ENGLISH DEPARTMENT FIVE-YEAR ASSESSMENT PLAN

OVERVIEW
In 2011-12, we developed an assessment plan to collect data for each of the six department goals on a six-year cycle, in which each goal would undergo data collection for two years, followed by a reevaluation of the goal itself, and then a break for three years. We also planned to do curriculum mapping for two years, 2011-12 and 2012-13 for each goal, until the entire map was complete. Most important, we decided to pilot English major summative portfolios for two years, spring 2012-spring 2014, and then implement portfolios for all majors by fall 2014; we also planned to discuss the option of piloting formative portfolios. Once we had the results from our first portfolio evaluation in September, 2012, we changed the long-term plan for collecting data and evaluating departmental goals and learning objectives, as detailed below.

YEAR ONE 2011-2012
I Curriculum mapping began for English major distribution groups (A-E) and course levels (200-level and 300/400-level) to generate discussion of goals and learning objectives for the major and guidelines for courses taught within those groups at those levels.

II After researching options for a portfolio system for assessing our majors’ learning and the portfolio practices of peer institutions, in spring 2012, the Assessment Committee piloted an English Major Summative Portfolio in one section of ENGL 422 Seminar in Literature, taught by Dr. Lisa Eck. Students were required to submit their final Seminar in Literature papers and two or three additional papers they had written in FSU English courses. Students were also required to submit 1500- to 1800-word self-reflective narrative statements discussing and supporting their attainment of the department’s six goals for English majors. Students highlighted passages in their submitted essays using a color coding system and cross-referenced the passages to their narrative discussions (see attached English Major Portfolio Guidelines). In August 2012, the committee assessed participating students’ portfolios with an electronic rubric based on departmental goals, created by the chair of the committee, Dr. Patty Crouch.

III We instituted an information-sharing resource for faculty on the English Department Blackboard site for sample assignments, rubrics, syllabi, and other teaching materials.

YEAR TWO 2012-2013
In September, 2012, the Assessment Committee completed the first curriculum mapping survey. Tenured and tenure-track faculty members reported on each of the courses they taught during the past three academic years, indicating the relative degrees of emphasis that they placed on the department’s six goals, along with the learning objectives for each of those goals. Dr. Crouch created three reports. First, she created a summary of Assessment Committee members’ responses to the English Major Summative Portfolios. Second, she created a curriculum mapping report, showing where goals and learning objectives are being taught in four categories: overall, by literature course, by distribution group designation (A-E), and by course level. Third, Dr. Crouch created a report aligning the curriculum mapping data with the data from the pilot of English Major Summative Portfolios. After studying this
third report, committee members realized that we needed to change our long-term plan, so that the combined data from the portfolios and curriculum mapping would determine which goals should be reevaluated first. Accordingly, the Assessment Committee recommended the following steps to continue with assessment and to close the assessment loop in spring 2013 and 2013-2014:

1. Assess, using a revised rubric instrument, the English major portfolios submitted during the second round of the pilot in Fall 2012, and compile the results. Perform a second revision of the student guidelines for the portfolio and the rubric instrument if warranted.
2. Solicit faculty comments on the language of Goal 2, in particular to arrive at an understanding of department conceptions of what it means to “provid[e] . . . texts with appropriate historical and cultural contexts”
3. Revise the objectives for Goal 2, which have not been reevaluated since first drafted in 2007. Possibly revise and submit for department approval new language for Goal 2 itself, depending on the feedback we receive from faculty.
4. Work in tandem with the 300-level instructors to discuss the scaffolding of Goals 4 and 6 within the major (closing the loop). Solicit faculty comments on Goal 4, in particular to arrive at an understanding of department expectations for students’ abilities to “apply” critical theories, approaches, and methodologies to the interpretations of texts.
5. Revise the objectives for Goal 4, which have not been reevaluated since first drafted in 2007, using the feedback we receive from faculty to guide us.

YEAR THREE 2013-2014

I  Continue English Major Portfolio pilot, possibly moving to formative portfolios. Revise guidelines and assessment rubric as necessary. Collect and assess the data, compile the results, and make recommendations related to specific goals and learning objectives.
II  Revise the learning objectives for Goal 4.
III  Initiate conversation about instituting a C- passing requirement for Literary Study and Seminar in Literature.

YEAR FOUR 2014-2015

Implement English Major Portfolios for all majors and collect portfolio data. Assess the data, compile the results, and make recommendations related to specific goals and learning objectives.

YEAR FIVE 2015-2016

Continue to collect portfolio data for all majors. Assess the data, compile the results, and make recommendations related to specific goals and learning objectives. After three years of portfolio data collection, evaluate the effectiveness of portfolios.
What is the Seminar in Literature portfolio?

In the university setting, the word *portfolio* refers to a collection of work that a student assembles and contextualizes in order to demonstrate learning.

For the Fall 2012 semester, the English Department is piloting, or trying out, a portfolio requirement for all of students enrolled in Seminar in Literature. This portfolio will ask you to reflect on the work that you’ve done in your courses in the major and to show us how well you’ve attained the six goals that we believe all majors should achieve by the end of their studies:

1. Demonstrate an aesthetic appreciation of language and literature.
2. Interpret a range of texts in American, British, and world literature, providing those texts with appropriate historical and cultural contexts.
3. Demonstrate advanced analytical reading skills.
4. Understand a variety of critical theories, approaches, and methodologies and apply them to the interpretation of texts.
5. Demonstrate substantial communication skills, including the ability to write effective prose for specific rhetorical situations.
6. Demonstrate advanced ability to conduct and use academic research, from locating and evaluating print and electronic sources to integrating research materials into substantial critical essays.

Why put together a portfolio?

A portfolio of your work in the English major provides you with a valuable tool for others and for yourself. First, such a portfolio gives you a showcase of your abilities to share with employers and/or graduate programs who want to see samples of your work. In this sense, your portfolio is a supplement to your résumé when you apply for graduate school or employment, providing you or those who are interested with concrete examples of your capabilities.

More importantly, assembling a portfolio provides you with the opportunity to reflect on your educational and professional development – a chance to think actively about what you have done, the skills you have, and the knowledge with which you are conversant. Your portfolio is your opportunity to tell your own educational story. What have you accomplished in your academic career? What special strengths do you have? Who are you as you complete the major? A portfolio is a moment to take stock of where you are in your educational and professional journey. At this turning point – the end of your undergraduate education and the beginning of your professional or graduate career – the
portfolio provides a tool for documenting your growth as a student of English and your preparation for the next phase of your intellectual path.

How will your portfolio be used by the English Department?

As part of our efforts to measure how well our program is working to help students achieve these goals, we will evaluate the portfolio that you submit and discuss our findings. We will use what we learn from the collection of portfolios as a whole to help us assess the effectiveness of our major and to improve the quality of our teaching, advising, and curriculum. We will also use those results to help us refine and improve the design of the portfolios that we will collect from future Seminar in Literature students.

During the pilot phase of the Seminar in Literature portfolio collection, only the four faculty members who serve on the department’s Assessment Committee will have access to student portfolios. We may make the findings of our evaluation of your portfolios available to others, including other faculty and accrediting agencies, but if we do so your anonymity will be preserved.

When you submit your portfolio, you will be asked to complete a permissions statement that tells us what other uses, if any, the department and faculty are allowed to make of your materials. For example, you might choose to allow us to use samples from your portfolio in models for other students or in published research about the department’s experiences using the Seminar in Literature portfolios.

Your Seminar in Literature instructor, at his or her own discretion, may also integrate the portfolio into his or her requirements for the class. Consult your instructor if you have questions about how the portfolio factors into the class.

What documents will you need to include in your portfolio?

Your portfolio will consist of the following materials:

1. Title page (a template will be provided)
2. A narrative statement of 1500-1800 words (see What are the requirements for the narrative statement? below; a template will be provided)
3. The seminar paper you wrote for Seminar in Literature plus at least two other papers that you wrote as part of your other course work in the English major at FSU (see How should you choose which papers to include? below), with selected passages highlighted (see What else do you need to do to complete the portfolio?)
4. Permissions form

How should you choose which papers to include?

You are required to include the seminar paper that you wrote for Seminar in Literature, but you will also choose two or more additional papers that you wrote for other major
courses that you took at FSU. Your papers may be from any English department course (literature, film, writing, grammar, etc.) at the 200-level or above.

Since the purpose of the portfolio is to demonstrate your mastery of the six goals listed above (see What is the Seminar in Literature Portfolio?), you will want to choose papers that show a breadth of skills in these areas. Given the limited number of papers that you will submit, however, you are not required to include papers on British and American and world literature (Goal 2), nor to demonstrate your use of multiple critical theories (Goal 4), though you are free to do either or both. Do be sure, though, to choose papers that demonstrate your ability to work with diverse primary texts and to engage meaningfully with at least one critical theory.

Don’t necessarily choose only papers for which you earned high grades. The portfolio is designed to capture your intellectual experiences and growth. Often, taking a risk by trying to do something unfamiliar or ambitious doesn’t translate into an excellent paper in every respect, but it does represent an important, often key, moment in your intellectual development. Don’t overlook papers where you tried, for example, to engage deeply with historical sources in a way that you never had before or to argue a complex or ground-breaking thesis but where your execution faltered, or where you failed to meet one or more of the requirements for the assignment.

What are the requirements of the narrative statement?

Think of your 1500-1800 word narrative statement as a self-reflective persuasive essay that mounts a thesis asserting you have attained mastery of the department’s six goals for its majors. The body of your essay will then produce and analyze evidence from your work to support that thesis or, in other words, to convince the reader to accept your thesis as true.

Your introduction should not only state your thesis but also give some background about the papers that you’ve chosen to include. Be sure to inform your readers about when, and for what course, you wrote each paper (e.g., ENGL 204, Literary Study, fall semester of sophomore year). Briefly contextualize each essay by asserting how it, and/or the larger work of the course for which you wrote it, connected with or departed from previous papers that you wrote or coursework that you took.

Using the color-coded template you will be provided, organize the body of your essay into six sections, one for each goal. You will use this color-coding to highlight specific passages in the papers you submit (see What else do you need to do to complete the portfolio? below).

Within each section, give evidence to support your mastery of the goal that you are considering. Some of this evidence must take the form of citations to and/or quotations from the papers that you have included in your portfolio. You should also discuss and/or quote your work from other essays or the courses you have taken in the major. The latter approach will be especially helpful for demonstrating your achievement of goals that
demand breadth (Goal 2’s expectation of knowledge of British, American, and world literature and Goal 4’s expectation of an engagement with multiple critical theories).

Above all, though, be sure that you explain how the evidence you have produced demonstrates your attainment of the skills that you believe are encompassed in the department’s description of the goal.

**What else do you need to do to complete the portfolio?**

The final step before you submit your completed portfolio (besides careful editing and proofreading) is to highlight the sections of your submitted papers that you cite in your narrative. Be sure to use the same color-coding scheme provided in the template.

When you submit your portfolio, you will complete a permissions form (see *How will the English Department use your portfolio?* above). We will ask you also to complete a brief, anonymous survey about your experience in constructing the portfolio.

**How will you submit your portfolio?**

You will create your portfolio using Blackboard’s Content Collection. As a student enrolled in Seminar in Literature, you will be registered as a member of a special site on Blackboard where you will submit (“share”) your final Seminar in Literature Portfolio. Guidelines for submitting your portfolio will be provided separately. The due date for your portfolio will be determined and announced to you by your Seminar in Literature instructor.
Checklist for the Seminar in Literature Portfolio
Fall 2012

My portfolio includes the following items:

- Title page (a template will be provided)
- Narrative statement (a template will be provided)
  - Includes an introduction and six headings, one for each of the following department goals, bolded and highlighted in the colors indicated in the template
    - Goal 1: Demonstrate an aesthetic appreciation of language and literature.
    - Goal 2: Interpret a range of texts in American, British, and world literature, providing those texts with appropriate historical and cultural contexts.
      - Note that your narrative should address not only specific examples where you apply these skills in your submitted papers but also the broader range of literature and its contexts that you engaged during your studies in the major.
    - Goal 3: Demonstrate advanced analytical reading skills.
    - Goal 4: Understand a variety of critical theories, approaches, and methodologies and apply them to the interpretation of texts.
      - Note that your narrative should address not only specific examples where you apply these skills in your submitted papers but also the broader range of critical theories, approaches, and methodologies that you engaged during your studies in the major.
    - Goal 5: Demonstrate substantial communication skills, including the ability to write effective prose for specific rhetorical situations.
    - Goal 6: Demonstrate advanced ability to conduct and use academic research, from locating and evaluating print and electronic sources to integrating research materials into substantial critical essays.
- Seminar in Literature seminar paper
- Two or more papers written in other major courses at the 200-level or above taken at FSU (literature, film, writing, etc.)
  - Include highlighted sections color-coded to narrative statement goals and your discussions of specific examples
- Permissions form (template will be provided)