



General Education Assessment Report: Western Culture

A study of data from Humanities courses in the Semesters of Fall 2013 and Spring 2014

GE Humanities

Overview of requirement:

The Humanities General Education Program consists of 3 courses, 111, 212, 313, and the original intention in designing this sequence was to have courses be taught at the introductory, intermediate, and advanced (upper division level). The learning outcomes, besides mastering content information in the area of western culture (history, philosophy, and the arts), are concerned with being introduced to, developing, and mastering skills in the analysis of historical and cultural evidence, thinking critically and writing effectively about the course materials, and finally being able to identify and make judgments informed by values. All courses also contribute to students' understanding of diversity—which we have taken to mean not only diverse cultures and values, but diverse approaches to historical and cultural evidence. Additionally, each of these courses correspond to General Education Core Competencies.

Learning Outcomes for the Humanities requirement:

- Students demonstrate a historical and chronological understanding of Western cultures from the ancient world to the present
- Demonstrate skill in analyzing and evaluating diverse voices in historical evidence from literature, the art and both primary and secondary historical texts
- Write clearly and coherently on the formation and global implications of western cultural values—political, philosophical, aesthetic, and religious—and the historical contexts in which they were formed

Courses fulfilling the Humanities requirement:

HUM 111

HUM 212

HUM 313

Objectives

Institutional Educational Outcomes (Objectives)

The Humanities Learning Outcomes align with the following IEOs.

Demonstrate a historical and chronological understanding of Western cultures from the ancient world to the present.

Knowledge & Scholarship (Purpose): Demonstrate expertise in an academic or professional discipline, display proficiency in the discipline, and engage in the process of academic discovery

Demonstrate skill in analyzing and evaluating diverse voices in historical evidence from literature, the art and both primary and secondary historical texts

Community and Global Understanding (Purpose): Develop and enact a compelling personal and professional vision that values diversity.

Knowledge & Scholarship (Leadership): Think critically and creatively, communicate clearly, and act with integrity

Write clearly and coherently on the formation and global implications of western cultural values—political, philosophical, aesthetic, religious—and the historical contexts in which they were formed.

Faith & Heritage (Purpose): Appreciate the complex relationship between faith, learning and practice.

Knowledge & Scholarship (Leadership): Think critically and creatively, communicate clearly, and act with integrity

Curriculum Map

	<u>SLO #1</u>	<u>SLO #2</u>	<u>SLO #3</u>
<u>Hum 111</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>M</u>
<u>Hum 212</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>M</u>
<u>Hum 313</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>M</u>

Course Descriptions from the Seaver Catalog

Western Heritage (9)

This three-course sequence, taught with progressively more rigorous expectations, gives a historical and sequential introduction to the achievements of Western culture from prehistoric times through the late Middle Ages (30,000 CE–1300 CE) in the first course, through the Early Modern Period (1300–1815) in the second, and from the Industrial Revolution to the present in the third. Through an integrated, interdisciplinary study of politics, literature, philosophy, and the arts, the sequence explores the interrelationship between the cultural arts and the spiritual, political, and intellectual commitments of men and men in the West

Courses fulfilling the Western Heritage requirement: HUM 111, HUM 212, and HUM 313, taken in sequence at the introductory, intermediate, and advanced levels:

In the Western Heritage requirement, students will:

- Develop a historical and sequential understanding of the history of Western civilization.
- Experience the West's important primary cultural "texts" (literature, philosophy, art, and music) and explore their historical contexts.
- Understand the consequences and costs of Western cultural achievements both to men and women in the West and to other civilizations with which the West has interacted.
- Learn, use, and evaluate ideas of historical periodization, such as "Classical," "Medieval," "Renaissance," "Baroque," Enlightenment, "Romantic," "Modern," and "Postmodern."

HUM 111 Western Culture I (3)

An introduction to the West, with particular emphasis on knowledge and comprehension. Students will achieve basic cultural literacy in the following time periods: Prehistoric, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, Rome, Medieval

Europe (30,000 BC-AD 1300). (GE)

HUM 212 Western Culture II (3)

An analysis and interpretation of six major historical "events" during the time period 1300-1815 and their cultural implications: Renaissance, Reformation, Intercultural Encounters, Science, Enlightenment, the French Revolution. Students will achieve cultural literacy in these areas and develop skills in cultural interpretation and analysis. Prerequisite: HUM 111. (GE)

HUM 313 Western Culture III (3)

Focused on a particular topic in modern culture, the course will use historical narrative of the time period 1815 to the present as a background for investigation into a particular theme or themes. Students will engage with and assess varying cultural and historical interpretations. Students will achieve cultural literacy in the modern period and demonstrate their skill in synthesizing and evaluating diverse historical and cultural interpretations.

Prerequisite: HUM 212. (GE)

Methodology

Student Sample

Data was collected from Humanities 212, which emphasizes the “practice” of critical thinking. A total of 100 students’ work was assessed from Malibu, and a total of 77 students’ work was assessed from International Programs: Florence, Heidelberg, and London.

Assignment/Rubric

For Malibu, we used the essay portion of the final examination from Humanities 212 for both fall and spring semesters (December 2013, April 2014). During each of these terms only one large lecture class of 200+ is taught. Our complete sample was 85 papers. Given our use of SLO #2 we would expect students to be able to assess multiple historical perspectives, and present appropriate and well explained evidence.

Assignments:

Fall: According to Marxist historians, a genuine revolution must produce economic transformation. Other views of revolution have been presented in class to include the Enlightenment and the Scientific Revolution. Considering the evidence you have from primary readings from these “revolutions,” as well as secondary assessments of the “Age of Revolution,” assess whether the French Revolution and Napoleonic Era constituted genuine revolutions.

Spring: Evaluate the ways in which Locke, Hobbes, and Rousseau transformed (or failed to transform) the Western understanding of sovereignty.

For International Programs we requested that they provide a sample of at least 1/3 of the essays from their final exams for fall semester (which is when 212 is taught). We received 15 essays each from London and Florence, but they did not send the assignment as requested. Heidelberg apparently did not give an essay exam, so they provided 15 papers students wrote about Spain in relation to their spring Educational Field Trip.

Rubric

HUM 212 Critical Thinking Assessment Rubric

	Introductory	Developing (Practiced)	Mastery
Clarification of Issue	Issue stated without Clarification and/or description	Issue stated, described and clarified, though some things may be omitted	Issue stated, described, and clarified indicating clear understanding
Thesis and perspective	Thesis stated but may be simplistic	Thesis takes into account the issue's complexity	Thesis accounts for complexities and accommodates multiple viewpoints
Use of evidence and analysis	Evidence and information from sources or observations with little or no interpretation	Evidence and information from sources and observations clearly presented and relevance explained	Presents and evaluates evidence from multiple perspectives and thoroughly evaluates relevance and contexts
Conclusions and/or consequences	Conclusions may be inconsistently tied to information and/or implications are oversimplified	Conclusion is logically tied to range of information and outcomes are clearly identified	Conclusion is logically tied to evidence presented and reflects priorities derived from evidence

Members of the team circulated a set of papers; each of us using the rubric, "graded" the samples. We collated our evaluations and, where we differed, discussed our use of the rubric. We were mostly in agreement

Preliminary Data Analysis

The following trends were identified in the data:

Malibu: (sample 100)

95% of Malibu students were at the level of Developing or Mastery, with 31% at level of mastery. We are definitely meeting our expectations. The 7 samples that were at an introductory level would be expected based on student writing ability. The higher level of mastery in the fall course probably derives from the way expectations were clearly set out in the examination question.

	I	D	M	TOTAL
FALL	2 (3%)	34 (56%)	24 (40%)	60 (100%)
SPRING	3 (7%)	30 (75%)	7 (17%)	40 (100%)

Florence: (sample size 20)

Florence students were at the level of Developing or Mastery at the level of 70%. Although we did not have an assignment, from the responses it was not altogether clear that critical thinking was clearly expected from the prompt. These tended to be more content based rather than evidence analysis.

	I	D	M	TOTAL
FALL	6 (30%)	12 (60%)	2 (10%)	20 (100%)

Heidelberg: (sample size 42)

Students are not exhibiting the acceptable skill level in critical thinking.

Student papers were exercises in description rather than critical thinking. They were informational, relying on secondary source for information about their subject. They did not submit their sources to any critical evaluation, and they introduced no observations of their own about primary evidence like art or field trip locations.

	I	D	M	TOTAL
FALL	18 (42%)	0 (0%)	24 (57%)	42 (100%)

Preliminary Data Analysis

London: (sample size 15)

Students are exhibiting critical thinking skill at the level of 60%, 15% below the expected level of 75%.

As in Florence, the expectation for the assignment appeared to be more on content mastery rather than evidence analysis.

	I	D	M	TOTAL
FALL	6 (40%)	7 (46%)	2 (13%)	15 (100%)

Discussion

The critical thinking expectation has been built in to the Humanities curriculum for nearly a decade, with both Malibu instructors having taught the course since 2009. We are very clear on our critical thinking outcomes for Humanities 212—and have been so since before we were asked to assess student leaning. Having a 95% skill demonstration is consistent with our course planning and teaching.

Asking for consistency between Malibu and International Programs humanities classes began only two years ago. This was the second year for London's alignment of their curriculum with Malibu, the first year for Florence, and, apparently, the emphasis on critical thinking has not occurred in Heidelberg—or if it has occurred, this was not a reasonably selected assignment. . That two of the programs ignored requests for sample papers makes it pretty clear that there is not much serious interest in revising their classes. It is very difficult for those of us assessing the humanities courses to enforce compliance in the International Programs—especially since there appears to be no interest from the Dean of International Programs or his office team.

Closing the Loop

Action Plan

Malibu

Hold a retreat to discuss:

1. Crafting exam questions/assignments to demonstrate critical thinking skills
2. Assessment of other core competencies for HUM 111 and HUM 313
3. Creating rubrics for content mastery and perspectives
4. Review our current curriculum in light of GE assessment
5. Ways in which we can involve students in assessment

International Programs

1. Share assessment report
2. Share rubrics for future assessment
3. Share examples of exam questions that demonstrate core competencies
4. Share the results with the program directors.
5. Ask program directors to help faculty work more closely with the SLO's
6. Some kind of action needs to be taken to achieve the cooperation of all International Programs in assuring that outcomes for the Humanities Courses are consistent with Malibu.

Comparison of Humanities SLOs 2013 to 2014 in International Programs. This was an action item from last year's assessment report.

Student Learning Outcome(s)

Expectation: In Humanities 212 70% of students will demonstrate the level of practice

SLO #1	Students demonstrate a historical and chronological understanding of Western cultures from the ancient world to the present.
SLO #2	Demonstrate skill in analyzing and evaluating diverse voices in historical evidence from literature, the art and both primary and secondary historical texts
SLO #3	Write clearly and coherently on the formation and global implications of western cultural values—political, philosophical, aesthetic, and religious—and the historical contexts in which they were formed.

Closing the Loop

Florence

		Introduce	Practice	Mastery
SLO 1	2013	40%	60%	
	2014	30%	60%	10%
SLO 2	2013	40%	60%	
	2014	30%	70%	
SLO	2013	50%	30%	
	2014	30	70%	

The expectation for each of these SLOs is 70% at the level of mastery in Humanities 212. Florence has improved in all areas and is the **ONLY** International Program that is achieving student learning in Humanities 212 at the level expected in Malibu.

Heidelberg

		Introduce	Practice	Mastery
SLO 1	2013	40%	60%	
	2014	100%		
SLO 2	2013	60%	40%	
	2014	100%		
SLO 3	2013	40%	40%	
	2014	100%		

Apparently Heidelberg is not implementing the Student Learning Outcomes for the Humanities Sequence in their classes. The sample of papers that was submitted involved students describing some historical aspect of Spain. The papers reported, some verbatim, information from their sources. The approach is entirely introductory, with students performing at the level they would in Malibu in Humanities 111.

Closing the Loop

London

		Introduce	Practice	Mastery
SLO 1	2013	25%	58%	17%
	2014	40%	47%	13%
SLO	2013	8%	92%	
	2014	47%	47%	6%
SLO 3	2013	18%	71%	11%
	2014	47%	47%	6%

Last year London Humanities 212 samples demonstrated an acceptable 75% in content mastery, 92% in analyzing and evaluating diverse kinds of evidence, and 82% at writing addressing implications (perspectives) in Western Culture. In all areas London has fallen below the acceptable 70% of students practicing the given skill. The London samples this year were from essay exams rather than papers, and the declining results may be because exams tend to be more content oriented than evaluative.