

CURRICULUM PROPOSAL FORM 2001-2002

GENERAL EDUCATION PROCESS B

*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: Special Topics in Biological Sciences 0401.440

SPONSOR(S): J. Scott, Associate Professor

DEPARTMENT: Biological Sciences

COLLEGE: Liberal Arts & Sciences

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

The attached *GENERAL EDUCATION* proposal is best described by the item(s) checked:

NEW course to be placed in a General Education Bank

Request that **NEW** course receive the following designation(s):

Writing Intensive Literature Multicultural/Global Lab Science

NEW Short-term course be placed in a General Education Bank

EXISTING course to be placed in a General Education Bank

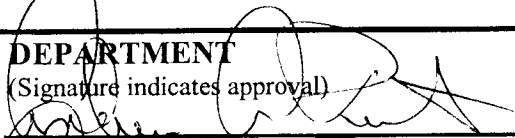
Request that **EXISTING** course receive the following designation(s):

Writing Intensive Literature Multicultural/Global Lab Science


Minor changes to **EXISTING** general education course

Changes to General Education requirements of a degree or program

DEPARTMENT
(Signature indicates approval)

 10-15-01

Dept. Curriculum Chair / Date

 10-15-01

st. Chairperson / Date

ACADEMIC DEAN

Approved Not Approved Comments:

Dean's Signature/Date [Signature] 10/24/02

UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

Date of Open Hearing 4/23/02 Approved Not Approved

Comments: * Existing 2 s.h. Special Topics course (not w.I.) to be maintained in addition to 3 s.h. WI course

Curriculum Chair Signature/Date Jamette M. Reeves 6/24/02 Date Announced at Senate 5/15/02

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] 9/19/02

REGISTRAR

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

Registrar Signature/Date [Signature] 9/27/02

NOTIFICATION FORWARD

Senate Curriculum Committee Chairperson Academic Dean(s) CAW TM 10/1/02
 Department Chairpersons Registrar _____ Sponsor(s)

SPECIAL TOPICS IN BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES 0401.440

DESIGNATION AS WRITING INTENSIVE (WI)
and CHANGE IN NUMBER OF CREDIT HOURS

REVISED SUBMISSION (revisions appear in boldface italics)

1. Details:

- a. **Course Title:** Special Topics in Biological Sciences - WI
- b. **Sponsor:** Joanne Scott, Ph.D.
Department: Biological Sciences
- c. **Proposed changes:** Change from 2 s.h. to 3 s.h.
Designation as Writing Intensive (WI)
- d. **Course Level:** 400-level, undergraduate. This course should be given a different HEGIS number from the currently-offered Special Topics course (0401.440).

The Biological Sciences Department wishes to keep the original 2-s.h. non-WI course 0401.440, which would be offered occasionally. The original 2-s.h. non-WI course would provide an excellent format, for example, for scientists from the private sector to teach Rowan students. Also, since many biology majors fulfill their WI requirement by taking courses in other departments (e.g., Philosophy and Religion), we may occasionally wish to offer a non-WI senior seminar that would be attractive to such students.

- e. **Curricular Effect:** Currently the Biological Sciences Department offers only two other WI courses, not taught annually. Designating our senior seminar as WI would decrease the number of our majors enrolling in General Education WI courses in other departments. Other majors whose students might choose to take this course include Chemistry and Biochemistry majors.
- f. **Prerequisites:** College Composition I and II (1501.111 & 1501.112), and Biology I & II (0401.100 & 0401.101), or permission of the instructor.
- g. **Suggested Time for Implementation:** Fall 2002
- h. **Adequacy of Present Staff/Resources:** The current 2-s.h. course is taught every semester, with the Department faculty rotating this assignment. We would no longer offer the current 2-s.h. course on a regular basis. The change from 2 s.h. to 3 s.h. would not appreciably affect our faculty's teaching load.

2. Rationale:

All Biology majors who have not been involved in undergraduate research are required to take our senior seminar course, Special Topics in Biological Sciences. All Rowan undergraduates are

required to take a Writing Intensive (WI) course. As a WI course, our senior seminar would then facilitate our majors' ability to satisfy both requirements. Special Topics (WI) will provide our majors with additional opportunities to enhance their ability to write effectively in the sciences.

Currently, the only other WI courses in the Department are Ecology (WI) and Introduction to Virology (WI). Only one section of Ecology (WI) is taught annually, and only one section of Introduction to Virology (WI) is taught semi-annually. Alternatively, our students may take a WI course within the General Education bank, offered by other departments. WI courses within the major are especially helpful to the students because 1) they encourage the students to think and write critically in the sciences, and 2) the style of writing for scientific papers is quite different from the style of writing generally found in non-science papers.

The proposed change from 2 s.h. to 3 s.h. for the course is a logical extension of the desire to include the additional pedagogy involved.

The writing portion of the proposed Special Topics in Biological Sciences (WI) includes, for example, "opinion papers", research papers, etc. The writing process will be emphasized through a dialogue between instructor and students over the course of several papers. Students will be exposed to scholarly work in the field, which can provide examples and ideas for their own writing. Students may also discover that there are scientific papers published despite the fact that those papers are not well-written. Emphasis in the class will include the importance of being able to explain complicated concepts in a manner that readers can understand, while expressing those concepts concisely.

3. Essence of the Course:

a. Description and Goals:

As a writing intensive course, Special Topics in Biological Sciences (WI) will enhance the students' written ability to express ideas about relevant topics through exposure to the writing of respected scholars in the field, and through the practice of writing and revising, for example, "opinion papers", research papers, etc. Assigned readings will be a part of the course, but there will also be extensive need for the students to do their own literature research. Students will learn to judge the validity of peer-reviewed publications *vs.* individual scientists' and private industry's websites.

Specifically, a student who has completed this course will learn:

- 1) how to examine critically the work of influential and/or respected scholars;
- 2) how to find information about particular topics in the library (especially through the use of computerized indices);
- 3) how to integrate and express in writing what students have learned orally in class discussions and individual presentations;
- 4) how to listen actively and respond rationally to classmates, the instructor, or invited lecturers with diverse knowledge or perspectives;
- 5) how to integrate and express information in writing in a variety of types of writing assignments, including, for example, "opinion papers" and research papers;
- 6) how to read, in a critical fashion, about biological issues.

b. Student Evaluation and Grading: Students will be evaluated by their participation in class discussions, papers, and oral reports. Students are expected to participate actively in class, come prepared to ask and answer questions, and make critical and relevant comments.

(1) Papers: Throughout the semester, there will be a variety of papers assigned, as either in-class writing assignments or homework assignments. *At least one assignment will involve a semester-long project with multiple revisions.* Possible topics for “opinion papers” would vary widely, depending on the “topic” of the semester, but could include, for example: (a) Should the U.S. be engaged in stem cell research? (b) Should childhood vaccinations be mandatory? What are the “pros” and “cons”? For each paper, the student will be expected to do extensive reading of the current literature.

For some assignments, a first draft of the paper will be brought to class to be reviewed by the instructor. Students might also be asked to exchange papers and give each other feedback in peer-editing sessions. Drafts will be marked for corrections, mainly in the overall organization and clarity of expression, and returned to the student before the final copies are written. The instructor’s meetings with the individual students to critique the writing of the students’ papers is an essential aspect of this course.

(2) Oral Presentations: Class participation will be an essential component of the course. In addition, the instructor may choose to have the students present their papers orally to the class; this sharing of work contributes to the building of a learning community in the biological sciences.

c. Course Evaluation: The Department routinely evaluates its course offerings, with an attempt to determine if the courses are meeting our goals.

4. Results of Consultation:

The Biological Sciences Department faculty voted unanimously to offer Special Topics in Biological Sciences as a WI course, and to increase the credit hours for the course from two (2) to three (3).

5. Catalog Description:

Changes from the current course description include the usual additional prerequisites of College Composition I and College Composition II for all Writing Intensive courses, the change in semester hours from 2 to 3, the deletion of the phrase “This course is not open to non-majors”, and a revision of the phrase requiring the course for all biology majors. *(Students who enroll in Biology Lab/Field Research are exempt from the senior seminar requirement, but are still required to take a writing intensive course.)*

See next page.

CATALOG DESCRIPTION

Currently-offered course:

0401.440 Special Topics in Biological Sciences 2 s.h.

(Prerequisites: 0401.100, 0401.101, Senior or Junior standing. This course is not open to non-majors)

This seminar course covers topics in individual areas of the biological sciences. students give oral reports on topics chosen from the current biological sciences literature. Students may be required to submit written reports as well. This course is required for all Biological Sciences majors.

Proposed WI course:

0401.4xx Special Topics in Biological Sciences (WI) 3 s.h.

(Prerequisites: 1501.111 and 1501.112; Senior or Junior standing; 0401.100 and 0401.101 or permission of the instructor)

This seminar course covers topics in individual areas of the biological sciences. Students give written and oral reports on topics chosen from the current biological sciences literature. This course is required for all Biological Sciences majors who do not complete a semester of Biology Lab/Field Research.

TO: Dr. E. Flores, Chairperson
Department of Chemistry & Physics
FROM: Dr. J. Scott
Biological Sciences Department
DATE: October 2, 2001
RE: Course Proposal

Attached is a curriculum proposal to offer Special Topics in Biology as a Writing-Intensive course for our students. We currently offer this course every semester; this proposal does not change the syllabus other than to make it a designated Writing-Intensive course to fulfill the all-University requirement. Since this course may be one that Chemistry and Biochemistry majors choose to take, the Biological Sciences Department wished to remind you that the prerequisites are Biology I and II *or permission of the instructor*.

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Dear Helen, I was informed that you need an impact in our load teaching to change our Special Topics in Biology (our Senior Seminar) from 2-3 crs/hr and make it WI.

The impact in our teaching load will be less than 1% (0.97%). The department has 12 faculty members with a load of 24 crs/hr per year (A total of 288 crs/hrs per year). We teach 4 section of the Special Topics course during one academic year (2 in the fall/ 2 in the spring). At the present time that implies 8 crs/hr per year in our faculty load. Changing the course to a 3 hrs will require a commitment of 12 crs/hr.

You ca find the rationale for the change in the course proposal. The department strongly feels that this change is necessary.

Thanks so much for your consideration.

If you need a paper copy of this memo, please do not hesitate to call me.

Pat

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"Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless"