



DOROTHY F. SCHMIDT COLLEGE OF ARTS & LETTERS

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

CONTENT KNOWLEDGE (Declarative Knowledge; Technical Skills): Students will demonstrate use of critical methods together with mastery of pertinent declarative knowledge in formal essays as they analyze/interpret a complex literary work.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS (Written Communication): Students will demonstrate effective communication skills by writing thesis-driven essays in response to a specific prompt. Essays are expected to exhibit the control of rhetorical elements that include clarity, coherence, comprehensiveness, and mechanical correctness.

CRITICAL THINKING (Analytical Skills; Creative Skills): Students will have the ability to analyze/interpret a complex literary work, demonstrating the capacity to formulate and develop in a formal essay a significant topic in depth and in an independent and even original way. Essays are expected to exhibit mature creative and analytical thinking, and an ability to create a mature critical argument.

Essays in a sample of 3000- and 4000-level English courses will be assessed annually and holistically according to a rubric (see next page) developed and shared by faculty and communicated to students. The rubric distinguishes levels of competence and defines the minimum requirements for demonstrating the skills designated above.

Students whose essays are rated Competent, Strong, or Superior are making progress toward the degree. Students whose essays are rated Inadequate will be referred to the University Center for Excellence in Writing. Students whose essays are consistently rated Inadequate in any course will effectively fail that course and must successfully retake the course or an equivalent course.

RUBRIC FOR HOLISTIC ASSESSMENT OF ESSAYS

SUPERIOR

Addresses the question or prompt fully

Demonstrates substantial comprehension of relevant material

Shows substantial depth, complexity, and creativity of thought

Demonstrates clear and coherent organization

Develops arguments fully with ample supporting detail

Demonstrates superior control of diction, syntactic variety, and transitions

STRONG

Address the question or prompt substantively, yet not fully

Demonstrates comprehension of relevant material

Shows depth, complexity, and creativity of thought

Demonstrates clear organization

Develops arguments with supporting detail

Demonstrates control of diction, syntactic variety, and transition

COMPETENT

Adequately addresses the question or prompt

Demonstrates adequate understanding of relevant material

Shows clarity of thought but may treat the topic simplistically or repetitively

Demonstrates adequate organization

Develops arguments adequately, with some detail

Demonstrates adequate facility with syntax, mechanics, and usage but contains some errors

INADEQUATE

May distort or neglect parts of the question or prompt, and/or

Fails to comprehend relevant material

Lacks clarity of thought; demonstrates confused/simplistic thinking, and/or

Lacks adequate organization, and/or

Fails to provide adequate or appropriate details to support generalizations, or may provide details without

generalization, and/or

Demonstrates significant errors in language, syntax, or mechanics