Feedback Report

UCA Core Council Assessment sub-committee

February 2020

Re: Review of LD Core Diversity Course Offerings

Thank you for providing the information requested by the sub-committee. The assessment sub-committee is diligently reviewing all courses in the Lower Division Core that assess under the Diversity Core Competency in order to assure that our students are receiving a shared, common experience across the university as regards this Core competency. Your participation is greatly appreciated in this endeavor. The sub-committee would like to provide you with this feedback report as an informational item. If you have questions, concerns, or comments please direct those to, Jake Held (jmheld@uca.edu)

**Course Prefix and Number: ENGL 2390**

**Course Title: Introduction to Drama**

*The committee was provided materials from multiple faculty. On the whole, we found the materials provided by Dr. Reynolds to be exceptional in various ways, and in fact provide model examples for how to intentionally design a syllabus and course assignments to engage the learning outcomes under Diversity rubric C. However, this was not noted consistently across sections, and insofar as any student taking ENGL 2390 should receive an exemplary experience in this area, we would like to underscore the importance of intradepartmental conversations and cooperation when it comes to offering multiple sections of a course in order to assure students are receiving a consistent experience across sections.*

**Syllabus**: Any syllabus for a course in the UCA Core must include language indicating the courses relative position within the UCA Core. The boilerplate language can be located here: <http://uca.edu/academicaffairs/publications-information/>

The course syllabi did have the required language.

**Lower Division Core standards:** Does 50% of the course content directly align to the Core outcomes for the goal under with the course assesses? (NB: This is calculated by considering course objectives, readings, lecture/discussion, and assignments as indicated by the course syllabus and provided work.)

ENGL 2390 is categorized under Goal C of the Diversity competency. The outcomes for Goal C are:

* **Theory/Criticism/Technique**: The set of concepts/principles used to create or evaluate creative works.
* **Themes and Ideas**: The concepts expressed in the creative work that are representative of diverse cultures/perspectives.
* **Context**: The personal, social, cultural, and historical influences on the creative work.
* **Reflection**: The articulation of a personal response to the experience of a creative work.

The full rubric can be located here: <http://uca.edu/core/assessment/>

As a lower division Core course, this course ought to provide students with a foundational experience to begin developing the skills indicated by the outcomes under the rubric. In order to provide such an experience it is necessary that students be consistently exposed to these ideas and offered multiple opportunities to develop these skills. The committee found that overall ENGL 2390 offers students ample opportunity throughout the semester to be introduced to and develop these skills. However, the committee made some observations we’d like to share to help direct future conversations within your department and perhaps inform future iterations of sections of ENGL 2390.

Simply put, Dr. Reynolds course looked exemplary in terms of engagement with Diversity outcomes. We were also impressed with her requirement that students actually attend a play and thereby get actual experience with the genre. Kudos to Dr. Reynolds for her intentional and ingenious course design, and her thoughtful assignment design and prompts which promote substantive engagement with the outcomes for Rubric C.

On a related note, the materials we received from Dr. Frontain did not exhibit the same level of engagement. Although we respect and appreciate his engagement with the LGBTIQ community and LGBTIQ issues, and see his work in this area as exemplary, his narrow focus on a small facet of this population makes his course “myopically diverse.” For example, there were no women authors presented in the course and although there was a focus on Stonewall, there was no clear mention of racial issues so related. Thus, the course was a very narrow window on a very selective diverse population, leaving the committee struggling with the issue of whether it provided enough engagement across a diversity or plurality of viewpoints to provide an intellectual experience that promotes exposure to broader contexts of cultural and social diversity. Ultimately, these issues were merely points on which to reflect and didn’t sway the committee’s conclusion.

Simply stated, insofar as we at UCA view diversity as a desirable educational goal of our Core curriculum, ENGL 2390 as presented to us, provides, or is proven to provide, this experience. We have an iteration of ENGL 2390 that clearly provides a well-designed and intentional engagement with diversity, thus proving that the course fits well in the category.

Moving forward we would simply recommend that the department continue having discussions about what it means for ENGL 2390 to be a diversity course, highlight the good work being done in sections of that course, and encourage others to pursue a deeper engagement with the diversity outcomes.

Again, the course as a whole meets the Core requirements, but we wished to offer these comments as simply our feedback.

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**Further Action:**

None

In order to better understand Core requirements or the sub-committee’s recommendations feel free to contact your college representative on the sub-committee, Zach Smith. If you have any questions or concerns please contact Jake Held (jmheld@uca.edu)