

Assessment 2: Content Knowledge: Two Analytical Essays on Literary and Cultural Products

1. Description of the Assessment

Candidates will write two papers demonstrating their familiarity with both literary and non-literary cultural products, while also providing samples of their mastery of writing skills. These papers will constitute part of the coursework in the French and Spanish 495 courses, which all majors are required to take, typically upon return from a semester abroad. These courses constitute the capstone experience for seniors. Literary or cultural topics are selected, depending on faculty and students' interests. For example in spring 2006, Sp 495 focused on contemporary short Latin American fiction. Our coursework familiarizes students with a variety of cultural products. For example, during their methods course, teacher candidates compile a music file to use in the classroom and create a related presentation. Therefore they may well choose to use music as the basis for their second paper, which will of course be written in the target language. Most of our language courses also incorporate films, drawing on connections with Keene State College's film studies program, and students enjoy and perform well in analyzing film. Their work presenting both music and film in the classroom requires that students demonstrate technological competence, which also features in New Hampshire's standards for teacher certification.

2. Alignment with ACTFL Standards

This assessment represents the culmination of a series of experiences providing candidates with a solid foundation in content knowledge. ACTFL Standard 2a is supported by the required Fr/Sp 303 Introduction to Literature course, which presents literature within its cultural and historical framework, covering authors' biographies, major literary movements, and a variety of genres. Both the Franco-American Women's Voices and the Latinos in the US courses broaden and enrich this cultural, historical, and literary knowledge, as well as presenting the experiences and mindset of a population living as a minority within mainstream US culture (ACTFL Standard 2a, 2b and 2c). This assessment demonstrates candidates' reflection on the perspectives of both the dominant target culture, and minority streams within it. Furthermore it requires candidates to "integrate knowledge of other disciplines [e.g. history, social sciences, film, music] into foreign language instruction" (ACTFL Standard 2c).

Because this assessment informs students that their writing should achieve the ACTFL level defined as Advanced Low, it will necessitate their familiarization with the ACTFL writing proficiency standards (ACTFL Standard 4a).

3. Analysis of Data Findings will follow when the assessment has been administered,

4. Evidence of Meeting ACTFL Standards

Because this assessment is new, we expect to collect data during spring 2007, when the 495 Seminar courses are offered. However, components of the assessment have been in place for some time; for example students in Sp 495 regularly write analytical papers on Spanish literary

works, although their choices are not limited to those suitable for the foreign language classroom. The papers do provide evidence of writing proficiency (ACTFL Standard 1a) and of cultural and literary knowledge (ACTFL Standard 2a, 2b).

5. Assessment Documentation

5a. Assessment Tool (two assignments in French or Spanish 495; examples are given in French)

1. An analytical essay written in the target language (French or Spanish) analyzing in detail one literary work (poem, short story, novel, drama) suitable to teach to a third or fourth-level French or Spanish class. This paper should include reflections on the historical and cultural context of this work, the author's background, literary style, and reflections on what makes this a great work of literature. How would high school students respond to this work? How does it contribute significantly to their understanding of Francophone/Hispanic culture? What insights into this work are provided by your knowledge of other disciplines such as history, music, art, or psychology and sociology? The essay, a minimum of five pages long, should also demonstrate writing proficiency in the target language at the level defined by ACTFL guidelines as Advanced Low, or above.

French Examples:

La rue cases nègres de Zobel et L'appel des arènes

Dans un essai bien organisé, considérez la question suivante:

La rue cases nègres de Zobel et L'appel des arènes de Sow-Fall nous révèlent les difficultés qui se présentent quand un enfant est scholarisé dans un système qui ne tient pas compte des valeurs et traditions de son pays. Pour s'avancer dans la vie, il est certain que José (La rue cases nègres) et Nalla (L'appel des arènes) doivent forcément aller à l'école. C'est le seul moyen de s'avancer dans la vie. Or la formation qu'offre école ne tient pas compte de l'héritage et de la vie actuelle des écoliers. Quelles stratégies utilisent-ils pour rester en contact avec les traditions et valeurs traditionnelles? Quels personnages compatisants sont prêts à soutenir leurs efforts?

N'oubliez pas de situer ces deux oeuvres dans leur contexte historique et culturelle.

Longueur: 7 à 10 pages écrites à l'ordinateur

Bibliographie: 6 références minimum

Evaluation: Selon les critères ACTFL Advanced Low

Charles Baudelaire "Paysage"

Dans son poème "Paysage", Baudelaire interprète le paysage parisienne tel qu'un artiste de son temps pourrait l'observer par la fenêtre de sa mansarde. Au lieu de nous décrire un endroit naturel éloigné de la civilisation, il nous présente une scène située au plein centre de Paris. Analysez ce poème tout en vous tenant compte de la vie, du style et des intérêts artistiques de l'auteur.

Longueur: 5 pages écrites à l'ordinateur
Bibliographie: au moins 5 références
Evaluation : selon les critères ACTFL Advanced Low

2. An analytical essay written in the target language (French or Spanish) analyzing in detail one non-literary creative work (music, painting, film,) suitable to teach to a third or fourth-level French or Spanish class. The paper should include reflections on the historical and cultural context of this work, the artist's background, creative style, and reflections on what makes this a significant example of the target culture. How would high school students respond to this work? How does it contribute significantly to their understanding of Francophone/Hispanic culture? What insights into this work are provided by your knowledge of other disciplines such as history, music, art, or psychology and sociology? The essay, a minimum of five pages long, should also demonstrate writing proficiency in the target language at the level defined by ACTFL guidelines as Advanced Low, or above.

French Examples:

(Song lyric/Poem) “Mon pays”

En 1965 Giles Vigneault, poète et chansonnier de la Révolution tranquille, a composé ce simple poème pour le film “ Il a neigé sur la Manicouagan”. Les premiers vers, aussi le refrain du poème nous dit “ Mon pays, ce n’est pas un pays, c’est l’hiver”. Quels moyens le poète utilise-t-il pour engager l’intérêt du lecteur? Etant donné que son message est en même temps un message politique et personnel, pourquoi choisir la poésie au lieu de la prose? Analysez “Mon pays” tout en le situant dans son contexte historique et culturelle.

Longueur : 5 pages écrites à l'ordinateur
Bibliographie : 5 références
Evaluation : selon les critères ACTFL Advanced Low

Film *Joyeux Noël*

film allemand de Christian Carion sorti en 2005

Noël 1914. Après quelques mois de guerre, les hommes dans les tranchées comprennent que la guerre n’est pas la glorieuse affaire qu’on leur a promise. Au milieu de cette boucherie, un événement remarquable ; la veille de Noël des soldats français, écossais et allemands quittent leurs tranchées pour célébrer Noël ensemble. Un critique nous dit « De part mon âge. . . certain, j’ai fort bien connu et parlé avec des Poilus survivants de Verdun ou autres carnages. Je n’ai pas souvenir de les avoir entendu exprimer des mots de haine envers leurs adversaires. » Tout en situant ce film dans son contexte historique et culturelle, choisissez votre propre thème et, en le développant, écrivez une analyse bien organisée.

Longueur: 5 pages écrites à l'ordinateur
Bibliographie: au moins 5 références
Evaluation : selon les critères ACTFL Advanced Low

5b. Scoring Guide

	Unacceptable (1)	Acceptable (2)	Exceeds Standard (3)
Demonstrates understanding of historical and cultural framework (ACTFL Standard 2b) and uses literary and cultural texts to interpret and reflect on perspectives of target culture over time.	Incomplete discussion omits some details of historical & cultural background. No reflection on perspectives of target culture over time.	Basic factual presentation of author or artist's biography, literary, musical, or filmic genre. Basic discussion of text related to perspectives of target culture over time	Thorough, complete presentation of author or artist's biography, literary, musical, or filmic genre. Broad and thorough reflection on its place in target culture.
Analytical skills include integration of information from other disciplines (ACTFL Standard 2c)	Little analysis of the work beyond plot summary; little relation of work to its era and place within target culture	Writer understands connections of this work to target culture; integrates information from other disciplines.	Clear, well developed analysis of work and its place in target culture. Demonstrates awareness of genre, audience, style; integrates information from other disciplines
Writing demonstrates awareness of ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines and includes most features characteristic of Advanced Low or higher (ACTFL Standard 1a)	Frequent errors in grammar, vocabulary and syntax may cloud meaning.	Sustained control of simple target language structures, cohesive devices; some more complex structures present.	Sustained control of most target language structures, cohesive devices; and some complex structures (aspect, subordination). Literary and historical analysis includes specific terminology.
Integration of literature/culture framework into instructional practice (ACTFL Standard 2a)	Little or no discussion of work's impact on students or its value as example of target culture.	Work is analyzed in terms of student appeal and response and its validity as cultural sample.	Writer analyzes work as instructional material and demonstrates how to present it in classroom.

5c. Candidate Data will be analyzed after the assessment has been administered (spring 2007).