

**Texas A&M International University
Core Curriculum Institutional Effectiveness Review (CCIER)**

Core Curriculum Academic Discipline: HUMANITIES/VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

Assessment Period Covered: Sept. 1, 2011 to May 31, 2012

Discipline Coordinator (Preparer of Report):

William Nolen

List Other Academic Discipline Faculty:

Dr. Deborah Scaggs

Dr. Manuel Broncano

Dr. Stephen Duffy

Dr. John Dean

Dr. Mark Menaldo

The Core Curriculum Institutional Effectiveness Review supports the following imperative of the Texas A&M International University 2011-2015 Strategic Plan:

Imperative 3: Teaching and Learning-- Enhance the educational environment by promoting excellence in teaching and learning.

Institutional Mission

Texas A&M International University, a Member of The Texas A&M University System, prepares students for leadership roles in their chosen profession in an increasingly complex, culturally diverse state, national, and global society ... Through instruction, faculty and student research, and public service, Texas A&M International University embodies a strategic point of delivery for well-defined programs and services that improve the quality of life for citizens of the border region, the State of Texas, and national and international communities.

Core Curriculum Mission

At Texas A&M International University, the Core curriculum introduces students to academic disciplines which form the foundation of human thought: mathematics, science, history, language, literature, the arts, and social and behavioral sciences. Our Core is conceived to open new areas of learning for our students and to foster skills necessary for success in higher education.

As they move through this course of study, students are encouraged, as their knowledge increases, to develop the capacity to articulate and support a thesis, to think critically, to synthesize their observations and to perceive analogies and relationships between seemingly diverse ideas and intellectual pursuits.

Provide summary of the last cycle's use of results and changes implemented:

The statement should include a concise analysis of the assessment data collected during the previous year, a brief explanation of actions taken to address specific outcomes, an evaluation of how these actions contributed to the improvement of the program, and any recommendations formulated.

This is the first time the Philosophy discipline has prepared a report. No prior reports exist.

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Exemplary Educational Objectives for the following academic discipline:

HUMANITIES and VISUAL and PERFORMING ARTS

1. To demonstrate awareness of the scope and variety of works in the arts and humanities.
2. To understand those works as expressions of individual and human values within a historical and social context.
3. To respond critically to works in the arts and humanities.
4. To engage in the creative process or interpretive performance and comprehend the physical and intellectual demands required of the author or visual or performing artist.
5. To articulate an informed personal reaction to works in the arts and humanities.
6. To develop an appreciation for the aesthetic principles that guide or govern the humanities and arts.
7. To demonstrate knowledge of the influence of literature, philosophy, and/or the arts on intercultural experiences.

Section I: Planning and Implementation
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Outcome(s):

From the list above, identify the outcome(s) that will be focused upon this year. (It is recommended that academic disciplines rotate through their entire set of Exemplary Educational Objectives over a multi-year period. Thus, disciplines are encouraged to focus only on a few outcomes each year.) To facilitate the completion of this report, please refer to the Core Curriculum Matrix completed for each academic discipline.

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| 7. To demonstrate knowledge of the influence of literature, philosophy, and/or the arts on inter-cultural experiences. |
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Please indicate if the outcome(s) is (are) related to writing (Write-On TAMIU).

Methods of assessment to be used:

The explanation should identify and describe the type of assessment(s) that will be used (e.g., survey, questionnaire, observation instrument, test, rubric to evaluate performance, standardized

examination, action research, interviews, etc.), who will provide the information, and how the data will be obtained.

Rubric (sections for Development and Organization) will assess students' ability to describe, explain and predict the influence of philosophical theories on intercultural experiences.

Indicate when assessment(s) will take place:

Spring 2012

Criteria/Benchmark(s) for assessing students' progress in meeting the exemplary objective(s) selected:

The rubric uses a 0-4 grading for each of the objectives to be met. For objective 7, 80% of the students assessed must meet a minimum of a 3 in the corresponding section (Development and Organization).

Section II: Analysis of Results

What were the results attained?

Describe the primary results or findings from your analysis of the information collected. This section should include an explanation of any strength(s) or weakness(es) suggested by the results.

The findings were quite dismal at 18% or 6 of the thirty-three students tested reached the objective with a 3 (Accomplished) or 4 (Exemplary). Twelve or 36% of the students did nearly reach mastery of the objective by attaining a 2 (Developing), but even this would only arrive at 55% with more work. Fifteen or 45% of the class received a 1 (Beginning) or 0 (Unacceptable) in this objective.

What were the conclusions reached?

Include a brief description of the conclusion(s) based on the evidence collected and describe the process used to disseminate the information. Use the Meeting Minutes template found at: <http://www.tamtu.edu/adminis/iep/resources.shtml>. Once completed, submit the minutes to integrate@tamtu.edu.

Being the first semester this course was offered to TAMTU's student body, it was not realized that the immensely wide scope of a PHIL 1301 course includes a survey of the theories spanning the entirety of Western culture and their effects (as well as how to read philosophical treatises, to explain these theories via exegesis and how to respond critically via a logical analysis of an argument's strengths and weaknesses), and to expect the students to synthesize this into predictions determining the influences upon the West's interactions with other cultures on their

own is a bit beyond them at this juncture, unless we are testing for mere repetition of class discussion. PHIL 1301 is too early a course in order to reasonably expect students to be able to trace a philosophical theory's influence and effect on our culture then also analyze how this affects our culture's interaction with another culture. The results this semester demonstrate this sufficiently.

The information will be disseminated in three meetings right before the Fall 2012 semester begins when all the faculty have returned. One meeting will include Dr. Marc Menaldo and Dr. John Dean, who are also teaching Philosophy courses or courses cross-listed with Philosophy in order to validate these findings by determining whether the students display similar strengths and weaknesses in their courses or whether these findings were perhaps an isolated event due to the assessment tool, the course itself or the instructor's methods. If the findings are corroborated by their own experiences, then the meeting will also try to establish whether the recommendations in this report seem viable and pertinent and whether the faculty is on the same page in reference to the skills and theories and learning objectives throughout all of the philosophy courses. The long term goal (once these assessments improve) is to work towards a Minor in Philosophy; these assessments will go a long way towards determining whether the program is strong enough to support such a plan.

The other meeting will include Dr. Scaggs (as Writing Program Director) and Drs. Duffy and Broncano (as Humanities Department chairs). This meeting will be conducted in order to verify whether the assessments and objectives utilized here are in line with the objectives and assessments used by both the First Year Writing Program (FYWP) and the College of Arts and Sciences in general. Given their busy schedules, however, this meeting may be held via email and conference call. In particular, a question to examine will be whether the results here are in accord with studies of students' early writing conducted through the FYWP.

The final meeting will be a part of the Humanities department semester meeting in preparation of the Fall 2012 semester. Discussion will focus on how these findings relate to what other departments are finding (e.g. History, Literature, etc.). The questions revolve on the extent that ideologies prevalent throughout the periods covered in other disciplines are covered in these other departments and to what extent the ideologies presented in philosophy are a first exposure to students (which seems to be the case).

Describe the action plan formulated.

Based on the conclusion(s), describe the action plan to be implemented to improve or maintain student learning in the core academic discipline, including a timeline for implementation.

Plan A: Fall 2012- HUM 2301 and Spring 2013- PHIL 2306 will contain heavy writing components with much smaller more tightly focused scopes (and bases of knowledge and theory) to work with, where we can work on three shorter papers throughout the semester that will better utilize the assessment tool discussed herein by building a longer research essay that more fully and effectively accomplishes this objective (#7). These courses, however, are smaller in population and serve a smaller student demographic, therefore, do not serve well as CORE curriculum assessment samples currently.

Plan B: For assessment and reporting purposes, PHIL 1301 will continue to assess student learning outcome (SLO) #7. However, the assessment tool used to measure student success will change to one more appropriate for the skill and knowledge level of a 1000 level course. The

new assessment tool will consist of short essay questions found at the end of the three major exams. These exam questions will ask students to identify which theories discussed most directly impacted various historical examples of intercultural exchanges. The students will then defend their answers by explaining what elements in the theory had impacts, how those impacts were made manifest and what effects were produced by these impacts. Being a more focused assessment tool in that students are supplied with the historical examples that have documented causal connections to the philosophical theories of the course will still challenge students to apply the course material to historical and current intercultural exchanges, but at a level manageable by freshmen students who have not taken English 1301 or 1302 so that they are not at a disadvantage.

Both Plan A and B will be put into effect assuming no objections from the CORE committee or administration.

Section III: Resources

Resource(s) to implement action plan:

Describe the resources that will be needed to implement the action plan. Also indicate if the resources are currently available, or if additional funds will be needed to obtain these resources.

Funding

- ☐ New Resources Required
- ☐ Reallocation of current funds

Physical

- ☐ New or reallocated space

Other

- ☐ Primarily faculty/staff time
- X University/rule procedure change only

Provide a narrative description and justification for requested resources (include linkage to Strategic Plan)

The only resource required here is the committee's acceptance of the recommendations and conclusions set forth above in order to implement the changes in which courses will be assigned to what objectives.

Date Report Submitted:

Revised and submitted on August 28, 2012