

# GENERAL EDUCATION ANNUAL REPORT

Curriculum Committee 2016-2018

## Abstract

Annual assessment of General Education Content Areas:  
Diversity, Meaning, Value, History, Social Science, and  
Critical Thinking Juried Assessment completed Summer  
2018 with reflection and comments provided Academic  
year 2018-2019.

Respectfully submitted, Dr. Carrie McCray

# Table of Contents

OVERVIEW/HISTORY OF GENERAL EDUCATION	3
GENERAL EDUCATION PURPOSE STATEMENT	3
STRUCTURAL CHANGES TO GENERAL EDUCATION (FALL 2015):	5
CURRENT GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT CYCLE	6
DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF ASSESSED CONTENT	8
DEMOGRAPHIC DATA PER CONTENT AREA:	9
<b><u>DIVERSITY</u></b>	<b>10</b>
JURIED ASSESSOR RESPONSE:	11
FACULTY RESPONSE:	12
<b><u>MEANING</u></b>	<b>13</b>
JURIED ASSESSOR RESPONSE: (ONLY ONE JURIED ASSESSOR HAD COMMENTS)	14
FACULTY RESPONSE:	14
<b><u>ETHICS</u></b>	<b>15</b>
JURIED ASSESSOR RESPONSE: (ONLY ONE JURIED ASSESSOR HAD COMMENTS)	16
FACULTY RESPONSE:	16
<b><u>HISTORY</u></b>	<b>18</b>
JURIED ASSESSOR RESPONSE:	19
FACULTY RESPONSE:	20
<b><u>CRITICAL THINKING</u></b>	<b>22</b>
JURIED ASSESSOR RESPONSE:	23
FACULTY RESPONSE:	24
<b><u>SOCIAL SCIENCE</u></b>	<b>25</b>
JURIED ASSESSOR RESPONSE:	26
FACULTY RESPONSE:	27
<b><u>CURRICULUM COMMITTEE SUMMARY</u></b>	<b>29</b>
APPENDIX A: HISTORY OBJECTIVES	31

# General Education Annual Assessment Report

## Curriculum Committee

### 2016-2018

#### Overview/History of General Education

Starting in 2007, the General Education program began collecting data on the performance of students in those classes listed as “General Education.”

Students in classes that satisfied each of the ten general education classes were assessed on a three-year rotation: in the first year of rotation, three of the ten areas were assessed; in the next year, three other areas were assessed. In the third year, the remaining four areas were assessed, and the data collected through these methods was stored in our online portfolio system, tk20.

Students’ work in general education classes was assessed in the following way: if a student was enrolled in a general education class in an area scheduled for assessment, artifacts (essays, portfolios, etc) were collected of all students enrolled in the class. Those artifacts were then evaluated after the end of the semester using rubrics developed by faculty in those areas (in most cases, the assignments were evaluated by instructors before the end of the semester, and used in that manner as part of the grade for the class—the general education assessment, taking place after the end of the semester, had no direct effect on a student’s grade in the class, even in those cases where the assessors’ evaluation coincided with that of the instructor). It is the data collected by scoring with rubrics that was then stored. The data for the general education assessment is neutral to the course content, as it is assessed by a neutral member of the faculty.

The General Education program was restructured in the fall semester 2015 moving the content areas into four clusters to assist in the coordination of assessment and evaluation of the General Education program. The General Education assessment has moved to a 4-year cycle focusing on one cluster each year.

The university implemented a new assessment software Fall 2016 prompting the curriculum committee to hold on assessing the necessary content areas until there was a sufficient pool of samples within the new system. Faculty began utilizing the system fall 2016 and are required to have students upload an assignment each GE course through the Via software. At the end of the spring 2018 academic semester, the curriculum committee moved forward with assessing 2 of the 4 general education clusters.

The Associate Dean of Academic Assessment audited all GE courses within the 2 clusters and determined which courses complied with the GE requirement of uploading an assignment. From the identified courses, random samples of student work were identified and pulled in order to create the Juried Assessment process in Via.

#### General Education Purpose Statement

*Approved April 5, 2016 Faculty Assembly*

William Woods University strives to build upon student knowledge beyond their academic specialty areas. To supplement varied student goals and aspirations with core learning experiences, the University General

Education curriculum engages all students in critical analysis, quantitative inquiry, creative expression, and substantive understanding of the relationships between individuals and societies. Accordingly, all undergraduate students must complete the required General Education credits in addition to the coursework for their respective majors.

## Structural Changes to General Education (Fall 2015):

**Critical Analysis: (9 credit hours)** Students apply logical and analytical reasoning skills to diverse source materials in the interest of discerning and debating aesthetic, thematic, and ethical content.

- Critical Thinking (3 credit hours)
- Ethical Reasoning (3 credit hours)
- Meaning (3 credit hours)

**Creative Expression: (12 credit hours)** Students develop the ability to express ideas and concepts, both logically and creatively, through written, oral, reflective, and aesthetic practices utilizing various media forms.

- Communication (9 credit hours)
- Fine & Performing Arts (3 credit hours)

**Quantitative Inquiry: (10 credit hours)** Students will develop and practice quantitative problem-solving skills in order to analyze and critically evaluate information in a larger context.

- Natural Sciences (7 credit hours)
- Mathematics (3 credit hours)

**Society & the Individual: (12 credit hours)** Students integrate knowledge to articulate an understanding of diverse cultures, historical contexts, and human behaviors.

- Social Science (3 credit hours)
- Diversity (3 credit hours)
- Historical Perspective (6 credit hours)

Current General Education Assessment Cycle  
(updated beginning Fall 2016 to reflect new structure)

Outcome Area	Learning Outcomes	Assessment *Standardized Measures	Expected use for Assessment	Schedule for Analysis of Assessment Data
<b>Critical Analysis: Students apply logical and analytical reasoning skills to diverse source materials in the interest of discerning and debating aesthetic, thematic, and ethical content</b>				
<b>Critical Thinking</b>	Students will use the principles of logic to develop analytical and reasoning skills	CLA  Rubric developed by Legal Studies, Sociology, Philosophy, and other designated faculty. Re-evaluated in spring 2013.	Value Added scores on CLA Critical Thinking  Assess sample work to determine if the set benchmarks are met and to assess course/assessment changes in the future.	Spring 2017 Spring 2021
<b>Ethical Reasoning</b>	Students will consider ethical problems in terms of competing interests, historical and cultural roots of conflict, and use various models or theories of ethical reasoning to resolve moral dilemmas.	CLA  Rubric developed by Legal Studies, Sociology, Philosophy, and other designated faculty. Re-evaluated in spring 2013.	Value added scores on CLA Analytic Reasoning  Assess sample work to determine if the set benchmarks are met and to assess course/assessment changes in the future.	Spring 2017 Spring 2021
<b>Meaning</b>	Students will analyze texts (broadly defined) in order to identify central themes and interpret underlying meaning.	CLA  Rubric developed by English faculty. Re-evaluated in spring 2013.	Value added scores on CLA Analytic Reasoning  Assess sample work to determine if the set benchmarks are met and to assess course/assessment changes in the future.	Spring 2017 Spring 2021
<b>Society &amp; the Individual: Students integrate knowledge to articulate an understanding of diverse cultures, historical contexts, and human behaviors.</b>				
<b>Social Science</b>	Students will study the behavior of people and employ the principles of science to explain both group and individual behavior.	Rubric Developed by Social Science Faculty. Revised Spring 2013	Assess sample work to determine if the set benchmarks are met and to assess course/assessment changes in the future.	Spring 2018 Spring 2022
<b>Diversity</b>	Students will solve problems through an	*NSSE Results	Results of NSSE dealing with Diversity	Spring 2018 Spring 2022

	analysis of quantitative relationships.	Rubric Developed by Diversity Faculty. Revised spring 2013.	Assess sample work to determine if the set benchmarks are met and to assess course/assessment changes in the future.	
<b>Historical Perspective</b>	Students will think historically, meaning that they will understand both how the present is shaped by the past and how the past informs our understanding of the present.	Rubric developed by History Faculty (reevaluated spring 2013)	Assess sample work to determine if the set benchmarks are met and to assess course/assessment changes in the future	Spring 2018 Spring 2022
<b>Creative Expression: Students develop the ability to express ideas and concepts, both logically and creatively, through written, oral, reflective, and aesthetic practices utilizing various media forms</b>				
<b>Communication (writing)</b>	Students will transmit information effectively in written or spoken form.	Communication Rubric revised by COM and ENG faculty spring 2012	CLA Writing: Value Added scores  Assess sample work determine if set benchmarks are met and to assess course/assessment changes in the future	Spring 2019 Spring 2023
<b>(Oral)</b>		Communication Rubric revised by COM and ENG faculty spring 2012	Assess sample work to determine if benchmarks are met and to assess course/assessment changes in the future.	Spring 2019 Spring 2023
<b>Fine Arts: Creative and Aesthetic Sensibility</b>	Students will examine the products of human creativity in such endeavors as painting, sculpture, theatre, and music.	Rubric developed by Art Faculty and re-evaluated spring 2013.	Assess sample work from to determine if the set benchmarks are met and to assess course/assessment changes in the future.	Spring 2019 Spring2023
<b>Quantitative Inquiry: Students will develop and practice quantitative problem-solving skills in order to analyze and critically evaluate information in a larger context.</b>				
<b>Natural Science</b>	Students will understand the natural world through systematic observation, by analyzing data, and by forming, testing and revising hypotheses.	Rubric Developed by Science Faculty. Revised Spring 2013	Assess sample work to determine if the set benchmarks are met and to assess course/assessment changes in the future.	Spring 2020 Spring 2024
<b>Mathematics</b>	Students will solve problems through an analysis of quantitative relationships.	Rubric developed by Math faculty and revised spring 2013	Assess sample work determine if the set benchmarks are met and to assess course/assessment changes in the future.	Spring 2020 Spring 2024

Demographic Data of Assessed Content (Data represent the past 6 semesters of collected data)

GE Area	Criterion	Students Registered On Ground/OLC Total	Student uploads On Ground/OLC Total	Assignments Assessed in Via
<b>Diversity</b>	Cultural Awareness	371/184	255/66	<b>219</b>
	Knowledge of cultural worldview frameworks			
	Empathy	<b>555</b>	<b>321</b>	
	Verbal and nonverbal communication			
<b>Meaning</b>	Identify basic communication components of the text.	382/73	237/51	<b>205</b>
	Interpret the central meaning or theme of the text.	<b>455</b>	<b>288</b>	
	Support textual interpretation.			
<b>Value (Ethics)</b>	Identify interested parties and their claims	422/216	344/91	<b>319</b>
	Locate cultural and/or historical bases of conflict			
	Apply varied models and theories to approach moral dilemmas	<b>638</b>	<b>435</b>	
<b>Social Science</b>	Examines the ways culture, social structures, institutions, or processes influence human behavior.	547/326	443/180	<b>490</b>
	Examines the ways culture, social institutions, or processes influence a person's beliefs, assumptions, and values.			
	Apply social science interactions among individual's community or society.			
<b>Critical Thinking</b>	Identifies the rhetorical features of an argument, including its logical principles (inference, argumentation, reasoning) and common fallacies.	306/142	223/105	<b>275</b>
	Evaluates the quality of an argument on the basis of its application of logic and evidence.			
	Develops an argument that uses both logical principles and appropriate evidence.			
<b>History</b>	Student is able to identify well-defined historical periods and events.	533/202	361/109	<b>342</b>
	Student is able to provide an analysis that addresses the key historical questions of causation, comparison, and interpretation.			
	Student will understand the basic methodology and sources of historians.	<b>735</b>	<b>470</b>	
	Student will communicate findings clearly.			

Limitations on the data:

- General Assessment is a 3 year cycle, but due to the shift in assessment software we were unable to collect the data from the old program, so we were limited to a 2 year cycle for both clusters.
- Not all data uploaded to the Via program was assessed by the Program faculty, so there are data pulled for Juried assessment not assessed by a faculty member in Via.
- Some content area data is concentrated by specific faculty due to load options and reduction in adjunct hiring.

### Demographic Data per Content Area:

\*Representative Sample –Data pulled from Jenzabar “General Education Enrollment Report 2016-2018”

General Education Area	Enrollment	% Withdrawn	% Fail	Number of Courses offered	Number of Sections offered
Diversity (Campus) Total	371	1.23%	2.64%	6	27
Diversity (On Line) Total	184	1.58%	1.93%	3	10
Meaning (Campus) Total	382	1.27%	1.05%	13	21
Meaning (On Line) Total	73	.63%	1.27%	2	5
Value (Campus) Total	422	.90%	1.96%	8	21
Value (On Line) Total	216	2.26%	2.56%	3	15
Critical Thinking (Campus) Total	306	.78%	.58%	6	18
Critical Thinking (On Line) Total	142	3.88%	3.68%	4	12
History (Campus) Total	533	1.00%	.88%	14	28
History (On Line) Total	202	2.00%	2.88%	2	10
Social Science (Campus) Total	547	2.28%	1.95%	11	35
Social Science (On Line) Total	326	1.84%	2.71%	8	22

\*HIS on campus revised curriculum and 6 of the 14 classes were removed from GE designation. They are included in the data as they were part of the curriculum briefly for this time, but after Spring of 17, History GE consisted of only 8 courses.

## Diversity

**Student Population All N= 321**

**Student OLC N=50**

**Student On Campus N=50**

Classes involved:

**On Campus:** SPA 101 (F16, SP 17, F17, SP18), SPA 102 (F16, SP 17, F17, SP18), ASL 120 (SUM 17, SP 18), PHL 102 (SP17, F17), ASL 105 (F16, F17)

**Online:** SCA 353 (F17, SP17, SP 18); PHL 102 (SP 17, SP 18), HUM 212 (SUM 17), GEO 201 (F17)

Semesters: 2016-2018

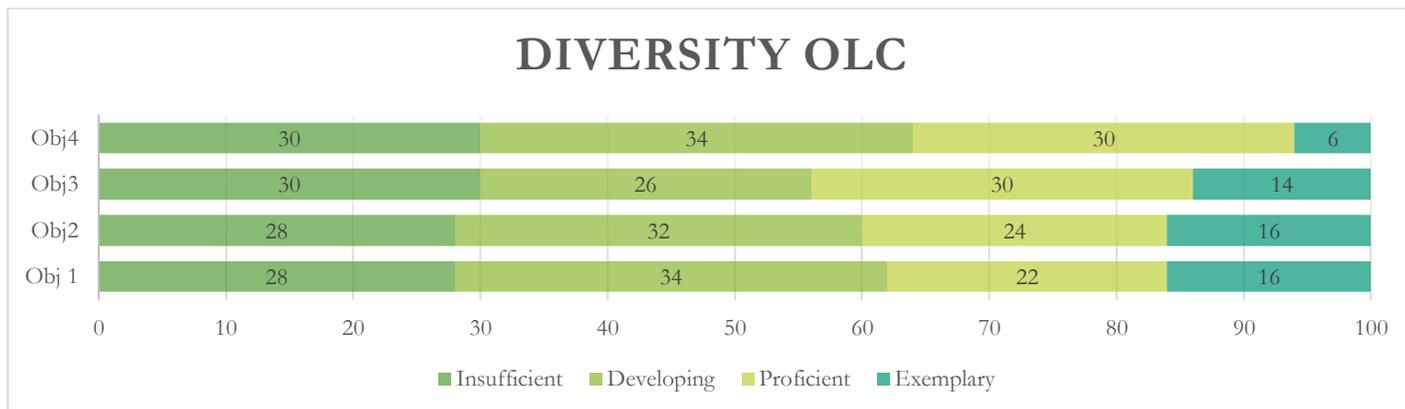
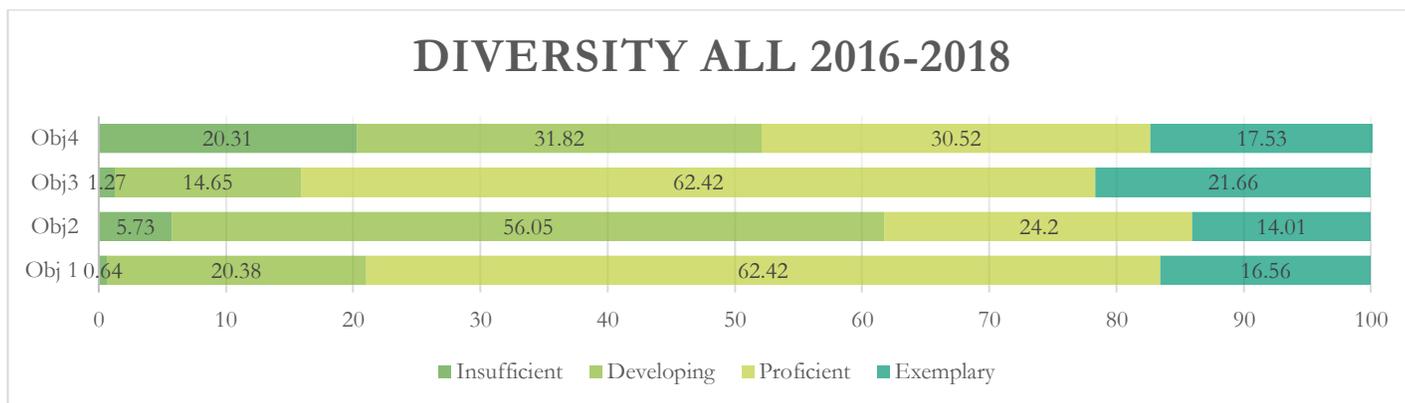
*Courses that Did not Submit Assessment Artifacts by term:*

*Fall 2016: ASL 105; ASL 105; PHL 102; GEO 201; GEO 202OLC; PHL 102 OLC*

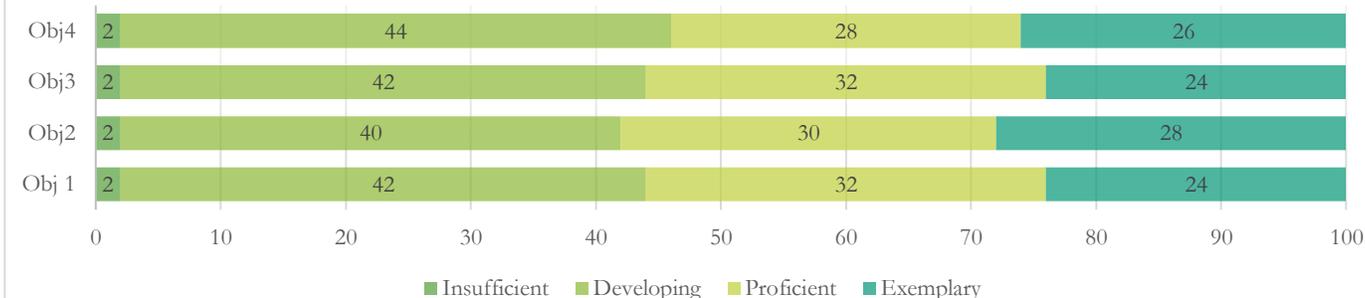
*Spring 2017: GEO 202*

*Fall 2017: GEO 201*

*Spring 2018: GEO 202; PHL 102; PHL 102*



## DIVERSITY ON CAMPUS



### Juried Assessor Response:

#### Comments summarized:

The assignments coming from the Deaf Culture class were most problematic, especially the set that were based on questions from a textbook. These questions were focused on attitudes about cochlear implants and the relationship of hearing parents to a deaf child and it was very difficult to synthesize the answers with the diversity rubric. The questionnaire style assessment artifact appeared to be designed to align more with the rubric, but the questions were not sufficiently articulated to illicit focused responses from the students that aligned with the rubric. This was the same for the World Religions artifact which was mostly approached by the students as more of a report on karma and very little to do with the cultural aspects of a belief in karma compared to a cultural belief that would not accept karma or any of the other aspects reflected in the rubric about assessing cultural diversity.

I felt that the rubric was very difficult to use to assess the artifacts. There appears to be no clear definition of what "culture" means, so that the use of terms such as "complex understanding" "skillfully negotiate a shared understanding" "sophisticated understanding of the complexity" in the proficient categories of verbal/nonverbal and knowledge of cultural worldview framework were impossible to apply and therefore I felt that I did not find many students proficient in those 2 categories. I felt bad about that because I think the problem was the standard in the rubric's which are unclear, excessive and overly subjective plus the artifacts that were used which did not align with these two objectives.

- I think we should take a look at what we want students to learn about cultural diversity, and particularly we need to have a clear definition of the terms "culture" and "diversity" for the purpose of assessing this general education requirement. I say that knowing that there are many views about culture and diversity, but to assess something we need at least a baseline of agreement that we are using a meaningful standard of proficiency.

#####

There were a few assignments that worked very well in addressing the rubric. The assignment where students interviewed a Spanish speaking person that worked at WWU and relating it to the rubric was a great link between cultural relevance and bringing rigor to the assignment. The Word Religion Introspection Essay did the same thing as well, really focusing on how to compare and contrast beliefs as they relate to cultural differences through the rubric. The assignment that did not seem to work well was the Deaf Community assignment that was focused on the Chapters 41-60. The formatting was odd and it was tough to understand how the questions related back to the rubric. The guidelines had not been updated for some time, as it still discussed TK 20.

I did not see any issues with the rubric while doing the assessment.

## Faculty Response:

### **Based on the data and comments provided by external evaluators, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the assessment process in your general education area?**

Strengths: There were positive comments provided regarding the assignment used in Spanish, stating that it related to the rubric and “was a great link between cultural relevance and bringing rigor to the assignment.” This helps me know that the assignments I have chosen for assessment are working. There were no negative comments made about artifacts submitted for Spanish.

Weaknesses: Overall data for diversity shows the greatest number of “insufficient” evaluations of all general education areas, with nearing 30% evaluated as “insufficient” of courses taught online. While the data for diversity courses taught on ground (which includes Spanish 101 and 102) shows less than 5% as insufficient, more than 40% of students evaluated on ground fell into either insufficient or developing. Since there was not any data that isolated the Spanish courses evaluated, I am not sure how the courses I offered compared to others in the area. However, I think it is important to establish a benchmark or proficiency goal for this area to better guide our assessment process and interpretation of results.

### **Are there any changes that need to be made to assignments, rubrics, or the courses in your general education area?**

I think perhaps the most valuable feedback of the comments provided was to establish clear definitions of the terms “culture” and “diversity” as used in the rubric. We could do this at the University level, the Curriculum Committee level, among the faculty teaching in the diversity general education area, or a combination of the above. With these terms better defined, I think faculty in this area will be able to decide what it is that we want students to learn about cultural diversity and what a baseline should be to assess. This will also better inform the assignments used for assessment.

### **Do you think the number of courses and sections offered are appropriate to the content area?**

Spanish 101 and 102 are going online (SPA 101 spring 2019 and SPA 102 summer 2019), which I think really helps to diversify course offerings for the area online.

### **What changes in assignments have been made since the last assessment?**

NA

The Diversity faculty have met several times to discuss the possibility of a standard assignment, but eventually determined the need was not there. The faculty in Diversity are going to work to make sure the assignment is appropriate to the diversity rubric. The suggestion was made for the next review cycle for the assessors for diversity to be faculty that teach courses in diversity or content specialists in diversity. The group determined the desire for the benchmark to be 75% of students demonstrate a developing proficiency or higher.

## Meaning

**Student Population All N= 288**

**Student OLC N=50**

**Student On Campus N=50**

Classes involved:

On Campus: ENG 215 (F16, F17); ENG 222 (F16, SP17, F17); ENG 226 (F16, F17); ENG 234 (F16, SP18); ENG 238 (F16); ENG 280 (F16); ENG 206 (SP 17); ENG 210 (SP17, SP18); ENG 218 (SP17, SP18); ENG 202 (F17); ENG 205 (F17); HUM 213 (F17); ENG 201 (SP18);

Online: ENG 239 (SP17; S18); ENG 215 (SU 17); ENG 239 (F17)

*Courses that Did not Submit Assessment Artifacts by term:*

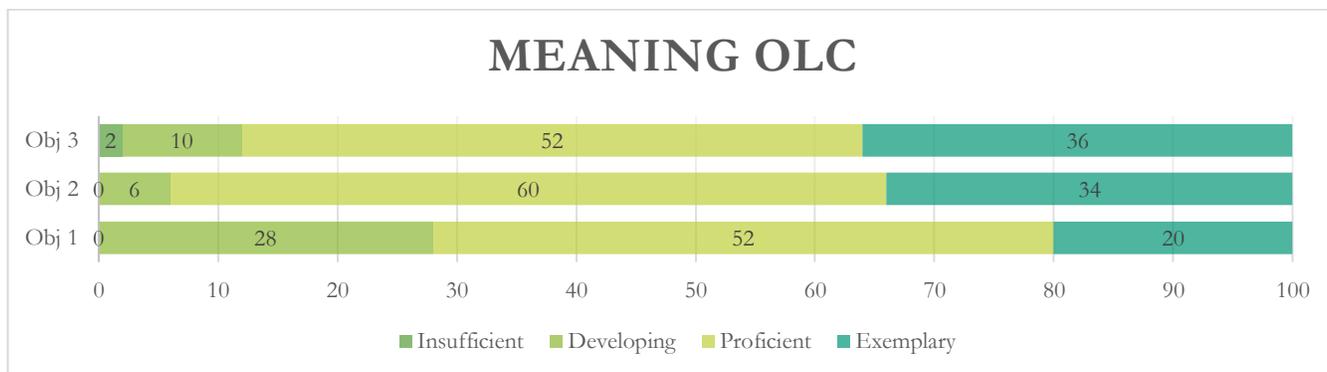
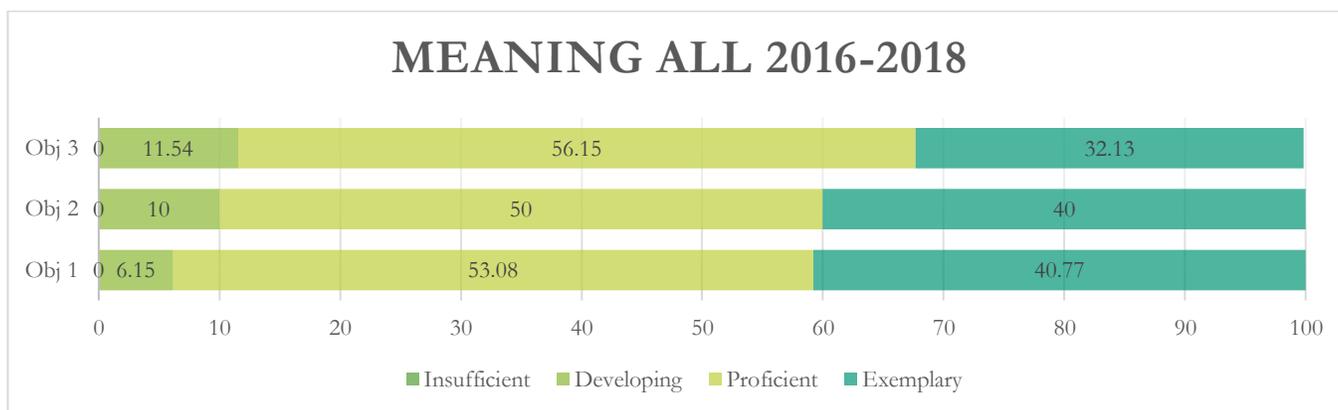
*Fall 2016: HUM213; ENG 239 OLC*

*Spring 2017: All Submitted*

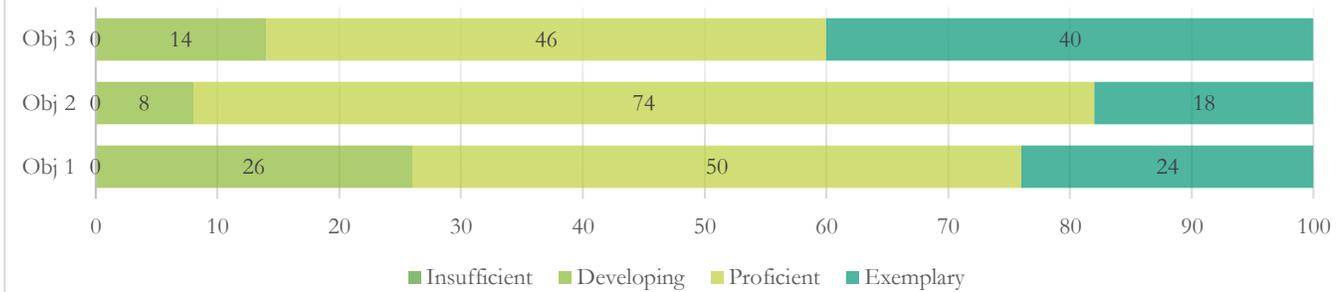
*Summer 2017: All Submitted*

*Fall 2017: ENG 280*

*Spring 2018: ENG 222*



## MEANING ON CAMPUS



### Juried Assessor Response: (only one Juried Assessor had comments)

- 1) Yes, all assignments were appropriate for the rubric, which made consistent assessment feel relatively easy.
- 2) No issues.
- 3) No suggestions. Great system, keep it up!

### Faculty Response:

#### Based on the data and comments provided by external evaluators, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the assessment process in your general education area?

Based on the data provided, we feel that the Meaning assessment process for our on ground and online Gen Ed courses is quite strong overall, and that there is no need to overhaul assignments, course designs, rubrics, or number of course offerings with respect to the process itself.

#### Are there any changes that need to be made to assignments, rubrics, or the courses in your general education area?

Our one area of concern is minor: that we have 2 “insufficient” scores in our OLC obj. 3 bracket. However, without knowing whether these were actual artifacts that scored low, or whether they were missing artifacts (i.e., non-submissions), it is difficult for us to determine a cause to address. We will keep an eye on this area to see if the issue recurs.

#### Do you think the number of courses and sections offered are appropriate to the content area?

Lastly, we thought we had set our benchmark at 75% + Developing or better, but we may be mistaken. If so, that is the benchmark we’d like to set and move forward with.

## Ethics

**Student Population All N= 432**

**Student OLC N=50**

**Student On Campus N=50**

Classes involved:

On Campus: BUS 214 (F16, SP17, F17, SP18); COM 250 (F16, F17); PHL 116 (F16, F17, SP18, SP18); PLS 210 (F16, SP17, SP18); SCA 245 (F16, F17); HUM 117 (F17, SP18).

On Line: ASL 220 (SP17, SU17, F17, F17, SP18, SP18); HUM117 (SU117)

*Courses that Did not Submit Assessment Artifacts by term:*

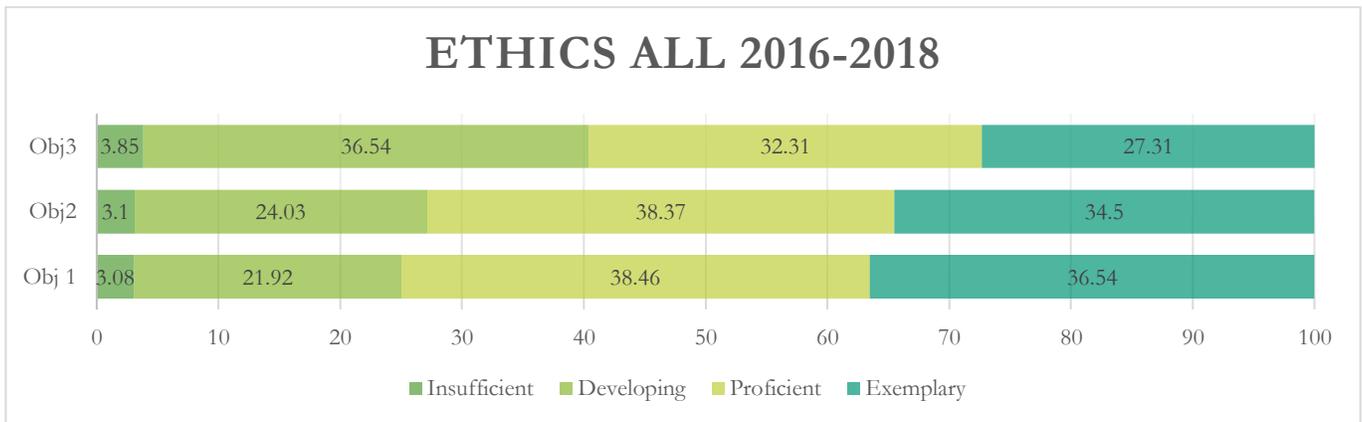
*Fall 2016: CMJ290; ASL 220 OLC; ASL220 OLC; BMT 329 OLC*

*Spring 2017: ASL 220; ASL 220 OLC*

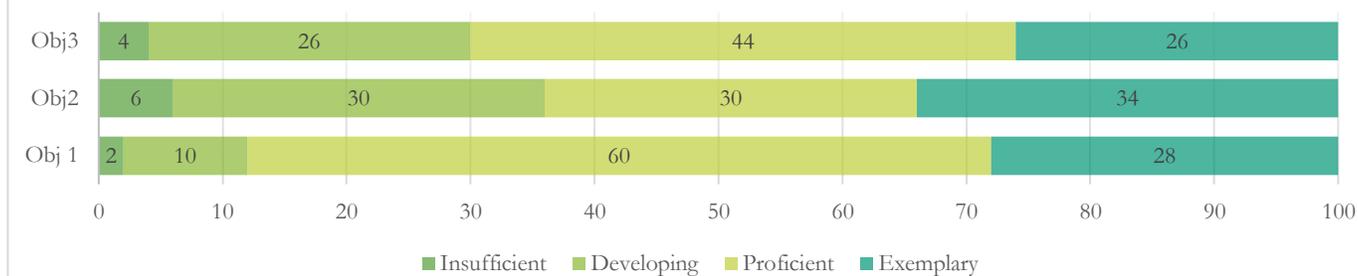
*Summer 2017: ASL 220 OLC; BMT 329 OLC*

*Fall 2017: BMT 329 OLC*

*Spring 2018: All Submitted*



## ETHICS ON CAMPUS



### Juried Assessor Response: (only one Juried Assessor had comments)

The only issue I had with assessing these was that it was sometimes difficult to understand the scenario the students were considering in their Case Studies. As I went along, it became easier as I read more examples. In the assignment, it might be stressed more (I'm sure it is stressed some already) that the situation be described clearly before starting to evaluate it. Otherwise, I did not have any issues.

I know we have been told in the past to remove any identification by name of the students in the submissions. All of the assessments I looked at had the student's names. Is this something we need to be concerned about?

### Faculty Response:

#### **Based on the data and comments provided by external evaluators, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the assessment process in your general education area?**

Based on the data, the majority of students who were assessed as proficient and exemplary indicates that the value piece of general education is successful. In addition, all courses submitted artifacts in Spring 2018, which is a significant improvement from Fall 2016. According to one of two comments from assessors, the scenario of case studies was not clear, although s/he was able to ascertain the focus as more examples were read.

There was only one comment and I did not gain insights from it. As I did not teach within this general education area last year, I would say a lack of detailed feedback to address the data is a weakness. If evaluators are not going to provide real feedback then this is not a value added process.

#### **Are there any changes that need to be made to assignments, rubrics, or the courses in your general education area?**

I continue to refine my assignment in COM 250 to ensure the students address the rubric questions as clearly as possible. I'm also working on helping students think deeper than the surface on ethical questions.

There was support for both keeping and revising the used rubric. At this time no decision has been made on what to do with the rubric for this content area.

#### **Do you think the number of courses and sections offered are appropriate to the content area?**

I think the number of courses and sections offered are appropriate to the content area, although this may change as student enrollment changes.

**Right now there is not a benchmark determined – what do you feel would be an appropriate benchmark for this area?**

Based on the data provided, I am comfortable setting a benchmark for value (ethics) at 60% proficiency.

## History

**Student Population All N= 470**

**Student OLC N=50**

**Student On Campus N=50**

Classes involved:

On Campus: HIS101 (F16, SP17, F17, SP18); HIS 102 (F16, SP17, F17, SP18), HIS103(F16, F16, SP17, F17, SP18), HIS 104 (F16, SP17, F17, SP18); HIS 210 (F16); HIS312 (F16), HIS 370 (F16), ECN 218 (SP17, F17), HIS 310 (SP17); HIS321 (SP17), HIS 215 (F17)

Online: HIS 104 (SP17, SU17, F17, SP18) HIS 103 (S17, SU17, F17)

*Courses that Did not Submit Assessment Artifacts by term:*

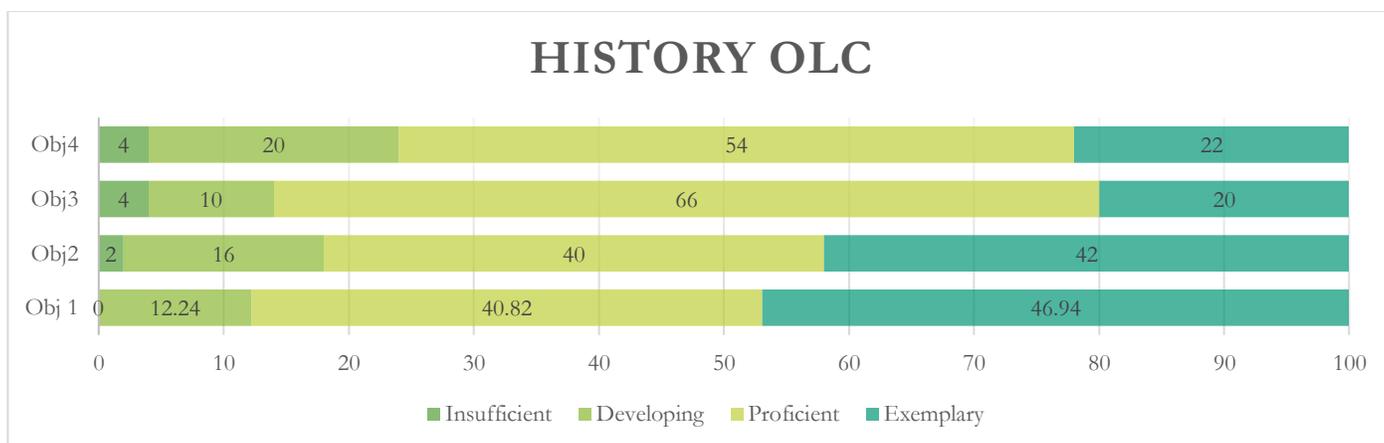
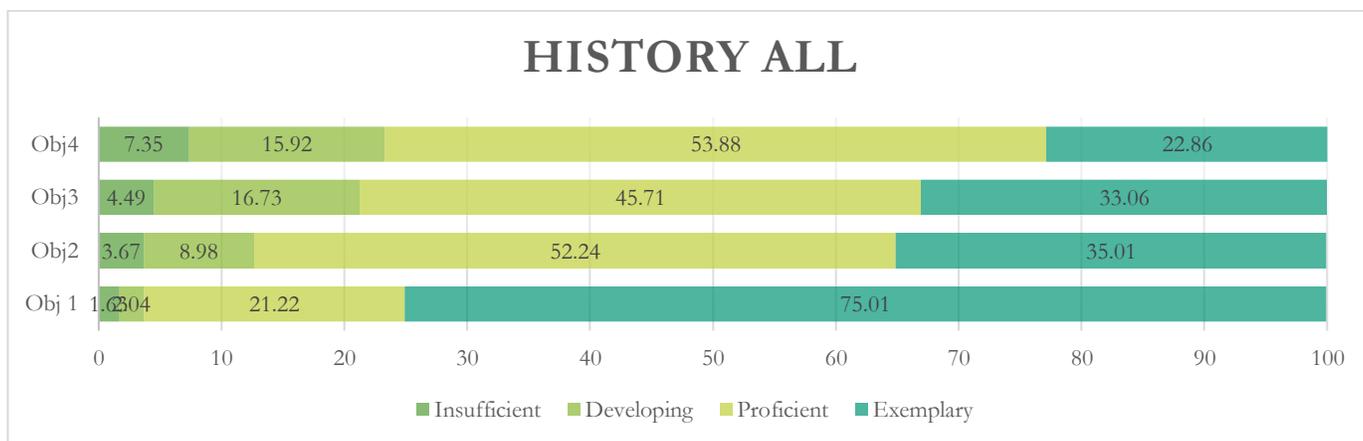
*Fall 2016: HIS 104 OLC, HIS 103 OLC*

*Spring 2017: HIS 340,*

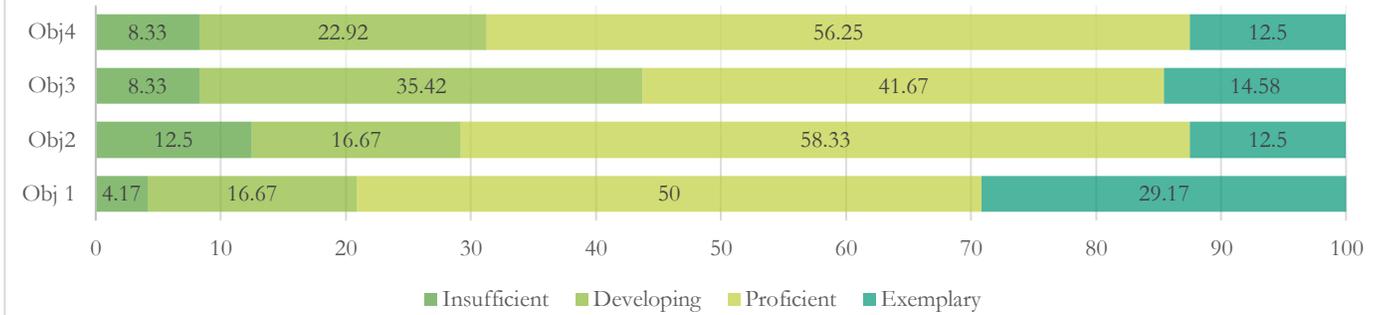
*Summer 2017: HIS 101 OLC*

*Fall 2017: All Submitted*

*Spring 2018: HIS 103 OLC*



## HISTORY ON CAMPUS



### Juried Assessor Response:

Here are a couple of notations I made while doing the History artifacts.

First, in grouping #26-50, I had 2 problematic artifacts: #18 was blank, and #23 kept giving me an error message and would not open. I marked "insufficient" across the board for both.

Overall, the student work is proving effective. The essays themselves have been noted for being of high quality overall. I agree that the GE rubric for history needs to be updated and revised in its language and scope to more effectively assess the assignments and make it more understandable for non-historian assessors.

Changes to the rubric: Yes, language simply for clarity and also reinforce the key historical principals such as thesis, research, and analysis.

In terms of the artifacts themselves, one attribute of the GE assignment that I found difficult to assess was the wide variation in course levels from which the artifacts originated. In other words, 300-level and 100-level papers tend to be markedly different in quality, focus, depth, research, etc., so I found myself having to continually readjust expectations while assessing, which was a little disorienting and may have impacted my assessments to some degree.

Also, I felt a little out of my comfort zone with history, especially with assessment criteria that asked me to assess how well students use "the methodology of historians, etc."--I have a general idea regarding what this means, but I do not feel entirely qualified to make specific judgments about the efficacy of historical methodology in research papers, so I worked through this the best I could. (Usually, I do Diversity for GE assessment, but Anthony may have gotten my request mixed up!)

Generally speaking, though, I thought the history papers were really strong pieces of work, well developed, detailed, and insightful. History faculty may want to consider adding a "proper source citation" caveat to their assessment criteria, though: while most of these students had really impressive research sources, many of them did not bother to cite the materials in any discernable way.

I just finished scoring the History artifacts. Here are my comments about the process.

1. Rubric methodology 4, should it say "their" instead of "either"?
2. On campus #9 may have been wrong assignment. I selected N/A

3. On campus #11 was titled ENG Comp for Greg Smith. Seemed like the correct assignment but I did not feel comfortable scoring it for HIS, so did N/A.
4. Many papers were very impressive.
5. I did not have an assignment description. Page requirement seemed about 6-7 pages, some were shorter and a few were way over, one was 13 pages with references.
6. Most of the on-campus papers used footnotes, while with online papers it was mixed between footnotes and other citation styles.
7. The item on rubric about analyzing the credibility of sources, it did not seem like the students were asked to do that, because not many papers actually did that. But I did not have an assignment description, so it made that item difficult to score. I had to infer that more than other items.
8. The historical periods item was very clear to assess.
9. Understanding basic methodology and sources for historians was the most difficult to assess. Some of the descriptions of insufficient, developing, proficient, and exemplary were worded in a way that made it difficult to score those items in each paper.
10. This is by no means a knock on anything or anyone, but online papers seemed to have more well thought-out ideas. As I read them, I thought that may be due to the class being online and that students don't have the face to face opportunity to earn points, so they spend more time on their papers.

### Faculty Response:

#### **Based on the data and comments provided by external evaluators, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the assessment process in your general education area?**

Overall, the student work is proving effective. The essays themselves have been noted for being of high quality overall. I agree that the GE rubric for history needs to be updated and revised in its language and scope to more effectively assess the assignments and make it more understandable for non-historian assessors.

#### **Are there any changes that need to be made to assignments, rubrics, or the courses in your general education area?**

Yes, language simply for clarity and also reinforce the key historical principals such as thesis, research, and analysis.

#### **Do you think the number of courses and sections offered are appropriate to the content area?**

No, history could offer at least 3-4 additional courses with no issue. Fall 2018 saw 8 history courses on offer, with nearly all of them filled to capacity. This year there are only 5 courses, but 4 are filled to capacity.

#### **Are there any courses in your general education area that have not submitted artifacts for assessment since the last data cycle?**

The past year all courses submitted. Since the last review courses have begun to assess their materials, but there is a noticeable lack of assessment in certain online courses.

History is proposing new objectives to the GE History program:

1. Demonstrate **historical knowledge** by understanding a key event(s)/issue(s), presenting differences between time periods, evaluating change/continuity over time, and being able to place events within their broader significance.

2. Illustrate **historical thinking** by assessing individuals/events/decisions and their causes/consequences based on the standards of their time. Present history as based on contingency, or being the result of individuals' choices, which leads to a specific result.

3. Exhibit **historical skills** by developing a thesis and support a claim by researching and analyzing primary and secondary sources with proper citations.

Once approved by the faculty, these objectives would go into effect summer session 2019.

## Critical Thinking

**Student Population All N= 328**

**Student OLC N=50**

**Student On Campus N=50**

Classes involved:

On Campus: COM 220 (F16, SP17, F17, SP18); PHL 101 (F16, SP17, F17, SP18); PHL 105 (F16, SP17, F17, SP18); PHL107 (F16, SP17, F17, F17); COM 209 (F17)

Online: COM 220 (SP17, F17, SP18); PLS 213 (SP17, SP18); PHL 101 (SU17); IFL 115 (F17)

*Courses that Did not Submit Assessment Artifacts by term:*

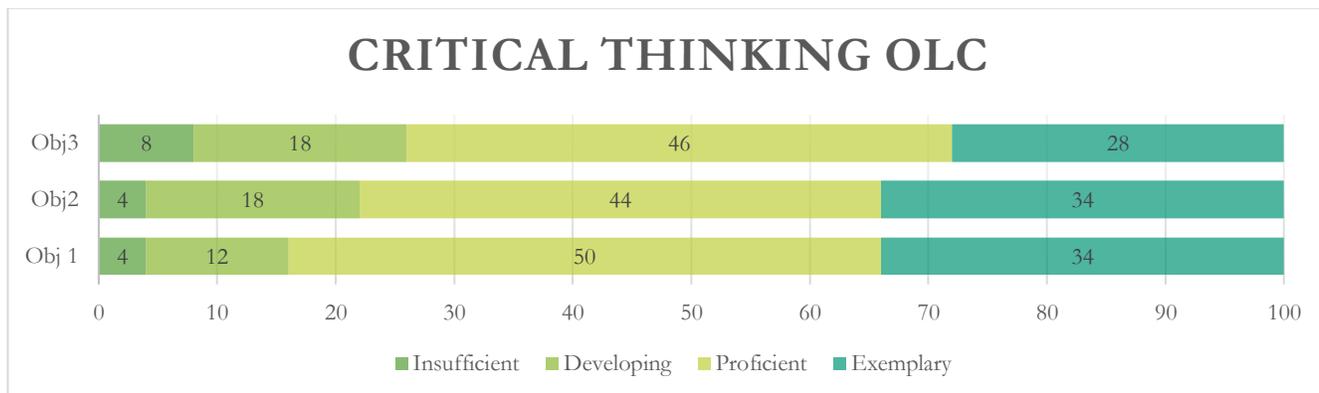
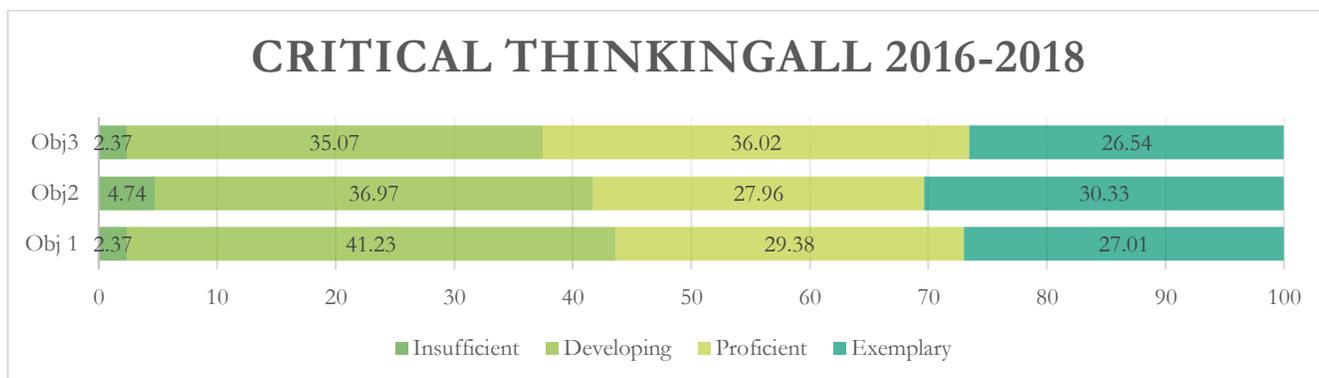
*Fall 2016: CMJ 180; COM 220 OLC; PHL 101 OLC*

*Spring 2017: All Submitted*

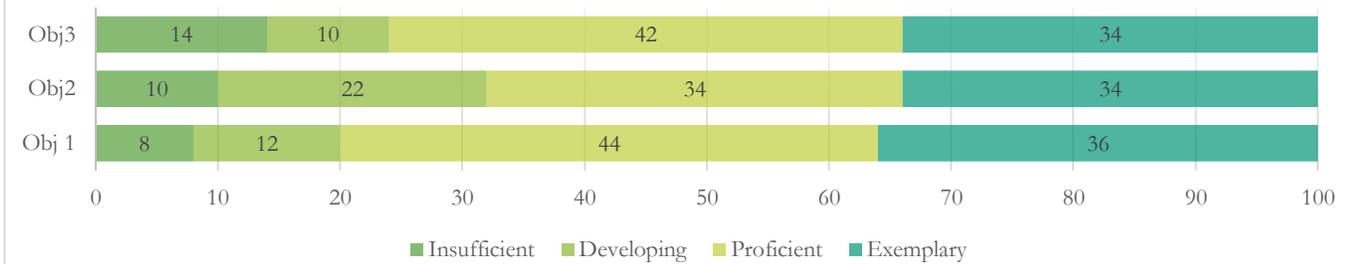
*Summer 2017: PLS 213 OLC*

*Fall 2017: All Submitted*

*Spring 2018: All Submitted*



## CRITICAL THINKING ON CAMPUS



### Juried Assessor Response:

Were the assignments appropriate for the GE rubric for your content area? What fit well and what did not fit well?  
 Bob Scott's Lt Bombardier problem wasn't so successful. I could see where it engaged the objectives, but it was hard to tell where one artifact excelled. Students either got it or they didn't, without the need for other categories of achievement.

Jill's "research map" was interesting, but it felt like without the actual essay being written, it was hard to determine if the student understood pros and cons, fallacies, etc.

Other assignments—about free will, books of the Bible, ad analysis—seemed to fit well with the rubric.

Any suggestions?

Another minor thing was trying to align rubrics with attachments/ artifacts in the second batch of 25. In the first group, rubric 1 went with attachment 1, but once rubric 2 went with attachment 27, I started getting confused which I'd read and which I hadn't. Maybe try to realign the rubric #s with the attachments? I mean, maybe this means you'd need to relabel artifacts, as attachment 1a and attachment 1b for the second group? But it felt like I was using cognitive candle power on something that probably didn't need that effort.

Also, and this is really minor, but can we get assignments to open inline instead of opening them in word? I feel like this works out OK on my courses, but maybe the way you added these artifacts to these "students" make that impossible.

I struggled a little not knowing what the assignments were in some cases. I got over it, but if you were looking for something else to shoot for, a gallery of assignment descriptions would be nice.

Otherwise, this was interesting, and really, it was pretty easy to do. It can always be easier, but this was pretty well set-up and easy to navigate.

Were the assignments appropriate for the GE rubric for your content area? What fit well and what did not fit well?

I did feel that some assignments were appropriate and others were a bit difficult to apply. I found the Persuasion in Advertising a good fit, and the Logic assignment about determining who had what role (ex: Bombardier, Pilot). I found the Presidential assignment to be a bit difficult to apply as it seemed most of those assignments summarized the debate but I did not feel as if many students actually analyzed the content.

Are there obvious issues with the rubric?

The rubric is good but I don't know that it was applicable to all of the assignments. Some of the assignments did not lend themselves well to the evaluation of an argument. I sometimes found it difficult to apply but I could find elements within the assignments.

Any suggestions?

It would be helpful to have the specific assignment requirements matched to the assignments-perhaps a list of the document numbers that fall under what assignment. Some were easy to identify and some a bit more difficult. In terms of the rubric/assignments, could they be more closely matched to address the critical thinking concept? It would be helpful to have assignments grouped by course-this way it is easier to compare similar submissions and make a more accurate assessment-for example, I found one in the first group I thought was really strong but in the second group I found a better one. Being able to group these would be helpful in getting a feel for the course assignment.

Being that this was my first review of these assessments, part of my comments may be because I am getting familiar with the courses and what was required. I did find as I went through more and more, I was able to get a feel for the information

### Faculty Response:

#### **Based on the data and comments provided by external evaluators, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the assessment process in your general education area?**

My assignment required students to complete an annotated bibliography on an academic topic of their choice. The main point of the assignment is to familiarize the students with the research process, develop a researchable topic and find credible, useful information on their topic. This requires them to be able to identify the main points of a source, evaluate the quality of a source, analyze the source and evaluate the context and/or bias, etc. The evaluator felt that without the essay actually being written, it was hard to determine whether the student understood fallacies, etc. And I agree, based on the current rubric, it is hard to fit my assignment into the rubric elements. That is why I advocate a tweaking of the rubric (as mentioned in the next question), because I believe my current assignment, as is, does measure critical thinking skills, if you understand critical thinking in a broader scope, such as the AACU definition-- "Critical thinking is a habit of mind characterized by the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts and events before accepting or formulating an opinion of conclusion." I do believe a evaluative annotated bibliography does this, without a paper or essay being written.

#### **Are there obvious issues with the rubric?**

The issues I have are mostly typographical; it was hard to scroll down to the discursive language that described, for example, a proficient response. But this is a pretty minor thing.

I think the rubric could use some tweaking. I believe the rubric was designed to fit the content of a course that used to be required for all students. Now that there are a range of courses available for Critical Thinking, I think the rubric could be a little broader, instead of focusing on arguments, rhetoric, logic, and fallacies. I like the VALUE rubric developed by AACU, and I believe a lot of institutions use this rubric and adapt it to their needs.<https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/VALUE/CriticalThinking.pdf>

I think a focus on these skills could be useful: (and I'm sure this could be added to and these could be expanded upon, this is just a quick thought)--

- Be able to identify and explain the main points, issues, points or arguments of a source
- Evaluate the quality of the supporting data or evidence in a source
- Analyze and evaluate the context, assumptions, and/or bias in a source
- Be able to state a position/perspective or create a hypothesis based on evidence

#### **Do you think the number of courses and sections offered are appropriate to the content area?**

I do think there could be a wider variety of courses offered in this area, as well as more sections offered. When doing advising for Spring 2019, students only had 3 on-ground courses to choose from. I would like to pursue adapting my course, IFL 115, to be an on-ground course, and I would be willing to also teach another online section in the Spring.

## Social Science

**Student Population All N= 623**

**Student OLC N=50**

**Student On Campus N=50**

Classes involved:

On Campus: ECN 251 (F16, F16, SP17, F17, SP18); ECN 252 (F16, SP17, F17, SP18); PLS 105 (F16, F17); PLS 110 (F16); PSY 209 (F16); SWK 215 (F16, F17), CMJ 110 (SP17); PSY 102 (SP17, SP17, SU17, SP18, SP18, SP18), PSY 221 (SP17, F17, SP18); PSY 101 (F17, SP18); PSY 226 (F17); PSY 285 (F17)

Online: ECN 252 (F16, SU17, F17); ECN 251 (SP17, SP18); PSY 209 (SP17, SU17); PLS 105 (SP17, SU17); PLS 110 (SP17, SU17, SP 18); CMJ 110 (SU17), PSY 102 (F17); PSY 226 (F17, SP18)

*Courses that Did not Submit Assessment Artifacts by term:*

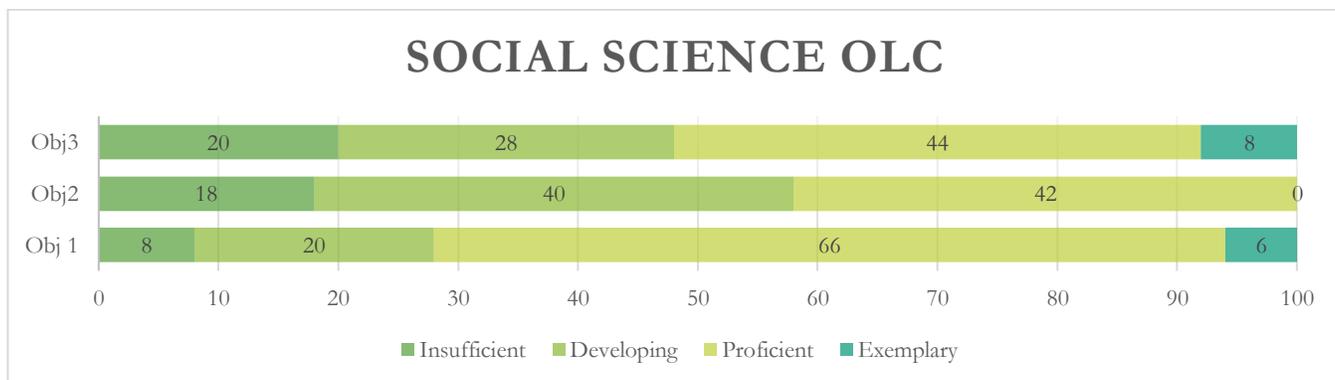
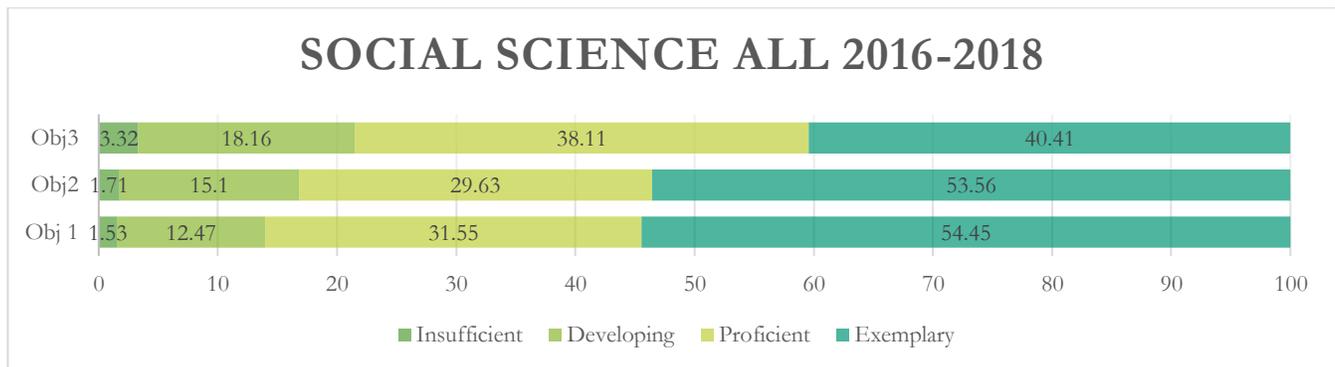
*Fall 2016: PSY 101, PSY 101, PSY 102, PSY 221, ECN 252 OLC, PSY 209 OLC, PSY 102 OLC*

*Spring 2017: All Submitted*

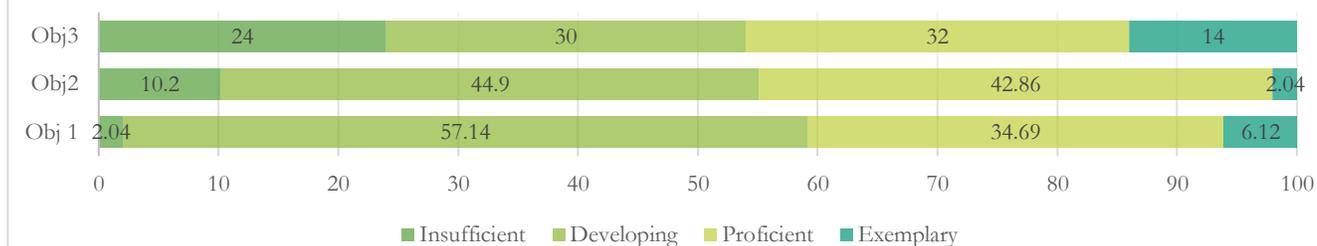
*Summer 2017: ECN 251 OLC*

*Fall 2017: All Submitted*

*Spring 2018: PLS 105 OLC*



## SOCIAL SCIENCES ON CAMPUS



### Juried Assessor Response:

Were the assignments appropriate for the GE rubric for your content area? What fit well and what did not fit well?

Some of the assignments were definitely more appropriate than others. The assignment for Macroeconomics seemed to work really well in touching on most parts of the rubric. The assignments on hindsight bias and child observations seemed to not address the rubric as well in many cases.

Are there obvious issues with the rubric?

I think the rubric could definitely be improved, unless what is in the rubric is truly what people want for a social science Gen Ed class. To me, the rubric isn't great for all social science disciplines. It talks about how culture, social structures, institutions or processes (what do they mean exactly by processes?) influence human behavior or beliefs. This doesn't work well for psychology, because psychology isn't as concerned with external forces, but more with the mind and its influence on behavior or beliefs.

In the Insufficient category the 1 point option is for "incorrectly" identifying elements, but what if they don't at all?

In the category for applying social science theory, it says "identifies the most important research..."—this seems relative to me and could vary based on topic or theoretical perspective. And while the assessors may have a general idea of social science theories, would they really be able to assess whether the student is applying the "most important" research or theories?

Any suggestions?

I think the rubric could definitely be improved upon—made to cover all disciplines better, worded better and made more clear for people outside of the disciplines who are assessing.

Context of the assignment (instructions given by the professor, etc.) would be helpful.

- Length discrepancy among assignments: Some of the documents appeared to be homework assignments that were very brief (a short paragraph) and underdeveloped, making it hard to understand the overall objective of the assignment. Other documents were three or more pages. I am wondering if there should be more consistency in assignment length/type.
- Many assignments were structured as a summary/opinion/reflection rather than a theoretical analysis (although since I was not able to see the assignment prompts, the students may have just neglected these parts of the assignment). The rubric is set up best for theoretical analysis of the topic with a connection to human behavior/culture/etc.
- The rubric talks about a focus on one vs. multiple elements as a mark of proficiency. However, when the assignment asks the student to reflect on only one theory/article/idea, it limits proficiency assessment. Faculty may want to use an assignment that synthesizes/puts in conversation two or more studied theories.

· Typo in rubric: under the “Apply social science theory” section of “Developing” should read “difficulty using\*\* them...”

### Faculty Response:

#### **Based on the data and comments provided by external evaluators, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the assessment process in your general education area?**

- Strengths:
  - The strength of social science is the common elements that overlay the basics that make up the field. Faculty are reviewing assignments and curriculum, working to strengthen the assessment process.
  - An unintentional strength to this process is that when able to be an evaluator for another content area, it is really interesting to see what other disciplines do for their assessment and what students are submitting. Reviewing other content areas helps break down the tunnel vision of the curriculum and is a great way to see what students are doing in other areas.
  
- Weaknesses:
  - The disciplines within Social Science are very diverse but yet under the same umbrella, which creates complications for setting an appropriate evaluation tool that will meet the needs of everyone.
  - Students are only required to take one course in the discipline so they don't develop enough of a core understanding to apply theory. T
  - The instructions for assignments were not included in the assessment sent out to the assessors and would be helpful and they were not included in this process.

\*Would be interesting to see how many social science courses do students take.. do they take electives in social science for filler classes?

#### **Are there any changes that need to be made to assignments, rubrics, or the courses in your general education area?**

After teaching and discussion on the curriculum, there will be changes made to SWK 205 and PLS 105. Other changes at this time are not known.

Faculty reviewed the current rubric and made changes to the wording/definitions within. Questions came up from the assessors that the rubric was not necessarily easy to use with all assignments, and the faculty looked at the results and considered that maybe the external assessor was reading the definitions differently. The components of the rubric will be evaluated and modified to reflect the expectations of current faculty and explained in a way that make it easier for the external assessor to determine the appropriate level of skill demonstrated.

#### **Do you think the number of courses and sections offered are appropriate to the content area?**

Currently the university offers a diverse course load in Social Science. There are several options for students each semester, but this is not seen as a negative, but an avenue for students to take additional courses in the discipline. The faculty do not want to eliminate any current courses that are offered as social science since our students have so few choices overall in their course offerings. The faculty would like to keep the options available to them in this field.

It is the recommendation of the faculty that we look at reinstating the 6 credits of social science across the curriculum. Several areas like social work, interpreting, and education already require 6 or more social science credits.

**Right now there is not a benchmark determined – what do you feel would be an appropriate benchmark for this area?**

The faculty would like to recommend that the benchmark be 90% of students will rate at the developing or above criteria on the approved Social Science Rubric.

## Curriculum Committee Summary

The general education assessment held in the summer of 2018 was a combination of cycles to catch up due to no assessment happening during the 16-17 academic year. The university implemented Via assessment software in the fall of 2016. The university needed a 2 year cycle in order to create enough of a sample to complete the juried assessment. This delay in assessment, led to the need to assess two content areas of the identified four in General Education.

Faculty were told to contact the Curriculum Committee if they were interested in serving as a juried assessor and 12 faculty were identified with relative ease. The classes were audited for assessment and assignment upload before random selection was determined. The assignments chosen were determined through a random number process and truly represent a diverse section of assignments that make up each individual content area.

After the juried assessors reviewed and scored each assignment, they also submitted thoughts and recommendations to each content area. Those comments are provided under the data for each group. Some areas of concern for the Curriculum Committee are:

- Not all assignments are assessed by the content specialist (faculty)
- Some content area data is concentrated by faculty and course due to limited offerings
- Lack of support to on campus adjuncts to set up Via and explain the GE process
- Lack of clarity on the expectation of the Juried assessor when the artifact did not open or was a repeat assignment. Some assessors clicked “NA” while others clicked “Insufficient”. This difference will impact the data.
- Differences are articulated between content areas on the identified benchmark for students’ scores and the committee will review and work towards standardizing benchmarks.
- **Diversity:** needs to review the assignments used as there was confusion by the reviewers. This is the second time the confusion has been noted.
- **Diversity:** the online data showed much higher “insufficient” numbers than on ground. And there seemed to be some disparity in Objective 4 of the rubric.
- **Diversity:** there are several courses that traditionally do not upload assignments for GE and that process needs to be discussed.
- **Meaning:** there is some disparity in the evaluation for Objective 1 with the online courses that is not there with All or on campus.
- **Ethics:** it would benefit the juried assessor to know the limitations of the assignments so that they had a better understanding of the requested task.
- **History:** the rubric needs to be updated was the most common point of discussion
- **Critical Thinking:** some of the assignments were hard to apply to the rubric. It would be helpful if the faculty involved would review the larger scope of critical thinking to include all the classes that are under that designation.
- **Social Science:** there is disparity in the data for the online classes compared to the “all” and the “on campus”. The number of “insufficient” is much larger for online data, and the number of “exemplary” for all data is also much more significant than other data.
- **Social Science:** the “exemplary” data **for all** social science ranges from 40-54 percent when evaluated by content faculty, but when rated by the juried assessors, we are looking at 0-14 percent exemplary. This is a large discrepancy in the expectation of work.

- History has submitted new objectives that would apply to all History GE courses. This would separate the General Education objectives from the program major objectives. See Appendix A for the objectives.

The next round of General Education assessment will occur this May with review of Creative Expression: Fine Art and Communication.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Curriculum Committee

## Appendix A: History Objectives

1. Demonstrate **historical knowledge** by understanding a key event(s)/issue(s), presenting differences between time periods, evaluating change/continuity over time, and being able to place events within their broader significance.
2. Illustrate **historical thinking** by assessing individuals/events/decisions and their causes/consequences based on the standards of their time. Present history as based on contingency, or being the result of individuals' choices, which leads to a specific result.
3. Exhibit **historical skills** by developing a thesis and support a claim by researching and analyzing primary and secondary sources with proper citations.