

AY 2017-2018 Assessment

Program: Bachelor's Degree in English

College: Arts and Sciences

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Northwestern State Mission: Northwestern State University is a responsive, Student-oriented institution that is committed to the creation, dissemination, and acquisition of knowledge through teaching, research, and service. The University maintains as its highest priority excellence in teaching in graduate and undergraduate programs. Northwestern State University prepares its Students to become productive members of society and promotes economic development and improvements in the quality of life of the citizens in its region.

College of Arts and Sciences' Mission: The College of Arts & Sciences, the largest college at Northwestern State University, is a diverse community of scholars, teachers, and students, working collaboratively to acquire, create, and disseminate knowledge through transformational, high-impact experiential learning practices, research, and service. The College strives to produce graduates who are productive members of society equipped with the capability to promote economic and social development and improve the overall quality of life in the region. The College provides an unequalled undergraduate education in the social and behavioral sciences, English, communication, journalism, media arts, biological and physical sciences, and the creative and performing arts, and at the graduate level in the creative and performing arts, English, TESOL, and Homeland Security. Uniquely, the College houses the Louisiana Scholars' College (the State's designated Honors College), the Louisiana Folklife Center, and the Creole Center, demonstrating its commitment to community service, research, and preservation of Louisiana's precious resources.

Department of English, Foreign Languages, and Cultural Studies Mission

Statement: The Department of English, Foreign Languages, and Cultural Studies has an active, diverse, and vital academic program, offering the Bachelor of Arts in English, the Minor in English, the Minor in Spanish, the Master of Arts in English, and two Graduate Certificates: Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and Writing for Business, Industry, and Technology (WBIT is a new program, beginning in fall, 2017). The Department teaches the required English core courses for undergraduates as well as large number of courses required for students in various majors. The Department serves over 6,000 NSU students per academic year, and this total does not include our English dual-enrollment program. Graduates are prepared to work in a wide variety of industries, in jobs that require skills in communication, data analysis, and creative, innovative thinking.

Undergraduate English Major Mission Statement: The undergraduate major in English is a dynamic, student-oriented program focused on rigorously preparing

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students to achieve in diverse fields. The undergraduate program focuses on developing, providing, and supporting innovative, responsive, and accessible education. The program encourages a mastery of disciplinary literature, thoughtful research, professional development, and cross-curricular innovation as members of an engaged scholarly community. Through encompassing a diverse suite of related fields of study, the English major offers its students access to creative, critical, and compositional skills, providing them invaluable versatility in a rapidly-changing market.

Methodology: The assessor(s) will electronically collect student writing and assignment descriptions. The assessor(s) will determine which SLOs each assignment targets. Student writing will be assessed using the rubric appended to this document. On the rubric, the “targeted” column pertains to whether the SLO was explicitly targeted by the paper assignment, as determined by the assessor(s). On the rubric, the “evaluation” column is for the assessor’s evaluation of how well the paper meets each SLO. The assessor(s) will mark “not applicable” for any goal that is not relevant to the pertinent assignment. The assessor(s) will mark a writing sample “weak” if the goal was explicitly targeted by the assignment but does not appear in the paper. Faculty will meet during the fall 2017 on call week to discuss the results and determine the actions that need to be taken in response to the evaluation. Individual meetings will be held with faculty during on call week, if necessary. The Director of Undergraduate Studies, in consultation with faculty and the department advisory committee, will propose changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next period, and, where needed, curriculum and program changes.

Student Learning Outcomes

SLO 1. Analysis and interpretation of evidence. Students in the English BA program will perform analysis and interpretation of evidence. In literature, film studies, and folklore papers, students will use textual evidence from close reading to defend an interpretive thesis, including locating the significance of chosen passages in the context of a larger work. For those students who take professional writing courses, this evidence may include primary materials such as websites, job ads, writing samples, etc. and the argument may be practical rather than interpretive.

Measure 1.1 (Direct – Skill)

On an annual basis, a sample number of research papers and/or projects from all English courses taught that year will be evaluated by a panel of faculty members, using the standardized *Assessment Rubric for English Major Writing* (attached). The writing will be evaluated to determine if students can demonstrate a basic ability to analyze and interpret evidence from a variety of texts, broadly defined to include fiction, nonfiction, drama, film, new media, and primary texts including interviews and oral histories. At least 80% of students sampled will score a 3 (competency) or higher on the evaluation.

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Findings for Measure 1.1

AY 2017-2018: Target was met, 91% of student work was deemed competent or higher on the rubric for analysis and interpretation of evidence.

Analysis: In AY 2016-2017, the target was met, as 58 out of the 65 (89%) student projects sampled were judged competent or higher in their ability to analyze and interpret evidence from a variety of texts. Based on the analysis of these results, and to further aid students in their use of textual evidence, we increased instruction in close reading skills as they apply to fiction, nonfiction, drama, film, new media, and primary texts including interviews and oral histories. This instruction took various forms, including textual explication assignments, rhetorical analyses, and video essays.

In AY 2017-18, the target was met again, as 64 out of 70 (91%) student projects were judged competent or higher in their ability to analyze and interpret evidence from a variety of texts. This represents a 2% increase from the previous year. Increased instruction in close reading skills is the reason for this increase. Further action will be taken to emphasize the skills of close reading, particularly as they apply to nonfiction, primary texts, and scholarly sources.

Decision: Consistent findings from both AY 2016-2017 and AY 2017-2018 provide evidence that the English major successfully fulfills SLO 1.1. The AY 2017-2018 results marked a 2% improvement over AY 2016-2017. This increase results from increased instruction in close reading skills. Analysis of these results in conjunction with our drive for continuous improvement demonstrates that further actions will be taken to sustain and advance students' ability to analyze and interpret evidence from a variety of texts. Our courses will be further refined to increase instruction in the skills of close reading, particularly as they apply to nonfiction, primary texts, and scholarly sources. Because of our improvement, we will be setting our new target at 95% of student work receiving a score of competent or higher on the *Rubric for English Major Writing* for AY 2018-2019.

SLO 2. Application of theory. Students in the English BA program will use theory to inform their analysis and argumentation. This theory may be literary, philosophical, cultural, psychological, political, economic, rhetorical, etc. in nature, and students will reference it explicitly in their writing, as, for example, an explicitly formulated Marxist analysis of the representation of class in a novel. This outcome does not pertain to general approaches that may have an unstated theoretical basis. For example, a focus on the passivity of female characters in a novel would not count for this outcome, unless feminist theory is an explicit topic of the paper as well.

Measure 2.1 (Direct – Knowledge/Skill)

On an annual basis, a sample number of research papers and/or projects from all English courses taught that year will be evaluated by a panel of faculty members, using the standardized *Assessment Rubric for English Major Writing* (attached). The writing will be evaluated to determine if students can demonstrate a basic knowledge of

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fundamental principles of theory as it relates to a given course. At least 80% of students sampled will score a 3 (competency) or higher on the evaluation.

Findings for Measure 2.1

AY 2017-2018: Target was met, 92% of student work was deemed competent or higher on the rubric for application of theory.

Analysis: In AY 2016-2017, the target was met, as 38 out of the 47 (81%) student projects sampled were judged competent or higher in their ability to use theory to inform their analysis and argumentation. Based on the analysis of these results, and to further aid students in achieving basic knowledge of fundamental principles of theory as it relates to a given course, we increased instruction in theory and its application across our curriculum. This instruction took various forms, including more reading assignments, short reading response essays, and presentations on specific theories or theorists.

In AY 2017-18, the target was met again, as 23 out of 25 (92%) student projects were judged competent or higher in their ability to use theory to inform their analysis and argumentation. This represents an 11% increase from the previous year. Increased instruction in theory and its applications is the reason for this increase. Further action will be taken to instruct students in the fundamental principles of theory as it relates to a given course and across our curriculum.

Decision: Consistent findings from both AY 2016-2017 and AY 2017-2018 provide evidence that the English major successfully fulfills SLO 2.1. The AY 2017-2018 results marked an 11% improvement over AY 2016-2017. This increase results from increased instruction in principles of theory and its applications. Analysis of these results in conjunction with our drive for continuous improvement demonstrates that further actions will be taken to sustain and advance students' ability to use theory to inform their analysis and argumentation. Our courses will be further refined to increase instruction in the fundamental principles of theory as it relates to a given course and across our curriculum. Because of our improvement, we will be setting our new target at 95% of student work receiving a score of competent or higher on the *Rubric for English Major Writing* for AY 2018-2019.

SLO 3. Application of established methodologies in the field. Students in the English BA program will use established methodologies of literary criticism. This outcome pertains to the use of the discourse of literary criticism, film studies, rhetorical theory, and cultural studies at a complex level, in regard to either: (a) specific approaches to interpretation that have established currency in the discipline, such as feminism and new historicism, but which do not involve the explicit theorization of learning outcome #2; and (b) terminology and techniques of formal analysis wielded in a more systematic and knowledgeable manner than the more general close reading that is covered by learning outcome #1.

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Measure 3.1 (Direct – Knowledge/Skill)

On an annual basis, a sample number of research papers and/or projects from all English courses taught that year will be evaluated by a panel of faculty members, using the standardized *Assessment Rubric for English Major Writing* (attached). The writing will be evaluated to determine if students can demonstrate a basic knowledge of the methodologies that apply to a given course. At least 80% of students sampled will score a 3 (competency) or higher on the evaluation.

Findings for Measure 3.1

AY 2017-2018: Target was met, 92% of student work was deemed competent or higher on the rubric for application of established methodologies.

Analysis: In AY 2016-2017, the target was met, as 46 out of the 50 (92%) student projects sampled were judged competent or higher in their ability to use established methodologies of literary criticism. While the analysis of these results reflects that learning is occurring, the faculty determined they could further aid students in their use of established methodologies, we increased instruction in specific approaches to interpretation that have established currency in the discipline related to each course. This instruction took various forms, including increased readings, short reading response essays, and presentations on specific methodologies.

In AY 2017-18, the target was met again, as 34 out of 37 (92%) student projects were judged competent or higher in their ability to analyze and interpret evidence from a variety of texts. There was no increase from the previous year, despite increased instruction in established methodologies. Further action will be taken to increase instruction in (a) specific approaches to interpretation that have established currency in the discipline, such as feminism and new historicism and (b) terminology and techniques of formal analysis at a complex level.

Decision: Consistent findings from both AY 2016-2017 and AY 2017-2018 provide evidence that the English major successfully fulfills SLO 3.1. The AY 2017-2018 results showed no improvement over AY 2016-2017, despite increased instruction in established methodologies. Analysis of these results in conjunction with our drive for continuous improvement demonstrates that further actions will be taken to sustain and advance students' ability to use established methodologies in the discipline. Our courses will be further refined to increase instruction in (a) specific approaches to interpretation that have established currency in the discipline, such as feminism and new historicism and (b) terminology and techniques of formal analysis at a complex level. Because of our improvement, we will be setting our new target at 95% of student work receiving a score of competent or higher on the *Rubric for English Major Writing* for AY 2018-2019.

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SLO 4. Engagement with social and literary history. Students in the English BA program will engage with social and literary history. While ideally we want students to have a sense of how social and literary history are reciprocal, this outcome may appear as engagement with *either* social history *or* literary history.

Measure 4.1 (Direct – Knowledge)

On an annual basis, a sample number of research papers and/or projects from all English courses taught that year will be evaluated by a panel of faculty members, using the standardized *Assessment Rubric for English Major Writing* (attached). The writing will be evaluated to determine if students can demonstrate a basic knowledge of social and/or literary history. At least 80% of students sampled will score a 3 (competency) or higher on the evaluation.

Findings for Measure 4.1

AY 2017-2018: Target was met, 96% of student work was deemed competent or higher on the rubric for engagement with social and literary history.

Analysis: In AY 2016-2017, the target was met, as 31 out of the 33 (94%) student projects sampled were judged competent or higher in their ability to engage with social and literary history. Based on the analysis of these results, and to further aid students in their ability to demonstrate a basic knowledge of social and/or literary history, we increased instruction in both social and literary history and the way these contexts are reciprocal. This instruction took various forms, including increased readings, short reading response essays, longer essays, video essays, and presentations.

In AY 2017-18, the target was met again, as 52 out of 54 (96%) student projects were judged competent or higher in their ability to engage with social and literary history. This represents a 2% increase from the previous year. Increased instruction in social and literary history is the reason for this increase. Further action will be taken to increase instruction in both social and literary history and the way these contexts are reciprocal.

Decision: Consistent findings from both AY 2016-2017 and AY 2017-2018 provide evidence that the English major successfully fulfills SLO 4.1. The AY 2017-2018 results marked a 2% improvement over AY 2016-2017. This increase results from increased instruction in both social and literary history. Analysis of these results in conjunction with our drive for continuous improvement demonstrates that further actions will be taken to sustain and advance students' ability to demonstrate a basic knowledge of social and/or literary history. Our courses will be further refined to increase instruction in both social and literary history and the way these contexts are reciprocal. Because of our improvement, we will be setting our new target at 98% of student work receiving a score of competent or higher on the *Rubric for English Major Writing* for AY 2018-2019.

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SLO 5. Engagement with genre and form. Students in the English BA program will engage with genre and form. For literature, film, and folklore papers, this outcome requires explicit uses of the terminology or concepts of genre or form, or creative imitations of a specific genre or form. For those students who take creative writing and filmmaking courses, this outcome may appear as implicit engagement, in the creative work itself, with generic and formal conventions, as for example the general generic categories of poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, and screenwriting; the finer distinctions among, say, prose poem, flash fiction, short story, novella, and novel; specific poetic verse forms such as the sonnet, villanelle, or free verse; modes of fiction such as magical realism or psychological realism; or structural conventions such as linear narrative or experimental narratives that employ a variety of discourses. This outcome also pertains to electronic media-specific composition and design skills, for example, composition for web pages, including effective paragraph length, linking, scannable prose, use of keywords, alignment; proximity, repetition, contrast and color, branding, ease of navigation, clarity and choice of visuals, font, and other multimedia.

Measure 5.1 (Direct – Knowledge)

On an annual basis, a sample number of research papers and/or projects from all English courses taught that year will be evaluated by a panel of faculty members, using the standardized *Assessment Rubric for English Major Writing* (attached). The writing will be evaluated to determine if students can demonstrate a basic knowledge of fundamental principles of genre and form in the context of a given course. At least 80% of students sampled will score a 3 (competency) or higher on the evaluation.

Findings for Measure 5.1

AY 2017-2018: Target was met, 97% of student work was deemed competent or higher on the rubric for engagement with genre and form.

Analysis: In AY 2016-2017, the target was met, as 55 out of the 64 (86%) student projects sampled were judged competent or higher in their ability to demonstrate a basic knowledge of fundamental principles of genre and form in the context of a given course. Based on the analysis of these results, it was determined the faculty could further aid students in their engagement with genre and form, we increased instruction in explicit uses of the terminology or concepts of genre or form and creative imitations of a specific genre or form. This instruction took various forms, including writing assignments that specifically required students to engage with a specific genre, reading assignments from a variety of genres, and assignments that allowed students to produce texts in a genre of their choosing.

In AY 2017-18, the target was met again, as 36 out of 37 (97%) student projects were judged competent or higher in their ability to demonstrate a basic knowledge of fundamental principles of genre and form in the context of a given course. This represents an 11% increase from the previous year. Increased instruction in genre and form are the reason for this increase. Further action will be taken to emphasize explicit

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uses of the terminology or concepts of genre or form and creative imitations of a specific genre or form.

Decision: Consistent findings from both AY 2016-2017 and AY 2017-2018 provide evidence that the English major successfully fulfills SLO 5.1. The AY 2017-2018 results marked an 11% improvement over AY 2016-2017. This increase results from increased instruction in concepts of genre and form. Analysis of these results in conjunction with our drive for continuous improvement demonstrates that further actions will be taken to sustain and advance students' ability to demonstrate a basic knowledge of fundamental principles of genre and form in the context of a given course. Our courses will be further refined to increase instruction in explicit uses of the terminology or concepts of genre or form and creative imitations of a specific genre or form. Because of our improvement, we will be setting our new target at 100% of student work receiving a score of competent or higher on the *Rubric for English Major Writing* for AY 2018-2019.

SLO 6. Effective writing. Students in the English BA program will demonstrate effective writing. Students will demonstrate the general skills of college-level exposition developed to some degree of sophistication, as evident in the clarity, precision, fluidity, and aptness of sentence-level grammar, mechanics, and word choice; as well as in higher-level structural flexibility of sentences and paragraphs. For those students who take creative writing and courses, this outcome also involves the effective rendering of poetic lines, poetic stanzas, and dialogue. For students completing professional writing projects with a practical emphasis, and is a measure of the projects' rhetorical recognition of their specific audiences, including word choice, tone, selection of evidence, organization, and style (e.g., creative or traditional). This outcome also involves the production of active, concise, engaging prose in clearly delineated chunks in professional writing assignments.

Measure 6.1 (Direct – Skill)

On an annual basis, a sample number of research papers and/or projects from all English courses taught that year will be evaluated by a panel of faculty members, using the standardized *Assessment Rubric for English Major Writing* (attached). The writing will be evaluated to determine if students can demonstrate a basic ability to compose effective writing. At least 80% of students sampled will score a 3 (competency) or higher on the evaluation.

Findings for Measure 6.1

AY 2017-2018: Target was met, 87% of student work was deemed competent or higher on the rubric for effective writing.

Analysis: In AY 2016-2017, the target was met, as 67 out of the 79 (85%) student projects sampled were judged competent or higher in effective writing. Based on the analysis of these results, faculty increased instruction in the general skills of college-level exposition to assist students in their use of effective writing and develop a degree

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of sophistication across all courses. This instruction took various forms, including writing exercises, draft assignments, peer-review sessions, and one-on-one feedback sessions.

In AY 2017-18, the target was met again, as 75 out of 86 (87%) student projects were judged competent or higher in effective writing. This represents a 1% increase from the previous year. Increased instruction in effective writing is the reason for this increase. Further action will be taken to emphasize the skills of college-level exposition, as evident in the clarity, precision, fluidity, and aptness of sentence-level grammar, mechanics, and word choice; as well as in higher-level structural flexibility of sentences and paragraphs.

Decision: Consistent findings from both AY 2016-2017 and AY 2017-2018 provide evidence that the English major successfully fulfills SLO 6.1. The AY 2017-2018 results marked a 1% improvement over AY 2016-2017. This increase results from increased instruction in effective writing. Analysis of these results in conjunction with our drive for continuous improvement demonstrates that further actions will be taken to sustain and advance students' use of effective writing. Our courses will be further refined to increase instruction in the skills of college-level exposition, as evident in the clarity, precision, fluidity, and aptness of sentence-level grammar, mechanics, and word choice; as well as in higher-level structural flexibility of sentences and paragraphs. Because of our improvement, we will be setting our new target at 90% of student work receiving a score of competent or higher on the *Rubric for English Major Writing* for AY 2018-2019.

SLO 7. Establishment of sound, applicable arguments. Students in the English BA program will establish sound, applicable arguments. In literature, film studies, and folklore courses, students will clearly articulate a substantive thesis, for which they will provide a logically reasoned and organized defense. For those students who take professional writing courses, the argument may take various practical forms, such as recommendations for a client, a personal statement of qualifications, or carefully selected primary evidence for a portfolio. For such practical arguments, this outcome includes the feasibility of the argument.

Measure 7.1 (Direct – Skill)

On an annual basis, a sample number of research papers and/or projects from all English courses taught that year will be evaluated by a panel of faculty members, using the standardized *Assessment Rubric for English Major Writing* (attached). The writing will be evaluated to determine if students can demonstrate a basic ability to craft a sound argument. At least 80% of students sampled will score a 3 (competency) or higher on the evaluation.

Findings for Measure 7.1

AY 2017-2018: Target was met, 88% of student work was deemed competent or higher on the rubric for establishment of sound, applicable arguments.

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Analysis: In AY 2016-2017, the target was not met, as 49 out of the 63 (78%) student projects sampled were judged competent or higher in their ability to establish sound, applicable arguments. The analysis of these results supports increased instruction in how to clearly articulate a substantive thesis and provide a logically reasoned and organized defense. This instruction took various forms, including thesis-writing exercises, quizzes to identify strong versus weak thesis statements, draft assignments, peer-review sessions, and one-on-one feedback sessions.

In AY 2017-18, the target was met, as 59 out of 67 (88%) student projects were judged competent or higher in their ability to establish sound, applicable arguments. This represents a 10% increase from the previous year. Increased instruction in developing and using sound, applicable arguments is the reason for this increase. Further action will be taken to emphasize how to clearly articulate a substantive thesis and provide a logically reasoned and organized defense across courses in our major.

Decision: Consistent findings from both AY 2016-2017 and AY 2017-2018 provide evidence that the English major successfully fulfills SLO 7.1. The AY 2017-2018 results marked a 10% improvement over AY 2016-2017. This increase results from increased instruction in crafting sound, applicable arguments. Analysis of these results in conjunction with our drive for continuous improvement demonstrates that further actions will be taken to sustain and advance students' ability to establish sound, applicable arguments. Our courses will be further refined to increase instruction in how to clearly articulate a substantive thesis and provide a logically reasoned and organized defense. Because of our improvement, we will be setting our new target at 90% of student work receiving a score of competent or higher on the *Rubric for English Major Writing* for AY 2018-2019.

SLO 8. Relevant use of sources. Students in the English BA program will use sources beyond the one of primary focus to establish relevant support for their argumentation. These sources may be assigned by an instructor specifically for an assignment, ones assigned earlier in the course, or ones the student knows from another course, in addition to those discovered through research.

Measure 8.1 (Direct – Skill)

On an annual basis, a sample number of research papers and/or projects from all English courses taught that year will be evaluated by a panel of faculty members, using the standardized *Assessment Rubric for English Major Writing* (attached). The writing will be evaluated to determine if students can demonstrate a basic ability to identify and incorporate relevant sources. At least 80% of students sampled will score a 3 (competency) or higher on the evaluation.

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Findings for Measure 8.1

AY 2017-2018: Target was met, 88% of student work was deemed competent or higher on the rubric for relevant use of sources.

Analysis: In AY 2016-2017, the target was not met, as 37 out of the 56 (66%) student projects sampled were judged competent or higher in their ability to identify and incorporate relevant sources. Based on the analysis of these results, and to further aid students in their use of relevant sources, we increased instruction in the use of sources beyond the one of primary focus to establish relevant support for their argumentation. This instruction took various forms, including worksheets on identifying relevant sources, presentations on sources relevant to a course, resource posts, and overall increased source use requirements.

In AY 2017-18, the target was met, as 49 out of 56 (88%) student projects were judged competent or higher in their ability to identify and incorporate relevant sources. This represents a 22% increase from the previous year. Increased instruction in the relevant use of sources is the reason for this increase. Further action will be taken to emphasize the research process and the use of sources beyond the one of primary focus to establish relevant support for their argumentation.

Decision: Consistent findings from both AY 2016-2017 and AY 2017-2018 provide evidence that the English major successfully fulfills SLO 8.1. The AY 2017-2018 results marked a 22% improvement over AY 2016-2017. This increase results from increased instruction in the relevant use of sources. Analysis of these results in conjunction with our drive for continuous improvement demonstrates that further actions will be taken to sustain and advance students' ability to identify and incorporate relevant sources. Our courses will be further refined to increase instruction in the research process and the use of sources beyond the one of primary focus to establish relevant support for their argumentation. Because of our improvement, we will be setting our new target at 90% of student work receiving a score of competent or higher on the *Rubric for English Major Writing* for AY 2018-2019.

SLO 9. Independent, relevant research. Students in the English BA program will conduct independent research to establish relevant support for their argumentation. This outcome requires student-directed research, usually for assignments that explicitly require such research. For those students who take professional writing, folklore, and film courses, this outcome may appear in other forms than traditional library research, such as interviews, investigations of companies or individuals, or comparison of websites, films, or versions of folktales.

Measure 9.1 (Direct – Skill)

On an annual basis, a sample number of research papers and/or projects from all English courses taught that year will be evaluated by a panel of faculty members, using the standardized *Assessment Rubric for English Major Writing* (attached). The writing

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will be evaluated to determine if students can demonstrate a basic ability to conduct independent, relevant research. At least 80% of students sampled will score a 3 (competency) or higher on the evaluation.

Findings for Measure 9.1

AY 2017-2018: Target was not met, 79% of student work was deemed competent or higher on the rubric for independent, relevant research.

Analysis: In AY 2016-2017, the target was not met, as 24 out of the 37 (65%) student projects sampled were judged competent or higher in their ability to conduct independent, relevant research. Based on the analysis of these results, and to further aid students in their use of research, we increased instruction in how to conduct independent research to establish relevant support for their argumentation. This instruction took various forms, including overviews of our library's resources, database use assignments, and annotated bibliographies.

In AY 2017-18, the target was not met again, as 33 out of 42 (79%) student projects were judged competent or higher in their ability to conduct independent, relevant research. However, this represents a 14% increase from the previous year, and is only 1% short of our goal. Increased instruction in conducting independent, relevant research is the reason for this increase. Further action will be taken to emphasize the research process and how to conduct independent research to establish relevant support for students' argumentation.

Decision: Consistent findings from both AY 2016-2017 and AY 2017-2018 provide evidence that the English major successfully fulfills SLO 9.1. The AY 2017-2018 results marked a 14% improvement over AY 2016-2017. This increase results from increased instruction in conducting independent, relevant research. Analysis of these results in conjunction with our drive for continuous improvement demonstrates that further actions will be taken to sustain and advance students' ability to conduct independent, relevant research. Our courses will be further refined to increase instruction in the research process and how to conduct independent research to establish relevant support for students' argumentation. Furthermore, undergraduate faculty will participate in professional training that directs them in how to integrate increased independent research in their course and assignment design. Because of our improvement, we will be setting our new target at 82% of student work receiving a score of competent or higher on the *Rubric for English Major Writing* for AY 2018-2019.

SLO 10. Documentation of sources. Students in the English BA program will document resources accurately, consistently, and fully. This outcome extends to the documentation of all sources in any paper that requires documentation (that is, in more than just research papers). For those students who take professional writing courses, this document extends to image credits and linking to websites; it does not necessarily involve a formal references page.

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Measure 10.1 (Direct – Skill)

On an annual basis, a sample number of research papers and/or projects from all English courses taught that year will be evaluated by a panel of faculty members, using the standardized *Assessment Rubric for English Major Writing* (attached). The writing will be evaluated to determine if students can demonstrate a basic ability to document sources in the citation style specified by the professor. At least 80% of students sampled will score a 3 (competency) or higher on the evaluation.

Findings for Measure 10.1

AY 2017-2018: Target was met, 80% of student work was deemed competent or higher on the rubric for documentation of sources.

Analysis: In AY 2016-2017, the target was not met, as 30 out of the 57 (53%) student projects sampled were judged competent or higher in their ability to document sources in the citation style specified by the professor. Based on the analysis of these results, and to further aid students in their use of textual evidence, we increased instruction in how to document resources accurately, consistently, and fully. This instruction took various forms, including citation management software, basic MLA and APA instruction, citation worksheets, and annotated bibliographies.

In AY 2017-18, the target was met, as 48 out of 60 (80%) student projects were judged competent or higher in their ability to document sources in the citation style specified by the professor. This represents a 27% increase from the previous year. Increased instruction in how to document sources is the reason for this increase. Further action will be taken to emphasize the importance of citation and how to document resources accurately, consistently, and fully.

Decision: Consistent findings from both AY 2016-2017 and AY 2017-2018 provide evidence that the English major successfully fulfills SLO 10.1. The AY 2017-2018 results marked a 27% improvement over AY 2016-2017. This increase results from increased instruction in how to document sources. Analysis of these results in conjunction with our drive for continuous improvement demonstrates that further actions will be taken to sustain and advance students' ability to document sources in the citation style specified by the professor. Our courses will be further refined to increase instruction in the importance of citation and how to document resources accurately, consistently, and fully. Because of our improvement, we will be setting our new target at 83% of student work receiving a score of competent or higher on the *Rubric for English Major Writing* for AY 2018-2019.

SLO 11. Critical thinking. Students in the English BA program will explore and render insight in argument, reasoning, and methodology. For those students who take creative writing and filmmaking courses, this outcome requires an exploration of profound and complex themes, independent of creativity and originality.

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Measure 11.1 (Direct – Skill)

On an annual basis, a sample number of research papers and/or projects from all English courses taught that year will be evaluated by a panel of faculty members, using the standardized *Assessment Rubric for English Major Writing* (attached). The writing will be evaluated to determine if students can demonstrate a basic ability to use critical thinking. At least 80% of students sampled will score a 3 (competency) or higher on the evaluation.

Findings for Measure 11.1

AY 2017-2018: Target was met, 89% of student work was deemed competent or higher on the rubric for critical thinking.

Analysis: In AY 2016-2017, the target was met, as 63 out of the 74 (85%) student projects sampled were judged competent or higher in their ability to use critical thinking. Based on the analysis of these results, and to further aid students in their use of critical thinking, we increased instruction in how to explore and render insight in argument, reasoning, and methodology. This instruction took various forms, including exercises asking students to identify their assumptions about a specific text, exercises on suspending your beliefs, discussions of ethical dilemmas related to the texts being taught, and discussions of how to react when your way of thinking is challenged.

In AY 2017-18, the target was met again, as 71 out of 80 (89%) student projects were judged competent or higher in their ability to use critical thinking. This represents a 4% increase from the previous year. Increased instruction in critical thinking is the reason for this increase. Further action will be taken to emphasize how to explore and render insight in argument, reasoning, and methodology.

Decision: Consistent findings from both AY 2016-2017 and AY 2017-2018 provide evidence that the English major successfully fulfills SLO 11.1. The AY 2017-2018 results marked a 4% improvement over AY 2016-2017. This increase results from increased instruction in critical thinking skills. Analysis of these results in conjunction with our drive for continuous improvement demonstrates that further actions will be taken to sustain and advance students' ability to use critical thinking. Our courses will be further refined to increase instruction in how to explore and render insight in argument, reasoning, and methodology. Because of our improvement, we will be setting our new target at 92% of student work receiving a score of competent or higher on the *Rubric for English Major Writing* for AY 2018-2019.

SLO 12. Creativity and originality. Students in the English BA program will display creativity and originality in argument, reasoning, or methodology. For those students who take creative writing or filmmaking courses, this outcome pertains to creativity in a range of items including fresh concepts, unique ideas, novel approaches, unusual perspectives, surprising images, playful language usage, and innovative forms.

AY 2017-2018 Assessment

Measure 12.1 (Direct – Skill)

On an annual basis, a sample number of research papers and/or projects from all English courses taught that year will be evaluated by a panel of faculty members, using the standardized *Assessment Rubric for English Major Writing* (attached). The writing will be evaluated to determine if students can demonstrate creativity and originality. At least 80% of students sampled will score a 3 (competency) or higher on the evaluation.

Findings for Measure 12.1

AY 2017-2018: Target was met, 95% of student work was deemed competent or higher on the rubric for creativity and originality.

Analysis: In AY 2016-2017, the target was met, as 13 out of the 15 (87%) student projects sampled were judged competent or higher in their ability to demonstrate creativity and originality. Based on the analysis of these results, and to further aid students in their use of creativity and originality, we increased instruction in the development of both (a) creativity and originality in argument, reasoning, and methodology and (b) fresh concepts, unique ideas, novel approaches, unusual perspectives, surprising images, playful language usage, and innovative forms. This instruction took various forms, including brainstorming activities, free-writing, writing prompts, and formal challenges (or obstacles) in creative assignments.

In AY 2017-18, the target was met again, as 60 out of 67 (95%) student projects were judged competent or higher in their ability to demonstrate creativity and originality. This represents an 8% increase from the previous year. Increased instruction in developing creativity and originality is the reason for this increase. Further action will be taken to emphasize the development of both (a) creativity and originality in argument, reasoning, and methodology and (b) fresh concepts, unique ideas, novel approaches, unusual perspectives, surprising images, playful language usage, and innovative forms.

Decision: Consistent findings from both AY 2016-2017 and AY 2017-2018 provide evidence that the English major successfully fulfills SLO 12.1. The AY 2017-2018 results marked an 8% improvement over AY 2016-2017. This increase results from increased instruction in developing creativity and originality. Analysis of these results in conjunction with our drive for continuous improvement demonstrates that further actions will be taken to sustain and advance students' ability to demonstrate creativity and originality. Our courses will be further refined to increase instruction in the development of both (a) creativity and originality in argument, reasoning, and methodology and (b) fresh concepts, unique ideas, novel approaches, unusual perspectives, surprising images, playful language usage, and innovative forms. Because of our improvement, we will be setting our new target at 98% of student work receiving a score of competent or higher on the *Rubric for English Major Writing* for AY 2018-2019.

Findings

Student Learning Outcomes:		Number of Assignments Targeting SLO	Weak (1)	Weak to Competent (2)	Competent (3)	Competent to Strong (4)	Strong (5)
1	Analysis and interpretation of evidence	70	0	6	22	34	8
2	Application of theory	25	0	2	11	10	2
3	Application of established methodologies	37	1	2	11	19	4
4	Engagement with social and literary history	54	0	2	23	25	4
5	Engagement with genre and form	37	0	1	9	19	8
6	Effective writing	86	2	9	23	37	15
7	Establishment of sound, applicable arguments	67	1	7	22	30	7
8	Relevant use of sources	56	0	7	19	19	11
9	Independent, relevant research	42	5	4	9	17	7
10	Documentation of sources	60	0	12	16	24	8
11	Critical Thinking	80	1	8	25	34	12
12	Creativity and originality	63	0	3	20	27	13

Student Learning Outcomes:		Number of Assignments Assessed	Number of Students Scoring Competent (3) or Higher	Percentage of Students Scoring Competent (3) or Higher
1	Analysis and interpretation of evidence	70	64	91
2	Application of theory	25	23	92
3	Application of established methodologies	37	34	92
4	Engagement with social and literary history	54	52	96
5	Engagement with genre and form	37	36	97
6	Effective writing	86	75	87
7	Establishment of sound, applicable arguments	67	59	88
8	Relevant use of sources	56	49	88
9	Independent, relevant research	42	33	79
10	Documentation of sources	60	48	80
11	Critical Thinking	80	71	89
12	Creativity and originality	63	60	95

Comprehensive summary of key evidence of improvements based on analysis of results

Changes implemented in AY2017-2018 as a result of AY2016-17 data analysis:

- Increased number and diversity of writing assignments including textual explication, rhetorical analysis, assignments that specifically required students to engage with a specific genre, assignments that allowed students to produce texts in a genre of their choosing, thesis-writing exercises, short reading responses, video essays, annotated bibliographies, brainstorming activities, free-writing, writing prompts, and formal challenges (in creative assignments), which has improved students' ability to write and communicate effectively in a variety of situations and genres.
- Use of quizzes to identify strong versus weak thesis statements ensures student success as they matriculate through the program and in all other written assignments.
- Increased instruction on our library's resources, database use assignments, and instruction in how to document sources and related worksheets, posts, and presentations on identifying relevant sources. This change has strengthened students' research and documentation skills.
- Presentations on specific theories, theorists, specific methodologies, and identifying relevant sources, which has improved students' ability to identify and apply essential theories and methods in the discipline of English studies.
- Increased the variety of genres that reading assignments are drawn from, which ensures students' ability to recognize and replicate different forms of writing.
- Increased critical thinking exercises asking students to identify their assumptions about a specific text, exercises on suspending your beliefs, discussions of ethical dilemmas related to the texts being taught, and discussions of how to react when your way of thinking is challenged. This instruction ensures student success as they matriculate through the program and enter the workforce.
- Increased student feedback in peer-review sessions, one-on-one instructor feedback sessions, and advising, which builds consistent improvement in student work and overall grades.
- Implemented changes to the structure of the major and concentration requirements. Based on our AY 2016-2017 and a comparative study of other majors' requirements, we determined that we would require our students to complete more hours within their major concentration. We expect that this increase will relate to even more fully developed skills related to all of our SLOs as well as a greater breadth and depth of content knowledge in our students.

- Added our required two-course QEP sequence to our major curriculum. Our QEP courses are designed to facilitate independent student research and creative projects. This choice will not only allow our students to engage in experiential learning, but it will help them further develop their independent research, writing, creative, and critical thinking skills.
- Hired a new tenure-track, creative writing faculty member, who began teaching in fall 2017, enabling us to offer poetry and nonfiction writing classes alongside our current fiction writing offerings.
- Hired two new tenure-track faculty members, one in rhetoric and composition, one in professional writing, to begin in fall 2018, in order to enrich our instruction in writing and digital studies. We will now be able to offer more specialized courses in these areas, while also drawing on these faculty members' expertise to improve writing instruction across our curriculum.

Program improvements based on the changes above:

- Student achievements of targets for Measures 1-8 and 10-12, and substantial improvement in Measure 9 in AY 2017-2018 demonstrate the success of the major regarding our established SLOs.
- Revision to our coursework across the major shows evidence of initial success, particularly regarding Measures 7-10, which received the lowest scores in AY 2016-2017 and experienced substantial increases in AY 2017-2018.
- Comparison of AY 2016-2017 and AY 2017-2018 demonstrates that curricular changes to our upper-level undergraduate courses support students in developing their skills of analysis, interpretation, research, argumentation, synthesis, and creativity across the disciplines within our major.
- Targets for all measures have been adjusted higher for AY 2018-2019.

Plan of action moving forward

Our dedication to persistent improvement, as well as our shortcoming in Measure 9, have led faculty to the following refinements to our curriculum:

- Increased focus on all SLOs in ENGL 2070, the introductory course taken by students in all concentrations in our major. This will instill the importance of these skills at the beginning of each student's degree program.
- Requirement of ENGL 4800 and 4810, courses taken in series that will guide students in independent research or creative projects from the initial planning stages through completion. This course is designed to be taken in either the junior or senior year as a culmination of their work in the major, and will be the second and third course required of students across all concentrations in our

major.

- Faculty will adapt existing assignments and create new assignments to target the SLOs relevant to a given course. Faculty teaching within each concentration will undergo professional development related to best practices for connecting the SLOs to their discipline.

Because we did not meet our target for Measure 9, faculty will undergo training and work with the instructional librarian at the Watson Library to develop further assignments about evaluating sources, what scholarly research is, and the importance of proper citation.

We are expecting two new hires to our department in AY 2018-2019, one who specializes in rhetoric and composition, and one who specializes in professional writing. This will expand our course offerings in these areas, and increase the research-based expertise of faculty in technical writing and digital studies courses. These new hires will be instrumental in developing further pedagogical tools related to our students' research and writing processes. The program also anticipates more regular meetings of the undergraduate faculty, which will enable additional discussion of our measures and how our program might reassess our target goals to further raise expectations and promote evidence of improvement.