This document outlines the Outcomes Assessment Process for the CSUS Department of English undergraduate major. This process is not designed to assess the learning outcomes of individual students nor will it be used in this manner. Information obtained from the Outcomes Assessment Process will be used to maintain a stable undergraduate curriculum that fosters academic scholarship and responsible pedagogy. The processes described in Sections B, C, and E of the Assessment Plan will be carried out on an annual basis. The Alumni Survey, described in Section D, will be carried out every five years and will be included as a part of the Self-Study which precedes the department’s Program Review. The Assessment Plan contains the following sections:

A) Program Goals and Teaching Values. The goals section of this document articulates in rather specific language the knowledge and skills that the Department of English values and that we expect to impart to our students. We fully acknowledge that it is impossible to measure and assess all of these goals. Nonetheless, we state them here because we believe it is important to convey a full account of our expectations for our students and ourselves. The abbreviated performance measures that are attached to the outcomes assessment product are merely a broad indication of the programs’ success.

B) An Entry Level Questionnaire. This survey consists of questions which will provide the department with a profile of the entering CSUS literature major. The survey will be given to students during their first semester as a literature major. It was administered for the first time in Fall 1999 and the results will be included in the English Department’s Spring 2000 Self-Study.

C) An Exit Survey for Graduating Seniors. This survey consists of a standardized questionnaire obtained from Institutional Studies and an additional 30 questions developed by English Department faculty. This questionnaire was administered for the first time in the Spring 1999, and the results will be included in the current self-study.

D) An Alumni Survey. This survey is distributed once every five years by Institutional Studies. The survey consists of the ACT standardized survey, plus 10 of our own departmental questions. The survey was sent out in Spring 1999, and the results are included in the analysis of Assessment in the Spring 2000 Self-Study.

E) The Senior Outcomes Assessment will be based upon a Senior Seminar. The requirements for this seminar are outlined in Section E of this document.

F) Description of the English Major. This section describes the undergraduate English major, including the sequencing of course options.

H) Analysis of Survey Data from 1999-2000 Self-Study. This section provides a summary of assessment related data gathered for the Self-Study.
Goal #1: The CSUS English literature major will be expected to have a knowledge of literature, theory, grammar/language

EXPECTATIONS:

Students should know, or show a basic understanding of, or usable familiarity with:

1. A wide variety of canonical and noncanonical works in sufficient quantity by British writers of various periods and traditions.

2. The general outlines of the development of British literature over time, and the social and historical contexts in which traditions developed.

3. A wide variety of canonical and noncanonical works in sufficient quantity by American writers of various periods and traditions.

4. The general outlines of the development of American literature over time, and the social and historical contexts in which traditions developed.

5. The major writers, periods, and genres of English and American literature, and important works and genres in their historical/cultural contexts.

6. The major literary eras from the medieval period to the present, and the styles, issues, and underlying philosophies that characterize literary periods or movements, with in-depth knowledge of at least two literary periods in England and one in America, and of one important theme, major writer, or literary movement.

7. The processes of forming literary canons and determining aesthetic value.

8. Crucial backgrounds to British and American literature such as the Bible, classical mythology and literature, and folklore.

9. The elements of literature such as plot, setting, character, point of view, form, and narrative structure.

10. Traditional literary genres such as poetry, drama, and prose fiction.

11. A variety of theoretical perspectives or critical approaches to the study of literature, such as formalist, new historicist, feminist, psychoanalytic, and deconstructionist, and the value of a strong foundation in critical theory for the study of literature.

12. The history of theory and criticism about literature from Plato to the present, and the relationship between culture and literary studies.

13. The nature of human language, and models of communication/rhetoric.
14. Central theories of sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and language acquisition and development, and linguistic theory in general.

15. The history and grammatical structure of the English language.

16. The phonological, morphological, and syntactic structures of English and their development.

17. The history and structure of varieties of English sufficient to read/understand literary texts.

18. Linguistic concepts such as usage levels, correct usage, dialects, and varieties of American English, and the social and cultural implications of the differences in language use that such concepts point to.

19. Commonly taught grammatical concepts and conventions, and conventions of standard written English.
Goal #2: The CSUS English literature major will be expected to understand cultural diversity as it relates to the study of literature.

EXPECTATIONS:

Students should know, or show basic understanding of, or usable familiarity with:

1. A wide variety of works in various forms by members of American minority groups.
2. A range of writers, literary works, and movements representing diverse and often marginalized cultural voices, with in-depth knowledge of at least one area within minority literatures, gender studies, and multicultural issues such as women writers, images of women in literature, African-American writers, Latino/a writers, and gay/lesbian writers.
3. A variety of works outside the British and American literary traditions, including European/continental, Latin/South American, and postcolonial.
4. Several important works in nonwestern, ethnic, and women’s literatures that illustrate the diversity of literary studies and the interconnectedness of literary traditions.
5. Differences and similarities in the way people are defined and treated in group settings and contexts because of or in relation to ethnicity, race, gender, culture, and class.
Goal #3: The CSUS English literature major will be expected to have a knowledge of the methodology and conventions of discourse/inquiry.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

Students should know, or show basic understanding of, or usable familiarity with:

1. The central conventions and processes of discourse and inquiry in the study of literature and language, including the expository and analytical essay and problem/issue-based inquiry.

2. The methodologies and techniques for reading critically and formulating useful, relevant, manageable questions of a text, for defining an issue or problem, evaluating evidence, and formulating a thesis, and for constructing a valid or persuasive interpretations, based on analysis and supported by argument, logic, and evidence.

3. The rhetorical forms and resources and specialized vocabulary of the discipline of English and study of literature and language.

4. Audience, purpose, and writing process, determining their most relevant and appropriate contexts and appropriate, productive uses.

5. The bodies of information and theory, and range of materials and research methods and tools, of the discipline of English and related disciplines, including standard resources such as books, journals, and reference guides in the library as well as the tools of the modern technological writing/research environment and information networks and databases enabling extended, sophisticated research into a topic.
Goal #4: The CSUS English literature major will be expected to read literature critically with appropriate interpretive skills.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

Students should be able to:

1. Identify and comprehend the main and subordinate ideas in a written work and to summarize the ideas in their own words.

2. Recognize different purposes and methods of writing, identify a writer’s point of view and tone, and interpret a written work’s meaning inferentially as well as literally.

3. Separate their personal opinions and assumptions from a writer’s or work’s.

4. Vary their reading speed and methods (survey, skim, review, question, master) according to the type of written work and their purposes for reading.

5. Use the features of books and other reference materials, such as table of contents, preface, introduction, titles and headings, index, appendix, and bibliography.

6. Define unfamiliar words by decoding, using contextual clues, or using a dictionary.

7. Read critically and ask useful questions of a text, and place the text within a larger context

8. Read so that they are able to analyze, interpret, and compare literary works.

9. Analyze literary texts and to interpret texts on the basis of such analysis.

10. Read with a high level of understanding of textual form, style, and theme.

11. Read literature critically and analytically with an appreciation of how elements of form--such as diction, tone, syntax, sound, rhythm, figures, structure, etc.--contribute to meaning.

12. Respond to and interpret figurative language.

13. Read a familiar or an unfamiliar text in any of several genres (including not only poetry, fiction, and drama, but such nonfiction forms as the essay, autobiography, personal letter, etc.) and from any of several cultural or historical origins in such a way that the act of reading incorporates literal comprehension, aesthetic responsiveness, informed awareness of the tradition(s) and context(s) within which the text may be most productively read, rhetorical and logical analysis of its argument, and critical reflection on the implications of its origins, tradition, aesthetics, rhetoric, and argument.
Goal #5: The CSUS English literature major is expected to produce advanced level expository writing

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS:

Students should be able to:

1. Write essays that contain clear, coherently organized, defensible, and substantial ideas.

2. Explain, analyze, develop, and criticize ideas clearly and effectively.

3. Write about literature in a clear, coherent, literate way that demonstrates a high level of understanding both of a text’s technical merits and of its emotional impact.

4. Demonstrate an understanding of writing as a process, including prewriting, drafting, responding, revising, editing, and evaluating.

5. Demonstrate an understanding of the goals, dynamics, and genres of college-level writing.

6. Demonstrate an awareness of audience, purpose, and various rhetorical forms as well as control of the conventions of standard written English.

7. Write effectively in the forms of discourse of English and the study of literature as a discipline.

8. Write papers using MLA or another prescribed style sheet and format.

9. Generate topics, produce rough drafts, revise one’s work, collaborate with editors and readers of one’s work, and prepare a final edited draft for formal presentation.

10. Employ varied diction and fluent syntax and appropriate and effective sentence structure and diction.

11. Exhibit competence in the conventions of edited standard English, including freedom from distracting errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

12. Develop a personal voice and a sense of style in writing, and know the place of style in writing and evaluating writing.

13. Recognize well-written texts and advise peers on how to improve their written work.

14. Demonstrate effective writing skills in different kinds of forms and formats and under different circumstances and contexts, such as in-class and take-home writing and individual and collaborative essays/writing.

15. Respond to essay questions on exams with clear, well-organized presentations focused on the topic and relatively free of errors.
16. Communicate interpretations of literary texts competently in written form.

17. Present in papers a cogent thesis as the core of a well organized argument or analysis, with effective and correct use of supporting materials, effective analysis, interpretation, evaluation, and synthesis of ideas encountered in multiple readings, and effective organization and development of ideas at paragraph and essay levels.

18. Write at a sophisticated level—that is, be able to ask good questions, assess goals and audience, and construct a clear and supported statement of a position.

19. Write about various kinds of texts in such a way that their writing articulates and embodies the multiple dimensions of the complex act of reading—literal comprehension, aesthetic responsiveness, informed awareness of traditions and appropriate context, rhetorical and logical analysis, and critical reflection—in clear, accurate, and effective prose.

20. Use reading and writing as a means of enabling the reading and study of other kinds of texts and situations and of producing other kinds of writing—as a means of understanding and writing about a variety of other kinds of topics, problems, and issues such as personal experiences, social issues, and topics in academic courses outside English which demand skills in critical reading and observation and effective writing in appropriate forms.
STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

Students should be able to:

1. Use the bodies of information and theory, and range of materials and research methods and tools, of the discipline of English and related disciplines, including standard resources such as books, journals, and reference guides in the library as well as the tools of the modern technological writing/research environment and information networks and databases.

2. Find in textbooks and research materials, both paper and electronic, the kinds of information relevant to a given problem, questions, or issue, literary or otherwise, and integrate that information into their own written work to support their argument while giving appropriate, documented credit to the source of the information.

3. Use the features of books and other reference materials, such as table of contents, preface, introduction, titles and headings, index, glossary, appendix, and bibliography.

4. Write papers using MLA or another prescribed style sheet and format.

5. Use computers to prepare manuscripts, analyze data, and communicate.

6. Use a word processing program.

7. Use email.

8. Use technology to access information/knowledge and to locate literature relevant to research questions.

9. Search electronic databases and the Internet, and to use electronic library resources to conduct literature searches.

10. Gather, manage, organize, synthesize, store, and retrieve information using electronic/computer and bibliographic systems.

11. Distinguish between primary and secondary sources of information and ideas.

12. Evaluate the quality, reliability, authority, salience, and usefulness of electronic and printed sources and information/ideas.
Goal #7: The CSUS literature major is expected to use critical thinking and problem-solving in reading and writing

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS:

Students should be able to:

1. Understand the ways reasons and evidence are used to support or refute conclusions.
2. Support their conclusions and theses with reasons and evidence.
3. Identify and analyze assumptions underlying arguments and interpretations.
4. Identify, explain, and guard against inappropriate or unwarranted/unsubstantiated assertions, and common thinking fallacies.
5. Distinguish among facts, reasons, opinions, and reasoned judgments.
6. Draw reasonable inferences from observations and premises.
7. Identify and analyze the problems and arguments characteristic of the discipline of English and literary study in a variety of situations, viewing issues from multiple perspectives.
8. Discern internal structure, pattern, and organization using frameworks or models from the discipline of English and literary study or from other disciplines and fields of inquiry to comprehend literary works, artistic products, and critical discourse on literature.
9. Initiate and sustain good questions characteristic of the discipline of English and literary study, developing a repertoire of question-asking strategies.
10. Generate multiple possible solutions to problems and select those that are most appropriate and productive.
11. Perceive associations and construct original ideas or relationships that are novel.
12. Understand and explain/interpret salient textual detail of literary works using complex strategies involving analytic, aesthetic, and ethical dimensions of literary meaning and value.
13. Evaluate their own and others’ ideas, positions, and arguments, using criteria from the discipline of English and literary study or from other disciplines and fields of inquiry.
14. Evaluate the adequacy of explanations, arguments, and conclusions on literature in a variety of sources, including everyday conversations, popular media, and professional journals and forums.
15. Develop metacognitive heuristic and monitoring strategies to guide the complex critical thinking process.
16. Respect and appreciate critical thinking and precise, rigorous inquiry and eschew oversimplification, shallowness, and unexamined, unchallenged evidence/assertions.

17. Develop a tolerance for ambiguity and a skepticism for certainty and dogma.
Goal #8: The CSUS literature major is expected to demonstrate high level skills in oral communication, discussion, and listening skills

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

Students should be able to:

1. Clearly present ideas and information about literature and literary works in class discussion and oral presentations, using appropriate language.

2. Communicate ideas, information, and opinions actively and effectively in class and group discussions, using appropriate language and tactics of skilled persuasion.

3. Make effective brief oral presentations on literature-related topics, using when appropriate the discursive forms and methods and vocabulary of the discipline of English and literary study.

4. Present effective oral arguments in class discussions and debates, and demonstrate the ability to explain and defend ideas clearly and without defensiveness

5. Listen carefully and creatively to the ideas, information, and opinions of others, paraphrasing them accurately, responding appropriately, and asking helpful questions.

6. Analyze themselves as oral communicators and listeners and identify their own strengths and weaknesses.
STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

Students should be able to:

1. Establish an appropriate and effective relationship with others in their work, educational, and personal activities.

2. Conduct themselves as professionals.

3. Work effectively and cooperatively in groups in a variety of situations inside and outside of class.

4. Work effectively with diverse groups and in intercultural settings, contexts, and situations.

5. Behave with sensitivity toward differences and similarities in the way people are defined and treated in group settings and contexts because of or in relation to ethnicity, race, gender, culture, and class.

6. Identify and evaluate their own behavior and responses when interacting with others, and the behavior and responses of others, both in one-to-one and group settings and contexts.
Goal #10: CSUS English literature majors are expected to adhere to standards of academic and professional integrity

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

Students should be able to:

1. Practice academic/professional integrity in courses, research, discourse, and professional work.
2. Practice ethical standards in courses, research, discourse, and professional work.
3. Behave in accordance with university, department, and professional/disciplinary policies regarding academic standards and ethical practice, including plagiarism, copyright, and fair use practice.
4. Value self-reflectively the importance of maintaining academic/professional integrity.
5. Recognize the importance of ethical principles and values in supporting the dignity and integrity of the individual, the welfare of the academic/professional group and institution, and the integrity, reliability, and productivity of academic/professional research, discourse, and practice.
Goal #11: CSUS literature majors should develop a lifelong appreciate for reading and literature

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

Students should be able to:

1. Learn independently, both to satisfy their own curiosity and to achieve practical ends.
2. Develop and demonstrate an active, consistent, and lifelong orientation toward learning.
3. Develop the intellectual virtues of perseverance, style, craftsmanship, love of precision, and passion for knowledge that are the basis of lifelong learning.
4. Identify their own preferred learning styles and strengths and weaknesses as learners, and develop the crucial ability of self-assessment.
5. Demonstrate active, diverse, and effective learning behaviors appropriate to the variety of contexts and purposes in the discipline of English and in other disciplines and fields of inquiry.
6. Articulate a critically informed, carefully reasoned position about the social and philosophical value of the various components of English as a discipline and field of study.
7. Form a belief in the personal and social importance of reading as a complex and culturally significant act.
8. Form a belief in the personal and social importance of performing well in a variety of writing situations.
9. Form a belief in the centrality of language to human endeavor in all areas and therefore in the usefulness of English in acquiring and maintaining valuable personal and social abilities.
10. Form a belief in the importance of aesthetic responsiveness to language as it is used in a variety of expressive and communicative contexts and situations.
11. Form a belief in the importance of analysis and critical reflection as language-based activities—that is, activities both required and enabled by language.
12. Form a belief in the interdependence of all the dimensions of language activity—reading, writing, listening, speaking, and thinking.
STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

Students should be able to:


2. Articulate a clear and integrated sense of their own personal identity, place in the world, and qualities/potential as a person.

3. Recognize and name/analyze their own emotional states and qualities of character in various contexts, situations, and circumstances.

4. Demonstrate ability to function effectively under conditions of ambiguity, uncertainty, and conflict, and to make informed and responsible moral choices.

5. Demonstrate intellectual flexibility and the capacity to adapt to change in their own lives and in various settings, contexts, and situations.

6. Demonstrate ability to empathize with others who are substantially unlike themselves and to communicate this empathy/understanding appropriately.

7. Identify their own chosen values, and employ consciously these values in making decisions and choices in their lives and in taking and defending stands on issues of social and ethical consequence.

8. Help determine their educational and career paths, guided by the complex vocabulary of motives of their own knowledge and passion.

9. Demonstrate facility in recognizing and evaluating values expressed in discourse such as conversation and in literary, critical, philosophical, artistic, and humanistic works and cultural developments.

10. Express personal response to literary and artistic works in terms of their formal elements and their own background and character.

II. Distinguish among literary and artistic forms in terms of their elements and their personal response to particular works.

12. Value and practice the ‘examined life.’”
Goal #13: CSUS English Education students will be expected to demonstrate the additional knowledge and skills

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

Students should know, or show basic understanding of, or usable familiarity with:

1. Pedagogical approaches to literature, language, and writing, and the theories that underlie those approaches.

2. A system for describing and analyzing the grammar of the English language.

3. The formal characteristics of the major belletristic and nonfiction genres as they have developed over time.

4. At least two systems for describing and analyzing the grammar of the English language.

5. A body of literature judged to be suitable for adolescents.

6. The instructional materials and curricular patterns commonly used in secondary English programs and with the role of English in the total school program.

7. Ways of teaching English in the secondary schools—of selecting and adapting methods and materials for the various interests and maturity levels of the students, of developing a sequence of assignments, and of guiding and stimulating the students’ intellectual work and social growth through language.

8. The history of high school English teaching in the United States and the issues in our nation’s history that have influenced various pedagogical models.

9. A body of literature judged to be suitable for teaching to a given audience.

10. The ways in which literature, composition, language, and linguistics studies are interrelated.

11. The nature and structure of the English language and its place among human languages, and the basic principles of second language acquisition.

12. The cultural perspectives and academic contributions, especially related to language, writing, and literature, of the many cultural and ethnic groups found in California K-12 classrooms.

13. The ways in which the growth and development of the discipline of English have affected different cultural, ethnic, gender, and handicapped groups.

14. The barriers to academic participation and success that affect these groups, and commitment to equitable practices of education.

15. The ways in which written and oral language are connected and the ability to use written and oral language effectively.
Students should be able to:

1. Apply rhetorical theory.

2. Use forms of technology appropriate for the study and teaching of literature, composition, language, and linguistics.

3. Participate in discourse pertaining to the disciplines of English.

4. Analyze elements of the language such as phonemes, morphemes, phrases, and clauses in terms of their form and function.

5. Read student writing in such a way that the reading process incorporates a sympathetic awareness of the complexities of the writing process as that process is manifested in students’ work, recognition of the features of good written discourse (such as substantial and relevant content, clear and effective organization, specific sense of audience, verbal and conceptual clarity, appropriateness of tone, and accuracy in mechanics and usage) as they do or do not appear in the students’ work, and a detailed analytical understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the students’ work.

6. Prepare comments on student writing that articulate and embody the complex act of reading above and that communicate effectively to the students and explain constructively the strengths and areas needing revision.

7. Make literature accessible to students and lead students to respond critically.
STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

Students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate a high level of competence in some genre of imaginative writing and the forms and techniques of that genre.

2. Demonstrate improvement in creative writing techniques: the use of figurative language, clarity in expression of ideas, voices, and images, variation in syntax and diction, and strategies for invention and revision.

3. Demonstrate familiarity and proficiency with a variety of poetic and/or narrative forms.

4. Develop critical vocabularies for discussing their creative work and that of other writers.

5. Demonstrate familiarity with contemporary literature and literary publications.