Proposal for a New Course

NOTE: All gray text boxes must be completed (even if you just put N/A into them), otherwise the committee must consider the form incomplete.

1. Department: Communication

2. Course Number and Title: COMM 310: Message Design and Influence
   Number of Credits: 3  Total hrs/week: 3
   Lecture: ☒  Lab: [ ]  Recitation: [ ]  Seminar: [ ]

For Independent study courses:
   Research: [ ]  Field experience: [ ]
   Clinical Practice: [ ]  Internship: [ ]
   Practicum: [ ]  Independent Course Work: [ ]

3. Semester and year when course will first be offered:
   Fall 2011

4. Catalog Description (please limit to 50 words):
   Crafting messages for particular contexts and publics. Students develop advanced writing skills and demonstrate proficiency in information gathering, message design, and visual communication. Topics vary depending on the course section and instructor. When course topics vary, the course is repeatable for elective credit with the permission of the department chair.

5. Check if appropriate: Humanities: ☒  Social Science: [ ]  (meets minimum degree requirements)

6. Check if appropriate: [ ]
   This course will be cross listed with: n/a
   Rationale for cross listing: n/a
   Please attach letters of support from the chairs of each department indicating that the department has discussed the proposal and supports it.

7. a) Could another department or program also be a logical originator of this course (i.e. History of American Education could originate in both the Teacher Education and the History departments)? If yes, what department/program? Please contact the department chair/program director and request a note or email that they are aware of the proposed new course and include that note with the proposal.
   No

b) Please explain overlap with any existing courses.
   None
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8. Prerequisites (or other restrictions):

COMM 104 or COMM 110; COMM 214 or COMM 215; CSCI 112 or higher; or permission of instructor. Pre-requisite or co-requisite COMM 111

9. Rationale/justification for course (consider the following issues):

a) What are the goals and objectives of the course?

Students engage in the study of both the theory and practice of crafting messages for particular contexts and publics. Students will:

• develop advanced writing skills (complete substantial writing assignments with multiple drafts and revisions, participate in writing workshops and peer reviews)
• craft messages for a specific audience with a specific goal.
• demonstrate proficiency in information gathering and message design.
• demonstrate visual and written competencies in the completion of course assignments.
• when appropriate, publish or make publicly available, class projects/assignments (e.g., article, blog, newsletter, web site profile).

b) How does the course support the mission statement of the department and the organizing principles of the major?

At a time of great change in communication professions, our distinctive, integrated curriculum discourages specialization in technologies and professional practices that quickly become obsolete. Instead, communication students are exposed to ideas and develop proficiencies that will sustain them for a lifetime. In our department, students become communication experts who write beautifully, speak eloquently, and research effectively. Our students and faculty understand communication as a liberal art.

COMM 310 supports the mission of our department by helping students to think critically and write beautifully through a focus on crafting messages for specific audiences across contexts.

10. a) For courses in the major, how does the course enhance the beginning, middle, or end of the major?

COMM 310, situated in the "middle" of our major builds upon the first 6 hours of writing and speaking instruction in our program by further developing students' capacity to analyze and adapt messages to his/her audience. This course prepares students for upper level courses and "end of the major" writing and speaking courses, specifically COMM 410 and the Capstone.

b) For courses used by non-majors, how does the course support the liberal arts tradition including linkages with other disciplines:

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n/a

11. Method of teaching:
   Lecture, peer review, discussion

12. a) Address potential enrollment pattern shifts in the department or college-wide related to the offering of this course:
   none

   b) Address potential shifts in staffing of the department as it relates to the offering of this course:
   none

   c) Frequency of offering:
      each fall: ☑ each spring: ☑
      every two years: ☐ every three years: ☐
      other ☐(Explain): __________

13. Requirements for additional resources made necessary by this course:

   a) Staff:
      none

   b) Budget:
      none

   c) Library:
      none

14. Is this course to be added to the Degree Requirements of a Major, Minor, Concentration or List of Approved Electives?
   a) ☑ yes ☐ no

   b) If yes, complete the Change Degree Requirements form(s) and list the name(s) of the major, minor, concentration and/or list of approved electives here:
      Major: Communication, Minor: Communication (approved elective)

15. Paste syllabus, reading lists, or any additional documentation that can help the committee evaluate this proposal (a syllabus is mandatory).

COMM 310
Message Design and Influence: Opinion Writing

Instructor: ________

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Office:
Phone:
Class times:
Office hours:
email:

Course Objectives:
All sections of COMM 310 will engage students in the study of both the theory and practice of crafting messages for particular contexts and publics. Students will:
• develop advanced writing skills through multiple drafts and revisions
• craft messages for a specific audience with a specific goal
• demonstrate proficiency in information gathering and message design.
• demonstrate visual and written competencies in the completion of course assignments
• publish or make publicly available, class projects/assignments

Course Description

COMM 310 provides instruction on the practice and theory of crafting persuasive messages for particular contexts and publics. "Opinion" encompasses writing competence (e.g., news editorials, letters to the editor, opinion columns, reviews) and visual appreciation (e.g., political cartoons) for all media, especially (but not limited to) newspapers.

Students will produce and publish written work and learn principles of good message design. The specific goal of written communication will be to persuade the message's audience to accept or understand the viewpoint of the communicator. In the case of opinion writing, students will learn to produce "opinion pieces" good enough for paid publications, which will require that opinion writing is constructed from factual arguments rather than unsupported opinions.

Students will create a blog where they post all of their work, providing an electronic portfolio of all opinion pieces at the end of the semester. Success will come from reading and listening to a steady flow of professional opinion writers, cartoonists, and reviewers throughout the semester, as well as classroom instruction.

Textbooks:
Course Packet
Writing Opinion for Impact, 2nd ed. by Conrad C. Fink
Pulitzer Prize Editorials: America's Best Writing, (3rd. ed) by Wm. David Sloan and Laird B. Anderson

GRADING
1) Letter to the editor, 100 words (100 points)
2) Editorial, 300-400 words (100 points)
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3) Social commentary, 400-500 words (100 points)
4) Personal column, 400-500 words (100 points)
5) Personal essay, 400-500 words (100 points)
6) Criticism, 400-500 words (100 points)
7) Extended outline/news analysis (100 points)
8) News analysis, 1,000-1,200 words (300 points)
9) Participation (100 points)

GRADING SCALE:
A  92-100
A-  90-91
B+  88-89
B  82-87
B-  80-81
C+  78-79
C  72-77
C-  70-71
D+  68-69
D  60-68
F  59 and under

HOUSE RULES: Late stories are subject to a 25-percent penalty. Every assignment is due at the beginning of the class period. Class participation consists of discussing the readings, critiquing stories, and merely attending class. Attending class is not the same thing as participating; therefore, if you do not come to class prepared, the instructor can consider you absent. Speaking of attendance, AFTER FOUR ABSENCES FOR WHATEVER REASON, your final grade will be dropped by one letter grade for each subsequent absence. In addition, if you’re late more than twice, each subsequent late arrival will result in 10 points being deducted from your point total. You are required to hand in a duplicate of each assignment you write. In addition, your work must be stapled and your name must be on it. And finally, your work must include fact-check material. Failure to do any of the aforementioned will result in a 10 percent penalty on the assignment.

Rewrites: You may rewrite all assignments. If you rewrite an assignment, your final grade for the assignment will be the average of your original and your rewrite. If you rewrite an assignment, you are required to hand in the marked-up version of your original with the rewrite. Rewrites will not be graded without the original. All rewrites are due no more than one week after the originals are returned. (This is not necessarily a week after you receive it.)

Extra credit: If you have an opinion piece published during the semester, your final grade will be increased by five points. MAXIMUM: 15 points.
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P.S.: Your work should be your work (good, bad, or whatever). Plagiarized work will get you an appearance before the honor board.

Week 1:
Introduction to class, syllabus. Schedule class critiques. Introduction to writing opinions, pages 1-6.
Declaration of Independence, Gettysburg Address, I Have a Dream, pages 14-20.

Week 2:
Awakening the giant within: finding your voice in a letter to editor, pages 21-38
Critique letters to the editor on Friday, January 16. Letters due.

Week 3:
Writing, revising and rewriting opinion pieces, pages 39-47.
Strengthening your argument (avoiding common pitfalls), pages 7-13, 21.
Writing editorials, pages 48-67

Week 4:
Writing editorials (continued).
Dissecting issues, organizing thoughts, supporting what you say, adding substance.
Critique editorials on Friday. Editorials due.

Week 5:
Writing social commentaries, pages 68-89.
Critiquing popular culture. Discussing social mores, trends, fads, lifestyles.

Week 6:
Critique social commentaries. Social commentaries due.

Week 7:
Personal columns/personal essays, pages 90-115.

Week 8
Critique personal columns on Monday. Personal columns due on Tuesday.
Conferences on Tuesday and Thursday.

Week 9
Discussion of personal essays
Critique personal essays on Monday. Personal essays due on Wednesday.

Week 10
Discussion of reviews, pages 116-137.

Week 11
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Critique reviews on Friday. Reviews are due next Monday.

Week 12
Writing extended analysis outlines, pages 138-154.
Critique outlines on Friday. Outlines are due on following Monday.

Week 13
Writing analyses, pages 155-194.
Student conferences.

Week 14
Analysis, student conferences (continued)
Critiques analyses on Friday and Monday.
Analyses due on final Monday.

Teacher reserves the right to change the syllabus
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14. Signature of Department Chair or Program Director:
________________________________________
Date: ________________________________

15. Signature of Dean of School:
________________________________________
Date: ________________________________

16. Signature of Provost:
________________________________________
Date: ________________________________

17. Signature of Business Affairs Official
________________________________________
Date: ________________________________

18. Signature of Curriculum Committee Chair
________________________________________
Date: ________________________________

19. Signature of Faculty Senate Secretary:
________________________________________
Date Approved by Senate: __________________

Completed form should be sent by the Faculty Senate Secretary to the Registrar. After implementation, information concerning the passed course and program changes will be provided by the Registrar to all faculty and staff on campus.