



Honors College Assessment



Public for this Department and lower

Number: IDR Honors College Assessment 2016 - 2017

Title: Honors College Assessment

Start: 9/1/2016

End: 8/31/2017

Progress: Completed

Providing Irvin D. Reid Honors College

Department:

Responsible No Roles Selected

Roles:

Assessment Method:

			ill		Section Day: (start in col H.)	
Attendance # in large section:			fill		Section Time:	
Attendance in small section:			fill		Group volunteer hrs:	
					Issue:	
					Organizations:	
Heading	Rubric	L Outcomes	4	3	2	1
Problem Defined	Problem Solving	Define Problem	Identifies and articulates problems/issues in a way that facilitates critical analysis and fully takes into account relevant contextual factors, i.e., its historical, ethical, social, cultural and disciplinary dimensions.	Identifies and articulates problems/issues and takes into account most of the relevant contextual factors, i.e., its historical, ethical, social, cultural and disciplinary dimensions.	Begins to demonstrate the ability to identify and articulate a problem/issue statement with evidence of some relevant contextual factors, but problem/issue statement is superficial.	Demonstrates a limited ability to identify and articulate problems/issues or consider related contextual factors.
Issues Analyzed	Critical Thinking	Analyze Issues Critically and Comprehensively	Gathers and critically analyzes all information necessary to thoroughly identify and/or develop actual and potential solutions to the problem.	Gathers and critically analyzes most information necessary to identify and/or develop actual and potential solutions to the problem.	Gathers and analyzes some information necessary to identify and/or develop potential solutions. Issue/problem is stated but description leaves some terms undefined, ambiguities unexplored, and boundaries undetermined, and/or backgrounds unknown.	Does not adequately clarify or describe information necessary to identify issues to be considered.
Evaluate Proposed Solutions	Problem Solving	Evaluate Proposed Solutions/Hypotheses to Problems	Evaluate potential and actual solutions with detailed consideration given to relevant contextual factors, feasibility, and effects/impacts, and recommend or offer conclusions based on same.	Evaluate potential and actual solutions with sufficient consideration given to relevant contextual factors, feasibility, and effects/impacts, and recommend or offer conclusions based on same.	Evaluate potential and actual solutions with adequate consideration given to relevant contextual factors, feasibility, and effects/impacts, and recommend or offer conclusions based on same.	Demonstrates a limited ability to evaluate potential and actual solutions.

Compose effective Written Arguments	Communication	Compose written arguments that are organized, substantiated, and clear	Organizes a clear, coherent narrative with well-defined fully developed sections throughout entire argument; Substantiates argument with strong supporting examples and excellent choices for source material; Has an effective, professional writing style with few or no errors in grammar, usage, or mechanics.	Organizes a narrative with relative clarity and coherence, and demonstrates rudimentary development of argument throughout most of the sections; Substantiates argument with tangential supporting examples and good choices for source material; Has a proficient, consistent writing style with isolated errors in grammar, usage, or mechanics.	Constructs a somewhat disjointed organizational structure where ill-defined, insufficiently developed sections fail to create an overarching and persuasive argument; Uses anecdotal and/or infrequent evidence and suspect source material to support a position; Has an inefficient writing style with frequent errors in grammar, usage, or mechanics.	Constructs a poor narrative where indistinct and unidentifiable sections contain multiple factual errors, contradictory positions and thus an illogical argument; Uses no or irrelevant and/or discredited examples and source material to offer an attempted argumentative position; Has an ineffective, negligent writing style with many repeated errors in grammar, usage, or mechanics.
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Assessment Method for Learning Outcomes 1,2,3,4

1. Data Source: Honors students' Final First Year Project and Honors Theses. Introductory and Developing Skills of the outcome are expected in the First Year (HON1000, HON PS1010), while Mastery of the outcome is expected for the Theses (HON4998).

Scores from first row of the Honors College Assessment rubric will be used to assess Learning Outcome 1, second row of the Honors College Assessment rubric will be used to assess Learning Outcome 2, the third row of the Honors College Assessment rubric will be used to assess Learning Outcome 3 and the fourth row of the Honors College Assessment rubric will be used to assess Learning Outcome 4.


2 & 3. Data gathering and timeline: Honors First Year faculty will collect these projects as a part of normal class requirement at the end of First Year coursework. Departmental Theses advisors will report the scores to the Honors College Advisor.

4. Data Scoring: Student work will be scored by Honors First Year faculty and Honors Theses advisors using the Honors Assessment rubric.

5. Scales: The rubric is based on an ordinal scale of 1 – 4, and defines each of the scores from 1 – 4 (Please refer to Honors College Assessment rubric).

6. Criterion for Acceptable performance: A score of 2.0 or above on this Learning Outcome is acceptable.

7. Review of Results: Honors faculty will conduct an annual review of student performance on this assessment by May 15th each year.

 Prog_Assessment_Rubric_V1_16_17_outForInstructors

Results : Learning Outcome 1: Define Problem

Average score on students' Define Problem from Fall 2016 – Winter 2017 is 3.21 on the 4 point scale. This average exceeds the target of 2.0 for this learning outcome.

Average score on students' Senior Theses Define Problem from Fall 2016 – Winter 2017 is 3.85 on the 4 point scale. This average substantially exceeds the target of 2.0 for this learning outcome.

Learning Outcome 2: Analyze Issues Critically and Comprehensively

Average score on students' Analyze Issues Critically and Comprehensively from Fall 2016 – Winter 2017 is 3.26 on the 4 point scale. This average exceeds the target of 2.0 for this learning outcome.

Average score on students' Senior Theses Define Problem from Fall 2016 – Winter 2017 is 3.74 on the 4 point scale. This average substantially exceeds the target of 2.0 for this learning outcome.

Learning Outcome 3: Evaluate Proposed Solutions/Hypotheses to Problems

Average score on students' Evaluate Proposed Solutions/Hypotheses to Problems from Fall 2016 – Winter 2017 is 3.15 on the 4 point scale. This average exceeds the target of 2.0 for this learning outcome.

Average score on students' Senior Theses Define Problem from Fall 2016 – Winter 2017 is 3.53 on the 4 point scale. This average substantially exceeds the target of 2.0 for this learning outcome.

Learning Outcome 4: Compose Effective Written Arguments

Average score on Compose Effective Written Arguments from Fall 2016 – Winter 2017 is 3.03 on the 4 point scale. This average exceeds the target of 2.0 for this learning outcome.

Average score on students' Senior Theses Define Problem from Fall 2016 – Winter 2017 is 3.79 on the 4 point scale. This average substantially exceeds the target of 2.0 for this learning outcome.

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Results from
Surveys
Delivered
through
Baseline:
Program Action
Plan:

Name	Source
No items to display.	

Learning Outcome 1: Define Problem

While the results from the assessment for Define Problem during AY 16– 17 were good, they were slightly down from the year before. Because of the significant turnover in personnel (5 of 8 senior lecturers were new in AY 16–17) the changes may be due to the different standards of new coders (though we try to work on inter-coder reliability). Restricting the assessment sample only to those senior lecturers who had also coded results in the previous two years yields a much smaller loss (-0.1) which represents a slight decline from the previous year (-0.1), returning to the levels of Fall 2014–Winter 2015.

Although the drop is small and the overall quality still very good, we hope to improve student performance on this indicator through the following adjustments:

1. Rework the initial diagnostic composition to allow students to propose more than one problem as a possible topic of group work and then to evaluate which of these is a more promising area for effort.
2. Introduce new method of group formation that combines group placement of “on-the-fence” students through a “speed dating” process that requires groups to briefly formulate their initial ideas for a project.
3. Encourage students at multiple points in the semester to explicitly revisit the problem definition.

Learning Outcome 2: Analyze Issues Critically and Comprehensively

While the results from the assessment for Analyze Issues Critically and Comprehensively during AY 16 – 17 were good, we hope to improve student performance through the following adjustments:

1. Introduce an online pre-test on US government institutions to allow faculty members to understand the areas where student knowledge is deficient and areas where knowledge is satisfactory. This will allow better allocation of class time.
2. Introduce new resources for understanding and using methods of critical thinking including brief specific texts.
3. Help students understand their critical role as integrators of information from multiple sources (readings, lecture, discussion) and providing them with assistance in note-taking (including note-taking and thesis-writing exercises and examples from lecturers of their own note-taking skills)
4. Rework the assignment schedule to allow senior lecturers more freedom in assigning weekly assignments as needed to deal with problems in issue analysis (including weekly journals, pre-reading questions and in-class problem solving)
5. Work with the Honors Librarian to help students critically analyze their choice of sources and develop a brief video for the second semester Honors PS1010 that revisits the use of sources and analysis of source quality.
6. Revise the discussion of the “yourmorals.org” test (introduced in 2016-2017) to eliminate some unnecessary areas of controversy and deal openly with others.
7. Introduce brief readings to explicitly address modes of civic engagement and “types of citizenship” to help students understand possible options for their own activity.

Learning Outcome 3: Evaluate Proposed Solutions/Hypotheses to Problems

While the results from the assessment for Evaluate Proposed Solutions/Hypotheses to Problems during AY 16 – 17 were good, we hope to improve student performance through the following adjustments:

1. Work with the Honors Librarian to develop principles for students to evaluate the quality and partisanship of think-tank research
2. Reintroduce readings on social policy (Floors, Safety Nets and Platforms) that were removed in 2015 and compensate by removal of redundant readings on policy (planned for in 2016-2017 but delayed by introduction of new textbook).
3. Link students to new policy resources with access to topic-specific policy guides from recently published textbooks.
4. Significantly expand the emphasis on policymakers in the following ways:
 - Provide additional examples of students as effective advocates in policy questions
 - Further develop procedures (introduced in 2016-2017) for encouraging students to reach out to elected officials and assisting them in using their direct experiences to enrich their group paper.

- Continue to work with the university administration to integrate the Honors College with student advocacy trips to Lansing.
5. Work before class on lecture narrative arc to ensure that key concepts get presented before class time begins to run out.
 6. Help students understand that class assignments are integrated and cumulative and that lessons learned for early assignments can (and should) be incorporated into subsequent assignments.
 7. Rework the final section of the course to retile it "What Would It Take?" (from the current "What Wins?") and emphasize tradeoffs among potential kinds of solutions, culminating in reworded question for the final group paper that would help students assess the most feasible mode of solving the problem (directly comparing solutions with one another).

Learning Outcome 4: Compose Effective Written Arguments

While the results from the assessment for Evaluate Proposed Solutions/Hypotheses to Problems during AY 16 – 17 were well above the target, they were the lowest of the four assessment scores and have shown a slight decline over time. We will therefore take the following significant steps to improve student writing performance:

1. Replace the current papers in both Honors 1000 and Honors PS1010 with a multi-step writing assignment designed to use high-impact practices in the teaching of writing through greater feedback and focus on formative rather than summative assessment of written work. The new process will stretch over 5 weeks for each paper and include:
 1. A brief, one-paragraph assignment in which students choose a topic and a position and explain why.
 2. An annotated bibliography assignment supplemented with an in-class discussion of sources to help students to conduct their research well.
 3. An outline and thesis assignment supplemented with in-class discussion of organizational techniques to help students move forward on their research and formulate their research into coherent argument.
 4. A peer-review exercise supplemented with in-class discussion of review techniques to help students see how peers view their work and to benefit from the experience of reviewing the work of others.
 5. A self-review exercise that builds on the experience of reviewing the texts of others.
 6. A rewriting exercise with in-class discussion of the process of revision to help students understand the need for and benefit from substantial revision (an understanding that is currently lacking).
2. Provide in both classes improved assignment materials including more comprehensive and refined assignment sheets and a video introduction of each major writing assignment by the instructor.
3. Provide in both classes improved methods of student feedback that will allow students to be able to calculate where they stand in the course, how much work is done (and at what level of quality) and how much remains.

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Timeline for Action Plan Implementation:

Honors faculty will implement the action items listed above throughout AY 2017-2018. Data for this assessment will be gathered and analyzed again during April – May, 2018.

Reporting to Stakeholders:

We have already shared our assessment results with our Honors First Year faculty in May 2017 Course planning meeting. We plan to disseminate this information in our July 2017 staff meeting, with the Honors College Staff members. We also plan to post the results to our program website by August 2017.

Additional Information :

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