

Annual Departmental Assessment Report
Department or Program: Theatre Arts
Academic Year of Report: AY 2018-19
Department Contact Person for Assessment: Harry Wonham

Section 1: Learning Objectives Assessed for this Report

The Department of Theatre Arts has completed three years in its four-year process of assessment focused on the department's four Learning Outcomes. The AY 2016-17 report summarized the department's assessment of Learning Outcome 1, which states that students in specified TA courses should:

Demonstrate knowledge, research, and analysis of theatre history, dramatic literature and critical theory across time and cultures, employing effective written and oral communication.

The AY 2017-18 report summarized the department's assessment of Learning Outcome 2, which states that students in specified TA courses should:

Demonstrate the comprehension of form and content in theatre through production-related practice, applying skill sets of design, technology, management, and performance.

This AY 2018-19 report summarizes the department's assessment of Learning Outcome 3, which states that students in specified TA courses should:

Demonstrate personal, theatrical, aesthetic, and artistic vision through script analysis and interpretation, integrating the visual and material/physical in collaborative practice.

Section 2: Assessment Activities

Courses examined during this assessment of Learning Outcome 3:

AY 2018-19

TA 420 (Return and Review: Rodley) (questionnaire 1)
TA 415/515m (Costume Design: DeJong) (questionnaire 1)
TA 490 (Play Direction: Najjar) (questionnaire 2)
TA 452 (Clown: Schmor) (questionnaire 2)

Assessment Methods:

Department faculty in the designated courses collected the following information on student attainment of Learning Outcome 3:

1. Comments on Student Course Evaluations for the four courses under review.
2. Targeted sample of graded projects from three randomly selected students per course.

3. Data collected from a student questionnaires (conducted between Weeks 5-7) pertaining to Learning Outcome 3

In May of 2019, TA faculty convened to discuss the data described above. The DH had prepared a series of graphs to provide visual summaries of student feedback on the three questionnaires used to measure student experience on Learning Outcome 3. Because the results of both questionnaires showed overwhelmingly positive results, faculty comments centered on ways in which we might probe more deeply in subsequent attempts to measure student learning. The group discussed several strategies for improving the content and administration of future questionnaires.

Teachers of the courses designated for assessment described the targeted samples of graded student work, which were passed around the table for consideration by colleagues. The graded projects received positive feedback from faculty, both for their rigor and for the thoroughness of the commentary returned to students.

The discussion then turned to plans for assessing Learning Outcome 4, which is quite different from LOs 1, 2, and 3. A plan of action was established for generating a new questionnaire during AY 2020-21, so that it can be administered in designated courses.

Section 3: Actions Taken Based on Assessment Analysis

As a result of our discussion of the data used to assess Learning Outcome 3, members of the department reiterated their interest (first articulated after the discussion of LOs 1 and 2) in expanding the role of written communication in Theatre Arts courses generally.

Section 4: Other Efforts to Improve the Student Educational Experience

As always, the Department of Theatre Arts is pursuing a number of curricular improvements, including the development of its Summer SOUP program and ongoing review of our “Futures” seminar for TA majors in their junior year. We are considering a significant overhaul of our Minor, in order to attract more students to TA courses. We are also initiating a high school recruitment plan, and we are attempting to expand opportunities for students to participate in University Theatre productions.

Section 5: Plans for Next Year

During AY 2019-20, the department plans to assess student attainment of Learning Outcome 4, which states that students in designated TA courses should be able to:

Demonstrate understanding of degree requirements and production expectations for the major, and chart prospective internship and other educational or professional opportunities in current theatre and related fields during and especially after college.

We will conduct the review process by analyzing information, as available, from the following sources:

1. Comments on mid-term and end-of-term student experience surveys
2. Samples of graded projects from a minimum of three randomly selected students per course
3. Data collected from a student questionnaire
4. Comments on instructor reflection survey