

**Annual Key Assessment Findings and Curricular Improvements
Department of English
Undergraduate B.A. Program in English**

Key Assessment Findings

Senior Comprehensive Examination

Format and evaluation. The undergraduate comprehensive examination in English consists of two sections completed over four hours on the same day. Section I includes objective and essay questions involving major authors and works, literary terms, historical backgrounds, literary periods, themes, and intellectual backgrounds. Section II presents a literary passage for close analysis (including scansion of verse), and two additional passages for comparison.

Examinations are written and evaluated by a committee of faculty chaired by the department's director of undergraduate studies, then voted on by the full department.

**UNDERGRADUATE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION RESULTS
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
AY2010-2011 to AY2014-2015**

	Fail		Pass		High Pass		Pass w/Honors		TOTAL
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
AY2010-2011	1	4.00%	20	80.00%	4	16.00%		0.00%	25
AY2011-2012		0.00%	16	100.00%		0.00%		0.00%	16
AY2012-2013	2	8.70%	17	73.91%	4	17.39%		0.00%	23
AY2013-2014	1	4.00%	23	92.00%	1	4.00%		0.00%	25
AY2014-2015		0.00%	26	96.30%	1	3.70%		0.00%	27
TOTAL	4	3.45%	102	87.93%	10	8.62%	0	0.00%	116

Note:

1) Milestone outcomes were included in the categories High Pass and Pass with Honors if these designations were explicitly indicated in the students' milestone record.

2) Category "High Pass" includes both "High Pass" and "Pass with distinction".

3) The count in this table is based on the exam outcomes of all attempts in an academic year.

Student Learning Assessment Rubric
Department of English
Senior Comprehensive Exams AY 2014-2015

Trait	Level						Mean	SD	Total N
	Exceeding Expectations (3pts)		Meeting Expectations (2pts)		Below Expectations (1pt)				
	N	%	N	%	N	%			
1) Knowledge of Literary History	1	4%	26	96%	0	0%	2.04	0.19	27
2) Knowledge of Literary Terms	1	4%	26	96%	0	0%	2.04	0.19	27
3) Ability to Analyze Literary Texts Closely	1	4%	26	96%	0	0%	2.04	0.19	27
4) Ability to Write a Coherent and Well Documented Essay	1	4%	26	96%	0	0%	2.04	0.19	27

- Note: 1) The "N" represents the number of students at each level of performance for each trait.
2) The "%" represents the percentage of the number of students falling at the level performance for each trait against the total number of students.
3) The mean is the average of all scores across the levels within the trait.
4) The standard deviation (SD) is the measure of the variability of the data set, indicating how "spread out" these data are from the mean value.

In recent years, administration of the senior comprehensive examination has evolved into, effectively, a two-stage process. All seniors must sit for the exam during the Fall term. Evaluators may then require particular students to re-take, after advising, particular sections or more rarely the entire exam. This process has resulted in more consistent overall performance as well as a higher percentage of final passing grades.

Study groups and a scansion workshop have also improved preparation and performance.

**Senior Coordinating Seminar (Capstone)
Grade distribution, 2014-2015**

	Fall 2014	%	Spring 2015	%
A	12	42.85%	15	55.55%
A-	5	17.86%	5	18.51%
B+	5	17.86%	4	14.81%
B	3	10.71%	1	3.70%
B-	1	3.57%	1	3.70%
C+	2	7.14%	1	3.70%
C				

Note : One student completed the first semester but was not enrolled for the second.

The Senior Coordinating Seminar for English majors is a year-long experience in which each small group (maximum 11) remains together with the same instructor over two semesters. The first semester is devoted primarily to reading and discussing the works of a single author (or focused group of authors) in historical and aesthetic context. During the second semester, the group engages critical perspectives and each student completes a substantial research project.

During 2014-2015, three seminars were offered with 27 students total. From Fall to Spring semesters, 10 of the students improved their grades, while 3 made a lower grade (minimally lower in each case) and 14 performed at a consistent level over the academic year.

Curricular Improvements

The English department faculty are committed to maintaining and improving a quality undergraduate major focused on literary history and aesthetics.

During 2014-2015 the faculty held discussions addressing a curricular challenge arising as an unanticipated consequence of the Freshman Year Experience. English has traditionally offered an array of courses at the 200-level, designed for non-majors as part of the Arts & Sciences distribution requirements; higher-level courses served majors and minors as well as students with developed interests in literature. The FYE, with heavy demand for instructors, significantly limited our ability to staff the 200-level non-majors classes, many of could not be scheduled. One result was a noticeable increase of non-majors in more advanced courses, seeking to fulfill general education requirements and inevitably sometimes displaying lower levels of preparation, interest, or motivation. A related factor has been the growth of the School of Business, which includes a literature requirement for its rapidly increasing undergraduate population and whose majors look for English courses to fulfill that requirement.

English faculty agree that these diverse populations in English literature classes bring in a welcome range of backgrounds, with many interested and engaged students who happen not to be in traditional literature or humanities programs. We wish to serve trend while also maintaining a high quality departmental major. Thus the challenge: how to combine in courses the traditional pre-professional mentoring of English majors, while providing quality educational experiences for non-majors with limited backgrounds and preparation in our field.

Discussions resulted in an informal consensus in two areas: (1) rebuilding a 200-level curriculum serving non-majors, with more full-time faculty teaching these courses, and (2) offering advanced offerings to engage the general student population as well as literature majors and minors. Those teaching the introductory surveys (ENG 231-232 and ENG 235-236) have met and discussed accommodating their diverse enrollments. In addition, courses addressing these goals included, at the lower level, ENG 201 (Form and Value in Poetry) and ENG 215 (Satire in Modern Literature and Film); higher level offerings included ENG 337 (World Fictions) and ENG 404 (Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Stein).

Submitted by Glen M. Johnson
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