Assessment Plan - 2012
B.A. in English – Standard (Literature) Option
College of Humanities and Social Sciences
Kean University

Mission:
The Standard (Literature) Option within Kean University’s English Major has several related goals that are aligned with the University Mission.

Mission Statement:
The Kean University English Department is dedicated to the liberal arts mission. More specifically, the department’s mission is to educate our diverse student community in the processes of critical reading, analytic thinking, and effective writing through the study of literature and writing. Our undergraduate and graduate programs promote literacies central to productive participation in the life of the academy and of the culture at large. The Standard, or Literature Option focuses on the canons and literary histories of British and American literature, remaining aware of the western critical tradition, contemporary trends in literary theory, and other literary traditions in translation. Those of us who teach in the Standard, or Literature, Option are committed to developing critical readers, effective writers, and analytic thinkers. We also work 1) to develop reflective individuals who can interpret the cultural history underlying the discipline and apply it to contemporary issues and 2) to prepare teachers through the study of literature and writing.

Assessment Process:
Standard Option students are required to complete eight core courses, four department electives, and the Senior Seminar for a total of 39 credits. The foundation course for the Standard Option is ENG 2000, Analytical Writing About Literature. The concluding requirement is ENG 4800, the Senior Capstone experience which guides students through the process of researching and writing a thesis. Sandwiched in between these two requirements are two British literature surveys, two American literature surveys, a course focusing on critical theory, a course entitled Structure and Origins of the English Language, a Shakespeare survey, and four electives (three at the 3,000/4000 level) of the student’s own choosing.

The department has developed four primary critical thinking SLO’s for the Standard Option. These SLO’s are as follows:

**Students who graduate with a B.A. in English (Standard, or Literature, Option) should demonstrate proficiency in the following areas:**

**SLO 1 - Evidence of Close Reading:** In thesis-driven essays, students will demonstrate the ability to analyze text, showing sensitivity to the nuances of language and expression.
**SLO 2 - Evidence of Independent Thought/Original Insights:** In written essays, students will demonstrate original, creative, and connective thinking and an understanding of literary texts that surpasses mere reiteration of conventional readings.

**SLO 3 – Mastery of Disciplinary Protocols:** In written essays, students will demonstrate knowledge and proper utilization of a) principal literary terms, theoretical lenses, and concepts; b) accepted bibliographic and research protocols; and c) presentation of and conventions of writing within the field of Literary Studies.

**SLO 4 – Integration of Texts and Contexts:** In written essays students will demonstrate a) an understanding of literary texts within varied contexts and discourses (e.g., cultural, historical, aesthetic, sociological, philosophical, psychological, etc.); and b) the ability to relate/connect meaningfully outside sources with literary text to support reading and analysis.

These SLO’S are more fully developed and explained in the brief outline below.

**Evidence of Close Reading:**
A. Thorough analysis based upon accurate deciphering/decoding of the text  
B. Systematic argumentative interpretation that supports a major claim or thesis  
C. Coverage and convergence – readings that account for the whole text, combined with readings that focus on a particular interpretive idea or set of ideas  
D. Reading sensitive to the nuances of language and expression

**Evidence of Independent Thought/Original Insights:**
A. Demonstration of understanding that surpasses mere reiteration of conventional readings  
B. Fresh ideas/creative thinking/innovative connections  
C. Conviction – ability to demonstrate individual investment in reading/interpretation/understanding  
D. Ability to connect the literary experience of reading with personal experience and history

**Mastery of Disciplinary Protocols:**
A. Knowledge and proper utilization of the principal terms and concepts used in the field of Literary Studies  
B. Knowledge and proper utilization of accepted bibliographic and research protocols  
C. Knowledge and proper presentation of the conventions of writing and presentation within the field of Literary Studies  
D. Understanding of the ways that Literary Studies poses its research questions, frames its strategies of inquiry, and assesses its findings – in sum, what passes for, or is accepted as “truth” or the “truthful” within the field of Literary Studies.  
E. Knowledge of various theories undergirding Literary Studies, along with historical understanding/appreciation of it as a discrete discipline.
**Integration of Texts and Contexts:**

A. Informed reading and understanding of literary texts within varied contexts and discourses (e.g., cultural, historical, aesthetic, sociological, philosophical, psychological, etc.)

B. Ability to relate/connect meaningfully “outside sources” with literary text to help support reading and analysis.

C. Understanding of literary texts as products of/responses to varied contexts and discourses.

In order to measure the extent to which students are demonstrating proficiency in the areas outlined above, the department developed the following baseline assessment plan: Copies of all 136 of the final student essays submitted in Spring 2012 for ENG 2000 as well as copies of all 64 of the Senior theses submitted for ENG 4800 were collected in May 2012. Thirty-nine essays were randomly selected from among the ENG 2000 submissions, and twenty were randomly selected from among the ENG 4800 submissions. Seven readers (five full-time and two adjunct faculty) and on the following day, six readers (four full-time and two adjunct faculty) participated in a normed reading (with range finders) of the papers in question. Everyone reading on the second day participated on the first. And a carefully developed rubric (please see attached) based on the four SLO’s served as a basis for grading the essays. This baseline study will serve as the foundation for long range assessment of the Standard (Literature) Option.

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**Links and Areas of Reinforcement Between and Among English Standard Option SLO’S, English Department and Writing Option SLO’s, General Education SLO’S, and Kean University SLO’s**

**Standard Option SLO 1: Evidence of Close Reading:** In thesis-driven essays, students will demonstrate the ability to analyze text, showing sensitivity to the nuances of language and expression. (WO 1, WO2); (S1); (KU1).

**Standard Option SLO 2: Evidence of Independent Thought/Original Insights:** In written essays, students will demonstrate original, creative, and connective thinking and an understanding of literary text that surpasses mere reiteration of conventional readings. (WO1, WO3, WO5); (K3); (S1); (V4); (KU1).

**Standard Option SLO 3: Mastery of Disciplinary Protocols:** In written essays, students will demonstrate knowledge and proper utilization of a) principal literary terms, theoretical lenses, and concepts; b) accepted bibliographic and research protocols; and c) presentation of and conventions of writing within the field of Literary Studies. (WO1, WO2, WO3); (S1); (KU1).

**Standard Option SLO 4: Integration of Texts and Contexts:** In written essays, students will demonstrate a) an understanding of literary texts within varied contexts and discourses (e.g. cultural, historical, aesthetic, sociological, philosophical, psychological, etc.); and b) the ability to relate/connect
meaningfully outside sources with literary text to support reading and analysis. (WO1, WO2, WO3); (K3); (S1, S4, S5); (V4); (KU1).

**English Department and Writing Option SLO’S:**

(WO1) Students will produce essays through a series of drafts that include exploratory writing or talk, as well as revisions that include addition, deletion, substitution and rearrangement.

(WO2) Students will identify central ideas/themes of a text through class discussion and writing.

(WO3) Students will use two or more methodologies from English studies to develop original research or creative products.

(WO4) Students will demonstrate ability to give a compelling oral presentation.

(WO5) Students will connect ideas from classroom assignments to contemporary issues in class discussion.

**General Education SLO’s:**

1. **Knowledge:** Students will demonstrate proficiency in knowledge and content by:
   - (K1) applying the scientific method to comprehend natural concepts and processes;
   - (K2) evaluating major theories and concepts in social sciences;
   - (K3) relating historical references to literature; and
   - (K4) evaluating major theories and concepts in the fine arts.

2. **Skills:** Students will demonstrate the skills necessary to:
   - (S1) write to communicate and clarify learning;
   - (S2) communicate effectively through speech;
   - (S3) solve problems using quantitative reasoning;
   - (S4) think critically about concepts in multiple disciplines; and
   - (S5) show information literacy.

3. **Values:** Students will exhibit a set of values that demonstrates:
   - (V1) personal responsibility;
   - (V2) ethical and social responsibility;
   - (V3) social and civic engagement;
   - (V4) respect for diverse cultures and perspectives; and
   - (V5) life-long learning.

**Kean University SLO’S:** Kean University graduates should be able to:

- (KU1) think critically, creatively, and globally;
- (KU2) adapt to changing social, economic, and technological environments;
- (KU3) serve as active and contributing members of their communities; and
- (KU4) advance their knowledge in the traditional disciplines (GE) and enhance their skills in professional areas (prof. programs).