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Assessment Plan
IS3350 (“Introduction to Western Europe”), autumn 2017
- Online version –

Instructor designation: Associate Professor

Campus: Columbus

Mode of instruction: online

General Education categories:

The course fulfills the General Education (GE) categories for (1) Historical Study; (2) Diversity: Global Studies; and (3) Social Science: Human, Natural and Economic Resources. Their goals and expected learning outcomes are as follows.

Historical Study

- Goals:
Students recognize how past events are studied and how they influence today’s society and the human condition.
- Expected Learning Outcomes:
 - 1) Students construct an integrated perspective on history and the factors that shape human activity.
 - 2) Students describe and analyze the origins and nature of contemporary issues.
 - 3) Students speak and write critically about primary and secondary historical sources by examining diverse interpretations of past events and ideas in their historical contexts.

Diversity: Global Studies

- Goals:
Students understand the pluralistic nature of institutions, society, and culture in the United States and across the world in order to become educated, productive, and principled citizens.
- Expected Learning Outcomes:
 - 1) Students understand some of the political, economic, cultural, physical, social, and philosophical aspects of one or more of the world’s nations, peoples and cultures outside the U.S.
 - 2) Students recognize the role of national and international diversity in shaping their own attitudes and values as global citizens.

Social Science: Human, Natural and Economic Resources

- Goals:

Students understand the systematic study of human behavior and cognition; the structure of human societies, cultures, and institutions; and the processes by which individuals, groups, and societies interact, communicate, and use human, natural, and economic resources.

- Expected Learning Outcomes:
 - 1) Students understand the theories and methods of social scientific inquiry as they apply to the study of the use and distribution of human, natural, and economic resources and decisions and policies concerning such resources.
 - 2) Students understand the political, economic, and social trade-offs reflected in individual decisions and societal policymaking and enforcement and their similarities and differences across contexts.
 - 3) Students comprehend and assess the physical, social, economic, and political sustainability of individual and societal decisions with respect to resource use.

The course description on the first page of the syllabus indicates how the materials covered in the course relate to the General Education goals and Expected Learning Outcomes (ELO) listed above.

Assessment plan:

The course assessment will rely on three instruments:

- 1) Pre- and post-instruction embedded testing
At the very beginning of the course, students take a standardized test online (not for credit). The test will contain some questions that are directly tailored toward the ELOs. These questions are also embedded in subsequent exams that students take for credit. This direct assessment instrument will allow me to calculate the percentage of students who satisfactorily answer a question before and after instruction. Mastery will be defined as improving to at least 75 percentage points on an assignment.

Examples:

One of the ELOs is “Students understand some of the political, economic, cultural, physical, social, and philosophical aspects of one or more of the world’s nations, peoples and cultures outside the U.S.”

An ‘assessment quiz’ at the beginning of the course (not for credit) will contain several dozen multiple-choice questions, several of which will be embedded in future exams.

Example questions (related to the above-mentioned ELO) include:

1. The French system is a typical example of:
 - A. A parliamentary system
 - B. A presidential system
 - C. A hybrid system
 - D. None of the above
 - E. A, B, C above
2. Today, the EU has how many members?
 - A. 6
 - B. 12

- C. 15
 - D. 27
 - E. 28
3. Which of the following statements regarding the German electoral system (for the Bundestag) is incorrect?
- A. There is a 5% hurdle
 - B. A party gets seats in the parliament if it wins at least 5% of the votes
 - C. A party gets seats in the parliament if it wins at least 3 direct mandates
 - D. A party gets seats in the parliament if it either wins 3% of the votes or 2 direct mandates
 - E. All of the above answers are incorrect
4. Which country did not have a significant 1848/49 revolution?
- A. France
 - B. Italy
 - C. England
 - D. Austrian Empire
 - E. Prussia

This will allow the instructor to calculate the percentage of correct answers before and after instruction (averaged across questions) – say 30% versus 85%. Mastery would be achieved in this example because the average score improved to at least 75%.

2) Rubric scores for writing assignments

The course contains several required writing assignments ('mini-papers' and 'activities'). A subset of these are tailored toward ELOs. Mastery will be defined as scoring "fair" or "proficient" (not "inadequate") on a rubric describing the ideal outcome. (Aggregate mastery is simply the percentage of students scoring "fair" or "proficient" and aggregate mastery is defined as 75%).

Examples:

The Historical Study GE category calls for students to "write critically about primary and secondary historical sources" and the course includes several writing assignments (mini-papers). One ELO mandates that "students speak and write critically about primary and secondary historical sources by examining diverse interpretations of past events and ideas in their historical contexts."

One mini-paper is directly tailored towards this ELO, and its prompt reads as follows: "Which country is to blame for WWI? Informed by Palmer, Ch. 17, take sides on the debate in the British newspapers (see required readings [which present a diverse set of viewpoints on the issue])."

Potential rubric:

Ideal outcome: Students critically synthesize several competing viewpoints formulated in the newspaper debate and evaluate them based on Palmer's chapter.

() Proficient; () Fair; () Inadequate

3) Anonymous course evaluations

At the end of the course, students will be asked to fill in an anonymous questionnaire that asks them to self-assess their progress relative to the ELOs. This indirect assessment instrument will provide additional evidence on aspects of the course that require improvement.

All three assessment instruments are used for assessment purposes.