

CURRICULUM PROPOSAL FORM 2001-2002

NON-GENERAL EDUCATION PROCESS A

***DEADLINES:** Deadline dates for 2001/2002 submissions: Regular proposals: October 19, 2001 to be implemented in Fall 2002; Short-Term proposals: December 7, 2001 to be implemented in Fall, 2002; Regular proposals February 15, 2002 to be implemented in Spring, 2003; March 22, 2002 for short-term courses to be implemented in Spring 2003.

PROPOSAL TITLE: Evaluating Writing (Minor Curricular Change)

SPONSOR(S): Janice Rowan

DEPARTMENT: Composition/Rhetoric

COLLEGE: Communication

IF LAS CHECK ONE: History/Humanities Math/Sciences Social/Behavioral Sciences

Check one: Undergraduate Graduate

THE ATTACHED **NON-GEN-ED** PROPOSAL IS BEST DESCRIBED BY THE ITEM(S) CHECKED.

New non-gen-ed course

Short-term non-gen-ed course

Minor curricular changes (fewer than three) to: revision of Evaluating Writing Art. Track

existing non-gen-ed course

non-gen-ed degree requirements

major

minor, specialization, concentration, track, certificate program

DEPARTMENT
(Signature indicates approval)

Dept. Curriculum Chair / Date Janice Rowan 10-18-01

Dept. Chairperson / Date Janice Rowan 10-18-01

ADEMIC DEAN

Approved Not Approved Comments:

Dean's Signature/Date [Signature] 10-18-01

COLLEGE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

Date of open hearing (if necessary) _____ Approved Not Approved _____

Comments:

Signature of College Chair/Date: Donald W. Hill 2/14/02

UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

Date Received/Processed _____

Comments:

Curriculum Chair Signature Lanetta Rivers Date Announced At Senate 6/5/02

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT/PROVOST

Approved Not Approved _____ If no, reasons are as follows:

Student Credit Hours _____ Faculty Load Hours _____ Equalized Credit Hours _____

Official Copy & Approval Sheet Filed (Date): _____ Executive VP/Provost Signature/Date [Signature] 7/2/02

REGISTRAR

Date Approved Course Description Received _____ Hegis Taxonomy & Course Number Assigned _____

Registrar Signature/Date Edwin C. Eggenbald 7/10/02

NOTIFICATION FORWARD

Senate Curriculum Committee Chairperson Academic Dean(s) IRP
 Department Chairpersons Registrar CAP w 7/23/02
_____ Sponsor(s)

Minor Curricular Change: Moving Evaluating Writing from a Related Elective Bank to a Major Requirement (see attached curriculum sheet)

1. Details:

- a) Current Course: Evaluating Writing, an existing course (1501405)
- b) Sponsor: Janice Rowan, Chair
Department of Composition and Rhetoric
- c) Credit Hours: 3 credit hours within the 30-hour specialization in Writing Arts
- d) Course Level: 400-level
- e) Curricular Effect: Course moves from its present position in Related Elective bank #3 and becomes a Major Requirement for Writing Arts majors and Coordinate Majors.
- f) Prerequisites: College Composition II (1501112) and 60 hrs. *completed*
- g) Implementation: Fall 2002
- h) Resources: The course is already being offered on a regular basis. No new faculty are needed.

2. Rationale:

Evaluating Writing is an ideal capstone course for Writing Arts majors and coordinate majors. The course description reads as follows: "This course examines issues and methods of assessing writing. Students will explore a wide variety of tools used to evaluate writing, such as portfolio and holistic assessment, and they will discuss the validity and reliability of many assessment models." The course provides a culminating academic activity and shows connections to work in the other specialization courses (Mass Media, Communication Theory, Writing, Research, and Technology, and The Writer's Mind).

3. Essence of the Course

See above #2.

- a) Objectives
- b) Topical Outline
- c) Evaluation and Grading Procedures
- d) Course Evaluation

See attached syllabus.

4. Results of Consultations

- a) Consulted Departments: Composition and Rhetoric and Elementary Education
- b) Consultants' Statements: Kathleen Small, Elementary Education (Coordinate Majors); Dr. Susan Taber, Chair, Elementary Education; Dr. Diane Penrod, Composition/Rhetoric
- c) Written Consultations: Forthcoming

5. Additional Support:

NA

Course Catalogue Description:

1501-405

Evaluating Writing (1501401xx)

This course examines issues and methods of assessing writing. Students will explore a wide variety of tools used to evaluate writing, such as portfolio and holistic assessment, and they will discuss the validity and reliability of many assessment models.

Prerequisites: 1501.112 and 60 hrs completed

Special Topics: Evaluating Writing
060140401 Th 6:30pm

Dr. Diane Penrod
Fall 2000

Office: 104 Bozorth Hall
Office phone: (856) 256-4330 can leave message on voice mail
Office hours: 4-6pm Tues, Wed, Thurs.
E-mail: penrod@rowan.edu

Course Description: Getting something down on paper is only the first step in writing or being a writer. Effective writing builds upon several things, central to which is increasing those elements that are strong in the text. Minimizing error is important, too, but if we focus on carefully evaluating a text based on its strengths, we can learn how to minimize error as we go along.

Writers can find work in a number of settings. Some teach, others go into fields like copywriting, editing, technical writing, electronic publishing, or journalism. Often, good writers enter fields like law or medicine, where excellent writing is held at a premium. Still others are independent — they freelance for numerous clients or they decide to publish stories, poetry, novels, creative non-fiction, or essays for a living. Regardless of the path you take, understanding how to evaluate writing with a critical eye can make a significant difference in your career. Teachers who carefully evaluate their students' writing can make their students stronger writers — an important consideration in this age of unlimited assessment. Copywriters who know how to evaluate writing become valuable members of a creative team, as they know how to build vibrant copy that is both interesting and flawless. Editors who know how to evaluate writing become indispensable for publishing houses and authors, both of whom depend upon the editor to polish a potential manuscript into a fine, salable book. Technical or professional writers who can conscientiously evaluate writing are crucial for assuring correct information is placed clearly in manuals, corporate documents, and reports. Journalists who can evaluate writing well can move ahead in their careers, becoming editors and newsroom managers. Similarly, those independent authors who are comfortable with their “evaluating eye” foster positive relationships with agents and editors, as these authors understand how to revise and rewrite to publish on a regular basis.

So, knowing how to evaluate writing from multiple contexts makes you an integral part of any workplace, regardless of where your career takes you.

This class, then, shows you how to develop criteria for evaluating a piece of writing from a number of diverse perspectives. We'll look at how fields like education, scientific/technical writing, publishing, poetry/fiction writing, and law set standards for measuring the value of a piece of writing. We'll also look at how these fields put forward certain guidelines for what makes writing “good.” At the same time, we'll look at the conventions each field uses in its writing and why the writers in those fields might have differing reasons for changing conventions.

Upon completing the course, students should have the following background:

- 1.) An understanding of the many conventions and standards used in the fields connected to writing
- 2.) A basic knowledge of writing assessment from various perspectives
- 3.) A grasp in determining criteria for a piece of writing for educational, professional, journalistic, legal, publishing, or creative writing contexts
- 4.) An ability to use the correct terminology found in evaluation and editing.

Texts required: The following books are required for the course:

- Agostino, Paul. Created Writing. Prentice Hall, 1996.
Alley, Michael. The Craft of Editing. Springer-Verlag, 2000.
Sharpe & Gunther. Editing Fact and Fiction. Cambridge University Press, 1997.
Shaughnessy, Mina. Errors and Expectations. Oxford University Press, 1977.
Willis, Meredith Sue. Deep Revision. Teachers & Writers Collaborative, 1993.

You can purchase them either at the Bookstore in Winans Hall or through Amazon.com or BN.com. From time to time, there may also be some handouts in class. You will not have to pay for these.

Some general policies (kind of like “Good Housekeeping”): Normally, I’m a fairly easy-going person, but recently a few incidents have occurred in other classes that have forced me to adopt a couple of general policies for classroom decorum. Here they are

1.) Cell phones/pagers: Please turn them off or turn them to vibrate before coming to class. There is nothing so rude and inconsiderate than having someone take his or her phone calls during class. The same goes for pagers. If there is some sort of emergency, please excuse yourself from the class and take (or make) the call outside in the hall. Remember — Hell hath no fury like a professor who is continually interrupted by cell phones and pagers!

2.) Repeatedly coming in late/leaving early: While I understand high society suggests that entering a room 15 minutes late or leaving 15 minutes (or so) early guarantees people remember you, I find it a sure way for us to have a private discussion — so perhaps high society IS right: I will remember you. Maybe not in the ways in which you would like, though. This class meets once per week in the evening. Parking should not be a problem, nor should getting to class be difficult even if you are student teaching or working.

I understand that occasionally you may be late for class; weather and road conditions sometimes affect arrival times. I also understand that you might have to leave early occasionally for personal reasons. Please come in or leave quietly, so as not to disturb the class.

3.) Eating in class: Generally this is not a problem for me as long as you are neat and clean up after yourselves. I recognize many of you are working or student teaching and working. This class may be the only time you can catch a dinner break. Be neat and the privilege remains intact. Make life difficult for the cleaning staff, and future permission will be denied.

Otherwise, there are few things that bother me...except for these two areas:

Attendance: The Department of College Writing has an attendance policy for all its classes: For classes that meet once per week, students can not miss more than 3 classes (excused or unexcused). If students miss more than 3 classes, they are either expected to withdraw from the course or take an F. I will hold to this policy.

If you are ill for an extended period of time, please contact the Dean of Students, who will send a form to your professors notifying them that you will be out. In addition, if you are going to miss more than 3 classes because of illness, please withdraw from this class. It is

better to retake this class at a later date than to have an F on your transcript. Please note: INC grades are only given for emergencies that happen in the last week or two of school, not to avoid F grades.

AND

Late Assignments: I simply don't accept them. Deadlines are important in the writing professions, and you need to learn how to follow them. I plan the assignments very carefully throughout the semester so you'll have plenty of time to complete them.

If, for some reason, you must miss class, please turn your assignment in before 6:00pm the night of the class. You can fax me the assignment, e-mail it as an RTF file, or place it in my mailbox in Bozorth Hall. If your assignment is not in my mailbox by 6:00pm and you are not in class, then I will not accept your paper. No excuses. No exceptions.

Now that you've learned my peeves, let me explain some of the other more important details about the class....

Assignments: There will be several assignments due this semester, all focusing on how to evaluate a written text.

"Voice" paper	5-7 pages	20% of final grade
"Exposing structure" paper	6-8 pages	25% of final grade
"Restructuring a story" paper	6-8 pages	20% of final grade
Case study	8-10 pages	35% of final grade

These assignments are sketched out for you at the end of the syllabus.

Grades will be given on an A-F scale according to the Rowan University Student Handbook. Final grades are not negotiated. Grade changes are given only if there is mathematical error or clerical error.

How I Grade an Assignment: Since this is a course on evaluating writing, you should know my criteria for grading an essay. That only makes sense, I think. So, to help you work on your writing, here is my criteria for each letter grade. I follow this criteria pretty closely, therefore, you should be able to use this information to develop your writing for the class.

"A" papers, which includes A- papers, depend upon you developing an original look at the material. That means really thinking about the assignment. "A" papers are not summaries of what has been written by these authors, no matter how well you summarize the chapters. "A" papers show significant thought connected to the subject(s) presented, display strong organization, vivid and clear language use and an appropriate tone for the discussion, and, in general, demonstrate use of correct grammatical and mechanical form.

"B" papers, which include B+ and B- papers, take original positions, too, but may not be as well developed or as insightful as "A" papers. There might also be more emphasis on summary rather than independent thinking in a "B" paper. Additionally, "B" papers frequently display writing problems to a greater degree — there may be places where the organization is weaker or the language use is not as sharp and clear as it is in an "A" paper. Likewise, the tone could be inappropriate for the topic or there are far too many typos,

misspellings, or grammatical errors to assign a higher grade.

“C” papers, which include C+ and C- papers, start to read like an encyclopedic entry about the subject. In these papers, I’ll see very little of your voice, your thoughts and a ton of what other author(s) say. “C” papers are often summaries only. “C” papers also have many writing problems — organizational, sentence structure, and idea development difficulties really emerge. Generally, “C” papers aren’t proofed, so numerous typos, spelling errors, grammatical and mechanical errors surface.

“D” papers, which include D+ and D- papers, are what I’ll call “rip and read” papers. You rip some section from the book, read it, and write an off-the-cuff response just to make the assignment happen. There is no engagement with the ideas; usually, these papers are polemical, one-sided opinions with little grounding in the readings. Occasionally, “D” papers reflect a writer’s difficulty with language use, sentence structure, or organization. More likely, though, “D” papers reflect laziness or poor time management.

“F” papers...what can I say here....”F” papers mean you didn’t submit anything or submitted it after the class. Oh, and just in case, “F”s are also used for those who want to plagiarize. Plagiarism is academic fraud. It means you’re taking another’s work or idea and representing it as your own. I will take plagiarism cases seriously. Instances of plagiarism will be sent forward through the University process.

COURSE SCHEDULE FOR THE SEMESTER

(N.B.: The syllabus is created before the course begins. There may be extenuating circumstances, such as weather or power failures, which could affect singular classes. In those instances, we will make revisions to the course outline in class or by e-mail. Regardless, all material listed on the course schedule will be covered this semester.)

September

7 Introduction to class. The differences among revision, evaluation, and assessment.
14 Agostino 1- 54; Willis 1-50. Discuss “voice” paper.
21 Agostino 55-96; Willis 51-104. Workshop draft of “voice” paper in second part of class.
28 Agostino 97-136; Willis 105-167. **“Voice” paper due at the beginning of class.**

October

5 Shaughnessy 1-89. Discuss “exposing structure” paper.
12 Shaughnessy 90-159. Workshop draft of “exposing structure” paper.
19 Shaughnessy, 160-225. Second part of class, learning registered holistic scoring. Pt.1.
26 **“Exposing structure” paper due.** Shaughnessy, 226-294. Second part of class, learning registered holistic scoring. Pt 2.

November

2 Alley 1-42. Discuss case study paper due on last night of class. Discussing “restructuring a story” paper.
9 Alley 43-90. Workshop draft of “restructuring a story” paper.
16 **“Restructuring a story” paper due.** Sharpe & Gunther 1-26.
30 Sharpe & Gunther 27-76.

December

7 Sharpe & Gunther 77-144.

14 Sharpe & Gunther 145-222.

21 Case Study due by 6:00pm.

DESCRIPTION of ASSIGNMENTS

“VOICE” PAPER In this assignment, I want you to listen to the voice(s) of the lines in the writer’s head, as voice is essential in all aspects of writing evaluation. The voice(s) in the text need to work together to create meaning in what is being said.

Using the Agostino and Willis books for support, find either three poems or one longish (10-15 pages) short story to evaluate the writing for voice. Make copies of these texts so you can annotate them (mark them up with your notes) as you go along.

Read each text line-by-line and circle the most effective words in each line. Then look at each line to see how every sentence carries significant information in a clear and pleasing manner. Also note how the grammar and mechanics reinforce meaning and how punctuation and the like do not get in the way between writer and reader. Write up a few notes about this process and how competent the writer was in these areas.

Now select the strongest and most interesting parts of the texts in front of you. Is the meaning clear to you or must you rewrite these sections to make them understandable for another reader? Why or why not? Do these sections need more (or less) detail, definition, explanation to be really useful? Don’t be afraid to take the texts apart!

Your paper should be a reflection of what you found during your “deconstruction.” What did you discover about this writer’s voice as you studied the writing? Could his or her voice be improved? If so, how? If not, why not?

“EXPOSING STRUCTURE” PAPER Understanding the underlying structure of a piece of writing is important in deciding how to evaluate it. Using the best form for carrying a message or a sense of purpose is important for conveying meaning. Otherwise, a reader can leave the text before you get the point across to him or her. In this assignment, I want you to take a paper you wrote for another class...somewhere in the 5-7 page range...and examine its structure in greater detail.

To complete this assignment, you will have to carry out these basic steps:

1.) Re-read your paper, and as you read write down the questions that come to mind — questions that you need to know to read on — and then after each question, describe how you have answered, failed to answer, or answered the questions in the wrong place (if done too soon or too late in the paper).

2.) On a piece of paper, put the following headings across the top

Message ----- Purpose ----- FORM Reader

Under “message” briefly describe what you wanted to get across to the reader. Under

“purpose,” write your statement of purpose (thesis statement, reason for writing, or so on). Now, under “reader,” write a description of the reader for whom this paper was meant.

Taking all this information, go to the “FORM” column. Consider all the possible forms that might deliver the message and accomplish your purpose for this reader. Compare the form you used to write the paper to all the other possible forms listed — is the form you selected for this older paper the most effective form or is there a better form that could have conveyed the message or the purpose for this assignment?

3.) Now, go back and read the paper again. This time, ask questions that come to mind as you read (write them down!). After each question, describe what needed to be done to answer your questions.

4.) Using your findings, discuss how your paper could be improved for a future use.

“RESTRUCTURING A STORY” PAPER In this assignment, we’re going to explore how, just by changing a few important elements of a popular story, we can determine whether the basic structure of a narrative is worthwhile or trite.

Take a fairly long news article from Time, Newsweek, US News, or any “serious” magazines (no National Enquirer, Star, People, ESPN or the like!) and make a photocopy for yourself. You might have to make a couple of photocopies if you start revising quite a bit.

Once you have the article, do the following:

1.) Change the proper names of all cities, events, people. For instance, New York becomes Glassboro or San Francisco becomes Peoria, Illinois. A chemical spill becomes a soap spill in the water system. George W. Bush becomes Alfred Jones.

2) Now, change the gender of the main characters of the story. That is, make males females and vice-versa. How does this change the plausibility or sequence of events? Are some events and activities in the story totally dependent upon gender?

3.) Now, change the point of view. If the narrative is written in third person, revise it to read in first person. If the writer seems distant, revise it to read as if the writer was there.

After you complete these three steps, write about how these simple changes affect the way people would respond to and evaluate the information.

CASE STUDY PAPER In this assignment, I want you to examine in great detail (evaluate) the writing of a friend, a child, a roommate or co-worker, even a spouse or significant other. If you’re teaching or are a teacher’s aide, you could take examples from students to review. Take one or two writing samples from your subject and look at the various items we’ve discussed over the semester:

FORM: What form(s) is/are used by this writer? How does the form shape the intended message or purpose of the writing?

VOICE: What tone of voice or point of view is used in the sample? What types of attitude or perspective emerge from studying the voice of this sample? What kinds of influences (ethnic, regional, family, expected societal, formal, informal) are at work in this sample?

FOCUS: What is the central meaning of this sample? If the central meaning isn't clear, how might it be sharpened? If it is clear, how did the writer sharpen the focus so you did understand the central meaning?

ORDER: How did the writer order the information in this sample? Does the order fit with the form or are there changes that need to be made in order for the sample to be much stronger? If the order does fit, explain how the order and the form work together in the sample.

MECHANICS: Sometimes everything is fine until the presentation — the mechanics. Study the mechanical and usage areas of your sample against the information presented in the course readings. Are there problems in the sample? If so, what are they, and if you were the editor working on this sample, how would you suggest change?

In addition, you might make other substantial comments about the writing concerning its effectiveness for an audience, how you react to the writing as a reader, and so on.

Effective case studies tell readers about the subject (you may create a pseudonym for the subject if you wish), the grade level or professional level of the subject's writing, and details about how the subject views writing. Then, move into the analysis of the subject's writing samples. To conclude, you can either discuss the additional points or create a summary of your findings.

To: "rowan@rowan.edu"@ROWANDOM.GWIA
From: "Susan B. Taber" <Taber@rowan.edu>
Subject: Curriculum change approval
CC:
Date Sent: Monday, November 26, 2001 3:07 PM

Dear Janice,

I approve the proposed curriculum changes for the coordinate major in Writing Arts.

These changes are:

1. To make "Evaluating Writing" the fifth course in the Major Requirements.
2. To make "Creative Writing I" or "Creative Writing II" one of the related electives.
3. To change the names of two courses: "Advanced Writing" to "Writing with Style" and "Communication through literature/film" to "Fiction to Film".

I believe that the proposed changes will benefit our Elementary Education majors who are charged with teaching writing to elementary school students.

Susan Taber, Ph.D.
Chair
Elementary / Early Childhood Education

To: "rowan@rowan.edu"@ROWANDOM.GWIA
From: "Kathleen Small" <small@rowan.edu>
Subject: Support for Change in Writing Arts
CC: Taber@ROWANDOM.EMP_PO
Date Sent: Tuesday, November 27, 2001 4:02 PM

November 26, 2001

Dr. Janice Rowan:

Please accept this correspondence as my endorsement of the minor curricular change in the Writing Arts Track.

After reading the information you sent me and our discussions over the phone and e-mail, it appears that replacing Creative Writing with Evaluating Writing as a Major Requirement seems very appropriate. That fact that this course: 1) assesses numerous writing styles, 2) allows students to use a variety of tools to evaluate writing (especially portfolio and holistic assessment), and 3) is a capstone experience that incorporates skills learned from other communication courses, certainly makes it of great value to our Elementary Education majors.

I agree that making Creative Writing a required course instead of an elective makes perfect sense and can only benefit our students.

Kathleen L. Small
Academic Advisor-Department
of Elementary/Early Childhood
Education



Date: Nov. 23, 2001
To: Janice Rowan, Chair, Dept. of Composition and Rhetoric
From: Carl Hausman, Chair, Dept. of Journalism and Creative Writing *Carl Hausman*
Re: Moving Evaluating Writing from a Related Elective Bank to a Major Requirement

I have examined your proposal to move Evaluating Writing within your schema and find it logical and worthwhile. The course, as you state, would serve as an excellent capstone.

Please contact me if you have any questions.



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