Feedback Report

UCA Core Council Assessment sub-committee

January 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: MUS 2300**

**Course Title: Introduction to Music Appreciation**

**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/>

Some syllabi had the required Core language, some did not. Please make sure all course syllabi 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.)

MUS 2300 is categorized under Goal C (Creative Works) 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.

Diversity, as a Core competency, is defined as: the ability to analyze familiar cultural assumptions in the context of the world’s diverse values, traditions, and belief systems as well as to analyze the major ideas, techniques, and processes that inform creative works within different cultural and historical contexts. The committee notes that crucial components of this definition are engaging the world’s diverse systems as well as approaching difference cultural and historical frameworks. For MUS 2300, we were presented many syllabi, but what we did not see throughout was a shared or common vision of, or emphasis/commitment to, engaging diversity in this much broader way through the course. Some did seemingly address these issues by spending time looking at Latin American musical traditions or religious musical traditions, for example. Rutman, of note, did explicitly engage with various ethnic musical traditions as well as religious music. And one assignment we were provided addressed Billie Holiday, here famous song “Strange Fruit” and the cultural context in which it was produced and received. These types of engagements are quite befitting of a course designated as Diversity in Creative Works. However, we did not see evidence of them being consistently represented through all sections of the course, or predominant in any one course.

Seeing indications from the materials provided that your department is thinking about diversity broadly, and attempting to integrate it into course sections, albeit inconsistently, we are asking that you provide an assurance argument for MUS 2300 demonstrating a commitment to align all sections of the course to the Diversity outcomes under which it is designated.

In order to provide an assurance argument for MUS 2300 we simply ask that you address the following:

Specific recommendations:

1. Greater that 50% of course content needs to explicitly align to the outcomes under Diversity (Goal C – Creative Works). Use the table in Curriculum Attachment A here:<http://uca.edu/core/forms/> as a guide. For MUS 2300, we are asking that all sections of the course, regardless of instructor align well to the Core outcomes under Diversity rubric C. What material they use, how they engage, is up to them, but a demonstrable commitment to the learning outcomes of Goal C should be apparent.
2. In order to best understand Core requirements and respond to the sub-committee’s requests it is recommended that the department consult with a member of the sub-committee in regard to this report before, or while, revising its submission. Your college representative on the sub-committee is Laura Niswonger. Of course, Dr. Held, Assistant Provost for Academic Assessment and General Education, is always readily available as well.

The assurance argument should be a single pdf document including relevant evidence/examples of course content/work that aligns well to the rubric reinforcing your commitment to provide a foundational educative experience for our students consistent with the Core outcomes under which your course is designated. It may also include a model syllabus or revised syllabus indicating how these materials are integrated through the course as a whole. Ideally, we would ask that a model course be used to illustrate to instructors in your program how a course might be well aligned to Core outcomes while still respecting academic freedom of how faculty approach the issues relevant to MUS 2300. However, it might serve as material for continued conversations about how your department’s course contributes to our students’ general education experience.

Should you choose to submit revised materials for MUS 2300, those materials should be collected into a single pdf file and submitted directly to Jacob Held. The course materials will be evaluated by the UCA Core Council curriculum review sub-committee. The sub-committee will review the materials and make a recommendation to the UCA Core Council as to whether or not they are adequate in addressing the concerns noted above. Should the sub-committee affirm that they are adequate and the Core Council affirm that assessment, no further action will be necessary. Should, however, the sub-committee deem the revised materials to be insufficient and the Core Council affirm this evaluation, or the sub-committee deem the materials sufficient yet the UCA Core Council reject this assessment, the Core Council’s decision will be guiding. In the event of either of these previous two outcomes, you will have one semester to revisit the issues and revise the course materials. The same process will then be followed with the subsequent decision of the Core Council being final.

If you should fail to act on this recommendation by May 15, 2020, MUS 2300 will be placed on probationary status for Fall 2020. If no progress is made in rectifying matters by the close of Fall 2020, MUS 2300 will be removed from the LD Core beginning Spring 2021.

I am happy to assist in anyway that may be of service. So if you have any questions or concerns please contact me at 450-5307 or jmheld@uca.edu