

Assessment plan for English 361 Narrative and Medicine

Assessment Objectives

The purpose of the assessment are to determine how well the course is meeting its GEC category 2 (Arts and Humanities) goals, namely, “to evaluate significant writing and works of art. Such studies develop capacities for aesthetic and historical response and judgment; interpretation and evaluation; critical listening, reading, seeing, thinking, and writing; and experiencing the arts and reflecting on that experience.”

.As explained in the GEC Rationale for the course, the course objectives, reading list, selection of course topics, and writing assignments have all been designed with these goals in mind. For example, with respect to the written assignments

1. The formal papers will provide a way to assess how well the students are developing their skills of interpretation and evaluation, by requiring them to perform close readings and to build on those close readings toward larger conclusions.
2. The journal assignments give the students the opportunity to explore informally aspects of the readings and discussions that they find most intriguing.
3. The agenda setting encourages the students to use their judgment about what the class as a whole needs to focus on for a given class session.

Methods of Assessment

All methods will focus on the effectiveness of the course’s means in achieving these GEC goals.

1. SEI reports
2. Students’ responses to a discursive evaluation form that reminds them of the course’s objectives and asks them to comment on the effectiveness of the various means we have taken for achieving those objectives. One version of this form will be distributed at midterm and another at the end of the course. Students will receive feedback on the midterm form and be invited to comment on plans for any adjustments.
3. Assessment of the effectiveness of items on the reading list in contributing to the goals. Do some readings work more effectively than others? Are there common characteristics of the more effective readings?
4. Assessment of the students’ written work. Are the students demonstrating increased abilities to analyze and evaluate the significant works in the course? If so, then the assignments are appropriate. If not, how should they change? How might class time be adjusted to put more effective emphasis on those assignments?
5. Assessment of the students’ participation. Throughout the quarter students will be asked—sometimes by each other through their agenda setting assignments and sometimes by the instructor—to practice their skills of evaluation and analysis of individual works. The instructor will monitor their performance and, where appropriate, shift the focus from the

specific case (analyze Text A) to the general skill (in order to analyze Text A, B. or C, one needs to undertake intellectual operations X, Y, and Z).

Assessments will be summarized at the end of each quarter and used to alter the course for the next teaching. Because this is a new course, this process is expected to be particularly thorough for the first few years.