

## Form E-1-A for Boston College Core Curriculum

### Department/Program English Department Literature Core (AY 2018)

- 1) **Have formal learning outcomes for the department's Core courses been developed? What are they?** (What specific sets of skills and knowledge does the department expect students completing its Core courses to have acquired?)

Yes. As part of a departmental self study in 2012, the following learning outcomes for the Literature Core were established:

**By the successful completion of their Literature Core course, students will be able to demonstrate:**

- an ability to close-read, interpret, and analyze texts;
- an ability to write clear, coherent, organized, grammatically correct and stylistically competent prose;
- an awareness of literary genres and terminology;
- a recognition of the historical and cultural specificity of literary texts; and an appreciation of the human imagination.

- 2) **Where are these learning outcomes published? Be specific.** (Where are the department's expected learning outcomes for its Core courses accessible: on the web, in the catalog, or in your department handouts?)

#### Department Website:

[https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/schools/mcas/departments/english/about/learning-outcomes.html#literature\\_core](https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/schools/mcas/departments/english/about/learning-outcomes.html#literature_core)

- 3) **Other than GPA, what data/evidence is used to determine whether students have achieved the stated outcomes for the Core requirement?** (What evidence and analytical approaches do you use to assess which of the student learning outcomes have been achieved more or less well?)

This year's assessment focus followed **two paths**. Last year, the newly appointed Director of the Literature Core in English sought assistance from the university's offices of Institutional Research and Planning Assessment, in order to measure student experience in the Literature Core, with the specific task of assessing (1) students' understanding of the relationship of the Literature Core to the First Year Writing seminars (FWS), and (2) students' perception of writing instruction in the Literature Core. The IRPA recommended focus group interviews, which were conducted in late April 2017.

This year, to follow up on the recommendations from those interviews, we focused two Departmental workshops on pedagogy in our Literature Core: one on the new CTE platform known as "Perusall," which emphasizes collaborative interpretation of course readings, and one on "Writing to Learn" methodologies. Both workshops were well-attended, and we follow up with a Google-form survey to assess their efficacy

and develop ideas for AY 2019. The workshops were praised enthusiastically on the Google-forms, both in terms of their practicality and their innovation.

**Secondly**, the Director and graduate assistant worked this year to create a Canvas site specifically designed for teachers in the Literature Core. This was effected by a two-step review process with the department's doctoral candidates—a preliminary design, followed by a second edition following upon feedback from the doctoral students (all of whom teach in the Literature Core). The Director and grad. Assistant also made a presentation to the pedagogy seminar run by doctoral students.

We also plan both to incorporate findings both into workshops next year, and to **use a planned reflection session on our “EnCore”** experiments for assessment in AY 2019. That is, our assessment phase for AY2019 will include full-group discussions of common questions generated by the six different teachers from the EnCore pilots in Fall '18.

- 4) **Who interprets the evidence? What is the process?** (Who in the department is responsible for interpreting the data and making recommendations for curriculum or assignment changes if appropriate? When does this occur?)

The Google surveys were interpreted by the departmental Literature Core steering committee (composed of the Director, one FTT faculty member, and one Professor of the Practice), and by the department Chair.

- 5) **What were the assessment results and what changes have been made as a result of using this data/evidence?** (What were the major assessment findings? Have there been any recent changes to your curriculum or program? How did the assessment data contribute to those changes?)

Over the course of the year, we have refined the Canvas site; we have begun discussions about pedagogy workshops for next year; and we have now allotted four new Core courses that have been designed along the lines of assessment needs from AY 2017: two sections of a year long “linked” FWS and Lit Core section, and two parallel Literature Core “big question” sections that will include evening reflection sessions.

One of the teachers of the planned linked sessions for AY2019, Prof. Treseanne Ainsworth, has also successfully applied to the CTE's inaugural Teaching Retreat, entitled “Reflecting on Teaching and Designing for Learning,” this May.

- 6) **Date of the most recent program review.** (Your latest comprehensive departmental self-study and external review.)

The English Department conducted a self-study of its Literature Core offerings in 2012. At that time, new written guidelines were established (and which are still in use); the department established learning outcomes (see above); and discontinued the practice of segmenting the Literature Core into four thematic rubrics.