by teaching-assistants
  - \* assessment of publication record and participation in professional meetings
  - \* collect number and kind of honors received per degree candidate
  - \* yearly review of performance and progress toward the degree
  - \* completion, successful defense and deposit of dissertation
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- \* assessment of post-dissertation employment as measured against national and peer institutions (data provided by the Modern Language Association)
  - \* devise and administer a survey measuring graduate students' assessment of the Program academic goals and quality of professional training upon graduation
  - \* periodic survey of alumni/ae (3 years after graduation)

## **SECTION 3 : PLANS FOR USING RESULTS**

### **(a) PLANS: Brief description of plans to use assessment results for program improvement.**

The Undergraduate Advisor will report to the Director annually on portfolios, ICES reviews, and senior surveys. The Undergraduate Advisor will be charged with constituting the students' portfolios.

The Director of Graduate Studies will report to the Director annually on students' examinations results, progress to degree, and post-dissertation employment. The DGS will be charged with conducting regular surveys of graduating students and alumni/ae. The assessment results will be discussed annually with the faculty, and curricula and outcome measurements will be adjusted accordingly.

### **(b) TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION:**

Fall 08:

- gather the relevant information regarding ICES evaluations, test scores and examinations
- start gathering information on professional career of alumni/ae
- devise an exit survey for undergraduate majors, terminal Masters students and doctors.

Spring 09:

- collect material from majors for portfolios

- administer surveys for 08-09 academic year
  - collect results of the various assessment methods listed above for academic year 08-09.
- The process will be repeated on a yearly basis.

