Course Development Project Final Report

Course Background
English 363: American Literature 1914-1960 is 1 of 5 English courses that can fulfill the major requirement “Literature from 1900 to Present.” One section of this course is offered every Fall and Winter semester, and the course should typically be offered in Spring and Summer terms as well. I taught English 363 for the first time in Winter 2014, and I just finished teaching it (using the syllabus I re-created for the Course Development Project in the Spring New Faculty Seminar) in Fall 2014. I am scheduled to teach this course again in Winter 2016 and Spring 2016, and I will probably teach this course at least once in most upcoming academic years as the English Department schedulers see fit.

Learning Outcomes
[List the learning outcomes you have recorded in your course syllabus.]

The primary learning outcomes for the English BA program are as follows:
1-Interpretive Skills: English graduates will develop critical reading strategies, professional writing expertise, and sophisticated analytical skills.
2-Interpretive Contexts: English graduates will gain familiarity with the development of literary history and genres, interpretative methodologies, and scholarly conversations in the discipline.
3-Interpretive Ethics: English graduates will embrace literature as a source of wisdom, spiritual insight, and aesthetic pleasure; as a medium for encountering and reflecting upon the diversity of human experience; and as a guide for building relationships and discerning value.

We will approach these learning outcomes in the following ways in this course:
1-Interpretive Skills
-You will interpret both well-known and lesser-known U.S. texts from the first half of the twentieth century through class discussions and in-class writing assignments.
-You will analyze one of these texts in a formal literary analysis and all of these texts during two written exams.
-You will write a polished, conference-length paper on a germane text or author of your choice.
2/3-Interpretive Contexts & Interpretive Ethics
-You will engage in academic conversations concerning race, racial mixture, and racial identity; region and regional identity; nation and national identity; and modernity and literary modernism via class discussions, in-class writing assignments, a conference-length paper, and two written exams.
-You will demonstrate an understanding of literary modernism (both “high modernism” and other literary creations that respond to modernity) through class discussions, in-class writing assignments, and two written exams.
-You will examine the experiences of these U.S. writers both at home and abroad to demonstrate (via class discussions, in-class writing assignments, and two written exams) that race and racial mixture, national identity, and regional identity are constructs that change in time/place.

[Describe the quality and importance of the learning outcomes]
1. As in all upper-division literature courses in the English Department, we want the students to learn interpretive skills, interpretive contexts, and interpretive ethics. I have crafted the learning outcomes for this course to revolve around those primary learning outcomes for the major.
2. My course learning outcomes clearly connect to the learning outcomes of the English major. I demonstrate this on the syllabus by listing the major’s learning outcomes and then explaining the course’s specific learning outcomes in the terms of the major’s learning outcomes.

Course Activities
[Describe the course activities and how they relate to the learning outcomes]
Class Activities:
Class Discussion
Rushwrites
Literary Analysis
Exam 1
Exam 2
Final Paper
The class discussions and rushwrites allow the students to begin to interact with the course material and with sensitive and complex ideas about race, nation, and region in a low pressure setting in which they can bounce ideas off one another and off their professor without fearing that their thoughts carry a significant grade weight. Both exams require the students to demonstrate a mastery of the course content and to write brief essays that are more formal than their in-class rushwrites and discussions but still less formal than their two official class papers. The literary analysis requires them to craft their ideas in a formal paper, and it can also serve as a stepping stone for their larger paper. The final paper requires them to conduct significant research on a topic germane to the course and allows them to use the knowledge they have learned from earlier discussions, rushwrites, their first exam, and their first paper as springboards into their research projects. As noted, these assignments build on one another and help the students to wrestle with complex content in a context that requires more of them as their knowledge and practice increases. With all major assignments (literary analysis, exams, and final paper), I provide prompt feedback (within one week) so that the students can use that feedback almost immediately as they prepare for their next assignment.

2. The course outcomes as listed in the syllabus already explain how they are connected to the individual course activities. So, from the first day, the students can see how each activity, including class discussions, connects back to our learning outcomes.

3. Professors can teach a course on U.S. literature during this specific time period in a variety of very distinct ways. The English Department’s curriculum allows individual professors to craft these 300-level courses toward their own expertise and scholarship. My work with the literature of this period revolves around the ideas of national/regional/racial identities, specifically concerning the discourse of racial mixture in the U.S. compared to other racial discourses in the Americas. The course readings and the various activities from discussions to exams to papers all help the students see, via the literature of the time period, that ideas of race, nation, and region are all constructs created by individuals and groups rather than natural concepts that simply exist on their own. These ideas reflect the current thinking in the fields of American literary studies and inter-American literary studies.

Final Thoughts
In short, I think that this revised syllabus worked well in Fall 2014. I also tweaked a few of the activities in the class in response to the student evaluations I received from my Winter 2014 students. My overall course and instructor numbers improved slightly for this class. I plan to make a few more changes the next time I teach this class to respond to the comments of some of the Fall 2014 students. The majority of my 363 students appear happy with the course, so I think I'm on my way to meeting my overall goal with this class. Still, a few students think that I can improve the way discussions take place in this class, so I hope to do so when I teach the course again in Winter 2016.
1. Maintaining Network Created through Translated Poe: Over the past three years I have developed relationships with over 30 scholars from 29 institutions in 19 different nations while creating and co-editing Translated Poe. I hope to maintain this network by creating conference panels and/or suggesting other possible publications with members of this group. For example, my co-editor and I have organized a double-panel on Poe and translation for the upcoming Poe Studies Association international conference in February 2015. The double-panel includes 4 of us who participated in the book.

-This goal is coming about. In late February, I will meet with several of the contributors to Translated Poe at the International Poe conference in New York. Three of these individuals will participate in the double panel that I have co-organized with my co-editor, and several others will meet with me in informal settings. I have also received an invitation to present a paper at a conference at the University of Iceland in June. This invitation came from one of the Icelandic contributors to Translated Poe.

2. Running for a Seat on the Advisory Board of the International Association of Inter-American Studies (IAS): I have been involved in this international association since 2009-2010, and I was invited by the president of the organization, Josef Raab, to run for a seat on the organization’s advisory board at the upcoming biennial conference in Lima, Peru in August 2014. However, due to family obligations, I will not be able to participate in the conference. Josef would still like me to run for a position, but he wants to see what other candidates they field before he puts scholars who will not be at the conference on the ballot. If I receive the green light from him this summer, I will run for election, otherwise, I will wait for the next election in 2018. (Contingent goal.)

- I was unable to attend this conference, as I noted above, and although my name was on the ballot, I was not elected to the advisory board. I hope to run for a position on the board again in 2018.

BYU
1. Active Participation in the New Faculty Study Group on Translation and Translation Studies Sponsored by the Humanities Center: This research group just formed in Winter 2014. I plan to be an active/participating group member. I hope to help the group verbalize its goals during Fall 2014.

- I am an active member in this new group, and I am excited to keep working with my colleagues as we read Translation Studies theory together and as we workshop 3-4 articles from our colleagues’ work per semester.

2. Creation of a Small Writing/Reporting Group: With a pair of colleagues in my department, I are forming a writing/reporting group in which each member will be liable to either present new writing, a report on revisions, or a report on research at each meeting. The goal of this group it two-fold: we want to provide feedback to one another on our work, and we want to have deadlines that will help us produce.

-This goal did not work. We organized the group and held our first meeting. Then, we all became busy with our projects and our teaching and did not meet again. The negative—we did not end up helping one another revise our work. The positive—each member in the group of 3 was able to make significant progress on their scholarship even though we did not meet again during the semester. What I learned from this experience was something that I already had running through the back of my mind: there is only a limited amount of time to participate in group work. I am already participating in 2 research groups in the college—the AMRG and the Translation Studies Group—so I will focus my efforts there rather than attempting to create another writing group.

Both
1. Active Participation in the American Modernity Research Group Sponsored by the Humanities Center: I have been an active member of this research group since coming to BYU in 2013. I will continue to participate in the two workshops the groups offers each semester—one on an outside scholar’s work and one on a BYU faculty member’s work. This year, my participation should be more significant than last
year because I will be inviting and hosting the outside scholar in Fall—Caroline Levander from Rice—and I hope to present work from one of my projects for the group in either Fall 2014 or Winter 2015.

Work with the AMRG is going well. In Fall 2014, I was the host for Caroline Levander’s visit to campus. This visit was a success. Caroline met with several members of the group and gave a great presentation to the College of Humanities. We, as a group, work-shopped the introduction to her forthcoming co-edited book. I am not currently scheduled to present my work at the AMRG this semester, but I will continue to work with the group.

2. Inviting Rolando Hinojosa to Campus: I have been in conversations with Stephen Tuttle in the English Department about inviting a speaker to the English Reading Series. I plan to invite my friend and colleague Rolando Hinojosa from UT Austin to speak in the series and deliver one or two other talks at the college and/or department level. I will make the invitation during the current spring/summer with the goal of having Rolando on campus in either February or March 2015. Rolando’s visit will attract an audience from across the College of Humanities, including the English Department; the Department of Humanities, Classics, and Comparative Literature; and the Department of Spanish and Portuguese.

(Contingent goal.)

Rolando accepted this invitation, but he was then seriously ill in December. We have postponed his campus visit until Fall semester 2015.

In short, off campus I have a successful network of Poe scholars and inter-Americanists with whom I am working. I plan to continue this work with them via future projects and conferences. I also have a pair of networks on campus with whom I am working—the AMRG and the Translation Studies Group—and I plan to continue collaborating with both groups.
Emron Esplin  
Scholarship Strategies Project: Final Report  
Report on Specific Goals to be Completed by February 2015  

1. “Faulkner and Latin America; Latin America in Faulkner” came to print in January 2015. I am very happy with this piece and happy to have my work included in a book edited by a preeminent Faulkner scholar that includes the work of several well-known Faulkner literary critics.  

2. Translated Poe came out in October 2014. This was a wonderful month. Over three years of work with scholars from around the globe (34 contributors from Europe, northern Africa and the Middle East, the Americas, and Asia) came to fruition with the publication of this book. The book should be reviewed in Poe Studies and in the Edgar Allan Poe Review in 2015. We are also hoping that it will be reviewed in a few international journals this year. A reprint of the front matter and the introduction will be released in the Journal of Transnational American Studies during 2015. The book includes my co-written introduction and my article on Cortázar’s Poe translations.  

3. Borges’s Poe: Two-Way Influence and the Reinvention of Edgar Allan Poe in Twentieth-Century Spanish America is under contract with the University of Georgia Press in their New Southern Studies series. My editor has the final manuscript in hand and will present the book to the board for final approval in early February 2015. The book will then go to the copy editors and design team at the press. Hopefully, the book will be in print during Fall 2015. If not, it should be released in Winter 2016. I should be working on the galley proofs during 2015.  

4. “Jorge Luis Borges’s Edgar Allan Poe References: An Annotated Bibliography” has been accepted by Poe Studies. The bibliography, most likely, will be split in two and published as two pieces in subsequent years. I am currently negotiating with the journal’s editors about when those dates will be. They would like 2015 and 2016, but this will only work if my monograph comes out by October (the typical release date for Poe Studies). If not, the release dates will need to be 2016 and 2017. I will be speaking with the editors about this at the upcoming International Conference on Edgar Allan Poe in late February.  

5. My research on Borges and Hawthorne was on the back burner for the majority of 2014. I have now begun that research again. I would like to write two different articles on Borges and Hawthorne—one on Borges’s translation of Hawthorne’s “Mr. Higginbotham’s Catastrophe” and another on the general relationship between the two writers. I hope to finish the first article during 2015.  

So far, these specific outcomes are helping me to accomplish the broader scholarship goals from my FDP. I have listed those goals below:  
A. Make a significant contribution to international Poe scholarship by demonstrating how Poe’s influence on world literature is both more widespread and longer lasting than the influence of any other U.S. writer.  
B. Further open up the field of comparative studies between Poe and Spanish American letters so that other scholars will explore this rich area.  
C. Solidify the literary connections between Borges and Poe and prove that these connections run far deeper than the detective genre.  
D. Add another convincing voice to the scholarly conversation that redefines America in broader terms that apply to the hemisphere rather than only to the United States.
E. Demonstrate the reciprocal nature of literary influence and the significance of the literary relationships between various U.S. writers and other writers of the western hemisphere.

Strategies of Scholarly Activity
I currently have a full scholarship agenda which I plan to continue as my two book-length projects come to fruition. I plan to continue following the strategies below as I complete the goals I have listed above and as I begin new projects.

1. Conferencing/Networking: Attend a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 3 academic conferences per year in which I present my current work and/or ideas about new work to peers from other universities. Continue to organize panels or seminars for the ACLA (American Comparative Literature Association) annual meeting and other conferences that allow me to create small networks of scholars invested in research questions that are similar to my own rather than having my papers placed in “random” panels at conferences.

- Networking is going well. I will present at 3 conferences this year—the International Conference on Poe in New York in February, the ACLA meeting in March, and a small conference on Translation and Translation Studies at the University of Iceland in June. I co-organized the panel for the Poe conference with my co-editor for Translated Poe, Margarida Vale de Gato, and the panel includes contributors from our book and new scholars with whom we are networking. The invitation to the conference in Iceland came from one of the contributors of Translated Poe.

2. Multiple Projects: Try to have at least 2 projects going at the same time (e.g. be writing a new article while working on the galley proofs of another project).

- This is difficult, but I am making the attempt right now as I continue to work on the Poe/Borges annotated bibliography, on my research with Borges and Hawthorne, and on my monograph once the galley proofs come back.

3. Create and Guard Research/Writing Time: Continue to dedicate Tuesdays/Thursdays to scholarship alone during the Fall/Winter semesters. Continue to dedicate significant time to scholarship every week (besides vacations/travel time) during Spring/Summer terms.

- I have been able to keep several hours on Tuesdays/Thursdays open for scholarship and research, although I’d like to keep those days even more open for research than I have been able to do so far.

Methods of Evaluation of Strategies’ Success
1. Proof in the Pudding: The first measurement to check the success of these strategies (which I have been using for the past several years) will be to see if my two major book-length projects continue progressing toward publication. For Translated Poe this means galley proofs during the Fall and publication by late Fall or early Winter. For Borges’s Poe this means a book contract and the creation of a realistic time table for revisions.

- So far, so good. One article is now in print and others are in the works. Translated Poe is in print, and Borges’s Poe is under contract. Now, I’ll need to keep working to see that Translated Poe gets reviewed in the journals where we would like to see it reviewed. Finally, I’ll need to review the galley proofs for Borges’s Poe.

2. Personal Evaluation: I will sit down in February 2015 and evaluate the conferencing/networking I have done (or, actually, will do since in the upcoming academic year my two conferences are in February and March, 2015 rather than during Fall), review my current projects to ensure that I am doing more than one piece of scholarship at a time, and evaluate how well I have been guarding my Tuesdays/Thursdays for research and writing.

- Evaluation complete—these strategies are currently working. I want to try a little harder to keep Tuesdays/Thursdays open for scholarship so that I can continue to work on more than one scholarly project at a time.