

## **Departmental Assessment Meeting: Report**

Please fill out this report based on your department's conversation and return via e-mail to Megan Leonard or Sasha Pfau by March 31, 2017.

### **Summary of past decisions**

Please summarize up to three departmental changes made since the last HLC visit (08-09) the impetus for those changes and any changes to information gathering about student development.

1. The biggest change came in 2009-10 when we revised the major substantially to include three emphases. Students majoring in English now choose to major in Literary Studies, Film Studies, or Creative Writing. We made these changes in response to student interest (Kristi McKim surveyed students to gauge their interest in film studies, for example) and to new positions in Film studies (McKim) and Creative Writing (Jaeger). As part of the major revision we revised the period requirements for courses, again as a response to the faculty we had at the time (we are poised to change these yet again now that we have a differently composed faculty). With new faculty came many new courses.
2. In 2010, we devised an assessment matrix (see attached document). Using a scaffolding model, we worked backwards from our capstone experience (which we had also revised the year before revising the major to include an oral exam component—that is an oral defense of the written thesis). The matrix describes the skills we want students to be introduced to, to develop proficiency in, and to have mastery over and the level of coursework when we expect each of these goals to be attained. The impetus for this work was to improve our assessment of student learning, and to be able to coordinate our course offerings. We wanted to be sure we were basically doing the same kinds of things in courses at the same level (i.e. in 200-level courses we expect x, in 300-level courses y, and so on).
3. In 2016, we added a mid-semester research symposium to our Literary studies/film studies (LS/FS) Senior Thesis class (students present their research in progress to their peers and faculty and take questions). We made this change because LS/FS students were telling us (in our Senior Thesis major evaluations, completed by all Seniors before graduation) that they wanted a group bonding/public venue for their work similar to the Word Garden reading series that Ty Jaeger had developed for Creative Writing students already on his arrival.
4. Last semester, we devised a set of learning goals for English 110. These go into effect in the coming academic year.

### **Looking forward**

Please summarize your department's focus for student development and your evaluation methods.

In the coming year, we will some devise common questions for our course evaluations. (We will devote part of our annual retreat in August to this task.) We will compile these responses and discuss them at the next retreat. In other words, we envision a two-year process: the first year to gather responses and the second to assess them. Comparing the answers to these evaluation questions will allow us to decide whether we need to change our procedures to ensure a more common experience for our students.

### **Achieving departmental goals for students**

Please explain how your departmental curriculum achieves your student learning goals, being sure to include the Capstone. Feel free to attach a curricular map or other supporting documents. Summarize the ways your department provides guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

Please see the attached matrix of learning goals by course type that we refer to in question 1.

In terms of how we guide students in the effective use of research and information resources, we teach these skills in all our courses, but we emphasize it in ENGL 297 Literary Analysis (the course all majors and minors take, usually as Sophomores) and then again in ENGL 497 Senior Thesis. In the past four years, Toni Jaudon has run a special information session (on Reading Day in the Fall semester) for the students of ENGL 497 which provides best practices for how to do the kind of research expected of them for the thesis process.

As to how we teach these skills, we do a variety of things: some of us schedule class visits to the library, others require annotated bibliography assignments. All of us assign writing in our upper-level courses that require the use of secondary sources. We also assign works of this nature in those courses, so that students learn how to read and interpret them, as well as how to model their own writing on them.

### **Your department's role in achieving the college's shared goals for students**

Please explain how your departmental learning goals contribute to the Vision for Student Learning Goals. Feel free to attach a map or other supporting documents.

### **English Department Learning Goals: Key to match template for Vision for Student Learning**

#### **Departmental Mission and Goals for Student Learning:**

**DM1:** To assist students in improving their critical and creative writing, and to help them express ideas coherently, with clarity, precision, forcefulness, and grace;

**DM2:** To enrich the cultural background of students through the study of significant works of literature and the programming of extracurricular literary events;

**DM3:** To provide for those students who choose to major or minor in English a rich, intensive program of study of literature and film through textual analysis and an understanding of historical periods, cultural movements, and critical and theoretical approaches, while emphasizing Literary Studies, Film Studies, or Creative Writing.

#### **Senior Thesis Objectives for the Literary and Film Studies Emphases (encapsulates goals for student learning in the major)**

**LF1:** The thesis essay will present an original, compelling argument. It must at once explicate the issue and appreciate its complexity. The thesis must also make a case for its own significance: Why does this matter? An audience unfamiliar with the text or the approach should still be able to follow the argument.

**LF2:** The thesis will engage secondary and critical sources in substantive ways. Instead of dropping occasional supporting quotations, it should make those sources an integral part of the line of argumentation and inquiry. The sources should be discussed.

**LF3:** The thesis will demonstrate command of its own methodology (including its limitations).

**LF4:** The thesis will show familiarity with the other pertinent and important scholarship.

**LF5:** The thesis will place its subject in a larger aesthetic, cultural, and/or historical context.

**LF6:** The thesis will be well-organized, solidly and compellingly argued, and gracefully written, free of grammatical errors and stylistic gaffes.

**LF7:** The thesis will demonstrate mastery the MLA style in terms of format, documentation, citation, and other matters.

#### **Senior Thesis Objectives for the Creative Writing Emphasis (encapsulates goals for student learning in the major)**

**CW1:** The senior thesis will consist of a brief aesthetic statement and an extended creative manuscript of a single literary genre (poetry, fiction, or nonfiction).

**CW2:** The aesthetic statement will place the creative manuscript in a larger aesthetic context, including literary influences and issues of form, craft, and genre. It will engage secondary sources in substantive ways, discussing the secondary sources listed in its bibliography.

**CW3:** The thesis will be in Standard Manuscript Format, gracefully written, and free of grammatical errors and stylistic gaffes (unless errors are intended to produce specific effects).

**CW4:** The creative manuscript will demonstrate engagement with the contextual and formal issues put forth in the aesthetic statement.

**CW5:** The aesthetic statement will demonstrate mastery of MLA style in terms of format, documentation, citation, and other matters.

#### **Learning Goals by Course Type (see attached rubric)**

**LGC1:** Using MLA guidelines for style, formatting, documentation, and citation.

**LGC2:** Knowing research tools and skills for literary scholarship.

**LGC3:** Working with—fully engaging—secondary and critical sources.

**LGC4:** Performing close readings on texts and moments within texts.

**LGC5:** Attaining contextual knowledge—aesthetic, cultural, & historical—of studied texts.

**LGC6:** Understanding and applying specialized terminology and concepts of the field.

**LGC7:** Taking intellectual ownership and initiative of one's ideas and education.

**LGC8:** Achieving command of one's own writing process, from generation through revision.

**LGC9:** Writing an organized, lucidly articulated, analytically sound, & compelling argument.

**LGC10:** Collaborating on intellectual work.

**LGC11:** Providing productive criticism of work drafted by others.

**LGC12:** Practicing oral and public expression of ideas.

Department of English, Hendrix College  
Learning Goals by Course Type (non-writing courses)  
(rev. Fall 2010)

	Skill/Goal/Outcome	(200)	280	300	400	497
1	Using MLA guidelines for style, formatting, documentation, and citation.	I	D	M	M	M
2	Knowing research tools and skills for literary scholarship.	-	I	D	M	M
3	Working with—fully engaging—secondary and critical sources.	-	I	D	M	M
4	Performing close readings on texts and moments within texts.	I	I	D	M	M
5	Attaining contextual knowledge—aesthetic, cultural, & historical—of studied texts.	I	I	D	D	M
6	Understanding and applying specialized terminology and concepts of the field.	I	I	D	D	M
7	Taking intellectual ownership and initiative of one's ideas and education.	I	I	D	D	M
8	Achieving command of one's own writing process, from generation through revision.	D	D	D	M	M
9	Writing an organized, lucidly articulated, analytically sound, & compelling argument.	I	D	D	M	M
10	Collaborating on intellectual work.	I	I	D	M	M
11	Providing productive criticism of work drafted by others.	I	I	D	D	M
12	Practicing oral and public expression of ideas.	D	D	D	D	D

- = not practiced      I = introduced      D = developed      M = mastered for undergraduate level