

Humanities General Education Annual Assessment Report 2009-10

I. Introduction

The Humanities General Education Program serves all OIT degree students, who are each required to take nine credits in this general education area. The program offers courses in fine arts, literature, humanities, drama, film, music, philosophy and foreign language. The program also offers a number of online courses to serve degree completion students as well as on-campus students.

II. Program Purpose, Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes

The Humanities faculty reviewed the program purpose, objectives, and learning outcomes during the fall faculty meeting in September 2009. The faculty reaffirmed the statements below:

Humanities General Education Program Purpose

The Humanities General Education Program provides for the study of fine arts, literature, humanities, drama, film, music, philosophy and foreign language which allows students the opportunity to learn specific methods for critically evaluating human values and conduct within historical and cultural contexts.

Program Educational Objectives

1. Foster intellectual curiosity, global knowledge, critical thinking, personal responsibility, and ethical and cultural awareness.
2. Prepare students to use language effectively.
3. Establish a framework for students to develop an aesthetic appreciation for fine arts.
4. Prepare students to be responsible citizens, lifelong learners, and world-ready leaders in their chosen fields.

Expected Program Learning Outcomes

Students from this program will be able to:

1. Articulate significant social, literary, and political perspectives found in humanities in such areas as class, ethnicity, gender, sex, and cultural orientation.
2. Produce a significant amount of interpretive and analytical writing, using appropriate organization, argument, support, vocabulary, documentation and grammar.
3. Read and discuss humanistic works critically with significant reference to irony, symbolism, imagery, and interpretation.
4. Identify or create key elements of individual expression within film and/or fiction writing.
5. Explain how historical and social contexts influence various types of artistic expression.
6. Identify and analyze universal themes reflected in the humanities.

III. Three-Year Cycle for Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

The faculty also confirmed the assessment cycle planned last year, as listed in Table 1 below.

Learning Outcomes	'07-08	'08-09	'09-10	'10-11	'11-12	'12-13
1. Articulate significant social, literary, and political perspectives found in humanities in such areas as class, ethnicity, gender, sex, and cultural orientation.	X			X		
2. Produce a significant amount of interpretive and analytical writing using appropriate organization, argument, support, vocabulary, documentation and grammar.	X			X		
3. Read and discuss humanistic works critically with significant reference to irony, symbolism, imagery, and interpretation.			X			X
4. Identify or create key elements of individual expression within film and/or fiction writing.			X			X
5. Explain how historical and social contexts influence various types of artistic expression.		X			X	
6. Identify and analyze universal themes reflected in the humanities.		X			X	

Table 1. Humanities General Education Assessment Cycle

IV. 2009-10 Assessment Activities

The Humanities faculty conducted formal assessment of two student learning outcomes during 2009-10, SLOs 3 & 4.

Student Learning Outcome #3: Read and discuss humanistic works critically with significant reference to irony, symbolism, imagery, and interpretation.

Direct Assessment #1

The faculty assessed this outcome in Humanities 147, fall 2009, using several different formal essays (specific assignments requiring higher level analysis in literary criticism). There were approximately 41 students enrolled in this course. The minimum acceptable performance was set at 70% because student skills and performance vary widely in large lower division courses taught in an auditorium. This HUM 147 course had 8 seniors, 6 juniors, 13 sophomores, and 12 freshmen. These results are summarized using the performance criteria shown in Table 2 below.

Performance Criteria	Assessment Method	Measurement Scale	Minimum Acceptable Performance	Results
Identifies and explains irony in a literary work	Student essay, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	70% at 3 or 4	70%
Identifies and explains symbolism in a literary work	Student essay, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	70% at 3 or 4	72.5%
Identifies and explains imagery in a literary work	Student essay, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	70% at 3 or 4	75%
Correctly interprets textual meaning in a literary work	Student essay, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	70% at 3 or 4	77.5%

Table 2 Assessment Results for SLO #3 in HUM 147, fall 2009

Indirect Assessment #1

To accompany the assessment above, the faculty indirectly assessed this outcome in HUM 147, fall 2009, by asking students to rate their proficiency on the term papers, using the same rubric used by faculty to assess their performance. These results are summarized using the same performance criteria, shown in Table 3 below.

Performance Criteria	Assessment Method	Measurement Scale	Minimum Acceptable Performance	Results
Identifies and explains irony in a literary work	Student reflection rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	70% at 3 or 4	83%
Identifies symbolism in a literary work	Student reflection rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	70% at 3 or 4	82.9%
Identifies and explains imagery in a literary work	Student reflection rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	70% at 3 or 4	80%
Interprets textual meaning in a literary work	Student essay, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	70% at 3 or 4	63%

Table 3 Student self-assessment for SLO #3 in HUM 147, fall 2009

Students clearly had a much higher level of confidence in their ability to read and discuss humanistic works critically with significant reference to irony, symbolism, and imagery. Ironically, students rated themselves as less proficient (63%) on interpreting meaning in a literary work than their actual proficiency (77.5%). This anomaly may simply be a result of student anxiety related to expectations that they identify “one correct” interpretation. Or, perhaps many freshmen and sophomores simply haven’t had much experience with writing a formal literary analysis.

Direct Assessment #2

The faculty assessed this outcome in Humanities 148, winter 2010, using several different formal essays (specific assignments requiring higher level analysis in literary criticism). There were 53 students enrolled in this course. The minimum acceptable performance was set at 70% because student skills and performance vary widely in large lower division courses taught in an auditorium. These results are summarized using the performance criteria shown in Table 4 below.

Performance Criteria	Assessment Method	Measurement Scale	Minimum Acceptable Performance	Results
Identifies and explains irony in a literary work	Student essay, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	70% at 3 or 4	77%
Identifies and explains symbolism in a literary work	Student essay, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	70% at 3 or 4	81%
Identifies and explains imagery in a literary work	Student essay, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	70% at 3 or 4	83%
Correctly interprets textual meaning in a literary work	Student essay, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	70% at 3 or 4	77%

Table 4 Assessment Results for SLO #3 in HUM 147, fall 2009

When implementing assessment of SLO #3 in HUM 148, winter 2010, the instructor emphasized developing skills in irony and symbolism (in which student performance was slightly lower fall term). The added emphasis on developing skills clearly resulted in an improvement in almost all areas, including irony, symbolism, and imagery.

Indirect Assessment #2

To accompany the assessment above, the faculty indirectly assessed this outcome in HUM148, winter 2010, by asking students to rate their proficiency on the term papers, using the same rubric used by faculty to assess their performance. These results are summarized using the same performance criteria, shown in Table 5 below.

Performance Criteria	Assessment Method	Measurement Scale	Minimum Acceptable Performance	Results
Identifies and explains irony in a literary work	Student reflection rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	70% at 3 or 4	81.6%
Identifies symbolism in a literary work	Student reflection rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	70% at 3 or 4	83%
Identifies and explains imagery in a literary work	Student reflection rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	70% at 3 or 4	85%
Interprets textual meaning in a literary work	Student essay, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	70% at 3 or 4	73%

Table 5 Student self-assessment for SLO #3 in HUM 147, fall 2009

Students made fairly accurate estimates of their proficiency in each category. Detailed records of all assessment activities can be found in the department assessment coordinator's notebook.

Student Learning Outcome #4: Identify or create key elements of individual expression within film and/or fiction writing.

Direct Assessment #1

The faculty assessed this outcome in ENG 456, Topics in Film, fall 2009, using oral presentations and/or term papers. There were approximately 25 students assessed in each class. The faculty rated the proficiency of students using the performance criteria described in Table 6 below.

Performance Criteria	Assessment Method	Measurement Scale	Minimum Acceptable Performance	Results
Use of metaphor	Student paper, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	86%
Use of symbolism	Student paper, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	86%
Use of paradox	Student paper, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	69%
Use of subtext	Student paper, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	82%

Table 6 Student self-assessment for SLO #4 in ENG 456, Topics in Film, fall 2009

Indirect Assessment #1

To accompany the assessment above, the faculty indirectly assessed this outcome in ENG 456, Topics in Film, fall 2009 by asking students to rate their proficiency on the oral presentation and/or papers, using the same rubric used by faculty to assess their performance. These results are summarized using the same performance criteria, shown in Table 7 below.

Performance Criteria	Assessment Method	Measurement Scale	Minimum Acceptable Performance	Results
Use of metaphor	Student paper, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	100%
Use of symbolism	Student paper, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	87%
Use of paradox	Student paper, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	57%
Use of subtext	Student paper, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	57%

Table 7 Student self-assessment for SLO #4 in ENG 456, Topics in Film, fall 2009

Student confidence in their use of metaphor was slightly higher (14%) than their direct assessment scores. Their confidence level with symbolism matched their measured abilities nearly exactly, and their self assessed level for paradox was 12% less than their assessed level. The largest disparity fell with subtext. Their assessed level in this last category was 25% higher than their level of confidence.

During the term students were assigned two major writing assignments, five weekly quizzes, one major presentation, and a final exam. All assigned work featured extensive, sophisticated responses to various films. The four literary terms listed in the Performance Criteria appear on an extensive vocabulary list provided for the students on the course syllabus. They are expected to use the terms in their writing and presentations to identify meaning in the films. Effective use of terms is graded. Nearly all of the students used the literary vocabulary effectively enough to achieve full credit in that category by the latter part of the term. However, as noted above, the specific use of *paradox* fell short of the minimum proficiency.

Direct Assessment #2

The faculty assessed this outcome in ENG 246, Reading for Fiction Writers, winter 2010, using oral presentations and/or term papers. There were approximately nine students assessed in the class. The faculty rated the proficiency of students using the performance criteria described in Table 8 below.

Performance Criteria	Assessment Method	Measurement Scale	Minimum Acceptable Performance	Results
Use of metaphor	Student paper, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	100%
Use of symbolism	Student paper, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	88%
Use of paradox	Student paper, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	44%
Use of subtext	Student paper, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	66%

Table 8 Student self-assessment for SLO #4 in ENG 246, Reading for Fiction Writers, winter 2010

Indirect Assessment #2

To accompany the assessment above, the faculty indirectly assessed this outcome in ENG 246, Reading for Fiction Writers, by asking students to rate their proficiency on the oral presentation and/or papers, using the same rubric used by faculty to assess their performance. These results are summarized using the same performance criteria, shown in Table 9 below.

Performance Criteria	Assessment Method	Measurement Scale	Minimum Acceptable Performance	Results
Use of metaphor	Student paper, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	66%
Use of symbolism	Student paper, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	77%
Use of paradox	Student paper, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	33%
Use of subtext	Student paper, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	66%

Table 9 Student self-assessment for SLO #4 in ENG 246, Reading for Fiction Writes, winter 2010

Student confidence in their use of metaphor was significantly lower than their Direct Assessment scores (34%). Their confidence level with symbolism and paradox was lower as well, but the contrast was much less (11% for each). Student confidence with subtext matched their Direct Assessment.

Along with reading and corresponding short writing assignments, students were assigned to complete an original short story of their own. They were guided through various revisions of their creative writing with specific assignments and a workshop. Students responded to their colleagues' short stories with formal written critique and organized workshop discussions. The four literary terms listed on the Performance Criteria appear on an extensive vocabulary list provided for the students on the course syllabus. They are expected to use the terms to help find meaning in their written responses to the literature, and they must also use the concept of each element in their fiction writing. The use of paradox and subtext fell short of minimum proficiency.

V. Summary of Student Learning

Student Learning Outcome #3: Read and discuss humanistic works critically with significant reference to irony, symbolism, imagery, and interpretation.

Strengths: students demonstrated acceptable performance on all performance criteria for this SLO, including identifying irony, symbolism, imagery and interpretation. The faculty will continue providing more activities that promote recognizing irony and identifying correct interpretation of literary works.

Even though students demonstrated acceptable performance on all criteria for the SLO it's clear that these data also indicate that smaller classes would be more conducive to learning. Ideally, the minimum acceptable performance should be 80% at 3 or 4, rather than 70%. The faculty will continue to advocate for smaller class sizes.

Student Learning Outcome #4: Identify or create key elements of individual expression within film and/or fiction writing.

Strengths: Students demonstrate high performance for the use and comprehension of metaphor and symbolism in their fiction writing.

Weaknesses: Students demonstrate low performance for the use and comprehension of paradox in their fiction writing. Students demonstrate a moderately low performance for the use and comprehension of subtext in their fiction writing.

Actions: The instructor will establish a special exercise to illuminate paradox and subtext with techniques for recognizing these elements and using them effectively in fiction writing.

Appendix A
Student Learning Outcome-Course Matrices

Student Learning Outcome #3: Read and discuss humanistic works critically with significant reference to irony, symbolism, imagery, and interpretation. Table A1 demonstrates the mapping of this outcome to humanities courses. (I =introduce; E = emphasize; R = reinforce)

Humanities Courses	Emphasis
ART 207 Watercolor	
ART 207 Graphic Design	
ART 207 Digital Photography	
ART 220	
ENG 104	IE
ENG 105	IER
ENG 106	IER
ENG 235	IE
ENG 246	IE
ENG 253	IE
ENG 254	IER
ENG 255	IER
ENG 266	IE
ENG 367	ER
ENG 381	ER
ENG 387	ER
ENG 407 Latin American Lit	ER
ENG 456	ER
HUM 125	
HUM 147	IE
HUM 148	IER
HUM 149	IER
HUM 225	IE
MUS 207	
PHIL 331	

Table A1. Student Learning Outcome #3-Course Matrix

Student Learning Outcome Student Learning Outcome #4: Student Learning Outcome #4: Identify or create key elements of individual expression within film and/or fiction writing.

Table A2 demonstrates the mapping of this outcome to humanities courses. (I =introduce; E = emphasize; R = reinforce)

Humanities Courses	Emphasis
ART 207 Watercolor	
ART 207 Graphic Design	
ART 207 Digital Photography	
ART 220	
ENG 104	IE
ENG 105	IER
ENG 106	IER
ENG 235	IE
ENG 246	IER
ENG 253	IE
ENG 254	IER
ENG 255	IER
ENG 266	IE
ENG 367	ER
ENG 381	ER
ENG 387	ER
ENG 407 Latin American Lit	ER
ENG 456	ER
HUM 125	
HUM 147	IE
HUM 148	IER
HUM 149	IER
HUM 225	IE
MUS 207	
PHIL 331	

Table A2. Student Learning Outcome #4-Course Matrix