

Prof Writing

PROPOSAL NUMBER: 99-201

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CURRICULUM PROPOSAL FORM

***DEADLINES:**

REGULAR COURSE PROPOSALS: OCTOBER 23, 1998 FOR FALL, 1999 AND FEBRUARY 19, 1999 FOR SPRING, 2000
SHORT-TERM COURSE PROPOSALS: DECEMBER 11, 1998 FOR FALL, 1999 AND MARCH 26, 1998 FOR SPRING 2000

PROPOSAL TITLE: Advanced Fiction Workshop

SPONSOR/S: Julia MacDonnell Chang C661.558

DEPARTMENT: Journalism & Creative Writing, College of Communication

CHECK ALL THAT APPLY:
 UNDERGRADUATE GRADUATE

COLLEGE: Communication
If LAS: History/Humanities
 Math/Sciences
 Social/Behavioral Sciences

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TYPE OF PROPOSAL (Check ALL that Apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> General Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Course (NOT Gen. Ed.)
<input type="checkbox"/> New Course in <u> </u> Bank	<input type="checkbox"/> Name Change (Dept., School, Major)
<input type="checkbox"/> Existing course, Add To <u> </u> Bank	<input type="checkbox"/> Changes in Degree Requirements
<input type="checkbox"/> Multicultural/Global Designation	<input type="checkbox"/> Changes Involve Gen. Ed. requirements
<input type="checkbox"/> Writing Intensive Designation	
<input type="checkbox"/> Literature Designation	<input type="checkbox"/> Minor Changes to Existing Courses
<input type="checkbox"/> New Minor/Concentration/Specialization	<input type="checkbox"/> Course is NOT General Education
<input type="checkbox"/> New Major/Degree Program	<input type="checkbox"/> Course IS General Education
<input type="checkbox"/> Short Term Course Proposal	

DEPARTMENT
(SIGNATURE INDICATES APPROVAL)

David Lloyd 4/17/99 Debra Whelan

DEPT. CURRICULUM CHAIR / DATE DEPT. CHAIRPERSON / DATE

COLLEGE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE
DATE OF OPEN HEARING (if necessary) 4/23/99

APPROVED
 NOT APPROVED

COMMENTS:

Walt D'Ant 4/23/99

SIGNATURE DATE

ACADEMIC DEAN (& GRADUATE DEAN, for New Graduate Programs Only)

APPROVED
 NOT APPROVED

COMMENTS:

 4/12/99

SIGNATURE (Academic Dean) DATE

SIGNATURE (Graduate Dean) DATE

UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

DATE OF OPEN HEARING (if necessary) 12/23/99 College Level 100

APPROVED

NOT APPROVED

COMMENTS:

Handwritten Signature 5/21/99
SIGNATURE DATE

SENATE

Date announced at Senate 4/30/99

Voted upon at Senate: Approved Not Approved Date:

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT/PROVOST

APPROVED

NOT APPROVED If no, reasons are as follows:

STUDENT CREDIT HOURS 3 FACULTY LOAD HOURS 3 EQUALIZED CREDIT HOURS _____

OFFICIAL COPY & APPROVAL SHEET FILED (DATE): _____

DATE/SIGNATURE EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT/PROVOST [Signature] 5/22/99

REGISTRAR

DATE APPROVED COURSE DESCRIPTION RECEIVED _____

HEGIS TAXONOMY & COURSE NUMBER ASSIGNED CULT 558

DATE/SIGNATURE OF REGISTRAR Robert G. Bulet 7/26/99

NOTIFICATION FORWARD:

SENATE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

DEPARTMENT CHAIRPERSONS

ACADEMIC DEAN(S)

REGISTRAR

SPONSOR(S)

T.M.
8/16/99

COURSE PROPOSAL

1. DETAILS:

- a.) Course Title: **Advanced Fiction Workshop**
- b.) Sponsor: Prof. Julia MacDonnell Chang, Department of Journalism and Creative Writing
- c.) Credit Hours: 3 credit hours
- d.) Course Level: 500-level graduate course
- e.) Curricular Effect: Required course for creative writing track in proposed Masters of Arts in Writing. Open to students throughout the University.
- f.) Prerequisites: None
- g.) Suggested Time/
Scale of Implementation: Fall 1999, One Section
- h.) Resources Teaching faculty on staff consistent with the College of Communication budget. New library acquisitions will be required over time.

2. RATIONALE

The proposed course is part of the Master of Arts in Writing currently under development by the College of Communication's Departments of College Writing, and Journalism and Creative Writing. The course can also be offered as an elective for students enrolled in other graduate programs across campus.

In the past quarter century, the graduate fiction workshop, based largely upon teaching strategies developed at the University of Iowa, has become the essential training forum for literary writers. Students who desire to write short stories, novels, novellas and/or prose poems will find this course essential to their development. This workshop-style class would also be beneficial to experienced writers in other disciplines who have a strong interest in self-expression through prose fiction and who wish to develop their skills in either literary or genre fiction.

Through the workshop method, that is, the close communal examination and critique of student texts, the course will cover such literary techniques as plot, characterization and point of view, and such narrative modes as description, dramatization and exposition.

Members of the class will be required to submit several substantial pieces of fiction during the semester; to write evaluations of their classmates work and to take a turn serving as a discussion leader, presenting a classmate's work to the class.

3. ESSENCE OF THE COURSE:

A.) Objectives:

This proposed course has ten objectives:

- (i) To develop students' literary skills through the writing of complete stories
- (ii) To develop craft and discipline through writing practice - exercises, designed like a musician's varied scales, to focus on particular techniques such as description, tone, or the use of figurative language
- (iii) To provide students with the technical and critical vocabularies that will enable them to engage in advanced analyses and critiques --both written and oral -- of their own work, their classmates' work, and that of the best contemporary writers
- (iv) To develop the self-editing and revision skills essential to survival as a literary writer
- (v) To explore the differences that exist between literary and commercial fiction and the small place where these two writing streams intersect
- (vi) To teach students how to read fiction analytically and critically -- that is, as a skilled craftsman, one who seeks to deconstruct a finished work to see how it was put together
- (vii) To expose students to the best contemporary writers and to give them a historical perspective on the development of modern and post-modern techniques
- (viii) To enable students, through the constant and objective evaluation of their work, to gain the emotional distance essential to their growth as literary artists
- (ix) To understand the many particulars of manuscript preparation and submission
- (x) To introduce students to the current publishing scene - agents, editors, commercial and university publishers, et. al.

B.) *Topical Outline:*

Students in this proposed course will be required to develop a portfolio that contains the following work:

Three pieces of original, publishable quality fiction for submission to literary journals and/or magazines

A writer's journal containing handwritten exercises as assigned throughout the course

Approximately 30 1-page critiques of classmates' work

(The goal of these writing assignments is for students to demonstrate their development as creative writers and their understanding of the content being presented in the workshop.)

C.) *Evaluation and Grading Procedures:*

Final course grade will be determined based upon the quality of the various written assignments for the portfolio and upon the quality and quantity of student participation in the workshop during the semester.

D.) *Course Evaluation:*

The proposed course will be evaluated using the College of Communication student evaluation forms (adapted from McKeachie) and critical review by College of Communication writing faculty. Student evaluation forms will assess effectiveness of content and content delivery, assignments, and texts. The critical review by College of Communication writing faculty will determine whether the course meets the goals outlined. Critical review by the department faculty can be met in several ways: classroom observation, syllabus review, faculty meetings at regular intervals to assess progress.

4. *Results of Consultations:*

Consultations were sought from Dr. Kenneth Kaleta, acting chairman of the Department of Radio/Television/Film, and Dr. Joan Mellen, a novelist and full professor in Temple University's graduate program in English and Creative Writing

Dr. Kaleta said he was "particularly supportive of the integration of studying writing art, practicing writing skills and introducing writing business....business savvy is now integral to publishing your work.

Dr. Mellen said, "Certainly the proposal meets the criteria we set for our courses in the graduate program in creative writing at Temple University....In particular, I admire your emphasis on students evaluating their classmates' work, and indeed serving as discussion leaders in workshop sessions."

5. Additional Supporting Information:

The Department of Professional Writing has been involved in three activities that will be of benefit to the graduate fiction workshop:

Avant

The Department of Journalism and Creative Writing oversees the publication of **Avant**, Rowan's award-winning literary magazine, a forum for student poetry and fiction, that would be open to matriculated students at the graduate level

AWP Membership

The Department of Professional Writing currently maintains a membership in Associated Writing Programs, an association of undergraduate and graduate creative writing programs in North America. Among its many benefits are copies of its monthly **Writers' Chronicle** for distribution to all creative writing students. Since most AWP programs are geared to the graduate level, our continued membership in this organization will be essential for our graduate students.

Literary Awards

The Department of Journalism and Creative Writing, in conjunction with the English Department, currently oversees the annual Rowan University Literary Awards, a highly competitive writing contest that honors student writing in both poetry and fiction with cash prizes, citations, and a public reading and reception.

Possible Texts:

- Burroway, Janet. 1996. Writing Fiction, A Guide to Narrative Craft. New York: HarperCollins.
- Bernays, Anne, and Painter, Pamela. 1990. What If? Writing Exercises for Fiction Writers. New York: HarperCollins.
- Brande, Dorothea. 1981. On Becoming a Writer. Los Angeles: Jeremy Tarcher.
- Gardner, John. 1984. The Art of Fiction. New York: Alfred A. Knopf
- James, Henry. 1947. The Art of the Novel. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- O'Connor, Flannery. 1969. Mystery and Manners. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.
- O'Connor, Frank. 1963. The Lonely Voice: A Study of the Short Story. Cleveland. World Publishing.
- Jason, Philip K. and Lefcowitz, Allan B. 1998. Creative Writer's Handbook, 3rd. Ed. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall.
- Hills, Rust. 1977. Writing in General and the Short Story in Particular. Boston Houghton Mifflin.
- Forster, E.M. 1954. Aspects of the Novel. New York: Harcourt Brace and World.
- Stevick, Philip. 1967. The Theory of the Novel. New York. The Free Press.
- Welty, Eudora. 1977. The Eye of the Story. New York: Random House.

APPENDIX A -- CONSULTATIONS



TEMPLE UNIVERSITY
A Commonwealth University

College of Arts and Sciences
Department of English

Anderson Hall (022-29)
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19122
Fax: (215) 787-9620

February 10, 1999

Professor Julia MacDonnell Chang
211 Bunce Hall
Rowan University
201 Mullica Hill Road
Glassboro, New Jersey 08028

Dear Professor MacDonnell Chang:

I greatly enjoyed and found thought-provoking the two course proposals you forwarded to me, both the one for a Fiction Workshop and the one for Advanced Feature Writing for Print Media. Certainly the proposal for a fiction workshop meets the qualifications we set for our courses in the graduate program in creative writing at Temple University.

In particular, I admire your emphasis on students evaluating their classmates' work, and indeed serving as discussion leaders in workshop sessions. The written objectives for your course seem purposeful and designed for the students to gain the maximum benefit from the course. I believe that the students should receive copies of these objectives which might serve as a virtual "bill of rights" for fiction workshops everywhere. I approve of the emphasis, for example, on "self-editing and revision skills" since this is an aspect of creative writing programs which is never given enough time. I think you have done an absolutely splendid job.

I might suggest that the written commentaries students present of the work of their fellows be 2-3 pages rather than one page long, that the students be given guidelines on how to write these commentaries, and that the writer's journal be omitted as more befitting less experienced writers. But these are minor points. I have full confidence that the course you offer will be rich and profound and immensely helpful to apprentice writers who have chosen your program in the hope of becoming professional novelists or short story writers.

The feature writing proposal sounds so exciting I would like to sign up for the course myself. I like the combination of specific aims (how to organize a long story and a lead) with practicalities like the understanding of communication law and how to hone interviewing skills along with more abstract concerns like how to recognize and



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present ideas to editors. The bibliography here is particularly rich and intriguing.

In all I am deeply impressed by your work, and by the course outlines. I know you will do a splendid job and will initiate the Rowan writing program in fine and high style.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joan Mellen".

Joan Mellen
Professor



TO: Julia MacDonnell Chang
Professional Writing Department

FROM: Dr. Ken Kaleta, ^{KK}Acting Chair
Radio/TV/Film Department

DATE: February 17, 1999

RE: Graduate Course Proposal--Advanced Fiction Workshop

Your new graduate course proposal is exciting. It has earned my support and invited my enthusiasm.

The ten objectives are a strong and obvious indication of the potential of this course. The range of goals from theoretical to practical will give our students a comprehensive overview. Advanced Fiction Workshop conveys the interactive investigation of the complicated process of writing for publication.

I am particularly supportive of the integration of studying writing art, practicing writing skills and introducing writing business. As you and I know as writers, business savvy is now integral to publishing your work.

Best of luck with this new course.

I remain at your disposal for any further consultations you might seek.

KK/jh

Course Description:

Advanced Fiction Workshop

During this graduate level workshop, students will complete, through the composition of a first draft and several revisions, at least three full-length short stories or novel chapters of publishable quality. By participating in workshop-style discussions and critiques of others' work, students will develop a critical and analytical vocabulary. Students will also learn how to prepare manuscripts and present them to editors and agents.

FICTION WORKSHOP
Master's Course at Rowan University

Letter of Consultation
from
Joseph Éamon Cummins

General Comments

I consider 'Fiction Workshop', this new master's-level course, a suitably comprehensive, sensible, and well-balanced unit. In addition, the program seems desirably practical and participatory, giving it extra built-in appeal that should be of strong interest to the target populations.

Points that I feel deserve consideration

PREREQUISITES: It is my experience that a 500-level course typically needs an admittance standard in the relevant discipline. The efficacy of the course (essentially its ability to achieve its objectives) will be determined more by the competence of the students than by any other single criterion established. At the 500 level, to optimize the course resources and achieve the program's objectives, a degree of homogeneity in student standard is desirable, even necessary. If all academically qualified students (with divergent skill levels in writing) are free to enroll, that is likely, perhaps certain, to set an overall lower literary standard of competence for the group. That resulting group standard would then establish the critical benchmark, which in turn would determine what can and cannot be attempted, or achieved, by the instructors. If this likely result is acceptable to Rowan, and is in keeping with the University's admittance policies on such courses, then that priority would, of course, prevail over my cautions here.

CURRICULUM CRITIQUE ELEMENT: I believe it is important that your students will be required to evaluate and critique not just peer writings (competitive) but also the work of accomplished writers and great works. These two requirements manifest different depths and qualities of engagement in students.

INDIVIDUALITY: At the 500 level it is reasonable to expect that some of the students in this program will hold developed interests in one or more literary fields, or in a particular sub-genre. Will there be opportunity in the course for individual pursuit of such interests? In other words, to what degree is there a self-directed component within the program (as against the clear prescriptive content)?

GROUP LEARNING: I feel it is always beneficial to acknowledge and activate students, especially at this level, as teachers as well as learners, even though few have been trained to see themselves this way. To capitalize on this fact, group work (projects, research, debate, critique, character creation, dialogue exchanges, etc) helps students to learn from each other in ways that are fundamentally different from - and complementary to - learning from the instructor or from book reading.

Creative group projects also allow opportunities for students to get close to and explore external consciousnesses (other students' minds), which, of course, is necessary too in the creation of fictional characters, and for general effectiveness in fiction writing.

Group work tends to develop cooperative learning, whereas individually evaluated tasks are inclined to be more competitive, not always the most learning-productive approach. At graduate level, despite the justified requirement for more independent work, the student discovers in cooperative tasks vital broader perspectives (diversity), along with learning the value of exploiting available resources.

THE PUBLISHING INDUSTRIES: Because this course is aimed at participants with, presumably, professional aspirations, I believe it is productive to include introductions to the editorial workings of journals, newspapers, university presses, and book publishing. Literary agents, manuscript preparation and marketing, and submission methods and standards stand apart from but related to this focus.

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES / COMPETENCIES: Apart from general course objectives and instructor objectives, I believe student performance objectives (outcome competencies) should be as clear and concrete as possible, and should be measurable by some pre-designated evaluation tool. Student competencies are produced by the development of cognitive functions that enable the student to interpret, integrate and practically apply the knowledge learned.

With this course level, I would ask: What practical competencies do you expect students to acquire and be able to demonstrate at the end of the course? Terms such as 'understanding', 'appreciating', and 'knowing', are difficult, if not impossible, to measure objectively. So, are there target competencies that can be demonstrated in student performance? Even a writing standard can be evaluated in this way, as long as the standard and its method of measurement are set and agreed beforehand, and an evaluation tool developed. Otherwise things tend to get fuzzy.

This suggestion applies generally, but it has extra significance for graduate students with self-directed interests and pursuits.

COURSE / INSTRUCTOR EVALUATION BY STUDENTS: Such evaluations are always desirable and should be considered genuinely. But, without measured judgment and interpretation by faculty, student responses should not form a blueprint for change in the program.

Student responses typically vary with individuality and are often unreliable as sole catalysts for alteration in the curriculum or methods of presentation. Changes in course content and presentation structure must be weighed against course objectives, current student profiles, admittance criteria and standards, facilities, instructors' styles and suitability, etc, etc.

Student evaluations, I believe, can seldom stand alone in guiding the development, in particular, of creative programs. Even less so in a 'no prerequisites' course at this level.

Joseph Eamon Cummins

March 1 1999