

Snow College

English and Philosophy Program Review

submitted to the State Board of Regents
summer 2017

Reviewed the spring semester 2017 with the rating of recommended

Reviewers:

- Robert Cousins, Professor of English Literature, Utah Valley University
- Lynn Anderson, Librarian, Snow College

English Program Description:

Note: for the purposes of this review, philosophy classes taught at Snow College are considered a part of the English department and curriculum.

English is the study of British, American, and world literature, literary theory, creative writing, technical writing, composition theory, rhetorical theory, and (in some programs) women's studies, American studies, multicultural studies, and film. The English department provides courses that focus on critical reading, critical thinking, and writing through the study of language.

The English Department at Snow College fulfills two roles: general education (GE) and major education. Most courses in the English Department are designed to satisfy either the Composition GE requirement or the Humanities GE requirement. English 1010 and 2010 satisfy the following GE outcomes:

- Read effectively, constructively, and critically;
- Write clearly, informatively, and persuasively; and
- Retrieve, evaluate, interpret, and deliver information through a variety of traditional and electronic media.
- Reason analytically, critically, and creatively about nature, culture, facts, values, ethics and civic policy

Most students take at least two classes within the English Department while they are at Snow College.

Snow College also serves English majors who study a variety of authors, genres, and literary periods. They study language as a vehicle of utility and pleasure. They study literature as a reflection of the human condition. They read and write extensively. The English Department offers major courses that transfer seamlessly to 4-year institutions in the state.

Department Mission and Goals

The mission of the English Department is to help all students fulfill their GE needs by helping them improve their critical thinking, critical reading, writing, and research skills. The department also seeks to prepare students for transfer to other institutions by adequately preparing them to enter upper-division courses.

The English Department provides a rigorous and diverse education in literature and writing for English majors and general education students.

The English Department supports the mission of Snow College in the following ways:

- Excellence: The department regularly uses assessment tools and student feedback to improve the quality of student education.
- Innovation: The department consistently seeks out and evaluates trends in pedagogy and implements those that best suit the mission and goals of the program.
- Engagement: The department assists students in developing skills that help them communicate effectively in a variety of contexts.

Philosophy Program Description:

The Department of Philosophy offers three courses that focus on critical reading, writing, and thinking through the study of philosophy, ethics, and religion.

The courses offered through the Philosophy Department are designed to satisfy the Humanities GE requirement. Courses taught satisfy the following GE outcomes:

1. Read effectively, constructively, and critically.
2. Write clearly, informatively, and persuasively
3. Apply a cultural and historical awareness to a variety of phenomena
4. Apply ethical reasoning to a variety of contexts

Department Mission Statement

The mission of the English Department is to help all students fulfill their GE needs by helping them improve their critical thinking, critical reading, writing, and research skills. The department also seeks to prepare students for transfer to other institutions by adequately preparing them to enter upper-division courses. The English Department provides a rigorous and diverse education in literature and writing for English majors and general education students.

The mission of the philosophy department at Snow College is to help students fulfill their GE requirements, develop an understanding of philosophy and philosophical inquiry, evaluate philosophical and ethical arguments, and see how philosophic thinking and ideas connect to their own lives.

Faculty and Staff:

There are 19 full-time faculty members on the Ephraim campus and one full-time faculty member on the Richfield campus. Each full-time faculty member has at least a master's degree or higher (10 have PhDs) in addition to many years of teaching experience. There are also 8-10 part-time faculty teaching in the English department in any given semester. Each of those teachers has a degree in English and many years of teaching experience. (See endnotes for information on faculty accomplishments.)

Full-time members of the English Department have a 3:1 contract, meaning that they are expected to teach three composition classes and one literature (creative writing, philosophy, ESL, literature) course per semester. However, the English department serves the campus community extensively and as a result several faculty members have assignments that fulfill one to two course loads: Presently, the Honors

Program director receives one course release, the Department Chair receives a two course release, and the Writing Lab director and the Director of Convocations each receive a one course release, respectively.

The English Department has no staff of its own. However, the department hires a work-to-learn student to assist faculty in record-keeping and publicity. The department also has access to the administrative assistant to the Humanities Division and a Humanities hired work to learn student, which is a benefit to the department.

Students in ENGL 2280, Methods and Practice in Tutoring Writers, work as tutors in the Snow College Writing Lab. Graduates of the course are eligible for paid positions as writing tutors. Eight to twelve tutors are hired each year. This tutoring experience provides an opportunity to learn what it means to teach English. It is also an excellent way to serve the college community.

The chair of the department is a rotating assignment. A full-time faculty member serves a term of three years that may be repeated. Faculty members serve as requested or as volunteers to campus and division committees, often in leadership positions: presently, members of the department chair the Honor's program, the, the GE Assessment Task Force, and the Writing Lab. The department also has representatives on Faculty Senate, Curriculum, Advancement and Tenure, GE Task Force, Global Engagement, Service Learning, and Sustainability committees.

Faculty Headcount (Academic Year)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
With Doctoral Degrees	6	6	9	10	10
Full-Time Tenured	4	4	3	2	2
Full-Time Non-Tenured	2	2	6	8	8
Part-Time	0	0	0	0	0
With Master's Degrees	33	34	31	32	34
Full-Time Tenured	6	6	4	4	5
Full-Time Non-Tenured	3	3	4	4	5
Part-Time	24	25	23	24	24
With Bachelor's Degrees	2	1	1	1	1
Full-Time Tenured	0	0	0	0	0
Full-Time Non-Tenured	0	0	0	0	0
Part-Time	2	2	2	2	2
Other					
Full-Time Tenured					
Full-Time Non-Tenured					
Part-Time					
Total Headcount Faculty	41	41	41	43	45
Full-Time Tenured	10	10	7	6	7
Full-Time Non-Tenured	5	5	10	12	13
Part-Time	26	27	25	26	25
FTE					

Full Time	31.26	24.7	32.4	32.6	33.7
Teaching Assistants	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Part-Time	5.2	5.4	5.0	5.2	5.0
Total Faculty FTE (Academic Year)	36.46	30.1	37.4	37.8	38.7

Students

The English Department at Snow College serves the entire student body due to its heavy commitment to general education. Students enroll in English courses at least once, and most take 2-3 courses to fulfill their general education requirements. Students enrolled in composition and literature courses seek to meet the Writing and Humanities general education outcomes, increase their communication skills, and prepare to transfer to four-year institutions or enter the workforce. Students enrolled in the English major seek to fulfill lower level major credit and prepare to enter the major at a four-year institution.

Snow College is an open-enrollment institution, and students arrive with a range of preparedness. Because of the department's heavy general education commitment, it must meet the needs of this diverse group. Some students come academically unprepared while others come with nearly a year of college credit already completed. Consequently, the English Department continually tries to meet the needs of a varied audience: developmental courses for those underprepared, and placement tests for those most prepared to test out of English 1010. Most students fall into the category of prepared college student: each of these students is given a diagnostic exam to ensure they are beginning their writing education at the appropriate course level.

Graduating Class	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Number of Graduates	12	15	0	6	12
Certificates	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Associate Degrees	12	15	0	6	12
Bachelor's Degrees	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Master's Degrees	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Doctoral Degrees	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Number of Students (Academic Year)	3352	2964	3480	3638	3594
Total Declared Majors	14	4	5	5	5
Total Department FTE	728.7	639.1	743.2	781.0	775.3
Total Department SCH	10931.0	9587.0	11148.0	11715.0	11630.0
Student FTE/Faculty FTE	20.0	21.2	19.9	20.7	20.0

Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment:

General Education: Writing

All students who graduate with an associate degree from Snow College are required to complete two English composition courses that meet the general education writing (E1 & E2) requirements. E1 & E2

courses offered through the English Department address the following departmental student learning outcomes:

Course 1 (E1)

- Assess rhetorical situations and plan written responses that account for audience, purpose, context, and genre.
- Organize effective arguments that engage readers, provide needed background, present compelling evidence, and respond to opposing viewpoints.
- Write using an effective process that includes planning, drafting, peer workshopping, and revision. This process should be explicit in class activities and assignment design; revision should improve the overall quality of the document.
- Carefully and critically read written arguments, identifying the use of rhetorical techniques by the author.

Course 2 (E2)

- Assess rhetorical situations and plan written responses that account for audience, purpose, context, and genre.
- Organize effective arguments that engage readers, provide needed background, present compelling evidence, and respond to opposing viewpoints.
- Write using an effective process that includes planning, drafting, peer workshopping, and revision. This process should be explicit in class activities and assignment design; revision should improve the overall quality of the document.
- Carefully and critically read written arguments, identifying the use of rhetorical techniques by the author.
- Think critically about arguments by exploring multiple perspectives.
- Find and evaluate credible primary and secondary research and utilize that research appropriately to support an argument/position. In doing so, students will include precise documentation, avoid plagiarism, and integrate source material smoothly (see more at: <https://www.snow.edu/academics/ge/index.html/#sthash.s7mcdfeb.dpuf>).

As an assessment tool, the department has participated in the Multistate Collaborative for 3 years, collecting all 75 or more signature assignments. Snow College assesses these artifacts on our own each May and has developed report/scorecards from returned MSC data during the fall. The report/scorecards are used for improvement discussions conducted during the holiday break each academic year.

General Education: Humanities

All students who graduate with an associate degree from Snow College are required to complete a general education course that meets the humanities (HU) requirement. HU courses offered through the English Department address the following departmental student learning outcomes:

- know the elements of most literary genres and the vocabulary used to describe them;
- know the general outline of British and/or American literary history;
- know the scope of several distinct literary theories;

- can respond constructively to an unfamiliar literary work;
- can write a mature essay that interprets a literary work within the framework of a recognized literary theory;
- believe that literature is an important form of expression;
- believe that they are themselves capable of participating in the literary tradition

The department has developed a Humanities rubric and began a practice of gathering artifacts spring semester 2015 and rating them accordingly. Assessment showed that revision of signature assignments was needed and faculty discussions were organized around assignment re-design. Improvements to assignment design were noted in the 2016 and 2017 artifact assessment exercise.

English Majors

Students who complete the recommended English major curriculum at Snow College will be expected to demonstrate that they

- know the elements of most literary genres and the vocabulary used to describe them;
- know the general outline of British and/or American literary history;
- know the scope of several distinct literary theories;
- can respond constructively to an unfamiliar literary work;
- can write a mature essay that interprets a literary work within the framework of a recognized literary theory;
- believe that literature is an important form of expression;
- believe that they are themselves capable of participating in the literary tradition.

Financial Analysis:

The department is supported by general funds from the college. The cost of hiring adjuncts is covered by the part-time instruction budget of the college, administered through the office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The department has no dedicated scholarship money, but there is \$1000 in the English budget for the publication of *Weeds*, the college literary journal.

Cost (based on Fiscal Year-Cost Study)	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16
Direct Institutional Expenditures	\$1,145,092	\$1,258,397	\$1,072,865	\$1,213,322	\$1,236,218
Cost per Student FTE	\$1,649	\$2,092	\$1,556	\$1,675	\$1,663
Funding:					
Appropriated Fund	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Other:					
Special Legislative Appropriation	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Grants of Contracts	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Special Fees/Differential Tuition	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Program Assessment:

The results of the 2012 English /Philosophy program was generally positive. The reviewers commended the programs for quality faculty, faculty activity on committees, and for maintaining a “rational student-faculty ratio.” They identified our offerings as strengths, as well as our facilities.

Of concern to the reviewers, aside from salary issues, were the ability to secure qualified part-time faculty, the need for a staff support person, the lack of a detailed on-going assessment plan and a long term strategic plan.

All of these concerns have been addressed in this fashion: to offset adjunct faculty issues, the English department has added three 1 year appointments. Additionally, there are additional instructors in Philosophy, and we have hired a part-time staff support person. The departments have addressed the assessment issues and are in the process of collection artifacts to be assessed with specific criteria.

In accordance with Utah State Board of Regents’ policy R411 on the periodic review of educational programs, an on-site visit of Snow College’s Communication program was conducted on February 24, 2017. The on-site visit included a comprehensive tour of educational facilities, conversations with students, class visits, and faculty interviews. This visit was preceded careful study of the self-study document. The strengths, weaknesses, recommendations and responses in the following section are inclusive of the English and Philosophy programs.

Program Strengths:

- Faculty should be commended for their impressive list of credentials earned from a healthy variety of institutions. They possess varied backgrounds and wide-ranging academic experiences adding richness to the profession they represent. Also, the faculty should be noted for their many accomplishments, accolades, and engagement in professional development.
- English faculty members are to be commended for their involvement in numerous campus committees, initiatives, and projects. Taken together, the faculty members play a major role in shaping the direction of the college beyond classroom teaching. This influence extends to the community as well.
- Our meetings with the faculty reveal a palpable sense of collegiality. This is not only reflected in their interactions, but also in the department’s clear and cohesive goals and mission statements.
- The program has a well-theorized and attractively designed writing lab led by an enthusiastic faculty director. The lab offers an important opportunity for students to meet with trained peer writing consultants on their class assignments. It is an invaluable resource that enhances student learning and helps the departments to meet their student learning outcomes.

Program Recommendations:

1. **Committee Assignments:** It appears that senior faculty share a large burden of institutional committee assignments. It is recommended that such opportunities be shared among new faculty in order to develop faculty leadership.

Institutional Response: We have realized the need to provide junior faculty the chance to serve on campus committees, and for that reason, this academic year (2016-2017) we ensured that every department member had a service opportunity either within the department or on campus-wide committees. As the first wave of our new hires enter their fourth years, there will be further opportunities to have them represent the division on elected campus committees. In fact, we have already elected one junior faculty member to serve on the Curriculum Committee. We will continue to find ways to share committee loads and to provide each faculty member with opportunities to develop skills and CV lines through campus service.

2. **Writing lab workshops:** It is recommended the junior faculty participate in outreach efforts such as providing workshops supportive of the program's writing lab.

Institutional Response: The review's suggestion of including junior faculty in the outreach efforts of the writing lab is a good one. We will make sure the department members working on this initiative keep this opportunity in mind.

3. **In-class participation:** It is recommended that the program adopt more engaging, discussion-like pedagogical strategies over the lecture based classroom presentation.

Institutional Response: Engaging and discussion-based class activities should be at the core of English classes, and we will consider the suggestion to integrate seminar-like discussions more fully. Beyond the pedagogical strategies to accomplish this, we will also need to reconfigure classrooms to support this kind of interaction. Beginning last fall (2016), we explored the costs of changing room 116 into a classroom with circular stations for students collaborate with each other (remodeling and furniture costs have been an issue). Additionally, some faculty circle the desks every class period. We will continue to work in this area, perhaps by focusing teaching brownbags on strategies for classroom discussion.

4. **Composition sequence and director of composition:** With the increasing number of adjunct faculty and distance/on-line and outreach instruction, it is recommended that composition course leadership be centralized to ensure consistency of instruction, instructional materials, and rigor.

Institutional Response: Because our low level of adjunct faculty—and not graduate instructors—the department has had a longstanding approach to composition that values course outcomes but does not require the same paper sequences, a required textbook, or uniform lesson plans. However, we also recognize that as the department grows, and as we are asked to teach online,

concurrent enrollment, and IVC classes, further coordination in composition classes is needed. Two years ago, the department updated the parameters for English 1010 and English 2010, and we are ensuring that concurrent enrollment classes also use the updated parameters.

5. **IVC strategies:** Teaching using interactive video technology (IVC) requires a special approach given the caliber of students (high school) and the number of distance sites being taught simultaneously. It is recommended the program consider how well the institution can offer such courses with the same quality of instruction as face-to-face courses.

***Institutional Response:** We recognize that IVC classes need special approaches, and we continue to work to improve the experience IVC students have. We have implemented training on IVC teaching best practices, hired faculty specifically for these classes, and continue assessments of the IVC classes and program. Question about whether Snow is well-positioned to run this program is largely a matter for Snow College administration to consider.*

6. **Tracking students and program development:** It is recommended that program increase efforts to track student success such as the awarding of a writing certificate. It is also recommended that additional co-curricular writing opportunities be provided to students.

***Institutional Response:** We appreciate suggestion concerning developing programs in the department. A writing certificate is a central goal for the next twelve months; the certificate is a step toward a possible four-year degree in that it will build the department's curriculum and capacity. Once we offer a writing certificate, the department will need to assess the feasibility and advisability of a bachelor's degree program.*

The department has made great strides in the last two years in developing discipline-clubs for philosophy and creative writing. An English Club is a logical companion or stand-alone club, and this merits attention and will be included on the agenda of the next department meeting.

7. **Plans for the next review:** It is recommended that reviewers begin given opportunities to meet with academic advisors in order to ascertain how placement and english course enrollment is encouraged.

***Institutional Response:** We will make a note to allow reviewers to meet with academic advisors and to have more conversations with students in subsequent reviews.*