

*SUNY Potsdam*  
***Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan- English & Communication (Literature and Literature/Writing Concentration)***

***Department Name: English and Communication***

***Date Submitted and Academic Year: 10/3/2011 AY 2011-12***

***Department Assessment Coordinator or Faculty Member Completing this Form:***  
Dr. Lisa M. Wilson, Department Chair

***Assessment Plans:***

**I. Intended Student Learning Outcomes**

**a. Student Outcomes for English majors with Literature and Literature/Writing concentrations**

1. Literature or Literature/Writing majors will be able to formulate a logically coherent analytical (i.e., not solely aesthetic) critique of a work (or works) of literature, either independently or working in concert with peers. Such a critique should demonstrate knowledge of and facility with core concepts within the specialized vocabulary of literary criticism (e.g., terms such as – but not limited to – metaphor, symbolism, characterization, narrative, imagery, allegory, etc.). The critique should also recognize the necessity of using – and logically justifying the use of – specific examples (either in direct quotation or paraphrase) from primary and possibly secondary texts in constructing supporting arguments.
2. Graduating Literature or Literature/Writing majors will demonstrate a critical perspective in their formal analysis of literature that may draw upon but is not limited strictly to their personal experience or aesthetic values. Accordingly, they should be able to identify and explicate themes within a text (or multiple texts). Subsequently, they should be able to formulate an argument as to the literary relevance of these themes within at least one of the following contextual categories: considerations of genre or other formal/functional conventions; considerations of aesthetic, social, political, or philosophical orthodoxy within a given culture; allusion to or other forms of inter-textual influence; considerations of the nature/role of authorship; considerations of the nature of what constitutes a text; some other interpretive context, provided it is accompanied by a logically coherent rationale regarding its relevance to specifically literary interpretation.
3. Graduating Literature or Literature/Writing majors will be able to find, to evaluate, and to incorporate secondary materials to enhance and support the process of literary analysis. Such research may demonstrate any or all of the following: a recognition of and engagement with existing interpretations of a particular work or author; an awareness of the need for authoritative sources for discussions of historical, cultural, or other contexts; a justification for the use of a mode of interpretation (e.g., astrophysics, musicology) not traditionally associated with literary analysis. The use of secondary sources should be properly attributed within the text
4. Graduating Literature or Literature/Writing majors will demonstrate the ability to transcend statement of either the abstruse or of the obvious in their work. Instead, they

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should demonstrate the ability to analyze texts synthetically in order to form a new, logically defensible position. While the expectation should not be that their work is absolutely novel, it should also not *simply* repeat or reject the position of their instructors, of their peers, or of their primary and/or secondary source texts. Students' writing should demonstrate an argumentative process predicated on explaining connections, whether between texts, between authors, between primary and secondary sources, between critics, or between symbols and interpretations.

**II. Assessment Plan for English: Literature and Literature/Writing majors**

PROCESS: Each faculty member teaching a LITR course numbered 301 and above will use the rubric we designed (based on student learning objectives for Literature) to report on the achievement level of the senior Literature and Literature/Writing majors. We agreed that "meeting" the student learning outcome would be loosely equivalent to performance at a C (acceptable/competent) level, "not meeting" is defined as below that (see specific guidelines, attached).

1. Faculty will choose one relevant assignment in such a class, then assess and report on the level of performance of the senior literature and literature/writing majors ONLY, not all class members. (A spreadsheet listing all such majors will be sent to faculty each semester.)
2. Faculty will assess assignments only on the SLO's that are relevant to their particular assignment/course; most assignments will not cover all of the SLO's. They will use the spreadsheet provided to report results and also provide the chair with a copy of the assignment used in assessment (writing prompt, essay assignment sheet, etc.)
3. Faculty will each submit one student essay representing overall performance at a C (acceptable/competent) level. They will also submit one essay "not meeting" one or more standards, if one is available.
4. All materials are due by the day grades are due.
5. Chair will compile the results and faculty will meet early in the semester following to discuss results and their implications for our program. Chair will gather sample student work (removing student names and other identifiers) in order to develop a set of samples to be used to norm faculty's use of the rubric in the years to come.
6. SLO's are available to students through: college website, on major advising forms on department website and in paper in department office, and on individual course syllabi.