

# 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, 1999 FOR SPRING 2000

PROPOSAL TITLE: The Straker's Mind  
 SPONSOR/S: D. Bernal  
 DEPARTMENT: College of Writing 1501 401

**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>Bank</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Name Change (Dept., School, Major)
<input type="checkbox"/> Existing course, Add To <u>Bank</u>	<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)

Walt D. King 3/4/99      Walt D. King 3/17/99  
 DEPT. CURRICULUM CHAIR / DATE      DEPT. CHAIRPERSON / DATE

**COLLEGE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE**  
 DATE OF OPEN HEARING (if necessary) \_\_\_\_\_

APPROVED  
 NOT APPROVED

COMMENTS:

Walt D. King      4/23/99  
 SIGNATURE      DATE

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

APPROVED  
 NOT APPROVED

COMMENTS:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 SIGNATURE (Academic Dean)      DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
 SIGNATURE (Graduate Dean)      DATE

## Course Proposal

### 1. Details:

- a) Course Title: The Writer's Mind *1501 401*
- b) Sponsor: Dr. Diane Penrod, College Writing Department, College of Communication
- c) Credit Hours: 3 credit hours
- d) Course Level 400-level undergraduate
- e) Curricular Effect: Required course for students pursuing the undergraduate coordinate major in Communication: Writing Arts.  
Open to students throughout the University.
- f) Prerequisites: College Composition I and II. *1501-III & 1501-III*
- g) Suggested Time/  
Scale of Implementation Spring 2000  
One section
- h) Resources Teaching faculty are on staff consistent with the College of Communication budget. New library acquisitions will be required over time.

### 2. Rationale:

The course is part of the proposed undergraduate coordinate major in Writing Arts sponsored by the College Writing Department in the College of Communication. The course can also be offered as an elective for students enrolled in other programs across campus.

The "literacy crisis" is a phenomenon that pervades American culture. The media, government agencies, and public opinion all express their concerns that students just do not read, write, and think as well as they once did or as they should in an increasingly information-dependent society. However, the inverse may be true. According to studies done at the State University of New York at Buffalo in the early 1980s, most of today's college students write in ways that conform to correct grammatical and mechanical principles. What differs in the current student body from earlier generations, says the SUNYAB study, is that current and prospective students have difficulty thinking analytically about complex issues. This finding suggests, then, that in addition to helping students develop their communicative competencies in writing classes, compositionists should also work with students to improve their analytical competencies.

This class examines the relationship of writing to thinking and how students can learn to write and think creatively and intelligently as they compose. The course readings and activities focus on how students can tap into their inner reflections and experiences to craft connections between themselves and their topics. Additionally, students will examine situations that affect their cognitive processes – what is commonly referred to as "writer's block" – and discover strategies to help them overcome these difficulties.

### 3. Essence of the Course:

#### a) Objectives:

This proposed course presents a number of objectives:

- (i) To expose students to the current and historical issues and practices of writing and rhetoric related to the intersection of writing and thinking.
- (ii) To provide students with an expanded framework of writing as a problem solving skill that employs certain theoretical and practical models to disseminate information to an audience.
- (iii) To assist students in developing applications and revision strategies for their own writing based on the theoretical models discussed in class.
- (iv) To introduce students to various avenues for handling obstacles in the composing process, including how to manage writer's block.
- (v) To explore with students the place of writing in a post-literate society.
- (vi) To discuss with students how contemporary writing theory works to transform negative attitudes and resistance toward writing.
- (vii) To introduce to students that the relationship between composition theory and practice is symbiotic, and this symbiosis has a direct effect on one's own concepts of what "good" writing is, how it is taught, why it is taught, and how — or by whom — it is evaluated.

#### b) Topical Outline:

The topical outline and content of the course will include:

##### Sample Projects

Students can choose from the following:\*

An ethnographic research project investigating the literacy history of one's family, friends, or co-workers to discover the importance writing has for a group of people.

An in-depth study of the student's error processes in writing to examine the relationship between the kinds of errors a writer makes in writing and thinking.

A traditional research paper in which students investigate how writing and thinking changes when writers compose in networked (computer) environments.

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\* The option for students to choose their own semester length project is to tailor learning to meet individual students' needs. To monitor and guide students' progress, instructors will individually contract the semester-long project. The contracts stipulate the length, type of project, and criteria needed to achieve a particular letter grade.

## Week-by-Week Overview of the Course\* \*

**Week 1: Introduction/Overview of Course and Course Requirements**

**Week 2: How Writing is Evidence of Thinking**

**Weeks 3-4: How Errors Reflect Changes in a Writer's Thought Process**

**Week 5: The Advantages and Disadvantages of Personal Experience Writing**

**Week 6-7: How a Writer's Thought Process Matures**

**Week 8: Combating Negative Attitudes and Resistance Toward Writing**

**Weeks 9-11: Patterns of Writer's Block and Ways to Overcome Them**

**Weeks 12-13: The Effect of Race, Class, Gender, and Ability on the Writing**

**Week 14: The Effect of Media and Electronic Communication on Written Literacy**

**Week 15: Metaphoric Thinking and Writing**

### **c) Evaluation and Grading Procedures:**

Final course grade will be determined based on the quality of the student assignments throughout the duration of the class. The assignments can include projects, response papers, examinations, seminar presentations and/or tests and quizzes.

### **d) Course Evaluation:**

The proposed course will be evaluated using the College of Communication student evaluation forms and critical review by the College Writing Department faculty. Student evaluation forms will assess effectiveness of content and content delivery, assignments, and texts. The critical review by the College Writing Department faculty will determine whether or not the course meets the goal(s) outlined or whether additional courses are needed. 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:** See attached.

**a) Consulted Departments:** College Writing, Professional Writing, English, Elementary Education, Secondary Education, Reading.

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\* \* All students will be required to turn in either weekly response papers, short formal papers, or other regular written assignments (i.e., essay exams, case studies, or ethnography). The option of response papers, essay exams, short formal papers or other written assignments is at the discretion of the instructor teaching the course. The goal of every writing assignment is for students to demonstrate understanding of the content being presented in the classroom.

**b) Consultants and Consultant Statements:** Carl Calliari (Chair, Elementary Education), Burton Sisco (Dean, College of Education), Antionette Libro (Dean, College of Communication), Janice Rowan (Chair, College Writing), Bruce Foster (Reading), Timothy Viator (Chair, English), John Gallagher (Chair, Secondary Education).

**c) Written Consultations:** See attached.

## **5. Additional Supporting Information:**

Possible texts that could serve as primary or supplemental references for this course:

Bishop, Wendy and Hans Ostrom, Eds. Genre and Writing: Issues, Arguments, Alternatives. Portsmouth: Heinemann, Boynton/Cook, 1997.

Chiseri-Strater, Elizabeth. Academic Literacies: The Public and Private Discourse of University Students. Portsmouth: Heinemann, Boynton/Cook, 1991.

D'Angelo, Frank. A Conceptual Theory of Rhetoric. Cambridge, MA: Winthrop, 1975.

Dunn, Patricia A. Learning Re-Abled: The Learning Disability Controversy and Composition Students. Portsmouth: Heinemann-Boynton/Cook, 1995.

Elbow, Peter. Writing With Power. Revised edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Flower, Linda. Problem Solving Strategies for Writing. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1981.

Fox, Thomas. The Social Uses of Student Writing. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 1994.

Harris, Joseph. A Teaching Subject: Composition Since 1966. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1997.

Hays, Janice N., et al. The Writer's Mind. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1983.

Himley, Margaret. Shared Territories: How Children Write. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Kinneavy, James. A Theory of Discourse. New York: Norton, 1971.

Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson. Metaphors We Live By. Chicago: U Chicago Press, 1980.

Porter, James. Audience and Rhetoric. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Blair Press/Prentice Hall, 1996.

Rose, Mike. When a Writer Can't Write. New York: Guilford Press, 1985.

Shaughnessey, Mina. Errors and Expectations. New York: Oxford University Press, 1977.

Spellmeyer, Kurt. Common Ground: Dialogue, Understanding, and the Teaching of Composition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1993.

Villanueva, Victor, Ed. Cross-Talk in Comp Theory: A Reader. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1997.

Vygotsky, Lev. Mind in Society. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978.

\_\_\_\_\_. Thought and Language. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962.

Wiley, Mark, Barbara Gleason, and Louise Wetherbee Phelps. Composition in Four Keys: Inquiring into the Field. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1996.

*Plus, the following journals could provide articles that may be used in the course:*

College English

Pre/Text

College Composition and Communication

Journal of Basic Writing

Journal of Advanced Composition

Profession

English Journal

Rhetoric Review

The Writing Instructor

Teaching English in the Two-Year College

Journal of Developmental Education

*A packet of readings may also be used as either the primary or supplementary readings for this course. Readings would be drawn from the journals and texts listed above.*

## **6.) Course Description**

### **The Writer's Mind (1501.. )**

*The Writer's Mind* examines the principles and practices that guide how writer's think and develop creative, expository, and argumentative writing. This class addresses the connections and interdependencies between thinking about a complex topic and writing intelligibly. Students will examine how writing errors often reflect thinking errors, how writer's block develops as well as strategies to overcome it, how metaphor functions in writing to structure thought, and how a writer's thought process matures over time.