



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



MA Student Learning Outcomes

Outcome 1

Thesis and Exam Option:

In either a thesis or an exam, students will produce writing that is characterized according to the following rubric: 1) mature in thought, rhetorically accomplished, and proficient in style and mechanics; that 2) demonstrates a professional maturity in the discipline, including knowledge of existing scholarship on the writers/works under discussion; that 3) reflects an awareness of critical traditions and can engage in contemporary critical debate.

Outcome 2

Students will produce writing that is publishable, meeting the standards of appropriate professional journals in the discipline and being accepted for presentation at conferences.

Outcome 3

Academic and professional accomplishment that leads to successful pursuit of a career in teaching, another profession of choice, or further advanced study.

English MFA Student Learning Outcomes

Outcome 1

Academic, creative, and professional accomplishment that leads to successful pursuit of a career in teaching, another profession of choice, or further advanced study.

Outcome 2

The creative writing thesis, which will be characterized according to the following rubric: a significant work in a genre demonstrating originality of technique and thought. The accompanying critical essay, which will be characterized according to the following rubric: demonstrates knowledge of traditions and genres and creates a rationale for the choices made in the thesis.

Outcome 3

Students should demonstrate a thorough understanding of the writing profession as appropriate to the student's creative discipline. This should include writing that is of a publishable quality, as well as the active pursuit of professional development opportunities, such as publication, readings, residencies, and other related activities.