



English | 2016-2017 Assessment Report

1. Please give a brief overview of the assessment data you collected this year.

Overview

This academic year the English department assessed “critical thinking through writing about literature.” Put another way, how well are our students presenting viable, well-reasoned ideas and arguments in their writing?

There were 3 courses assessed, all of them literature courses. These literature courses were spread across varying levels of difficulty, including:

- English 290, which is our gateway course
- English 215, a lower-level course that serves as a requirement for various English tracks
- English 338, an upper-level course that focused on “Medieval Women”

The specific writing assignments will be included at the end of this document.

Results

Each instructor was to look at the assignment in question and assign each individual submission into one of the following categories:

- Does not meet expectations
- Meets expectations
- Exceeds expectations
- Not assessed

The results for the individual classes are as follows:

English 290

- Exceeds expectations: 9
- Meets expectations: 5
- Does not meet expectations: 4
- Not assessed: 0

English 215

- Exceeds expectations: 11

- Meets expectations: 7
- Does not meet expectations: 1
- Not assessed: 2

English 338

- Exceeds expectations: 10
- Meets expectations: 19
- Does not meet expectations: 1
- Not assessed: 1

2. How will you use what you've learned from the data that was collected?

The department still needs to meet and discuss results for this assessment, but some preliminary responses and observations include:

- As a department, we are discussing dropping English 105 as a requirement and replacing it with a writing course designed more specifically for our students' career needs. To consider this, we wanted to determine the quality of our student writing and how much remediation is required. In short, the overwhelming majority meet or exceed expectations, and thus this serves as a good baseline for that discussion.
- Another discussion is whether particular assignments are "overdetermined" in our discipline, such as paper writing. Once we are satisfied with the level of writing, how to we maintain that expectation while making room for other types of assignments and assessments related to other skill sets? This data will help us begin thinking about the concept of a "semester syllabus" for students that expands beyond the classroom, where assignments in disciplines tend to be over-replicated.
- As early as this summer, but definitely by fall, the English department is going to have an "Idea Summit," where we, among other things, use our assessment data to begin talking about a major revision of our curriculum—this would be the first such major revision in many years.

Addendum

Assignment Descriptions

English 290

Using one of the texts we've read for class thus far, write a 3-4 page paper where you do the following:

Choose a topic that interests you

Make a claim

Support that claim with textual evidence, showing how the evidence supports the claim

Write clearly and explain thoroughly

Edit your writing

Cite direct quotations using MLA format (Author page number)

Some Pointers:

Don't underestimate the importance of choosing a topic that you're invested in; you'll be much happier with the outcome if you've chosen something that interests you. Although our focus has been bad children, your argument DOES NOT have to be based on this.

Your paper needs an argument (claim, thesis, etc.). Pursue your argument throughout the essay rather than dropping it, changing it or contradicting it. It's alright (it's actually GREAT!) if you happen to change your mind about your argument as you're explaining it; you'll just need to revise the essay to reflect that new development and make the essay cohesive.

Be cautious that you're not making a claim that's apparent on the surface or on the literal level of the text; after all, the object is to analyze a text, not describe it. Ask yourself if someone could contest or disagree with your claim. If the answer is yes, you're probably in good shape.

You should not summarize the text in your essay; you can assume your audience has read it. Sometimes students lapse into summary when writing about literature without realizing it, so be extra diligent in avoiding it.

I've also noticed that students under-develop or under-explain their thoughts when tying textual evidence to the thesis. It's your job to show the reader how to connect ideas, so don't cruise through that process. Use close reading, calling our attention to specific words, phrases or images in a passage you cite to make the link you see between the passage and your idea explicit.

Formatting:

12 point font, Times New Roman

Double-spaced

1-in margins

No space between paragraphs, indent paragraphs

ABSOLUTE MINIMUM LENGTH: three full pages. Papers that do not meet this requirement will receive a failing grade.

Workshop: Feb. 27

Final due: Mar. 1

English 215 (Excerpt)

Annotated Poems: (20% each, 60% total)

3 times x semester, pick one poem we've discussed, and annotate it, or a short extract from it. For #2 and #3, pick a poem we've read since #1 was due. Whichever poem you annotate, make sure it fits, double-spaced, on one page. You can use any format—marginal notes, footnotes, color-coding, drawing, handwriting, even VH-1 pop-ups. As long as you're identifying specific quotes and analyzing them, pulling out subtexts and relating them to contexts, you're good. You will be graded on the (1) persuasiveness, (2) thoroughness, and (3) creativity/originality/calculated risk of your analysis, as well as writing mechanics (grammar, punctuation, etc.) and presentation. Make your work visually as well as rhetorically compelling. Submit your poems in D2L.

English 338

ENGLISH 338 Medieval Literature: Medieval Women (Fall 2016)

Final Paper

Write an essay on four significant passages from different works we have read this semester. Choose the passages you wish to discuss wisely so that making comparisons and contrasts and discussing the overall themes and significances is easy for you. Please try to follow the basic outline below when writing your essay.

Annotated Bibliography due by midterm

As you are researching for your final paper, choose the four secondary sources that prove most meaningful and/or useful to you and provide a bibliographic entry and short summary of those sources. Wikipedia is not considered a source for this assignment though it may direct you to some good secondary sources. None of the sources for this assignment may deal with the research you have done for your oral/written report since you're presenting and handing that in separately.

I. Thesis Paragraph

A thorough, introductory paragraph should provide a thesis for the whole paper, something that connects the three passages you are discussing. You might want to write this after you've completed the rest of the paper so that it accurately reflects/introduces what's in the paper. Do not use obvious phrases such as "This paper will discuss"

II. Discussion of a first passage. Quotation + about 2 paragraphs total.

Introduce the first quotation: In [Title of work], for instance, character X says the following, or we

read the following, something introductory along those lines. Use a colon before citing the quotation, as such:

Indent Tab x 2 (like this in fact) and type the passage, or enough of the passage that your reader will know what's going on. Cite the page number(s). No quotation marks are necessary unless someone is speaking the quoted lines.

Discuss the significances of this quotation, the specific details and the broader significances. Some plot summary will likely be necessary, but do not simply summarize the plot of the passage/work as your discussion. You may also cite other passages from the work and/or any secondary research you have read which illuminates your discussion of this passage if appropriate, but keep these to a minimum and do not let citations take up more space than your own discussion.

III. Discussion of a second passage. Quotation + about 2 paragraphs total.

Introduce a second quotation, provide the quote and page number(s), and discuss the significances of this quotation. Again, you may cite other passages from the work and/or secondary research if appropriate, but keep these to a minimum and do not let citations take up more space than your own discussion.

IV. Discussion of a third passage. Quotation + about 2 paragraphs total.

Introduce a third quotation, provide the quote and page number(s), and discuss the significances of this quotation. Again, you may cite other passages from the work and/or secondary research if appropriate, but keep these to a minimum and do not let citations take up more space than your own discussion.

V. Discussion of a fourth passage. Quotation + about 2 paragraphs total.

Introduce a fourth quotation, provide the quote and page number(s), and discuss the significances of this quotation. Again, you may cite other passages from the work and/or secondary research if appropriate, but keep these to a minimum and do not let citations take up more space than your own discussion.

VI. Concluding Paragraph(s)

Provide a conclusion which does not necessarily just repeat what you already said in the thesis paragraph or repeat note-for-note what you've discussed in the paper. Here's where you can compare and contrast the works you have discussed and really "zoom out" to the "big picture." Do not begin your concluding paragraphs with obvious phrases such as "In conclusion . . ." or "Finally . . ."

VII. Include a bibliography of the primary and secondary works you cited in the paper.

*Proofread your paper before handing it in! Points will be deducted for poor grammar, punctuation, spelling, factual errors, and unclear writing.