

Annual Departmental Assessment Report

Department or Program: Classics

Academic Year of Report: 2016-17

Department Contact Person for Assessment: Malcolm Wilson

Section 1: Learning Objectives Assessed for this Report

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

1. The Department of Classics voted to pursue the assessment of one essential element of our program, one that is central to the core and heart of all of our sub-majors, namely, the teaching of the Classical ancient languages, Greek and Latin. After the roll-out of the first phase of the assessment we will turn to the more difficult problem of assessing learning in the service classes.

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.

We began with instruction in Greek grammar (GRK 101-103). Our learning goal was that the student should complete the courses with a sound knowledge of Greek grammar. The following learning outcomes were tested through daily and chapter quizzes. Student were required to show that they had mastered the correct form in each case. This required that the students be taught and learn the first (feminine and masculine), the second (masculine and neuter) and the third (masculine, feminine and neuter) declensions of nouns (in the singular and plural; nominative, genitive, dative, accusative and vocative); the corresponding declensions of adjectives; and the corresponding forms of adverbs. The major work consists in the doctrine of the verb: the three persons, the singular and the plural; the six tenses (present, imperfect, future, aorist, perfect, pluperfect); the four moods (indicative, subjunctive, optative, imperative) and the three voices (active, middle and passive). These verb forms must be learned for the -w and the -mi verbs, as well as for the e, a, and o contracts. In addition to these the participles (288 forms for each verb) must be learned. Complex syntax also had to be mastered, and tested by the students' ability to recognize and identify the correct syntactical structure: purpose clauses (subjunctive in primary sequence; optative in secondary sequence); conditional clauses (FMV, FLV, Pres. Gen., Past Gen., Pres. CF and Past CF) with the corresponding conditional relative clauses. There were of course, also the standard relative clauses themselves. There were also fear clauses and the independent uses of the subjunctive and optative. The beginning course requires in addition the memorization of the 1000 most commonly used words; for nouns, nom. sing. and gen. sing and gender; for verbs, the six principal parts. Students often reflected that Greek grammar was challenging to learn and that there was a lot to memorize. The grades in the beginning class showed that the higher grades went to the student who were able to memorize the material better. Many students, who thought that this was too hard or just plain crazy, dropped the class.

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.

Since ancient Greek has been taught for the last 2000 years, there were few surprises in our information or in our assessment thereof. We discovered anew that ancient Greek was indeed a challenging language to learn. We considered simplifying the grammar so that the students could assimilate the morphology more readily, but we were concerned that charges of teaching a "fake language" might arise from the "informal media". We decided instead that it would be better to try to maximum smiles and humor in class and cajole students into learning the morphology. We are presently seeking consulting agencies to help us with maximizing smiles and humor.

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).

Perhaps the easiest way to describe what the Classics department does to "improve the student educational experience" is to provide you with advanced copy of the this years "Nuntium Anatium" the "Duck News", our annual newsletter:

The New Ancient World

Last winter Chris White, who works in the Schnitzer Museum, told us about an unusual sale of antiquities. The Toledo Museum of Art was selling some of the material that had been stored in their basement and they were offering this material to accredited U.S. museums. The Classics Department went into high gear and assembled about \$15,000 in funding from inside and outside the University. We were able to buy about eight pieces as the beginning of a teaching collection. This collection is important because it is "well provenanced", that is, it holds to the highest anti-looting standards in the U.S.

The Schnitzer Museum has done a beautiful job in displaying some of these pieces. But the great thing about these ceramics is that our students can pick them up and handle them. They can fill what a kylix - a basic wine cup - feels like in the hand.

It is a real delight to have actual physical remains from the ancient Mediterranean in Oregon, and a thrill to touch a pitcher than someone filled with wine or water 2,300 years ago. We still have about \$4,000 in our acquisition fund and are eager to make new purchases. If you would like to contribute to this fund.... I have my eye on this beautiful Corinthian alabastron. Check it out: <http://www.hixenbaugh.net/gallery/detail.cfm?itemnum=5985>

Domi et Militiae

When we haven't been on the road conquering foreign domains of knowledge, we've been entertaining learned embassies from abroad. Our schedule has been packed with events and talks. Perhaps the highlight of the year will be the AIA lecture by Prof Mary Beard of Cambridge University.

Road Trip, Road Trip, Road Trip

Vade mecum! The Classics Department has been on the road! Last spring we all piled in the van and drove to Ashland to see a production of Julius Caesar at the Shakespeare Festival. The dictator may not have survived, but we did - in spite of the fact that Professor Wilson had "trouble respecting the white lines on the highway" and often jolted Halsey Egger awake by hitting the rumble strips. Shakespeare was fun in his "Miami Vice" update, and it was a great opportunity for our students to get to know one another better outside of class.

This past fall we headed north on Cardo-5 and drove (Wilson still at the wheel not respecting the white lines - more students found their own transportation this time) to OMSI to take in the exhibition about Pompeii. Our own Kevin Dicus (the garbage-man of Pompeii) joined us and led us through the exhibit. There was a lot of really nice stuff. My favorite was the doornice jar - who knew? And it was great to watch the knots of other visitors gather around as Kevin discussed the artifacts and his own experiences at the buried city.

Where to next year?

SAIL

Mary and Malcolm participated for the first time (Chris Eckerman has done this for years) in the "Summer Academy to Inspire Learning", which recruits students from area high school, who might not otherwise consider going to college, and brings them to the University for a week of fun, learning and acculturation. Mary introduced the students to the basics of Latin grammar, the case system and a couple of tenses. Then the fun part - Roman cuisine. There was moretum and ... and No Roman stomach went unfilled. Malcolm took up coinage and defenses. Over the course of the five-day camp we built a ballista. Tests showed that Gaul is safe from Roman conquest if we are in charge of the artillery. Our maximum range was..... 27 yards. Ite Anates!!!

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 year's 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?

We will carry on teaching the classical languages in the way we deem, on the basis of our long disciplinary experience, most beneficial to our students.