Academic Year:
2015-2016

Course Name/Catalog Number:
HON 111 Themes in American Civilization, HON 112 Exploring American Politics

General Education Component:
Constitutions

UULO(s) assessed this year:
☒ Intellectual Breadth/Life-long Learning
☒ Inquiry/Critical Thinking
☒ Communication
☒ Global/Multicultural Knowledge and Awareness
☒ Citizenship & Ethics

Other learning outcomes assessed this year:

Process: Please provide a brief narrative of the assessment process for this course. Include a description of the type of student work assessed (e.g., research papers, exams, etc.), the number and roles of people involved in the process, any tools used for the assessment (e.g., checklists, rubrics, etc.), and how student learning was evaluated.

Dr. Michael Green, Associate Professor in the Department of History, and Dr. Daniel Bubb, Assistant Professor in Residence, both teach Honors 111, which explores themes in American Civilization, and is a Constitutions class. In his class, Dr. Green asks students to form small groups where they propose changes to the United States Constitution, and debate them. The assignment takes three class periods to complete. Students also are given essay exam questions that involve their comprehension of the United States and Nevada Constitutions. In Dr. Bubb’s Honors 111 class, he lectures on both Constitutions, and gives quiz and essay exam questions to his students testing their comprehension. In his Honors 112 class, Dr. Bubb organizes his students into small groups where they debate political topics and issues related to both Constitutions. In addition, Dr. Bubb asks his students to craft bills with proposed amendments to the United States and Nevada Constitutions and debate them. In this class, Dr. Bubb also gives quiz and essay exam questions to test his students’ comprehension of both Constitutions.

To assess students’ comprehension of both Constitutions, in their Honors 111 classes, both Drs. Green and Bubb use a grading system. In Honors 112, Dr. Bubb uses a rubric to assess students’ debate performance (which is attached to this report as an appendix). Students use the same rubric to evaluate their peers’ debate performance. At the end of the debates, Dr. Bubb compiles the scores into an aggregate score. He returns his and the students’ peer review rubrics with the aggregate score and written comments.

Both classes are limited to an enrollment of 24 students. Also, both classes directly relate to and are structured within the UULOs.
Results: Please provide a brief summary of the results of your assessment process. Include both what you learned about your students’ achievement of the specified learning outcomes and what you learned about the assessment process itself, if applicable.

Student learning outcomes results in both classes indicated that the vast majority of students demonstrated a satisfactory knowledge of both Constitutions. In Dr. Bubb’s Honors 112 class, two students failed to demonstrate adequate knowledge because of poor attendance and lack of adequate preparation for the exams. Those students since have been dropped from the Honors College due to poor performance in other classes as well.

Upon reflection of the way Dr. Bubb conducts his Honors 111 class, he has considered including debate since it seems to work well in Dr. Green’s Honors 111 class, and Dr. Bubb’s Honors 112 class. Additionally, student comments in Dr. Green’s Honors 111 class and Dr. Bubb’s Honors 112 class indicate that they learn a great deal more by debating instead of taking notes and answering exam questions. In the fall semester of 2016, Dr. Bubb will try including debate of both Constitutions in his Honors 111 class.

Conclusions: Please describe how the results of this assessment process might be used to revise instruction in this course and/or refine the assessment process in future years.

Dr. Green remains satisfied with the debate process in his Honors 111 class, and as indicated above, Dr. Bubb will include it in his Honors 111 class beginning in the fall semester of 2016. Additionally, Drs. Green and Bubb will have future conversations about ways they can specifically collect data on the Citizenship and Ethics UULO within the subtopic of the separation of powers. This could be achieved by including the same question on an exam in Honors 111 classes, sequestering it, and measuring it.

Appendices: Please attach any applicable assignment descriptions, rubrics, results tables, or graphic representations of results.