

## Form E-1-A for Boston College Departments/Programs

### Department/Program Literature Core Program, AY 2024, English Department

- 1) **Have formal learning outcomes been developed? What are they?** (What specific sets of skills and knowledge does the department expect its majors to have acquired before they graduate?)

The learning outcomes for the Literature Core Program were extensively revised during the 2022-2023 academic year as part of an overall internal review of the program.

#### **1. Disciplinary Skills: The Power of Close Reading:**

Close reading, or the careful analysis of literary texts, is the foundational skill of English as an academic discipline. It is also foundational to the Jesuit tradition of *eloquentia perfecta*, which refers to the cultivation, through the study of language, of the whole person who can act ethically in the world. Students will learn how to engage substantively with literary texts and to appreciate the unique qualities of literary language. They will develop the art and skill of close reading, which will enable them to appreciate the nuance and complexity of literary language and thereby discover meanings that are not apparent through superficial reading. They will learn how to recognize the formal properties of texts and think critically about them. They will be given opportunities to practice their own analytical and creative interpretations of texts.

- Students will learn to identify the unique qualities of literary language.
- Students will perform close-readings of literary texts, think critically about them, and produce their own analytical interpretations, including at least one essay of sustained textual analysis.

#### **2. Humanistic Inquiry: Literature as Equipment for Living:**

This phrase, drawn from literary scholar Kenneth Burke, highlights the humanistic dimension of literary study. Students will discover how literature can illuminate the 'big questions' that life raises and aid them in navigating the worlds they inhabit. Students will encounter texts drawn from a wide range of genres, styles, time periods, and media, as well as authors who belong to dominant and non-dominant groups. In working with these texts, they will learn how literature opens doorways onto the perspectives of other peoples, times, and cultures, and how it helps us imagine diverse ways of being human. Students will have opportunities to reflect on their own values and the principles that guide their life, often by discovering alternative ways of looking at the world. The course thus holds true to the ideal of *studia humanitatis*: it develops the habits of mind, heart, and imagination that contribute to student formation.

- Students will develop the skills of reflection by discussing and writing about literature in ways that help them understand their own values and the principles that guide their life.
- Students will examine how literature opens doorways onto the perspectives of other peoples, times, and cultures and how it helps us imagine diverse ways of being human.

#### **3. How to be a College Student: Fostering Intellectual Community**

A strong sense of community supercharges classroom discussions and enriches the learning experience of all its members. Students will experience a discussion-based course that encourages them to share ideas and perspectives with each other. They will have opportunities to forge meaningful human connections with each other, which can help them integrate into the larger BC community in healthy ways. Students will be invited to participate in activities that foster a sense of social and intellectual

community. By cultivating a sense of connection rooted in the life of the mind, students will gain a greater appreciation for the challenges and rewards of being active members of a larger community.

- Students will forge meaningful connections with each other as human beings and as readers, writers, thinkers, and members of an intellectual community.
- Students will explore different ways of bringing their whole person into the classroom.

2) **Where are these learning outcomes published? Be specific.** (Where are the department's learning expectations accessible to potential majors: on the web or in the catalog or in your dept major handouts?)

They are included in the detailed Teaching Guidelines that are distributed to all instructors each semester. They are published on the English department's Literature Core website. They will be distributed to all advisors and incoming first-year students through the Academic Advising Center.

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

This year's assessment was focused on evaluating how well the new learning goals were being integrated into classroom instruction. This was done in three ways:

1. Syllabi were reviewed in advance by the program director and the English department chair to make sure the readings, activities, and assignment are explicitly geared to the new learning goals.
2. A subset of four instructors formed an assessment group for AY 2024. This cohort designed, implemented, and collectively reviewed several pedagogical strategies specifically designed to achieve the learning outcomes. These instructors also added special questions to their course evaluations asking students if they felt that they had achieved the learning goals.
3. During the fall semester the program director, English department chair, and assistant English department chair visited many instructors' classes to evaluate if instructors' teaching methods were aligned with the learning goals.

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?)

Christina Klein (director), Min Song (English department chair), Aeron Hunt (assistant English department chair), and members of the department Core Committee.

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?

The assessment group's course evaluations and individual reports showed that the learning goals were being met, and their pedagogical materials were shared with other instructors through the Literature Core Canvas site.

The program director, department chair, and assistant chair gave direct feedback as necessary to instructors whose courses they visited to help them develop teaching methods that are aligned with the learning goals.

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

The Literature Core program underwent a comprehensive internal program review during AY 2023, which culminated in the development of new learning goals.