



# General Education Assessment Report: *Literature*

A study of data from Literature courses in the Semesters of Fall 2012 and Spring 2013

# General Education Literature

## Institutional Learning Outcomes - ILOs

### Pepperdine University's Institutional Student Learning Outcomes

	Knowledge/ Scholarship	Faith/ Heritage	Community/Global Under- standing
<b>PURPOSE</b>	<b>ILO#1</b> Demonstrate expertise in an academic or professional discipline, display proficiency in the discipline, and engage in the process of academic discovery.	<b>ILO#2</b> Appreciate the complex relationship between faith, learning, and practice.	<b>ILO#3</b> Develop and enact a compelling personal and professional vision that values diversity.
<b>SERVICE</b>	<b>ILO#4</b> Apply knowledge to real-world challenges.	<b>ILO#5</b> Respond to the call to serve others.	<b>ILO#6</b> Demonstrate commitment to service and civic engagement.
<b>LEADERSHIP</b>	<b>ILO#7</b> Think critically and creatively, communicate clearly, and act with integrity.	<b>ILO#8</b> Practice responsible conduct and allow decisions and directions to be informed by a value-centered life.	<b>ILO#9</b> Use global and local leadership opportunities in pursuit of justice.

## Program Learning Outcomes - PLOs

PLO #1	<b>Demonstrate critical thinking skills through rigorous analysis of literary texts in diverse historical and cultural contexts</b>
PLO #2	<b>Demonstrate a basic understanding of the concept and practice of literary research</b>
PLO #3	<b>Demonstrate effective writing and/or oral presentation through literary analysis</b>
PLO #4	<b>Demonstrate the way meaning can be expressed through the formal elements of language and genre</b>

## Alignment of PLOs with ILOs

	ILO#1	ILO#2	ILO#3	ILO#4	ILO#5	ILO#6	ILO#7	ILO#8	ILO#9
PLO #1	x		x						
PLO #2	x								
PLO #3							x		
PLO #4	x						x		

## PLO Alignments

Additional Comments: Those who teach literature know that engaging with literature in a sustained way fosters the kind of reflection that can lead to a serious examination of one's own spirituality and personal vision. Literature often incites discussion of ethics, faith and civic responsibility. So while alignment with ILOs #2, #6, #8 and #9 is not formally stated in our PLOs, these elements recur regularly in our classrooms and in dorm rooms through reading and writing assignments across courses in the literature GE.

### Alignment of PLOs with Core Competencies

	PLO#1	PLO#2	PLO#3	PLO#4
Critical Thinking	X	X	X	X
Information Literacy		X	X	
Oral Communication			X	X
Written Communication			X	X
Quantitative Skills				

### Alignment of PLOs with General Education Requirements

List all of the courses in your Program which fulfill GE Requirements.

ENG 315 Literary Study  
ENG 325 British Literature Survey  
ENG 326 American Literature Survey  
ENG 370 World Literature  
ENG 380 Topics in Literature

Indicate which of these are being assessed as part of the major and which are not.

ENG 325 & ENG 326 are required for English majors but may be taken for GE credit by non-majors; ENG 315, ENG 370 and ENG 380 are GE courses only.

Indicate which of these are regularly taught in an International Program.

ENG 370 & ENG 380 are regularly taught in International Programs though they are not part of this year's assessment. In the future, literature GEs that are taught in International Programs as well as in the Foreign Languages curriculum will be integrated.

## Student Learning Outcomes

### Student Learning Outcomes

**\*NB: The tables below include only the courses taught in the Literature GE by Humanities faculty on the Malibu campus. Future assessment reports will extend to Literature GE courses taught by Foreign Language faculty and by faculty abroad in International Programs.**

Fall 2012 Courses	Faculty Member	Correctly Stated SLOs	SLOs Related to PLOs
ENG 315-01 LEC (1340)	Peterson,John A	Y	Y
ENG 315-02 LEC (1387)	Peterson,John A	Y	Y
ENG 325-01 LEC (1388)	Fulmer,Constance M	Y	Y
ENG 325-02 LEC (2002)	Smith,Julianne	Y	Y
ENG 326-01 LEC (1389)	Thomas,James	Y	Y
ENG 326-02 LEC (1290)	Thomas,James	Y	Y
ENG 370-01 LEC (2008)	Osborne,Monica R	Y	Y
ENG 380-01 LEC (1344)	Parmelee,Stephen F	Not submitted	Not submitted
ENG 380-02 LEC (1391)	Struloeff,Cynthia L	Y	N

Spring 2013 Courses	Faculty Member	Correctly Stated SLOs	SLOs Related to PLOs
ENG 315-01 LEC (3658)	Peterson,John A	Y	Y
ENG 315-02 LEC (3764)	Peterson,John A	Y	Y
ENG 325-01 LEC (3659)	Fulmer,Constance M	Y	Y
ENG 326-01 LEC (3660)	Thomas,James	Y	Y
ENG 326-02 LEC (3765)	Thomas,James	Y	Y
ENG 380-01 LEC (3661)	Parmelee,Stephen F	Y	Y
ENG 380-02 LEC (3767)	Ditmore,Michael G	Y	Y
ENG 380-03 LEC (4554)	Carr,Joi M	Y	Y
ENG 380-04 LEC (4939)	Struloeff,John R	Y	Y
ENG 380-05 LEC (4556)	Smith,Lisa R	Y	Y

## Curriculum Map

### Curriculum Map

**\*NB: The table below includes only the courses taught in the Literature GE by Humanities faculty on the Malibu campus. Future assessment reports will extend to Literature GE courses taught by Foreign Language faculty and by faculty abroad in International Programs.**

Course Number	PLO#1	PLO#2	PLO#3	PLO#4
ENG 315-01 LEC (1340)	I	I	D	D
ENG 315-01 LEC (3658)	I	I	D	D
ENG 315-02 LEC (1387)	I	I	D	D
ENG 315-02 LEC (3764)	I	I	D	D
ENG 325-01 LEC (1388)	I	I	D	D
ENG 325-01 LEC (3659)	I	I	D	D
ENG 325-02 LEC (2002)	I	I	D	D
ENG 326-01 LEC (1389)	I	I	D	D
ENG 326-01 LEC (3660)	I	I	D	D
ENG 326-02 LEC (1290)	I	I	D	D
ENG 326-02 LEC (3765)	I	I	D	D
ENG 370-01 LEC (2008)	I	I	D	D
ENG 380-01 LEC (1344)	I	I	D	D
ENG 380-01 LEC (3661)	I	I	D	D
ENG 380-02 LEC (3767)	I	I	D	D
ENG 380-03 LEC (4554)	I	I	D	D
ENG 380-04 LEC (4939)	I	I	D	D
ENG 380-05 LEC (4556)	I	I	D	D

### Assessment Plan

	Assessment Schedule	Direct Evidence	Indirect Evidence	Authentic Evidence
PLO #1	2014	X		
PLO # 2	2015	X		
PLO # 3	2013	X		
PLO # 4	2016	X		

# Outcome & Sample

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## Sample Size: 40

### Status Report of Assessment Activities

*Which outcome or outcomes did you assess?*

On April 30, 2013, seven faculty members who regularly teach GE literature courses met to evaluate the writing component (but not the oral presentation component) of PLO #3: Students will demonstrate effective writing and/or oral presentation through literary analysis.

*What did you collect?*

We collected direct evidence: 40 student papers from 8 different course sections taught by Humanities faculty at Seaver during Fall 2012/Spring 2013.

*What did you do with the data? How was it analyzed? Where is it stored?*

The papers were analyzed using a rubric (Appendix 1) designed to evaluate literature papers across six categories. Four of the six categories are relevant to the specific SLO we are scheduled to evaluate in 2013. These categories include (1) Context for writing; (2) Content Development; (3) Genre and Disciplinary Conventions; (4) Syntax and Mechanics. We began with a norming session in which all faculty members evaluated the same five essays to compare results and discuss standards. After that, each of the remaining student papers was evaluated by two faculty members, the results were compared, and paper evaluations that were too disparate were evaluated by a third reader. These essays and rubrics are stored in a file cabinet in Julie Smith's office (CAC 208).

*What did you find?*

According to the 2011-2012 assessment report, the designated benchmark for adequate student performance in the area of the literature GE is that, for each SLO, seventy percent (70%) of the assessed samples should show achievement at the introductory level. In our rubric, if a basic understanding or better constitutes introductory-level knowledge in the literature GE, then our students' achievements in effective writing meet and exceed that 70% benchmark as follows: Category 1 (Context for Writing) =87.5%; Category 2 (Content Development) =85%; Category 3 (Genre & Disciplinary Conventions) =77.5%; Category 4 (Syntax & Mechanics) =87.5%.

# Data

In our rubric, categories 1 & 2 focus on essay content and 3 & 4 focus on form and style. Together, these four categories constitute the standards for effective writing. The tables below show how many papers fell into each skill level:

## Category 1 (Content)

<i>Context for Writing</i>	<b>Sophisticated Understanding</b>	<b>Sound Understanding</b>	<b>Basic Understanding</b>	<b>Minimal Understanding</b>	<b>Unacceptable</b>
<i># of Papers</i>	6	16	13	5	0

This distribution shows that 55% of the students understand the rhetorical purpose (audience, purpose and circumstances) for their writing assignment at a sound or sophisticated level; 32.5% have a basic understanding; and 12.5% have at least a minimal understanding. None of the students fell into the unacceptable column.

## Category 2 (Content)

<i>Content Development</i>	<b>Sophisticated Understanding</b>	<b>Sound Understanding</b>	<b>Basic Understanding</b>	<b>Minimal Understanding</b>	<b>Unacceptable</b>
<i># of Papers</i>	4	12	18	6	0

This distribution shows that 40% of the students know how to use appropriate, relevant and compelling details, evidence and illustration to explore ideas and, in some cases (10%), even demonstrate mastery of their subject within the context of the discipline; 45% demonstrate a basic understanding of these elements throughout most of their paper; and 15% demonstrate at least a minimal grasp of this content area. None were unacceptable.

## Category 3 (Form & Style)

<i>Genre &amp; Disciplinary Conventions</i>	<b>Sophisticated Understanding</b>	<b>Sound Understanding</b>	<b>Basic Understanding</b>	<b>Minimal Understanding</b>	<b>Unacceptable</b>
<i># of Papers</i>	3	13	15	9	0

This distribution shows that 42.5% can write clear prose that contains few errors or, in some cases (10%), is virtually error-free; 45% can write in a way that generally conveys meaning but includes a number of errors; and 12.5% have difficulty conveying meaning because of errors in usage. None were unacceptable.

# Analysis

Overall, these results show that our students understand what we are asking them to do when we assign a paper about literature, and just under half of them are able to do it well at a sound to sophisticated level. However, the majority (between 78-88%) have at least a basic grasp (or better) of how to write an effective paper. Those who fall into the “minimal understanding” column (12-22%) struggle to express clear ideas about literature in writing but have still avoided being judged unacceptable.

In the categories of paper content (categories 1 & 2), the ability to follow up the “big ideas” of the assignment with skillfully selected evidence and detail lags, as indicated by the difference between conceiving the rhetorical dimensions of the assignment at a sound or sophisticated level (55%) and supplying the evidence in a proficient and accomplished manner (40%). The 22% discrepancy seems significant since it represents almost a quarter of the best papers.

In the categories of form and style (categories 3 & 4), there is a closer relationship between students in the top categories who understand the formal elements of an effective essay (40%) and those who have conquered syntax and mechanics (42.5%). The same is true for those at the basic skill level where the numbers between the two categories show only a difference of 7.5%. Surprisingly, among those at the lowest skill level, fewer struggle with syntax and mechanics (12.5%) than effective essay structure (22.5%).

## **Address specific PLOs or courses which address diversity issues or further the students' understanding of and sensitivity to diversity issues.**

Though we were not focusing on the diversity PLO in this year’s assessment, our rubric did contain a diversity category. Twenty-two (55%) out of 40 papers addressed issues of diversity across categories of race, class or gender. Our findings showed the following:

<i>Diversity</i>	<b>Sophisticated Understanding</b>	<b>Sound Understanding</b>	<b>Basic Understanding</b>	<b>Minimal Understanding</b>
<i># of Papers</i>	2 (9%)	4 (18%)	6 (27%)	10 (45%)

These results show that, when an assignment contained analysis related to diversity, roughly 55% addressed these issues at an introductory level or better. These papers explored or acknowledged issues of class, race or gender with at least a basic level of detail. The other 45% mentioned issues of class, race or gender but did not develop these ideas at any length. It is important to point out that this category indicates the topic of diversity only and may or may not be related to the effectiveness of the writing in any given essay.



## Closing the Loop

### Closing the Loop

The statistics show that the lowest-scoring category for PLO #3 (effective writing) is category 3 Genre & Disciplinary Conventions. Since this category addresses formal matters of organization, content presentation, format and style, it would behoove us to discuss ways to bolster student achievement in this area. Perhaps these formal elements need to be more clearly laid out in writing assignment prompts, and students need to be better informed about the importance of form in effective writing so that they consider these elements as they edit final drafts. If this importance is conveyed, students should realize that, while editing for syntax and mechanics is certainly essential, formal elements and essay conventions are equally critical for effective writing. This will be addressed with faculty over the 2013-2014 school year.

Another inequity exists for those students who did well in categories 1 (Context for Writing) & 2 (Content Development). Our best students need to recognize more specifically that a good essay topic or idea demands matching content development for the most effective writing. While that seems to be obvious, our findings show that students can propose a good topic but often fall short of developing it fully and effectively. Perhaps deliberately acknowledging this discrepancy to our students will raise awareness of the way these elements are complementary and that, without proper and thorough development, even the most promising and exciting ideas fall short of their potential. This will be addressed with faculty over the 2013-2014 school year.

Faculty evaluators discussed changes in focus and wording to both our writing rubric and our SLOs to reflect our goals and practices more clearly. Here is a list of action items:

In the writing assessment rubric, change category 1 from “*Context* for Writing” to “*Framework* for Writing.” The rationale was that “Context for Writing” seems to focus on the assignment rather than student achievement. “Framework for Writing” includes rhetorical matters of audience and purpose but also suggests that these elements should be apparent in the thesis statements students generate. This has been done.

In the writing assessment rubric, expand the list of diversity elements from “issues of class, race or gender” to “issues of class, race, *religion* or gender.” This has been done.

SLO #1 was changed from “Students will demonstrate critical thinking skills through rigorous analysis of literary texts” to “Students will demonstrate critical thinking skills through rigorous analysis of literary texts *in diverse cultural and historical contexts*.” This change ties together critical thinking, literature and diversity, but the language allows flexibility and suggests that all literature exists within a cultural and historical framework. As such, explicit discussion of race, class, religion and gender can but do not necessarily define diversity.

SLO #2 was changed from “Students will *be introduced to* the concept and practice of literary research” to “Students will *demonstrate a basic understanding of* the concept and practice of literary research.” This change focuses on student achievement instead of instruction. It also sets a level of achievement (“basic”) that reasonably accommodates general education students who are not majoring in English.

SLO #3 was changed from “Students will *communicate ideas about literature in diverse historical and cultural contexts*” to “Students will *demonstrate effective writing and/or oral presentation through literary analysis*.” This change focuses the SLO on effective writing and oral presentation whether or not it includes a diversity factor (now a part of SLO #1). Also, many sections of the literature GE are too big to include individual oral presentations; however, other sections include presentations regularly. This SLO now accommodates those who do and those who do not assign presentations.

SLO #4 was changed from “Students will *develop a deeper understanding* of the ways in which the formal elements of language and genre shape meaning” to “Students will *demonstrate the way meaning is expressed* through the formal elements of language and genre.” Because “developing a deeper understanding” is not assessable, the change mandates a demonstrable skill that can be assessed.

## Collaboration

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### Collaboration

#### Faculty Members involved:

**Julie Smith – Assessment Coordinator and Report Writer**

**Mike Ditmore - Evaluator**

**Frank Novak - Evaluator**

**Steve Parmelee - Evaluator**

**John Peterson - Evaluator**

**John Struleoff - Evaluator**

**James Thomas – Evaluator**

# Instrument

## APPENDIX 1

### GE Literature Assessment Student Paper Rubric (Original)

Paper ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Course & Section Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator's Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

	Rubric for ENG 300 Paper Assessment	4 Sophisticated Understanding	3 Sound Understanding	2 Basic Understanding	1 Minimal Understanding	0 Unacceptable	Score
Critical Thinking	<b>Context for Writing</b> (Considers textual sensitivity, context, audience and purpose)	Demonstrates a <u>sensitive and thorough</u> understanding of context, audience, and purpose	Demonstrates <u>adequately clear</u> consideration of context, audience, and purpose	Demonstrates <u>awareness</u> of context, audience, purpose	Demonstrates <u>minimal understanding</u> of context, audience, purpose	Does not meet any benchmarks in this category	
Critical Thinking	<b>Content Development</b>	Uses <u>appropriate, relevant, and compelling</u> content to illustrate <u>mastery of the subject</u>	Uses <u>appropriate, relevant, and compelling content</u> to <u>explore ideas</u> within the context of the discipline	Uses <u>appropriate and relevant content</u> to develop and <u>explore ideas</u> through most of the paper	Uses <u>appropriate and relevant content</u> to <u>develop simple ideas</u> in some parts of the paper	Does not meet any benchmarks in this category	
Language	<b>Genre and Disciplinary Conventions</b> (Formal and informal rules for writing in the genre/discipline)	Demonstrates <u>detailed attention</u> to conventions of organization, content, presentation, format, and style	Demonstrates <u>consistent attention</u> to conventions of organization, content, presentation, format and style	Demonstrates <u>basic attention</u> to conventions of organization, content, and presentation	<u>Attempts to use a consistent system</u> for basic organization and presentation	Does not meet any benchmarks in this category	
Language	<b>Syntax and Mechanics</b>	Uses <u>graceful</u> language that <u>skillfully</u> communicates meaning with clarity and fluency (virtually <u>error-free</u> )	Uses <u>straightforward</u> language that generally conveys meaning with <u>few errors</u> .	Uses language that generally <u>conveys meaning</u> to readers but <u>includes a number of errors</u>	Uses language that sometimes <u>impedes meaning</u> because of errors in usage	Does not meet any benchmarks in this category	
Research	<b>Sources and Evidence</b>	Demonstrates <u>skillful use</u> of high-quality, credible, relevant sources to develop ideas	Demonstrates <u>consistent use</u> of credible, relevant sources to support ideas	<u>Attempts</u> to use credible and/or relevant sources to support ideas	Demonstrates <u>an attempt</u> to use sources to support ideas	Does not meet any benchmarks in this category	
Diversity	<b>Diversity</b>	Addresses issues of class, race or gender with <u>sensitivity</u>	<u>Explores</u> issues of class, race or gender <u>in some detail</u>	<u>Acknowledges</u> issues of class, race or gender with <u>few details</u>	<u>Mentions</u> issues of class, race or gender but <u>does not develop</u>	Does not meet any benchmarks in this category	

Score: \_\_\_\_\_

Score without Diversity Factor: \_\_\_\_\_

Score without Research Factor: \_\_\_\_\_

Score without Research & Diversity Factor: \_\_\_\_\_