

# Literature and Humanities: Literary and Cultural Diversity Assessment

## 2017-2018

### Goals and objects

The learning objective for the Literature and Humanities area is as follows: “read, interpret, and write cogently, creatively, and critically about diverse literary and cultural texts.” For the 2017-18 academic year, we assessed the “**diverse literary and cultural texts**” component of the objective.

### Measures and Criterion

Since we were beginning a new assessment protocol for this gen ed requirement, we debated how best to approach this assessment. The committee we put together for this cycle decided to try, first, a syllabus assessment. The purpose was to see if students were being expected to engage diverse literary and cultural texts. We created a simple rubric (attachment #1) and set the goal as an **average of 2.0 (meets expectations) for all courses assessed**. This year, we decided to assess **all available syllabi for ENGL 201, 201, 205, 206, 210, 211, and 212 courses** taught in the **spring 2018** semester. The total number of syllabi assessed was 41.

The assessment committee was made up of three people: the assistant department head, the chair of the sophomore literature committee, and a member of the sophomore literature committee.

We assessed in two areas: **diversity of perspective (DP)** and **diversity of forms/genres (DF)**. When we assessed diversity of perspectives we asked if, to the extent possible, instructors incorporated texts by either writers from traditionally marginalized groups or from non-canonical writers. For diversity of forms/genres, we asked if the course incorporated texts from multiple forms/genres or from various media: poetry, novels, non-fiction, film, music, etc. There is more than one kind of writer, more than one way to write, and more than one form such writing can take, and we expect our courses to reflect that.

### Findings

Neither of the two objectives were met. The average score across all courses was **1.6** in diversity of perspective and **1.6** in diversity of forms/genres. The breakdown by course is as follows:

Course	DP	DF
201: Brit Lit I	1.6	1.5
202: Brit Lit II	1.0	1.7
205: Am Lit I	1.8	1.7
206: Am Lit II	1.7	1.6
210: Literary Genres	1.8	1.5
211: Thematic App to Lit	1.3	1.8
212: Lit and Other Media	1.7	1.5
Average	1.6	1.6
<b>Overall</b>		<b>1.6</b>

## Improvements

We noticed the problem with ENGL 202 immediately, and will work to address this concern through our mentorship program and through meetings with the sophomore literature committee. We also plan to hold a peer-lead workshop for all instructors who will or do teach these courses. The workshop will address successful strategies for incorporating a diversity of literary perspectives, forms, and genres. We also plan to publish several “model” syllabi for each course. We will continue to make this a priority for the sophomore literature committee, as we are concerned with the findings.

There is one important caveat to these findings that negatively impacted the scores. Several instructors did not include a reading schedule, or even a list of texts. We could not assess the diversity of the readings in these classes, but we decided to assign the syllabi a score of “1” on the rubric nonetheless. If our score rises considerably on the next assessment cycle because we now require instructors to include a list of readings, that’s great. However, we still felt that the courses did not meet our expectations as a whole, and felt that the number reflected our feelings about the courses being taught.

Also, we will revisit this rubric to see how we may improve the criteria, plus we will work to include more specific expectation for outcourse.