

## Examples of Learning Outcomes and Assessment Instruments for GER Courses

### Objectives for General Education Requirements for Writing and Speaking

Each course in the writing and speaking category of the General Education Requirements will provide instruction and guidance that help students to:

1. communicate effectively in specific writing or speaking situations, which may include various academic, professional, or civic situations; and
2. understand and respond appropriately to the critical elements that shape communication situations, such as audience, purpose, and genre; and
3. critique their own writing or speaking and provide effective and useful feedback to enable other students to improve their writing or speaking; and
4. demonstrate critical and evaluative thinking skills in locating, analyzing, synthesizing, and using information in writing or speaking activities

### EXAMPLE

#### Course Learning Outcomes: ENG 332 Communication in Business and Management

Students should be able to:

1. communicate effectively in specific writing and speaking situations related to business and management
2. understand and respond appropriately especially to the needs of the audience
3. critique their own writing or speaking and provide effective and useful feedback to enable other students to improve their writing or speaking
4. locate, analyze, synthesize, and effectively use sources in business and management

#### Evaluation Instruments for Assessing Course Learning Outcomes: ENG 332

Students should be able to:

1. produce a variety of writing and speaking assignments showing that they can apply what they have learned in the course to communicating effectively in different specific situations, including situations defined by such genres as memos, business letters, business reports, and proposals
2. provide for every major assignment an analysis of the intended audience and a description of the way the written or spoken communication responds to the specific needs of the audience
3. Assignments:
  - Fill out peer review sheets for each assignment in such a way that the review provides valuable criticism of the peer's communication
  - Using the required video-tape of a student's oral presentation, that student will write a report evaluating the presentation and outlining ways that the presentation can be improved
4. write and present a formal business report in groups in which they are expected to do research appropriate to the project. Students' information literacy will be evaluated according to their ability to manage information in the reports and according to conferences with the teacher in which students describe their research process

## **Objectives for the General Education Requirements in the Visual and Performing Arts (DRAFT)**

Courses in the visual and performing arts deal with aesthetic, personal, practical, and cultural significance of the fine and applied arts. Each course in the visual and performing arts category of the General Education Requirements will provide instruction and guidance that help students to:

1. deepen their understanding of aesthetic traditions and strengthen their ability to interpret the arts through the analysis of structure, form, and style of specific works in the fine and applied arts; and
2. understand and evaluate other people's interpretations of works in the fine and applied arts; and
3. make critical judgments about works in the fine and applied arts based on criteria appropriate to the particular form of the arts; and
4. develop an awareness of the cultural and historical dimensions of the fine or applied art that is the focus of study.

### **EXAMPLES**

#### **Course Learning Outcomes: ARC 141 History of Design I**

Students should be able to:

1. deepen their understanding of aesthetic traditions and strengthen their ability to interpret the arts through analysis of any of a variety of man-made forms--such as architecture and construction, landscape and urban planning, and pure and applied three- and two- dimensional artifact--in Western civilization from pre-history to Imperial Rome
2. understand and evaluate interpretations of any of a variety of man-made forms in the period covered by the class
3. make critical judgments of any of a variety of man-made forms in the period covered by the class
4. develop and awareness of the cultural and historical dimensions of the wide variety of man-made forms in the period covered by this class

#### **Evaluation Instruments for Assessing Course Learning Outcomes: ARC 141**

Students should be able to:

1. write a meaningful comparison of two different works of art from different periods and/or different cultures found in a local museum, a comparison that relies on one of more features of analysis of the two works
2. find critiques of the two works and evaluate those critiques in terms of your own experience of the works.
3. do an in-class critique of a man-made form with a group and present your critique to the class
4. construct, with a group, a timeline that includes the development of the major man-made forms of all the periods we have studied and the major events that have helped to shape the historical and cultural contexts of those forms

### **Course Learning Outcomes: COM 103 Introduction to Theatre**

Students should be able to:

1. deepen their understanding of aesthetic traditions and strengthen their ability to interpret the theatre arts through the analysis of a live theatre performance
2. understand and evaluate the interpretations of plays by both students and professionals
3. critique an important aspect of a play you have seen
4. understand the cultural and historical dimension of a play

### **Evaluation Instruments for Assessing Course Learning Outcomes: COM 103**

Students should be able to:

1. write a review of a live theatre performance that includes, in addition to a synopsis of the plot, an analysis of the acting, direction, and technical arts of the performance.
2. read at least three student reviews one professional of a performance and comment on the differences in the reviews and evaluate the reviews in terms of their ability to fairly and effectively capture the essence of the performance
3. critique, as a part of the review of the play, the script of the performance you have seen in terms of its effectiveness; if possible, compare it with other plays by the same author or other plays of its kind
4. present (with a group) a symposium on a play we have read in class: comment on the content, substance, history, and meaning of the play and explain the generic context of the play, comedy, tragedy, farce, etc.

### **Objectives for the General Education Requirements in the Social Sciences**

Each course in the social science category of the General Education Requirements will provide instruction and guidance that help students to:

1. understand at least one of the following: human behavior, mental processes, organizational processes, or institutional processes; and
2. understand how social scientific methods may be applied to the study of human behavior, mental processes, organizational processes, or institutional processes; and
3. use theories or concepts of the social sciences to understand real-world problems, including the underlying origins of such problems.

### **EXAMPLE**

#### **Course Learning Outcomes: Sociology 202: Principles of Sociology**

Students should be able to:

1. demonstrate that they are familiar with the basic concepts by which sociologists understand human behavior; and
2. demonstrate that they are familiar with some of the important terms related to research methodologies in sociology; and
3. apply sociological concepts to real-world problems.

## Evaluation Instruments for Assessing Course Learning Outcomes

1. *test question*: Define the key terms *value* and *norms* and describe how these terms are used by sociologists to understand human behavior.
2. *test question*: Define *experimental* and *control groups* in an experimental methodology and show how these two groups are used by some sociologists to come to conclusions about human behavior.
3. *test question*: Our textbook has focused on the social functions of the *maven*, the *social contact*, and the *salesperson*. Apply these three social functions to a social problem you are personally familiar with and show how you would use these functions to describe how you would come to a solution to that problem.

## Objectives for General Education Requirements in the Humanities (History)

Each course in the history category of the General Education Requirements will provide instruction and guidance that help students to:

1. understand and engage in the human experience through the interpretation of evidence from the past situated in geotemporal context (this objective must be the central focus of each history course); and
2. become aware of the act of historical interpretation itself, through which historians use varieties of evidence to offer perspectives on the meaning of the past; and
3. make academic arguments about history using reasons and evidence for supporting those reasons that are appropriate to the field of study.

### EXAMPLE

#### Course Learning Outcomes: HI 216 Latin America Since 1826 (The Struggle for Human Rights)

Students should be able to:

1. understand human rights in the context of Latin American history through the interpretation of primary and secondary sources
2. become aware of the fact that all history is interpretive, founded in a wide range of motivations for constructing interpretations
3. make logical, historical arguments about Latin America

## Evaluation Instruments for Assessing Learning Outcomes

1. Thought questions, such as:
  - Read the reactions of Christopher Columbus to people in the Caribbean, written in 1492-93 (Primary Sources Page). You are a rival explorer, eager to get support for your voyages from the Spanish monarchs. Write a letter to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella in which you critically question some of Columbus's descriptions and assumptions about peoples of the Caribbean. Give some examples of ethnocentrism and errors you find.
  - It's the year 1876. The feminist congress of Latin American women is meeting. You are a delegate. Prepare your remarks on how and why discrimination and machismo reduce opportunities for women in both rural and urban society. Also identify any hopeful signs of change. Read Slatta, *Gauchos*, ch. 4-5 and the 1876 statement by an Argentine feminist on the Primary Source Page.

- Read Slatta, *Gauchos*, intro., ch. 1-5. Last name Q-Z: Identify negative traits often attributed to gauchos. Note examples of ethnocentrism. A-H: Identify positive traits often attributed to gauchos. I-P: How and why did such conflicting views arise? Think creatively and sociologically. That is, consider the background and experiences of the people who are giving descriptions of gauchos.
2. Assignments:
- It is something of an unhappy irony that Las Casa, “Defender of the Indian,” urged that Spain import African slaves in order to spare Native Americans. Role Playing: You are representatives to an international conference debating whether to abolish the African slave trade. Prepare your remarks. All students: On your Primary Sources Page, read the two anti-slavery poems and the conceptual overview of the varieties of racism. Please note that when a majority of individuals may not be racist, that institutions and social pressures can perpetuate racism for a very long time. The last name Q-Z: Read document 1, the essay by Fitzhugh, and summarize and critique his pro-slavery arguments. A-P: Read the anti-slavery documents 2, 3, and 4 and summarize and critique their arguments.
  - Current events reports: Collect three articles from Latin American newspapers and discuss for each article the peculiarly Latin American perspective you find in the article and how that perspective is different from a US perspective on that same event.
3. Analytical essays:
- Gaucho Human Rights (read Slatta ch. 6-8 and the “International Declaration of Human Rights” from Primary Sources Page): Explain how and why Argentina’s elites violated the gaucho’s human rights as defined by the International Declaration.
  - US Responses to Human Rights: Using Cleary, ch. 5-7 and prior discussion and student reports, analyze the contradiction between US support for military dictatorships and US policy claims to promoting human rights and democracy.
  - Review ALL the readings and your notes for the semester. Identify and categorize: (1) the major reasons for (causes of) human rights abuses during the past five centuries in Latin America; and (2) the major types of abuses (nature of the actions, against whom). In both cases, provide specific evidence and quotations from primary sources.

### **Objectives for General Education Requirements in the Humanities (Literature)**

Each course in the literature category of the General Education Requirements will provide instruction and guidance that help students to:

1. understand and engage in the human experience through the interpretation of literature (this objective must be the central focus of each literature course); and
2. become aware of the act of interpretation itself as a critical form of knowing in the study of literature; and
3. make scholarly arguments about literature using reasons and ways of supporting those reasons that are appropriate to the field of study.

## EXAMPLE

### Course Learning Outcomes: ENG 251 Major British Authors

Students should be able to:

1. show that they can take an aspect of human experience and explore that aspect in terms of a literary text or texts, examining their own presuppositions related to the human experience and using the text(s) to discover a more complex understanding of the experience.
2. become aware of the complex and dynamic nature of the interpretation of literary texts, the forces that shape interpretation.
3. make academic arguments about the text of a major British author using reasons and evidence from texts to support the reasons

### Evaluation Instruments for Assessing Course Learning Outcomes: ENG 251

Students should be able to:

1. discuss the play, *Anthony and Cleopatra*, in terms of love. The best discussions are those that demonstrate an understanding of the complexity of love as represented in the play, treat that understanding of love as related to modern assumptions of love, and show what you have learned about love through your reading and analysis of the play.
2. identify a literary passage and discuss the significance of that passage. Your discussion should show demonstrate your understanding of the passage as central to the interpretation of the text it is taken from, different ways it could be interpreted, and how different interpretations are shape the understanding of the text.
3. respond to one of the following questions: What is the greatest act of betrayal in *Anthony and Cleopatra*? Or How does Cleopatra destabilize gender boundaries in the play? In your response you should make your answer as an argumentative claim and use evidence from the play to support your claim.

## Objectives for General Education Requirements in the Natural Sciences

Each course in the natural sciences category of the General Education Requirements will provide instruction and guidance that help students to:

1. use the methods and processes of science in testing hypotheses, solving problems, and making decisions; and
2. articulate and make inferences from the major concepts, principles, laws, theories, and responsible applications of science in specific disciplines; and
3. recognize the role of science in the interactions of science, technology, and society.

## EXAMPLE

### Course Learning Outcomes: CH 100 Chemistry and Society

Students should be able to:

1. apply what they've learned about scientific methodology in one experimental situation to a different situation, to reason through the new situation scientifically and project likely results; and
2. use a basic chemical principle to explain a specific chemical process and to state what the chemical process tells the students about the principle; and
3. identify various ways in which chemistry affects their everyday lives.

### **Evaluation Instruments for Assessing Course Learning Outcomes: CH 100**

1. *test question*: In class you observed an experiment that demonstrated X. Apply what you learned in that experiment to experiment Y. What would you hypothesize would be the results in experiment Y. Show how you used what you observed in experiment X to reach your hypothesis in experiment Y.
2. *test question*: The concept of quantization of energy provides for an explanation of why certain materials burn in flames of certain colors. Apply the concept of quantization of energy to the burning of wood. What color is the flame of wood? Explain why it is that color. What does the color of wood flame tell you about the nature of reacting materials?
4. *assignment*: collect five articles from the popular press--newspapers, magazines, web sites, etc.—that show chemistry in the news.