Portfolio Results Fall 2012

English 250

267 exams, 86% passing (down from 286 last fall but we cut a section)
   A) 51 portfolios, 19%
   B) 101, 35%
   C) 78, 29%
   D) 32, 12%
   F) 5, 2%

In the three previous semesters, 89-90% of 250 students passed. Our percentage of As and Bs is somewhat lower this semester, and the percentage of Ds has grown. This could be due to plagiarism, which we continue to strategize against both individually and collectively. Scott also mentioned that a few of the Ds are borderline and that teachers may be contesting them next week. Based on the portfolios I read as well as various conversations with instructors, here are some thoughts for future semesters:

1) Do not give grades at all—give zeros—to papers which contain plagiarism. This will discourage students from including essays with plagiarism in their portfolios. Also consider requiring students to submit Turnitin receipts in their portfolios.

2) Do not accept students’ essays with incorrect font or formatting during the semester. This will train students to submit properly formatted portfolios.

3) Take steps toward creating essay prompts which are thesis driven. Many assignments resulted in essays with body paragraphs that paraphrased information without a clear purpose. Scott will be convening a little committee this winter to work on best-practice prompt creation for our January retreat.

English 440

104 exams, 92% passing (slightly down from 108 last fall)
   A) 35 portfolios, 33%
   B) 34, 33%
   C) 27, 26%
   D) 6, 6%
   E) 2, 2%

The 440 pass rate seems very good, up from 83% last spring but down from 98% last fall. As far as trends go, I have come to expect that the 440 pass rate be in the 90s. A couple of the 440 teachers are new to the level, which is great for the fresh and energetic perspective though the portfolio process does take some adjustment. There are some differences in approaching research at the 440 level, particularly as our standards for research are more flexible than at other levels; however, we do need to create clearer guidelines and expectations, particularly for new instructors. (Also see above for the problems associated with research, which also appear at the 440 level.)