

## **Annual Departmental Assessment Report**

**Department or Program:** EALL

**Academic Year of Report:** Spring 2021

**Department Contact Person for Assessment:** Maram Epstein

### **Section 1: Learning Objectives Assessed for this Report**

For each major in the department, list the learning objectives that were assessed during this period.

The unplanned transition to remote teaching during the pandemic has made the pedagogical environment this year so anomalous that the faculty is unable to assess student learning in any systemic or meaningful way. Each instructor has transitioned to a remote learning mode as best they could without any larger curricular planning. By spring term, student resistance to Zoom classes is palpable. Moreover, since many students are in different time zones (including Asia) and / or have insufficient broadband access, many students have been unable to participate actively in synchronous classes. Faculty report spending undue amounts of time preparing lectures for a remote format and reaching out to students to help them with i) access issues; ii) mental health issues; iii) learning issues that are becoming more acute with remote learning. Because there is no baseline for assessment of remote learning and because we assume we will return to in-person teaching in the fall, we do not see the value of assessing a pedagogical mode that we hope to leave behind by Fall 2021.

Because remote learning has been much less disruptive to our graduate curriculum, EALL is engaged in a department-wide discussion about how best to overhaul the qualifying examination process. We have discovered that the current requirements, which require PhD students to write three research papers for three different fields in addition to preparing for an oral comprehensive exam in those three fields before writing and then defending a dissertation prospectus, has significantly slowed down their progress toward degree.

#### **PhD Learning Outcomes**

1. Demonstrate mastery of subject content knowledge (Comprehensive exams)
2. Demonstrate effective oral and written communication skills. (Comprehensive exams and field papers)
3. Conduct independent research and analysis in their discipline and contribute original and substantive work in their field. (Field papers, dissertation)

### **Section 2: Assessment Activities**

For each learning outcome, describe what information was collected, how it was analyzed and discussed, and the conclusions that were drawn from the analysis. In the narrative, reference all relevant means of collecting information about learning goals, including direct measures (e.g. assessment of student assignments), indirect measures (e.g. overall grade patterns in a particular course, student reflections on learning, SERU data), and qualitative information (e.g. faculty observations, student input). While the choice of which assessments are most meaningful is up to the department, a mix of direct and indirect measures is requested.

The DGS has reviewed the average time to degree and determined that current qualifying requirements create a significant bottleneck.

### **Section 3: Actions Taken Based on Assessment Analysis**

For each learning goal assessed for each major, describe any actions taken as a result of assessment information, or plans to take action during the next academic year. Describe how the actions or action plans are meant to address the issues arrived at through the assessment activities in Section 2.

Although the current system of requiring three qualifying papers and an oral examination in the three comprehensive fields succeeds in preparing our PhD students for dissertation level research and teaching advanced students, the graduate faculty are discussing how to reduce these requirements while ensuring that students get the necessary training to prepare them for dissertation research and writing as well as teaching. An additional goal of this programmatic review is to achieve greater uniformity in requirements across our sectors (CHN, JPN, KRN, and LING). The graduate faculty will review the requirements in other UO Humanities departments and other EALL graduate programs in order to determine best practices in this area.

#### **Section 4: Other Efforts to Improve the Student Educational Experience**

Briefly describe other continuous improvement efforts that are not directly related to the learning goals above. In other words, what activity has the department engaged in to improve the student educational experience? This might include changes such as curriculum revisions, new advising approaches, revised or new co-curricular activities, etc. Describe the rationale for the change(s) and any outcomes resulting from the change(s).

As this has been a year of transition, it has not been an appropriate time to launch any new initiatives. COVID along with the rise in anti-Asian violence has made student mental health a priority and the department has reached out to University Health Services to get help in connecting students to Counseling Services.

#### **Section 5: Plans for Next Year**

Briefly describe tentative assessment plans for the next academic year. Which goals will be assessed and how? What actions will be taken as a result of this years' analysis of assessment information? What other plans does the department have to improve the student educational experience? What are the budgetary implications of any proposed actions? How will those be addressed?

\_\_The launch of SLGS next year will impact the EALL curriculum as the department considers how we can support Global Studies majors.

\_\_The recent tenuring of our two Korean specialists means that we will finally be able to develop a KRN major.

\_\_We will finalize the new qualifying requirements for PhD students next year.

\_\_The Chinese faculty will implement a new system to support the writing skills of majors, as described below:

#### **Chinese Culture Major:**

Chinese culture courses draw a disproportionate number of transfer students and international students whose first language is not English. We have long been concerned with the quality of students' academic writing. The enrollments in the culture courses required for the major are so high that it has not been feasible to make these courses writing intensive. In order to create an opportunity for Culture majors to write a 12-15 page research paper before they graduate, we designed a Capstone Course, CHN 495, which has been approved. Unfortunately, because of the pressures to increase undergraduate enrollments, we have shifted FTE to courses that we

know will have larger enrollments and have not been able to offer the Capstone Seminar. Instead, we are proposing to implement a more modest but systematic approach to writing in the CHN 305, 306, 307, 308 series required for Chinese majors.

This effort is focused on supporting two key Learning Outcomes: Critical Thinking and Argumentation.

The faculty has already begun sharing our best practices to support students in their mastery of written communication. We have begun to develop a system of scaffolded paper writing and grading rubrics that we will implement in the CHN 305, 306, 307, 308 series, and, as appropriate and possible, in other content courses.

We will work toward developing a **variety of writing assignments** to assign early in each course to provide students a low-stakes way to write an essay that is expressive/ personal/ creative and linked to the themes of the course. We will also implement a **Paper Portfolio, based on skill-building exercises** in each course. Ideas for this include: **argumentation and developing a thesis**, and short assignments (one-page double spaced) that feature **Citations, Close Reading, Conceptual Explication, and Thesis-driven argumentation**. These exercises build toward the final paper, which will be broken down into a **Proposal** that lays out the topic, the sources, and the basic argument, and the **Final Paper** itself.

Faculty in the sector will develop a basic **Grading Template** that specifies each component of an academic paper and delineates the points that will be assigned so that students know exactly what they need to focus on. These components include:

**Argument** (thesis paragraph and thesis statements in following paragraphs)

**Organization** (logical development of argument and organization of ideas and evidence)

**Evidence** (use of quotes for close readings, proper citation, and appropriate analysis of quotes)

**Content** (application of information/ ideas/ methodologies introduced in class)

**Spelling/ Grammar**

**Originality/ Creativity**

The sector will also brainstorm ideas on how to develop prompts/ paper requirements that will make it harder for students to turn in plagiarized or purchased papers. We hope to have the portfolio structure in place for fall term. Unless enrollments increase, there are no budgetary impacts to this plan.

The Japanese faculty support the goal of added scaffolding for undergraduate writing skills and will meet with the China faculty during AY 21-22 to discuss regular reports and recommendations about this plan. However, given that 2 of the 4 TTF in the Japan sector will be on leave AY 21-22, and the sector will be unable to offer all of the 305-306-307 courses, any changes and assessment on the Japanese curricular side will have to wait until AY 22-23.