

Form E-1-A for Boston College Core Curriculum

Department/Program English Department Literature Core (AY 2019)

- 1) **Have formal learning outcomes for the department's Core courses been developed? What are they?** (What specific sets of skills and knowledge does the department expect students completing its Core courses to have acquired?)

Yes. As part of a departmental self study in 2012, the following learning outcomes for the Literature Core were established:

By the successful completion of their Literature Core course, students will be able to demonstrate:

- an ability to close-read, interpret, and analyze texts;
- an ability to write clear, coherent, organized, grammatically correct and stylistically competent prose;
- an awareness of literary genres and terminology;
- a recognition of the historical and cultural specificity of literary texts; and
- an appreciation of the human imagination.

- 2) **Where are these learning outcomes published? Be specific.** (Where are the department's expected learning outcomes for its Core courses accessible: on the web, in the catalog, or in your department handouts?)

Department Website:

https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/schools/mcas/departments/english/about/learning-outcomes.html#literature_core

- 3) **Other than GPA, what data/evidence is used to determine whether students have achieved the stated outcomes for the Core requirement?** (What evidence and analytical approaches do you use to assess which of the student learning outcomes have been achieved more or less well?)

For the past two years, the Director of the Literature Core in English has tried to implement the assistance we received from the university's offices of Institutional Research and Planning Assessment in spring 2017, which helped us measure student experience in the Literature Core. They were given the specific task of assessing (1) students' understanding of the relationship of the Literature Core to the First Year Writing seminars (FWS), and (2) students' perception of writing instruction in the Literature Core. The IRPA conducted focus group interviews. Much of our work for the past two years has responded to those discussions by focusing on teacher-training and development around writing and other topics). For instance, once again this year surveyed AY 2019 syllabi, held a pedagogy workshop (on group work in Lit Core), and made a presentation to the doctoral student pedagogy seminar.

Two additional activities in AY2019 extended our response to those surveys. First, with the help of CTE, we instituted video-conversations across different sections of Lit Core so that teachers could

discuss, compare, and evaluate their pedagogical approaches and results. (Nearly 40 faculty viewed our videos). The final installment in this series, which we hope will continue next year, will include testimony from students about online writing in the new EnCore course-configuration described below). This experiment was also featured in May 2019's "Excellence in Teaching" day.

Secondly, the full department held a **discussion assessing on our so-called "EnCore"** experiments for AY 2019. These EnCore sessions, which are also designed in part to channel innovations from Core Renewal into Lit Core, took two configurations in AY2019 : two sections of a year long "linked" FWS and Lit Core sections, and two parallel Literature Core "big question" sections that included evening reflection meetings and (in one case) a shared extracurricular event (attending a play). These new sections aimed to address concerns students expressed to the external assessment about the perceived lack of continuity between FWS and Lit Core, as well as the broader University desire to address more of the "whole person" beyond the classroom. To summarize briefly: three of these instructors of the "Big Question" sections (out of four) were very positive about the results; both of the FWS/Lit Core teachers were positive as well, though scheduling issues limited the success of one of them.

- 4) **Who interprets the evidence? What is the process?** (Who in the department is responsible for interpreting the data and making recommendations for curriculum or assignment changes if appropriate? When does this occur?)

The Literature Core steering committee (composed of the Director, one FTT faculty member, and one Professor of the Practice), and the department Chair, are primarily responsible. However, the Core as a whole was discussed by the entire English department faculty in the EnCore review meeting.

- 5) **What were the assessment results and what changes have been made as a result of using this data/evidence?** (What were the major assessment findings? Have there been any recent changes to your curriculum or program? How did the assessment data contribute to those changes?)

As a result of our discussions, three new Encore FWS/Lit Core sessions have been scheduled for AY 2020. Moreover, we will be experimenting with placing the Lit Core sequence in the fall, *followed* by FWS, again to test the issue of continuity and the role of writing in each semester.

In the spring of 2019, we created a **new-teacher packet** that will be used for the first time in AY 2020. Meanwhile, the Lit Core Director (with assistance of the graduate assistant and the Director of ELL, Lynne Anderson generated a resource packet on "**The Pedagogy of Inclusion,**" which currently is intended to prompt continuing workshop attention next year.

- 6) **Date of the most recent program review.** (Your latest comprehensive departmental self-study and external review.)

The English Department conducted a self-study of its Literature Core offerings in 2012. At that time, new written guidelines were established (and which are still in use); the department established learning outcomes (see above); and discontinued the practice of segmenting the Literature Core into four thematic rubrics.