



Faculty Review of Open eTextbooks

The [California Open Educational Resources Council](#) has designed and implemented a faculty review process of the free and open etextbooks showcased within the California Open Online Library for Education (www.cool4ed.org). Faculty from the California Community Colleges, the California State University, and the University of California were invited to review the selected free and open etextbooks using a rubric. Faculty received a stipend for their efforts and funding was provided by the State of California, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Textbook Name:

Literature, the Humanities, and Humanity



Literature,
the Humanities,
and Humanity



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Textbook Authors:

Dr. Theodore L. Steinberg

Reviewed by:

Balthazar Becker

Institution:

California State
University, San Francisco

Title/Position:

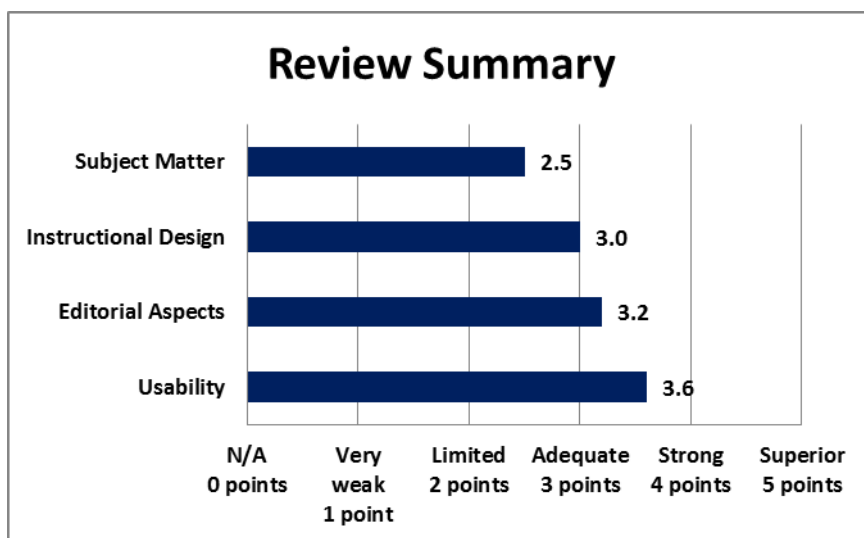
Professor

Format

Reviewed:

[Online](#)

A small fee may be associated with various formats.



Date Reviewed:

May 2016

California OER Council eTextbook Evaluation Rubric

CA Course ID: [ENGL 120](#)

Subject Matter (30 possible points)	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
Is the content accurate, error-free, and unbiased?					X	
Does the text adequately cover the designated course with a sufficient degree of depth and scope?			X			

Does the textbook use sufficient and relevant examples to present its subject matter?				X		
Does the textbook use a clear, consistent terminology to present its subject matter?				X		
Does the textbook reflect current knowledge of the subject matter?			X			
Does the textbook present its subject matter in a culturally sensitive manner? (e.g. Is the textbook free of offensive and insensitive examples? Does it include examples that are inclusive of a variety of races, ethnicities, and backgrounds?)		X				

Total Points: 15 out of 30

Please provide comments on any aspect of the subject matter of this textbook:

- I understand that the intention of the author is to revive his students' enthusiasm for the classics, but this textbook does very little to make these texts relevant to the multicultural and diverse classroom that we find at CSU or other public universities and colleges.
- The individual chapters present (often overly didactic) lectures on basic aspects of 7 canonical authors. (All of these seven authors are white Europeans and all but one are men.) For the most part, Steinberg's chapters do not, however, offer any feminist, postcolonial, queer, or even Marxist perspectives on these texts. (e.g. The words "queer," "Marxist," "labor," and colonial, among others, are conspicuously absent from the author's standard reading of standard texts.)

Instructional Design (35 possible points)	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
Does the textbook present its subject materials at appropriate reading levels for undergrad use?				X		
Does the textbook reflect a consideration of different learning styles? (e.g. visual, textual?)			X			
Does the textbook present explicit learning outcomes aligned with the course and curriculum?				X		
Is a coherent organization of the textbook evident to the reader/student?					X	
Does the textbook reflect best practices in the instruction of the designated course?				X		
Does the textbook contain sufficient effective ancillary materials? (e.g. test banks, individual and/or group activities or exercises, pedagogical apparatus, etc.)		X				
Is the textbook searchable?						X

Total Points: 21 out of 35

Please provide comments on any aspect of the instructional design of this textbook:

- As indicated above, the textbook follows a very traditional, non-engaging, form, which resembles a faculty lecture. While casual in tone, it is nonetheless very didactic--and allows very little room for students to become engaged by pursuing their own interpretations.
- In this sense, there are also no ancillary materials or other means of helping instructors to incorporate this textbook into their courses.

Editorial Aspects (25 possible points)	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
Is the language of the textbook free of grammatical, spelling, usage, and typographical errors?					X	
Is the textbook written in a clear, engaging style?					X	
Does the textbook adhere to effective principles of design? (e.g. are pages laid out and organized to be clear and visually engaging and effective? Are colors, font, and typography consistent and unified?)					X	
Does the textbook include conventional editorial features? (e.g. a table of contents, glossary, citations and further references)				X		
How effective are multimedia elements of the textbook? (e.g. graphics, animations, audio)		X				

Total Points: 16 out of 25

Please provide comments on any editorial aspect of this textbook:

- The layout is quite well done, but there is a noticeable lack of references, etc. in the back of the book.
- While for the most part the book is carefully written, there are occasional errors in spelling.
- The offered bibliography is very short and does not offer students directions for further research.
- Along these lines, Prof. Steinberg's chapters do not reference their sources--hence he either does not draw on or does not cite other scholars' work. Since our students are aspiring scholars, it would be nice to offer them texts that engage in academic discourse by crediting their influence and by considering textual scholarship as a debate, not a soliloquy.

Usability (25 possible points)	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
Is the textbook compatible with standard and commonly available hardware/software in college/university campus student computer labs?					X	
Is the textbook accessible in a variety of different electronic formats? (e.g. .txt, .pdf, .epub, etc.)					X	
Can the textbook be printed easily?					X	
Does the user interface implicitly inform the reader how to interact with and navigate the textbook?			X			
How easily can the textbook be annotated by students and instructors?					X	

Total Points: 18 out of 25

Please provide comments on any aspect of access concerning this textbook.

- Overall, this is a relatively high quality PDF that allows for all the usual tools to annotate, highlight, and search the content.
- What is missing (and what would be very helpful) is a document map that allows students to navigate the overall content more easily.

Overall Ratings	Not at all (0 pts)	Very Weak (1 pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3 pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
What is your overall impression of the textbook?			X			
How willing would you be to adopt this book?	X	Strong reservations (1 pt)	Limited willingness (2 pts)	Willing (3 pts)	Strongly willing (4 pts)	Enthusiastically willing (5 pts)

Total Points: 2 out of 10

Overall Comments

If you were to recommend this textbook to colleagues, what merits of the textbook would you highlight?

- As a very basic introduction to one of the seven authors, one of Prof. Steinberg's chapters might be suitable.

What areas of this textbook require improvement in order for it to be used in your courses?

- As a major guide to all these authors in a survey course, however, Steinberg's textbook is unsuitable, because it offers one sole (straight, white, and male) perspective on these texts. It would be preferable to rely on a range of diverse scholars to make these texts accessible and render them relevant to today's diverse student populations.
- Also, as I pointed out before, literary scholarship should be understood as a complex and open debate--in which individuals from a variety of backgrounds participate. Steinberg's lecture-based model, which does not include references to other scholars or offer us feminist, queer, or critical race perspectives, is not well suited to engage today's students.

We invite you to add your feedback on the textbook or the review to [the textbook site in MERLOT](#) (Please [register](#) in MERLOT to post your feedback.)



For questions or more information, contact the [CA Open Educational Resources Council](#).



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