

## Form E-1-A for Boston College Departments/Programs

### Department/Program: Slavic and Eastern Languages and Literatures

#### Literature Core Assessment SLAV2173/ENGL2228 Twentieth-Century Russian Literature

- 1) **Have formal learning outcomes been developed? What are they?** (What specific sets of skills and knowledge does the department expect its majors to have acquired before they graduate?)

Students read major representative works of Russian literature of the twentieth century. The works encompass all genres: prose, poetry, and drama. In fact, students were also exposed to other art forms such as music and visual art. Literary texts are read in various contexts: political, social, and cultural. Students learned important historical events, including but not limited to The Russian Revolution, the Second World War, the Cold War, Thaw, Stagnation, and Perestroika/Glasnost.

Students also pursue the general outcomes stated for all Literature Core courses at Boston College. Literature, a product of the imagination, is a vehicle for understanding human experiences. In this part of the Core program, students read in order to assess the shape and values of their own cultures; to discover alternative ways of looking at the world; to gain insights into issues of permanent importance and contemporary urgency; and to distinguish and appreciate the linguistic and formal satisfactions of literary art.

To read literature critically is to examine the human condition through language's expressive power and to place the reception of literary works in a cultural, historical, and social context. In Literature Core courses, students will be introduced to disciplinary skills including close reading, analysis of texts, and the practice of writing about them with clarity and engagement. Through shared critical and reflective inquiry, students will explore ways in which meaning is textually produced in the world.

- 2) **Where are these learning outcomes published? Be specific.** (Where are the department's learning expectations accessible to potential majors: on the web or in the catalog or in your dept major handouts?)

Learning outcomes for Literature Core courses will correspond to those published on the English Department website:

<http://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/english/undergraduate.html>

Additionally, the syllabus contains a detailed statement on the learning outcome.

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

Students are regularly given quizzes based on the readings. The quizzes are designed to ensure that students have read the texts carefully. Students write two 4-page papers; for each paper students can choose from two prompts. The papers are graded for both writing and analysis, and they are returned

with detailed comments. The goal is to provide an example of formal writing and to indicate to the student what is required in terms of analysis. There is a midterm as well as a final exam.

- 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?)

Two FT faculty in Russian/Slavic literature teach the core courses in Russian literature. These professors assess the outcomes of their students. Changes are made to the curriculum in consultation and in response to student performance and evaluation.

- 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?

The ESGS department conducts annual reassessments of its core literature courses. The most recent changes included an emphasis on a broader representation of genres and literary movements, as well as on ethnic and gender diversity of the authors/materials taught.

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

2012

## Form E-1-A for Boston College Core Curriculum

**Department/Program** Eastern, Slavic, & Germanic Studies  
Program in Linguistics

Note: I am completing this form with reference to the course Ling2379/ Eng12132 / Socy2275 *Language & Ethnicity*, which offers Cultural Diversity credit. It was last taught Spring 2021

- 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?)

Students completing this course will be able to examine how groups of contemporary Americans define and express their identities through the use of varieties of English, and how they exploit language variation to regulate power relations across boundaries of race, ethnicity, locale, and class. Case studies include the English of rural Appalachia and the Ozark Mountains; language variation in Eastern New England and its history; Hiberno-English; African-American Vernacular English; and language use among Native Americans and among people who identify with Deaf culture. Graduates of the class will also understand on-going debates about language endangerment and about bilingual education in the context of US language policy. Student learning outcomes are evaluated by producing four medium-length papers; a single individual or larger group presentation to the class; completing an on-line quiz; and sitting for midterm and final exams.

- 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?)

These learning outcomes are specified in the course syllabus, made available to the institution at large through online publication, and distributed to students through posting on Canvas (normally through hard copy; this is a pandemic-era accommodation) at the beginning of the semester.

- 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?)

(1) At mid-semester, students complete an informal course assessment in which they are invited to reflect on their progress in the direction of the course goals. That pooled data informs the subsequent direction of the course; (2) Linguistics majors can elect to present texts they created for this class as an example of their best work in the discipline on the occasion of their senior departmental Colloquium; (3) Students may further elect to submit their work for publication in the Boston College undergraduate Linguistics journal, *Lingua Franckly*, or other venues; (4) The instructor and TA grade and extensively comments on mid-term exams, and posts online both further discussion of the exercise and samples of ideal responses. Final exams are comprehensive of the full course, and graded but not returned to students. They are retained as a permanent record of the group's accomplishments.

- 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 instructor, in collaboration with the course Teaching Assistant, interprets informal evidence for student achievement gathered at mid-semester. The Chair of the Department and other faculty members teaching in linguistics serve a consultative role as needed. In addition, student course evaluations are carried out every year at the end of the semester; summaries are available to both the Chair of the Department and to the Departments of English and of Sociology, where the course is cross-registered. The instructor retains the full content of the course evaluations, including narrative responses to questions which probe students' self-evaluations of course goals. The instructor and TA meet after the course evaluations are returned to discuss these narratives in depth.

- 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?)

Assessment findings indicated that the course exceeded students' expectations. Student evaluations led to some minor changes in focus and pace, but overall student satisfaction was very high, about 20% higher than the average for courses in the Morrissey College overall. Moreover, during the 2017–8 school year, the syllabus of this course was revised in consultation with the University Core Committee to realign the course content with the new initiative on 'Difference, Justice, and the Common Good'. On the basis of feedback from the Core Committee, I have added a component to the course of reflection on what it means to go beyond '(mere) tolerance' of language difference to the goal of building a national consensus that expands community ownership and appreciation of language difference. I look forward to returning to this class in 2023.

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

Our latest departmental review occurred in 2012, and included review of each of the courses we offer.

Form completed by Margaret Thomas, 27 April 2021

## Form E-1-A for Boston College Departments/Programs

Department/Program: Eastern, Slavic, and German Studies,  
Program in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations

**NELC2061/SOCY1148: Language Memory and Identity in the Middle East  
(Salameh)**

**NELC 2161/RLRL2292/ENGL2348: Modern Middle Eastern and Arabic Literature  
(Salameh)**

**NELC2062/SOCY1150: States and Minorities in the Middle East (Salameh)**

- 1) **Have formal learning outcomes been developed? What are they?** (What specific sets of skills and knowledge does the department expect its majors to have acquired before they graduate?)

Learning outcomes for the courses listed above vary. But all three, satisfying cultural diversity core, address enduring questions made especially significant in our time: What are the Near and Middle East? Where are they situated geographically, historically, culturally, linguistically, emotively, and religiously? Who are the peoples of the Near and Middle East, how do we approach their varied histories, languages, traditions, and religious accretions, and how do their cultural, political, linguistic, and literary rituals compare to and differ from those of the “cultural west”? How does our understanding of the cultural productions and other traditions of the Near and Middle East (religious, linguistic, artistic, political...) shape our understanding of the region itself, *our* selves, and the world at large. In seeking answers to this quest for understanding, the courses examine ways in which language and history—remembered, restored, invented, and suppressed—have been used in the process of myth building and in the development of collective memories and corporate identities in the Near and Middle East of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the cultural and political challenges of the twenty-first century. Likewise, the courses also try to shed light on alternative and revisionist views challenging prevalent conceptions/assumptions about the Near and Middle East. In various contexts, and relying on a variety of texts (literary, journalistic, political, legal, religious, and historiographical) we consider how Middle Easterners, at least since the 2011 events known as “The Arab Spring,” have been questioning and rethinking their assumptions about themselves, their region, their identities, and the world outside of their immediate “neighborhoods.” In sum, the courses help us navigate our own “rethinking” of our own paradigms, stereotypes, and *idées reçues* about the Near and Middle East, which, shattered as they may be, remain “mosaics” *not* “monoliths,” and in that sense closer to—and in some cases a “progenitor” of—the “cultural west” than conventional knowledge might suggest. The skills students will have developed and honed at the conclusion of these courses relate to reading literature and other elements of cultural production critically, *not* only for meaning, but for implication as well, pointing to alternative ways of looking at the topics under consideration, bringing into their analyses a diversity of perspectives and a world of references spanning literature, philology, linguistics, history of ideas and political thought,

and even archaeology and human geology—elements of what the French refer to as “*un paysan travaillant un paysage qui fait naître un pays où vient germer une culture*” [a peasant honing a landscape yielding a country that gives birth to culture...]

- 2) **Where are these learning outcomes published? Be specific.** (Where are the department’s learning expectations accessible to potential majors: on the web or in the catalog or in your dept major handouts?)

**Learning outcomes are spelled out in the course syllabi, made available to students at the beginning of the semester through Canvas and hard-copies, and currently being worked into the department website.**

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

**Students write weekly (500-word) “reactions” which they post on Canvas, reflecting on the week’s readings, and constituting the bases of our online and in-class conversations. Students also write a 2000-word mid-term assignment, initially on a topic of their own choosing (but in consultation with the instructor,) synthesizing, analyzing, and responding to various questions generated in assigned readings and in-class discussions. In preparation for a 5000-word Final Paper, students also give a short oral presentation, and begin a class conversation on a research topic dealing with Near and Middle Eastern literary and cultural traditions, in an attempt to frame, question, challenge, and augment “self” and “other” understanding.**

- 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 instructor in collaboration with NELC colleagues interpret the evidence. Additionally, course evaluations are studied closely, including the qualitative narrative responses, and course adjustments are made accordingly.**

- 5) **What were the assessment results and what changes have been made as a result of using the data/evidence?** (Have there been any recent changes to your curriculum or program? Why were they made?)

**Students’ written work (weekly responses, as well as mid-term and final paper) is commented extensively, usually using the “comments” function in Word, and subsequently discussed in person and by way of class conversations. This is done for the purpose of future improvement in student performance and achievement, and further course development.**

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

**2012**

Completed by Franck Salameh, June 10, 2021.