

Course Outcomes Guide

Updated SP 2015

(Includes data from SP/13 and FA 13 data. This course was not offered in 2014)

Course/Program Title: ENG 219 Contemporary Literature

Course/Program Team: Amanda Miller

Expected Learning Outcomes:

Students will be able to complete 200-level work in the following areas:

Processes

- Employ prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing to contribute to the clear communication of ideas, taking into consideration the feedback of instructors and peers.

Conventions

- Formulate and support a focused thesis statement on a literary topic with adequate evidence while adhering to the conventions of standard written English in a well-structured essay.

Rhetorical Knowledge

- Demonstrate critical thinking and an understanding of literary analysis and terminology in order to employ collegiate voice, tone, level of formality, and support for claims.
- Evaluate current trends in award-winning contemporary literature and analyze how these literary trends reflect our contemporary world.

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES:

The common assessment will be an essay of no less than six pages that analyzes a particular prize-winning piece of literature. Due to the recent publication dates of the literature studied in the class, this essay is not required to include secondary support.

Formal response journals, quizzes, misc.	20%
Discussion/in-class exercises	10%
Essay 1	15%
Essay 2	15%
Essay 3	20%
Project	5%
Final exam	15%

90 - 100% = A, 80 - 89% = B, 70 - 79% = C, 60 - 69% = D, 59% and below = F (Failing)

See also the Course content objectives below.

COURSE CONTENT OBJECTIVES:

The student will:

1. Read one novel as well as a selection of short fiction and poems that have won recent prizes.
2. Compose several three-page literary analyses that focus on original analysis grounded in textual support.
3. Compose a literary analysis of no less than six pages that analyzes a particular prize-winning piece of literature. The analysis should make an original claim and support that claim with a quality of argument suitable for inclusion in a literary database. The analysis should also take into account background material about the literature's author, subject, and position in the literary canon.
4. Evaluate several journals that publish scholarly analyses. Research submission guidelines and write submission materials such as a cover letter and biographical notes.

Validation:

The outcomes and rubrics for ENG 219 were restructured to match the new ENG 101/102 outcomes and rubrics. The ENG 101/102 outcomes and rubrics were revised in the following manner:

In order to better measure student achievement and course success, we decided to revise the outcomes in such a way that data collection would be more streamlined and specific areas of weakness and strength could be better pinpointed. To that end, we decided that creating outcomes that spoke to a specific category of skill (and then revising the rubric to reflect these categories and the subset of skills measured in each) would help us to see where the course was reflecting the most success and where students or instructors were struggling to meet the course goals.

The first step of the process was to research other colleges and universities in order to get some idea of how other writing and English programs structured their goals and assessment. Upon gathering that data, we met several times to discuss the pros and cons of each of the strongest examples. With those in mind, we decided the best way to organize our outcomes was in the following categories: rhetorical knowledge, critical reading and thinking, processes, conventions, and research. While these five categories were always the foundation of assessment in this course, the rubric was organized (more or less) by essay structure rather than by category, and thus data collection and thoughtful reflection was more difficult.

Once we had decided on the categories, we went back to our original course outcomes and the specific skills measured in the rubric, and reshuffled everything into the appropriate category. We also added some items that we came across in our research that we thought were appropriate and valuable, and which had been overlooked in previous iterations of the rubric. For example,

we added into our “processes” category the element of reflection consideration of feedback from peers and instructors. We also eliminated items that seemed to be redundant or unclear. The elements in place, we worked carefully on synthesizing everything into five concise outcome statements.

Finally, we applied those new categories and revised outcomes to our rubric, separating the rubric by category and then by skill. After devising a draft of the new rubric, we held a department meeting and reviewed each section and skill sub-set, and determined that success in the category “critical thinking and reading” was going to be difficult to measure in a concrete way, so we absorbed the skills into “rhetorical knowledge” and “research.” We reordered the sections of the rubric to reflect the process of writing from a student’s perspective, and were in agreement that we should be introducing research requirements into essays earlier than the formal research essay. We applied tentative point values to each section of the rubric, agreeing to each try the new rubric on five of our research essays from this semester, after which we would meet for a norming session and revision of the rubric before sending it out to the rest of the faculty.

While revising the rubric, we addressed some key issues regarding data collection. After a lengthy discussion, we decided to continue using the formal research essay for data collection, at least until we see how the new outcomes and rubrics work in terms of data collection. We determined that we may be able to use the General Education Outcome database to develop reports that would provide feedback broken into the new outcome categories, though we would need to add other courses into that database.

In order to collect consistent data, the Contemporary Literature class will utilize revised outcomes to ensure consistency across the program and the department, and the rubric (attached) will be an advanced version of the ENG 102 rubric.

2014 UPDATE: The revised outcomes were used in FA 13. See results.

Results

The longest essay serves to measure the course outcomes.

There were 8 students enrolled in the SP 13 Semester of ENG 219. The success rates for the research paper categories were as follows, with the grades designated as A / B-C / D-F:

Organization 5/1/0

Coherence 4/2/0

Development 4/2/0

Standard English Skills 1/5/0

Source Citation N/A

The pass rate (grades A-C) of this class with respect to research papers is appropriate. Students in a 200 level class should have a basic understanding of how to write an essay, even coming

into the course, but there is always the occasional student who comes in underprepared. By the end of the course, the vast majority of students should be at least competent in basic essay writing. The number of A's in these categories could be slightly higher than ideal, but in a 200-level class, it's possible that the majority of writers were able to write essays that excelled in these areas, especially given that this essay utilizes intermediate steps, and 200 level students are more likely to understand how to take advantage of feedback to improve their papers.

2014 UPDATE:

In FA 13, the success rates for the research paper categories were as follows, with the grades designated as A / B/C / D/F:

Processes 5/0/0/0/0

Conventions 2/2/1/0/0

Rhetorical Knowledge 2/2/1/0

This semester, too, the pass rate (grades A-C) of this class with respect to research papers is appropriate. (See above for an explanation.)

The biggest change between 2013 and 2014 is the use of the new rubric, which helped me underscore the importance of students applying what they learned in their other classes.

Follow-up

A blog project was implemented to allow students to interact with contemporary literature in a contemporary way. The blog project dovetailed nicely with the long formal essay.

This course ran as an experimental course in SP 13. It will run as a regular course for the first time in FA 13, pending enrollment, and will be offered every Fall thereafter.

2014 UPDATE:

The course ran in FA 2013 as planned. Due to low enrollment, it did not run in FA 2014.

Budget Justification

Professional development funds for full time faculty and stipends for adjunct faculty will be needed. These will go toward conferences, webinars, and training/norming sessions for full time and adjunct faculty.

Files referenced and attached:

- 219 Revised Rubric
- Common Assessment

Contemporary Literature Student Outcomes Assessment

Student: _____

Grade: _____

All essays should exhibit 200-level quality. A (excellent) B (very good) C (good) D (fair) F (poor)

Processes	Points Possible = 10	Points Earned =
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing to contribute to the clear communication of ideas • Demonstrates consideration of feedback from instructors or peers 	Out of 10 A (9) B (8) C (7) D (6) F (___)	
Conventions	Points Possible = 70	Points Earned =
<u>Overall Organization (5)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displays effective organization and clear transitions within and between paragraphs 	A (5) B (4) C (3) D (2) F (___)	
<u>Essay Structure (35)</u> <i>Introduction</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engages the reader with an inviting attention statement • Provides background information that orients reader and transitions to the thesis • Ends with an insightful, focused, one-sentence thesis on a literary topic that states the central assertion of the essay <i>Body Paragraphs</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contain a topic sentence that directly supports thesis and states central idea of paragraph • Provide concrete details/evidence to explain, expand, and support the literary topic • Are well-organized, fully developed, and on topic • Provide satisfying closure for each paragraph <i>Conclusion</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides closure for entire analysis • Is well-developed, transitioned, and satisfying • Does not introduce new information 	Out of 35 A (33) B (30) C (26) D (23) F (___)	

Grammar and Style (30) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a variety of sophisticated (but clear and concise) sentence structures • Exhibits specific, advanced vocabulary and diction • Avoids fluff, wordiness, and vague, generic phrases • Contains few errors in grammar, punctuation, and usage • Avoids fragments, comma splices, and run-on sentences 	Out of 30 A (28) B (25) C (22) D (20) F (___)	
Rhetorical Knowledge		Points Possible = 20
		Points Earned =
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates well-informed critical thinking and sound literary analysis • Analyzes rather than summarizes ideas • Uses literary terminology effectively • Addresses the proper audience • Displays a consistent and appropriate point of view • Adopts college-level voice and tone 	Out of 20 A (19) B (17) C (15) D (13) F (___)	
Deductions		
Total		

Point scale for the research paper assignment:

Out of 150 points: A=135-150 B=120-134 C=105-119 D=90-104 F=89 and below

Point scale for an assignment not involving any research:

Out of 100 points: A=90-99 B=80-89 C=70-79 D=60-69 F=59 and below

Assignment Sheet for Essay 2

This paper is a literary analysis essay about a recent Pulitzer winning novel.

In 4 FULL pages, introduce and develop a clear, creative thesis that analyzes one focused aspect of your chosen piece of literature. You do not have to use any outside sources for this paper.

1. Develop a thesis that takes a stand on one aspect of the story. The thesis should be specific enough that it wouldn't work for any other story, and it should definitely be analytical. You might choose to argue why it's a Pulitzer or why it shouldn't be a Pulitzer, but you'd still need to analyze rather than simply praise/insult. Avoid simple facts or broad statements. A three point thesis is okay, but only if it's connected. For instance, none of these sentences would be okay:
 - "This story is about bugs."
 - "This author does a really good job at writing this story."
 - "I like this story because it's funny."
 - "This story uses characterization to show the theme." (This last sentence is better than the rest, but it still needs to be focused quite a bit.)
 - "Character A is nice, Character B is annoying, and Character C is sexist." (Characterizing is fine, but be specific, and make sure your thesis statement has a unifying idea instead of 3 disjointed ideas.)
2. Develop three main points that directly support your thesis. Each main point then becomes an assertion and you support each assertion in a fully-developed paragraph that integrates assertion/evidence/commentary, just like you have been practicing.
3. Proofread your writing, making sure your writing is smooth, formal, stylistic, and free of grammatical errors. Don't use "I" "you" "the reader" or "one." Here's an example of something to avoid: *When reading this story, I feel that the reader is inclined to think about how you don't really know yourself until one experiences a hard period of life.* This is problematic because of the mixture of pronoun references, but any of these pronoun references by itself would still be problematic. If you need to write sentences like this while you are warming up in order to make a point, that's fine, but then go back and cut them before the final draft.

Remember that your essay should not be a plot summary; instead, it should seek to discuss a certain element of the literary work while using textual evidence as support. Your purpose is to prove a thesis (an argument)—the point you want to make about your story and concept (character, setting, theme, etc). Interpretation, of course, is your opinion of what a story "means," but the opinion is important only to the degree that you are able to convince your audience that your perspective is valid, accurate, insightful, and significant. In short, the essay needs to impact the audience. Don't think of me as your primary audience. Imagining that you are writing to and attempting to influence the entire English faculty may help establish an appropriate tone. They may not agree with your interpretation, but you want them to recognize the strength of your essay even in their disagreement.

While your ideas are the most important aspect of your paper, those ideas must be presented in a way that enhances – not obscures – them. Your writing skills must be on college level. You must

follow the prescribed manuscript and MLA formats, and rigorously separate your words from the words of the writer.

The basic MLA form is this: “quoted text with double marks at the start and end, followed by page # and parenthesis and period” (22). The paper must cite the source specifically and must be in MLA format, but there’s no need to include a works cited page unless you use outside sources, too.