

## Assessment Report

Department/Program:   Humanities and Justice Studies   Chair:   Coordinator: David Munns  

Degree /Minor/Certificate/or other Program: \_\_\_\_\_

Time Period Covered for this Assessment Review:   2013-2014  

Assessment occurred in the following courses:

Course	Semester and Year
<u>HJS410</u>	<u>Fall 2013</u>
<u>HJS415</u>	<u>Spring 2014</u>

Direct Assessment of Learning Goals (Please attach to the report a copy of each rubric used.)

After listing the learning goal(s), insert *the percentage of students falling into each performance level* in the following chart. Your descriptors for the performance levels may vary, and if they do please substitute yours, but it's important to specify which level "meets expectations" for your program.

Learning Goal(s) Assessed	Course Number	Sample Size	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Approaches Expectations	Does Not Meet Expectations
<u>Learning Objective 3 (Comparative Analytical Skills): Students will learn to identify, compare, contrast, apply and evaluate the concepts, underlying principles, values, and theories embedded in justice-related issues, events, and texts; they will be able to formulate, find a theoretical framework for, and seek answers to their own original research questions.</u>	HJS410/4 15	14 (50%)	1 (7%)	<u>8 (57%)</u>	<u>5 (36%)</u>	<u>0</u>

	<u>HJ410/41</u>	<u>14 (50%)</u>	<u>1 (7%)</u>	<u>6 (43%)</u>	<u>7 (50%)</u>	<u>0</u>
<u>Learning Objective 4</u> (Multidisciplinary Methods of Inquiry): Students will learn to employ, compare, and evaluate the methods of inquiry used in the disciplines of history, literary study, and philosophy; students will be able to select and apply these methods to the study of justice-related concepts, issues, events, and texts, and to the investigation of their own original research questions.	<u>5</u>					
	<u>HJS410/4</u>	<u>14 (50%)</u>	<u>2 (14%)</u>	<u>6 (43%)</u>	<u>6 (43%)</u>	<u>0</u>
<u>Learning Objective 5</u> (Writing and Rhetorical Skills): Students will be able to produce well-reasoned, well-researched, well-documented and articulate texts, including essays, a Thesis Prospectus and/or draft, and a final Senior Thesis.	<u>15</u>					

Assessment Process How did you go about assessing student learning in your program?

*(Describe briefly the assessment methodology: sample selection, assessment instruments, scoring process, and assessment design)*

Led by the HJS Coordinator, the Assessment process called for the collection of one-half of the senior theses completed for HJS410-415. The HJS Coordinator asked each of the professors to send equivalent numbers of each grade (A,B, C, (D+F)) to encompass at least half the class size to make a viable sample. These theses, each some 30-35pages, were then read by the HJS assessment committee, and scored according to the established rubric. HJS has a well-established culture of assessment, and a well-developed system of assessment rubrics and criteria by which the goals of the course can be directly evaluated. These were all put in place by a former HJS Coordinator, Bettina Carbonell, back in 2011-12, and were used for consistency throughout this process. The Descriptive Assessment Rubric for HJS 415 is attached to the end of this report.

Conclusions What did you discover about student learning in your program?

The HJS courses 410/415 represent the capstone of the HJS major. The faculty’s ambitions for student theses are high, as are their demands about quality work. Over the last several years, the HJS faculty has been engaged in a substantive discussions about the place and structure of the thesis in the HJS major. This year permitted the assessment team to evaluate how are students are doing. In terms of the three criteria assessed, namely, the application of justice-related theories or concepts; the engagement with primary sources; and the integration of secondary sources, the team found a distinct disparity between the two classes. Substantial higher scores were found in one class rather than another, presumably reflecting the disciplinary focus of one instructor versus another. However, more seriously, the team found that the class with the lower overall scores did not possess the learning outcomes of the class on their syllabus (attached at the end of this report). This suggests that the instructor did not pivot their class towards the agreed learning outcomes, and it would appear that both the grades for that class, and the assessment of its student’s work suffered appreciably. The HJS coordinator has vowed to ensure that all faculty know of, incorporate, and adjust their syllabi to meet the agreed upon learning outcomes.

Secondly, overall the assessment of the three criteria revealed that many students only just met the expectations for integrating secondary sources and, even less effectively, the explicit use of primary source materials. Once again, the different disciplinary orientations towards the very meaning of “primary sources” comes into play here, but for an inter-disciplinary major like HJS, to meet or exceeds the expectations of the criteria is to “engage with relevant primary texts”. This process, however, probably needs to be instilled at the research methods level (HJS 315), and the results from this year’s assessment suggests that it is at HJS315 to which we need to look to improve our student performance markedly.

Actions Taken

What action decisions did you make based on your data and conclusions? (Plan actions to take effect in the following semester or sooner if practical.)

Actions To Be Taken and By Whom	Timeframe for implementation and intermediate steps
The HJS coordinator at the first faculty meeting of 2014/15 will stipulate that learning outcomes must appear on syllabi, and all faculty teaching in HJS will be given the copies of the Descriptive Assessment Rubrics. Any faculty member failing to fully integrate the learning outcomes in the revisions of their syllabi will not be further invited to teach in HJS.	One year, 2014/15.
HJS 250 and 315 will have to be re-worked in order to ground students in coherent and relevant bodies of literature, and to expose them to thinking explicitly about primary and secondary sources. Likewise, faculty have to be made aware that	Two years, 2014-2016

students are not using primary and secondary sources explicitly, and need to spend time on, and focus students attention towards, those foundation skills to better equipment them for their senior theses.	

Were last year's actions implemented as planned? Please explain.

Substantial discussion of the whole structure of HJS was heavily discussed at several faculty meetings all last year without, however, consensus or a firm decision of action. The only agreed upon action was to evaluate the capstone courses, HJS415/415 to see if the outcomes for those courses and the major were at or above expectations. This report fulfills that action.

Assessment data and conclusions were discussed in a Department or Program meeting on \_\_\_\_\_. [date]

Attachments: Please attach rubrics used and samples of student work at each performance level within the rubric.

**Humanities and Justice Major**  
**Descriptive Assessment Rubric – HJS 415 Thesis**

<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>Exceeds</b>	<b>Meets</b>	<b>Approaches</b>	<b>Fails to Meet</b>
In the final draft of the senior thesis the student:	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
1) Formulates an original thesis statement, research question or research problem relevant to the study of justice in the Humanities.	Thesis /problem displays original thought, is finely focused and clearly stated; relevance to study of justice is made explicit.	Thesis /focus clearly stated; relevance to justice implied, not stated /or fully developed; may be derivative, unoriginal; may be too broad.	Thesis / focus not identified; topic is general; offers some evidence of an area of interest; justice-related aspect not developed.	No stated focus; does not address justice in relation to subject area.
Assessment				
2) Constructs, sustains and develops the stated focus of the thesis.	Attention to stated focus is consistent; clear connections made between thesis, evidence, analysis.	Focus maintained but connections to evidence not always clearly established.	Without a clear thesis or focus, material presented seems random, cannot be evaluated re: relevance.	No focus, no sense of organization of material or its relevance.
Assessment				
3) Applies one or more justice-related concepts, principles, and / or values as a theoretical framework for the thesis.	Concept(s), principle(s) are clearly articulated; material is analyzed within that theoretical framework.	Concept(s), principle(s) are stated; some connections btw supporting material + theoretical framework are made.	Concept(s), principle(s) may be suggested; few connections made to supporting material; no clear framework for analysis of topic.	No concepts principles are discussed.
Assessment				
4) Engages primary sources critically and creatively; presents textual evidence persuasively.	Engages with relevant primary texts; summarizes, analyzes, makes persuasive connections to thesis.	Incorporates relevant primary texts; summarizes, makes connections to thesis.	Uses few primary texts; does not connect primary texts to thesis.	Does not use primary texts.
Assessment				

<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>Exceeds</b>	<b>Meets</b>	<b>Approaches</b>	<b>Fails to Meet</b>
In the final draft of the senior thesis the student:	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
5) Effectively integrates and evaluates relevant secondary literature.	Secondary sources are relevant, offer strong support for thesis; sources are peer-reviewed, authoritative; sources are well analyzed, evaluated.	Secondary sources are generally relevant, peer-reviewed, authoritative; sources are clearly presented, most are well analyzed.	Too few secondary sources; doubtful origins, not analyzed.	Few or no credible secondary sources.
Assessment				
6) Acknowledges and engages with counter-arguments and alternate perspectives.	Alternate views are seriously considered, objectively presented, evaluated in context of major claims, evidence.	Alternate views are noted, some specific examples are included, some analysis is offered.	Alternate views are given little attention and are dismissed without analysis.	No attention to alternate views.
Assessment				
7) Correctly and consistently employs MLA system of documentation.	All sources are cited in body of text with appropriate parenthetical data; all sources are listed on Works Cited with full publication information in MLA format.	Most sources are acknowledged in body of text and listed on Works Cited; most citations are complete and correctly formatted.	Some sources not clearly identified in body; some sources not listed on Works Cited; format is inconsistent.	Most sources not clearly identified; many not listed on Works Cited; little attention to format.
Assessment				
8) Demonstrates competence in the technical conventions of academic writing.	Prose is clear; needs of audience are met; terms are defined; error-free re: sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, spelling; paragraphs are well constructed; clear transitions are made.	Prose is generally clear; most terms are defined; few errors in sentence structure, etc.; paragraphs are generally well-structured.	Prose is sometimes unclear; terms are rarely defined; errors in sentence structure, etc., diction, word choice; lack of paragraph coherence.	Many errors at many levels cause serious interference with the communication of ideas.
Assessment				
Grading scale:	Points			
• Exceeds expectations / standards	= 4			
• Meets expectations / standards	= 3			
• Approaches expectations / standards	= 2			
• Fails to meet expectations / standards	= 1			

HUMANITIES AND JUSTICE MAJOR (BA) DRAFT CURRICULUM MAP - 01/18/2011

Course CORE COURSES	1 Learning Objective Knowledge Acquisition: ... major concepts ... in the Western tradition.	2 Learning Objective Knowledge Acquisition: ... selected concepts ... in non-Western traditions	3 Learning Objective Comparative Analytical Skills	4 Learning Objective Multidisciplinary Methods of Inquiry	5 Learning Objective Writing + Rhetorical Skills	6 Learning Objective Research Skills + Information Literacy
<b>COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES</b>						
<b>HJS 315</b> <i>Research Methods</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Study a justice-related topic selected by Instructor — this topic may involve Western, non-Western, or comparative Western / non-Western contexts.</li> <li>Engage in close reading and analysis of issue-specific primary and secondary texts in history, literary studies, and philosophy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compare and evaluate principles, theories and assumptions, in primary and secondary sources assigned by Instructor.</li> <li>Analyze and evaluate additional primary and secondary sources.</li> <li>Formulate an original thesis / question.</li> <li>Use textual evidence.</li> <li>Place thesis within existing secondary literature.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Select and evaluate disciplinary perspectives and methods appropriate to topic.</li> <li>Integrate more than one disciplinary method in an analysis.</li> <li>Develop a theoretical framework for an analysis.</li> <li>Synthesize evidence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compose essays of increasing analytical and argumentative complexity.</li> <li>Integrate and fully acknowledge sources.</li> <li>Revise in response to critique.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fully engage in the research process:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify topic and discipline-specific databases</li> <li>Locate credible, relevant primary and secondary sources.</li> <li>Use MLA citation style.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<b>HJS 410</b> <i>Problems and Theory: Thesis Prospectus</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apply, analyze and synthesize issues, concepts and principles relevant to the original research project.</li> <li>Integrate, analyze, evaluate relevant primary texts in the Western and / or non-Western traditions.</li> <li>Integrate, analyze, evaluate relevant secondary texts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formulate an original thesis / question.</li> <li>Use textual evidence.</li> <li>Place original thesis within existing secondary literature.</li> <li>Formulate and effectively present reasons, claims, warrants.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Select and evaluate disciplinary perspectives and methods as appropriate to topic.</li> <li>Integrate more than one disciplinary method in an analysis.</li> <li>Develop a theoretical framework for an analysis.</li> <li>Synthesize evidence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compose:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outline</li> <li>Abstract*</li> <li>Introduction</li> <li>Section drafts*</li> <li>Full 1st draft*</li> <li>Review of the Literature*</li> </ul> </li> <li>Integrate and fully acknowledge sources.</li> <li>Revise in response to critique.</li> <li>* in some iterations of the course</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Select subject-specific databases, journals, indexes.</li> <li>Execute subject and keyword searches.</li> <li>Locate and evaluate sources.</li> <li>Compile Working Bibliography and Annotated Bibliography.</li> <li>Use MLA citation style.</li> </ul>	
<b>HJS 415</b> <i>Thesis in Humanities and Justice Studies</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apply issues, concepts and principles relevant to the original research project.</li> <li>Integrate relevant primary texts in the Western and / or non-Western traditions.</li> <li>Integrate, analyze, evaluate relevant secondary texts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refine / revise thesis statement or research question.</li> <li>Use textual evidence.</li> <li>Place thesis within existing secondary literature.</li> <li>Formulate and effectively present reasons, claims, warrants.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apply disciplinary methods.</li> <li>Further develop a theoretical framework.</li> <li>Synthesize evidence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compose multiple drafts of thesis.</li> <li>Revise in response to critique.</li> <li>Compose a final draft of thesis.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Repeat, revise database, subject, and keyword searches.</li> <li>Locate and evaluate additional sources.</li> <li>Compile Works Cited List in MLA style.</li> </ul>	

HJS 415: Thesis in Humanities and Justice StudiesSYLLABUSTuesdays, 7<sup>th</sup> period (5:40–6:55 pm)

Room NB 1.100

This is the last in the sequence of four HJS courses required of all Justice Studies majors. In the prerequisite to this course, HJS 410, you prepared prospectuses of research projects; in this course you will carry out those research plans, producing a senior thesis presenting the results of your research.

The work of the course will thus be done primarily by you students working independently, pursuing your own research projects. Each of you will also be expected to meet periodically with the instructor to review your progress and discuss any problems or issues that arise. You can certainly schedule an appointment with me at any time. Additionally, each of you will be expected to participate in class discussions of your own and other students' work. Participation in a community of researchers will help alleviate some of the anxieties associated with scholarly writing of this kind. You will also help each other in more straight-forward ways, and gain insights from each other's creative achievements and solutions to problems that crop up.

Course Policies

Because this is a seminar and so much of the course content will take place during class sessions, you should attend every class. Only one unexcused absence will be permitted.

Come to class – and to any appointments we have – on time and plan to stay for the full seventy-five minutes. Consistent lateness will lower your grade. Leave class only for emergencies.

Cell phones and all other personal electronics must be off and out of sight for the duration of class. Two incidents of cell-phone discharge during class, and/or one incident of texting in class, will count as an absence.

You may bring a drink to class but no eating is allowed.

All thesis drafts must be word-processed, 12 pt. typeface, with one-inch margins and numbered pages, as well as a Word file attachment sent to [propittman@gmail.com](mailto:propittman@gmail.com). Submitted work must be grammatically correct and free of typos and surface errors; if not, it will be returned to you for resubmission and counted as late.

Required work submitted late will be penalized.

There will be no formal tests in this class; the final period (Thursday, May 19<sup>th</sup>, from 5:30 to 7:30 pm) will be used for oral presentation of your theses to the class.

There will be no incompletes given in this course.

## Grading

This is a product-driven course: your completed thesis, the final result of all your work in this class, will be the single most important determinant of your final grade. You will also be graded on your timely submission of the drafts of your thesis and your active participation in the activities of the class. Your final grade will be based 75% on the final version of your thesis, 15% on your timely submission of and follow-through on your working drafts and 10% on your participation in class activities.

## Plagiarism

Plagiarism of any kind or to any degree is unacceptable and will constitute grounds for failure of the course. According to the John Jay College Bulletin:

“Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's ideas, words, or artistic, scientific, or technical work as one's own creation. Using the ideas or work of another is permissible only when the original author is identified. Paraphrasing and summarizing, as well as direct quotations, require citations to the original source.

“Plagiarism may be intentional or unintentional. Lack of dishonest intent does not necessarily absolve a student of responsibility for plagiarism.

“It is the student's responsibility to recognize the difference between statements that are common knowledge (which do not require documentation) and restatements of the ideas of others.

“Students who are unsure how and when to provide documentation are advised to consult with their instructors. The Library has free guides designed to help students with problems of documentation.” (<http://www.jjay.cuny.edu/academicStandards/undergraduate.asp>)

## Tentative course meeting & deadline schedule

Tuesday, January 28 <sup>th</sup>	Course Introduction
...	
Tuesday, April 8 <sup>th</sup>	First full draft of your thesis due
Tuesday, May 13 <sup>th</sup>	Complete final draft due (last day of class)
Thursday, May 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Final Exam Period (5:30 to 7:30)