**Humanities Program Assessments**

Prepared by Martha Bayless, Director of Humanities

mjbayles@uoregon.edu

February 2020

**Program Mission**

The Humanities major provides the opportunity for motivated and independently minded students to craft an individualized major with a humanistic orientation. Students working toward a Humanities major, which is designed in consultation with the program advisor, pursue their interests in a systematic and coherent way across several disciplines.

 The curriculum of the Humanities Program provides opportunities for the student seeking intellectual coherence and integration, awareness of cultural contexts and traditions, and the connection of humanistic theory to practice. It models and encourages the integration of multidisciplinary knowledge and perspectives, including but not limited to literature, history, visual arts, music, philosophy, anthropology, religious studies, ethic and women’s studies, and folklore, as well as emerging disciplines such as Food Studies, Disability Studies, Medical Humanities, and Environmental Humanities. In studying an array of disciplines and perspectives, students gain a broad and diverse understanding of the ways humans and cultures have interpreted and expressed the world.

 The Humanities Program also offers an array of courses that serve non-majors, offering students in all fields an experience of interdisciplinary humanistic study.

**Goals (Learning Outcomes) for Students with a B.A. in Humanities**

Students with a B.A. in Humanities will be able to:

1. read critically and analyze texts from a variety of periods and cultures
2. analyze critically a variety of cultural artifacts such as paintings, sculpture, architecture, and music
3. show familiarity with the cultures that produced these texts and artifacts
4. do research, write clearly, develop a coherent argument, and substantiate that argument with relevant evidence (citations of texts, references to cultural artifacts, etc.)
5. identify ideas that unite different disciplines
6. understand issues of historical contingency and enculturation and, accordingly, be able to reflect critically on the thought systems (e.g. economic, political, religious) inculcated in our own culture.

**Assessment**

From our assessment document:

“As a way to capture the degree of more intensive learning from majors, the Humanities Program major requires students to write a paper at the end of their careers at the UO, reflecting on their learning and on the way their self-chosen higher-level courses (7 courses as required by the major) tie together and reinforce each other. This already constitutes a powerful tool both for student reflection and for the assessment of the program. The Head of the Program will tabulate the results of these into a formal report.”

Six Humanities Program majors graduated in spring 2019. Their familiarity with “a variety of cultural artifacts” and their ability to “read critically and analyze texts from a variety of periods and cultures,” as well as their “familiarity with the cultures that produced these texts and artifacts,” is on evidence in their Concentration statements necessary for graduation. One, for instance, reflects on the themes of his courses, the intersections of music, cinematography, and history, including their status as entertainment, community-builders, and reflections of historical movements and world events. Another student, who assembled a course of study including music, poetry, and architecture, reported, “As a songwriter, hip-hop artist, Architecture minor, and double major in Humanities and Music with a Popular Music Concentration, these seven courses have each contributed to my understanding of songwriting as both a musical and poetic endeavor, one with a unique form that can be studied and deliberately designed and that holds the potential for both eloquent storytelling and popular appeal.”

Another student reported, “For the focus of my major program, I choose to analyze how people interpret, process, and record the human experience. More specifically, my focus was to view this through a history of socio-political movements within the context of ... the social revolutions of the 1960s and the resulting changes in policy and social landscape of the US.” The student goes on to detail many of the social changes connected to music and other forms of expression. A different student wrote: “In choosing this major, I was excited by the unique structure in which I could create my own concentration. After pondering a few possibilities, I decided to implement various courses that deal with, *the different pervasive aspects in society that influence how we think, how we act, and what we value*.” She goes on to outline many of the intersections: “Classes such as ANTH 365 Food and Culture, CRES 415 Conflict and Gender, and PS 350 Politics and Film, delve into the intricate involvement that food, gender, and politics have had in creating our current socio-cultural environment. For instance, the types of food we eat is often linked to our identity- culturally, physically, financially, etc. This in turn creates different structures within society that divide or unite people based on what they identify with.” She concludes, “The importance and relevance of this concept is why I have chosen it as my concentration, and why after I graduate I will enter the world as a well-rounded and informed individual.”

The thoughtful Concentration documents from these students, coupled with the solid to excellent grades in their major classes, show that they have fulfilled the Humanities Learning Objectives.