

Enhancing Educational Effectiveness (Delgado: CHLS @ CSULB)

Abstract

This proposal seeks support to develop five new courses in Chicano and Latino Studies. Drs. Luis Arroyo, Anna Sandoval, and Grace Delgado will compose courses in comparative Latina literature (technology), feminism, Chicano history (service learning and technology), and indigenous women's movements of the Americas (technology) as part of an overall effort to restructure the curriculum in Chicano and Latino Studies. These curricular changes will strengthen the study of a vastly heterogeneous population by bridging Chicano and Latino communities in the United States with analyses of the histories, politics, and cultures of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Goals, objectives, and predicted outcomes

The immediate objective of this project is to develop five new courses in Chicano and Latino Studies. These courses, in turn, will advance our Department's long-term goal of becoming a leader in information competency, service-learning, and community-based approaches to teaching. The predicted outcomes include solidifying a relationship between the University's office of community service learning, directed by Dr. Patricia Rozee, and our Department. Other predicated outcomes include: 1) the development of five new Standard Course Outlines; 2) submission of SCOs to curricular certification committees at the College and University levels; and 3) the integration of information competency skills in three out of the five proposed courses.

Statement of Need

Part of the on-going mission of our Department is to create hands-on, community-based, socially relevant learning experiences for our students. This project is in keeping with Department goals because it directly provides faculty with the means and resources to compose new courses in understudied topics that are service-learning focused. Currently, our Department offers no courses in the areas of service learning, transnationalism, theory, or indigenous women's movements. However, it is our hope that this project will remedy the current situation. Furthermore, our Department is committed to the teaching of information competency. Three courses proposed here will integrate technology-based assignments and assessments into the curricula, respectively.

The impact of these curricular changes will be great. Over the past two years, Department majors and minors have increased from 54 to 200. Students are demanding a meaningful educational experience, one that prepares them to identify and deal with the diverse needs of the Latino community. Our proposal here is but one solution that could meet this requisite. In addition, our Department curriculum committee is embarking on the restructuring of the major and minor. As part of these changes we proposed students specialize in one of three areas: 1) Society and the Arts; 2) Education and Health, and 3) Internationalism and Public Policy. Awarding this would greatly "jump start" our efforts to prepare students for immediate employment in the Latino community or graduate studies.

Detailed description of the planned activities

Dr. Luis Arroyo's restructured course in Chicano history will afford students an opportunity to understand the complex relationships Chicanos have carved out with other Latinos (e.g. Cubans, Salvadorans) over time. Dr. Arroyo envisions devoting the first half of the semester to teaching course content and to orienting and preparing students to perform service learning at Centro C.H.A in Long Beach. During the second half of the semester, students would work three to four hours per week as tutors, helping fourth grade students learn California history, aiding sixth grade students learn ancient history (Mesoamerica), assisting tenth grade students in world history (Mexico and Latin America), or tutoring eleventh grade students in U.S. history.

Dr. Arroyo is proposing a new course as well: "The Political Economy and Changing Work Force of California." It explores the changing state economy and the re-composition of California's work force by race, class, ethnicity, and nationality. The instructor will rely on computer-based technologies to organize the data (via Adobe Photo, ArcView [geographic information system program], SPSS, and Excel) for classroom presentations and on-line student assignments. Dr. Arroyo is currently a participant in California State University-sponsored information competency workshops.

Dr. Anna Sandoval proposes developing two courses in gender studies. The courses she currently teaches include gender and sexuality as part of the course materials. However, the department understands the need to offer courses which deal specifically with gender and sexuality. Dr. Sandoval received an Educational Innovation Award in 2001 to co-design a seminar on Chicano/Latino and Asian American Film (with Dr. Linda Maram). The award allowed Dr. Sandoval the time to design what has turned out to be a very successful course. She is currently designing the course "Critical Issues in Latina Studies." A course release would allow her to continue work on this course as well as design additional courses including "Latin American Women's Literature in Translation" or a comparative course on Chicana and African American women's literature. Dr. Sandoval is currently a participant in California State University-sponsored information competency workshops.

Dr. Grace Delgado's course will address indigenous women's movements in the Americas. While movements for indigenous rights are present-day issues, this course examines the divergent histories of familialism and community-based activism among native peoples in Mexico, Brazil, and the United States over time. Grassroots activism, feminist ideologies, and gendered migration will be explored as the bases for understanding the interconnectivity between world-wide economic restructuring and indigenous communities. As a General Education course, the methods of instruction are aimed at students' development and demonstration of advanced writing skills such as synthesis and application of knowledge, critique, and research skills. Students' skills in information competency will be also be strengthened by faculty-determined instruction. Through various assignments, students will be able to: determine the nature and extent of the information needed; access information effectively and efficiently; and use relevant search databases and other resources in the library (including the reference section, LINK +, Interlibrary Loan, the MLA database, the Chicano Database, Sociological Abstracts.

Dr. Delgado is currently a participant in California State University-sponsored information competency workshops.

Assessments

These assessments will be embedded in appropriate courses.

Objective One: Students will write two service-learning, comprehensive essays (approximately 8-13 pp.) addressing course themes and their service learning experience. Essays will be evaluated on students' intimate knowledge and critique, as well as reflection on, all major themes identified in the course syllabus. Essays topics must strive to present insightful information from readings, discussions, media sources, and the service learning experience.

Assessment One: Students will be graded based on their ability to obtain, analyze, and synthesize material relevant to their service-learning experience. They will be assessed on their ability to characterize their service-learning agency, setting, target population, and the need for the program. Students must also describe the relevant characteristics of the individuals whom they serve: gender, expectations, attitudes, motivation, social, cultural and educational background. Students will be evaluated by on their ability to review, analyze and synthesize relevant literature *vis-à-vis* the service-learning agency. Discussion of instructional methods used will include a rationale for selecting such methods and materials and to what extent the student found them useful. Challenges, benefits, and limitations of service learning must also be considered in the students' project. They must also include an MLA-style bibliography.

Objective Two: Students' critical thinking skills will be strengthened by engaging in focused, analytically-driven questions in written and verbal form. Students will demonstrate the ability to construct, express, and support analytical perspectives about the cultural, economic, and political life of Latinos/as.

Assessment Two: Essay writing, in-class discussion, and oral presentations will measure the development of students' critical thinking skills. Writing assignments, which will take the form of two midterm exams, three quizzes and a research paper, will assess students' ability to evaluate primary and secondary material and apply concepts. Student discussions will synthesize material while oral presentations will focus on student research projects. Evaluation of performance will be based on students' ability to assess, apply and analyze material relevant to all assignments. The instructor will make clear the distinction between analysis and statements of opinion throughout the course. Students, for example, will become familiar with thesis-driven lectures, and thus, will often experience the unfolding of an argument. The instructor will also provide study questions that will encourage critical thinking of the readings, lectures, and films. In addition, the instructor will discuss the characteristics of critical thinking in written and verbal form. The instructor will also provide incisive feedback on assignments and discussions.

Objective Three: Students' skills in information competency will be strengthened through faculty-determined assignments. These assignments will be geared toward developing information competency skills, in particular accessing electronic resource material (e.g. Academic Search Elite, Gender watch) and student assessment of web material in determining the source (academic or popular) of information. Students will be able to determine the nature

and extent of the information needed, will be able to access needed information effectively and efficiently, and will use information to accomplish a specific academic task.

Assessment Three: Assessments will be based on the ability of the student to define or modify the information need in order to achieve a manageable focus; to recognize that existing information can be combined with original thought, to experiment, and/or to analyze to produce new information; to develop a research plan with keywords, synonyms, and understands and uses Boolean operators; and to recognize prejudice, bias, accuracy, and authority of information.

Objective Four: Students will survey interdisciplinary literature in the areas of global studies, Latina studies, service-learning, African American Studies, and the new Chicano history. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the differences and similarities between social sciences and humanities disciplines and the way these disciplines complement each other in Chicano and Latino Studies.

Assessment Four: The use of interdisciplinary literature will be measured through written exercises (a minimum of one essay, midterm essay exam, and a final research project), oral presentations, and in-class discussion. Assessments will be based on content, organization, reasoning, and writing conventions that stress the integration of interdisciplinary approaches; evaluating discussions will be based on the ability of the student to accurately and thoroughly synthesize, draw on, and refer to interdisciplinary literature. Students must also demonstrate an ability to compare literature and recognize distinctions in discipline-specific approaches.

Project Timeline

Assigned Time is requested for each participating faculty member for Fall 2005. We will construct standard course outlines during this semester in order to submit our completed SCOs to the College and University curriculum committees by the end of Fall, 2005. Instruction of new courses may begin as early as Spring 2006.

Budget

One semester assigned time for each faculty member:

Dr. Luis Arroyo (3 units, tenured, full professor)

Dr. Anna Sandoval (3 units, tenured, associate professor)

Dr. Grace Delgado (3 units, probationary, assistant professor)

Scanner: \$125.00 (to access printed material and images in the construction of new lecture material).