

Form E-1-A for Boston College Departments/Programs

Department/Program German Studies Department: Literature Core Updated Spring 2018

GERM1063: Triumphs and Failings of Modern Man (Bowles)

GERM1166: The Quest for Justice: Kafka and Kleist (Freudenburg)

GERM2221: Madmen, Hysterics, & Criminals: Inventing Deviance (Bowles)

1) **Have formal learning outcomes been developed? What are they?**

Formal learning outcomes for Literature Core courses taught in the German Studies Department have been developed in consultation with the individual instructors and department faculty. While specific learning outcomes vary depending on each course, German Studies Literature Core courses in general address enduring questions—What is the nature of justice? How do we define ourselves against what we fear? How might we think of crisis as opportunity and innovation? How does our understanding of literature shape our conception of the world and ourselves?—within the unique framework of the German literary and cultural legacy, especially since 1800.

In pursuing answers to these queries from the vantage point of a foreign cultural tradition, we aim to provide students a German-centric intellectual perspective for examining their own cultures and values from the outside; for understanding the shifting histories of these enduring questions and any potential answers to them; for grasping the everyday relevance of critical thinking, reading, and writing; for coming to terms, through narratological training, with the power of literature to shape human experience and understanding; and for practicing and appreciating the necessity of written expression, argumentation, and research.

These learning outcomes have been framed in three statements/questions that we include on course evaluations for Literature Core courses taught in the German Studies department (see below).

2) **Where are these learning outcomes published? Be specific.**

Learning outcomes for German Studies Literature Core courses are published on the departmental website, which is maintained and updated regularly.

3) **Other than GPA, what data/evidence is used to determine whether graduates have achieved the stated outcomes for the degree?**

To assess whether students in our Core courses achieve the stated learning outcomes, we survey students in our Literature Core courses at the end of each term. The first of these surveys was completed with third-party software in Fall 2015 (SurveyMonkey); more recent surveys were developed in consultation with the office of Institutional Research, Planning & Assessment, the Core program deans, and the Office of Student Services and were appended to the standard course evaluation form in Fall 2017. Data are forthcoming.

The most recent survey questions frame our departmental learning outcomes for Literature Core courses and consist of three agreement questions and one open-answer comment box. The data from these questions will be evaluated together with the relevant Core program officers. The questions read as follows:

1. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statement: "In this course, I gained deeper insight into the ways in which Western literary cultures have framed and challenged different mechanisms of self-understanding." [An additional prompt is added to this question to tailor this to each Core course we offer.]
2. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statement: "Together with my peers and my instructor, I engaged in critical inquiry and reflected meaningfully on alternative ways of looking at the world through literature."
3. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statement: "This course introduced me to (or helped me develop) the disciplinary practices of literary study, including close reading, textual analysis, critical thought, and the practice of writing."
4. Please use this space to comment on or explain your answers to the foregoing three questions.

4) **Who interprets the evidence? What is the process?**

Course evaluations are interpreted both by the instructor and the department chair, and survey results are shared and interpreted by the entire department faculty. In the case of these particular surveys of Core courses, data are shared with the Core Program officers. Recommendations for changes in curriculum or assignments are made in consultation with department colleagues on a two-year cycle (the cycle on which these courses are typically given) at departmental meetings.

5) **What changes have been made as a result of using the data/evidence?**

In Spring 2016, a new Literature Core course (GERM2221/FREN3315/ENGL2210) was added to our roster of courses. Because our assessment methods and data are still relatively new,

however, no recent changes to already existing curriculum have yet been made. Data from courses given in academic year 2017–2018 will be evaluated at the end of the spring term, combining both survey data captured by the SurveyMonkey questionnaire for GERM1166 and by the additional questions added to the course evaluations for GERM2221.

6) Date of the most recent program review.

The most recent comprehensive departmental self-study and review took place in Winter 2012. The offerings in the Core Program by the German Studies Department were mostly recently studied and reviewed in Fall 2015.