

February 25, 2004

To: St. Olaf College Faculty
Fr: CEPC
Re: New Course Proposals

At the March 4 Faculty Meeting CEPC will move the approval of the following new courses.

English 215: Fiction Down Under

Catalog Description:

Students read novels and short stories by twenty to thirty Australian and New Zealand authors, including Keri Hulme, Janet Frame, Frank Sargeson, Patricia Grace, Henry Lawson, David Malouf, Richard Flanagan, and Kim Scott. They encounter distinctive voices and strategies, but also issues of cultural identity, natural environment, indigenous peoples, and gender.
(ALS-L)

Rationale:

English 215: Fiction Down Under serves two constituencies. For English majors it provides an elective that supports the Literatures in English philosophy of our major: it allows students to study the fiction of two important English-speaking countries minimally represented in our current course offerings. In addition to being introduced to a body of literature from Australia and New Zealand, students will be able to see how these two former English colonies have dealt and are dealing with issues of cultural identity, indigenous peoples, natural environment, and gender.

For General Education students the novels and short stories in this course will provide an introduction not only to Australian and New Zealand literature, but also to the history and culture of these two countries. Students participating in off-campus programs in Australia could take this course either before or after their term abroad, aiding preparation or post-program reflection.

English 371: Advanced Poetry Writing

Catalog Description:

Students who have completed an introductory course (or courses) in creative writing will focus on poetry, deepening their understanding of the form and completing a substantial portfolio of polished work. Class sessions will include discussion of models in contemporary poetry, exploration of various options within the form, and workshopping of student writing.
Prerequisites: English 251, 255, 257, or writing equivalent.

Rationale:

Our current course English 372 (Creative Writing II: Poetry and Fiction) does not meet the demands or needs of students pursuing advanced and focused work in either of these two writing forms. Students sign up not really knowing which genre they will be working in, and trying to do both together is inappropriate for the advanced work of level three. Dividing the former English 372 into two separate courses (371 and 372), while adding a writing class to the curriculum, will also greatly advance the possibility for interested students to become better prepared for either graduate work or professional work demanding writing and editing skills.

The revised catalog description for English 372 follows for reference:

Students who have completed an introductory course (or courses) in creative writing will focus on fiction, deepening their understanding of the form and completing a substantial portfolio of polished work. Class sessions will include discussion of models in contemporary fiction, exploration of various options within the form, and workshopping of student writing. Prerequisites: English 251, 255, 257, or writing equivalent.

English 374: Screenwriting

Catalog Description:

Students learn the techniques of screenwriting, including how to write a treatment, to create backstories, and to break down scenes. Each student will produce and revise a 30-35 page narrative screenplay. Prerequisite: English 257 or writing equivalent.

Rationale:

English 374: Screenwriting will introduce students to the challenges of constructing a blueprint that, if successful, will become a cinematic story projected onto a screen. Even if novice writers don't go on to careers in the industry, their hands-on struggle to give dramatic shape to a script will teach them much about the distinctive character of film narrative, about the relationships of words and images in film.

The English department currently offers creative writing courses in poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction, as well as courses in journalistic writing and science writing. A course in screenwriting would contribute to a genre of creative writing that has in the last decade become increasingly important. It should appeal to majors and non-majors alike, and will add to the offerings for the Media Studies concentration.

Religion 320: Interpreting Sacred Texts

Catalog Description:

Careful study of selected sacred texts provides students opportunity to learn and use various tools and methods of interpretation. Students increase their understanding of the origins, structure, use and interpretation of sacred texts in various religious communities. Specific texts and traditions will vary. Students may repeat the course with different primary texts.

Rationale:

The goals and requirements for religion majors state that they must study three different academic approaches to religion, covering more than one religion. One of these academic approaches is “sacred texts.” At present we offer this approach primarily through our 200-level theology requirement courses, thus limiting sacred texts to those of Judaism and Christianity. The major also asks for at least two “intensive study” (third level) courses in religion. At present, no third level courses specifically in sacred texts are regularly offered. Offering this course once a year will better expose our majors to this subfield of their major, will offer an upper level course where majors can share study with each other, will respond to our outside evaluators' suggestions, and will offer faculty more opportunities to share their skills and research.

Environmental Studies 225: Environmental Political Theory**Catalog Description:**

This course examines relations between conceptions of “nature” and political issues of power, justice, liberty, and equality; and it explores theoretical foundations from which ecologically grounded institutions, policies, and political understandings arise. The course attends to issues currently being addressed by international green political theorists, including “ecological citizenship” and “green democracy.”

Rationale:

This course addresses an area of study that was formerly unavailable among the Environmental Studies and Political Science course offerings. Environmental Politics (Political Science 276) and Global Environmental Politics (Environmental Studies 201) focus on existing institutions, interest groups, and policy outcomes. In contrast, the proposed course explores the theoretical foundations from which ecologically grounded institutions, policies and political understandings can arise. The proposed course is also distinct from Environmental Ethics (Philosophy 257), a humanities cognate for environmental studies majors. While environmental political theory has its roots in the environmental ethics literature of the 1980s, green political theorists have moved in a decidedly political direction since then, arguing that our conceptions of “nature” are inherently lodged within issues of power, justice, liberty, and equality. Accordingly, the new course will focus on the concepts of “ecological citizenship” and “green democracy,” examining the implications of those terms for 21st century political life. Readings will be drawn from a range of international scholars within this vigorously expanding subfield of political theory and address topics such as the following: political understandings of ecological community and citizenship; distributive justice within an ecological framework; the roles of scientific expertise and local nonscientific knowledge for “ecological citizenry”; the definition and weighing of nonhuman rights and interests in environmental decision-making; intersections of race, class and gender within green political thought; and ecological theories of property and ownership. The new course will strengthen the

Environmental Studies program by providing another social science cognate course, and it will offer Political Science majors an additional Level II course in political theory.

Statistics 272: Statistical Modeling

Catalog Description:

A case-study approach to the fitting and assessment of statistical models, with application to real data. Specific topics include two-sample comparisons, simple linear regression, multiple regression, model diagnostics, logistic regression for binary response variables and binomial counts, nonparametric methods, and, possibly, principal components. Focus on problem-solving tools, interpretation, mathematical models underlying analysis methods, and written statistical reports. Prerequisite: Any introductory statistics course (Stat 110, Stat 212, Econ 263, or equivalent), or permission of instructor. Offered fall semester.

Rationale:

Statistics 272 will become a cornerstone course in the updated statistics concentration. Designed as a second course in statistical methods, Statistics 272 will build on conceptual ideas and basic methods learned in an introductory statistics course. It will be taught using a case study framework, using rich and interesting actual research problems to motivate the methods explored, and allowing students to develop competencies in written communication of study results and thoughtful consideration of model assumptions and the scope of inference. The primary topic will be multiple regression techniques, arguably the most flexible and powerful framework for statistical analysis of data. With respect to multiple regression, we will carefully consider underlying mathematical models, model building, model diagnostics, and model assessment. We will also consider related topics such as logistic regression for binary response variables and binomial counts, nonparametric methods, and possibly principal components. The introduction of a course such as Statistics 272 reflects the thinking of national leaders in statistics education. One primary example of this thinking is found in the "Report of the CRAFTY Workshop on Statistics" (Moore, Peck, and Rossman 2001). In this report, many distinguished statisticians commented on the role of statistics in the mathematics curriculum and the role of mathematics in preparing students to study statistics. Workshop participants, endorsing the 1991 Committee on the Undergraduate Program in Mathematics recommendation, recommended that every mathematical sciences major should study statistics, and that a required course for all mathematical sciences majors should adhere to principles that inform the design of Statistics 272. In addition, strong support for a course such as Statistics 272 came from the Pew Midstates Science and Mathematics Consortium faculty development workshop on "Upper Level Statistics in the 21st Century: Linking Practice and Pedagogy." This workshop, held in November 2003 at St. Olaf, featured contributions from over 30 participants. A clear consensus formed that we should rethink much of the current undergraduate upper level statistics curriculum---we should provide opportunities for students to see more advanced statistical methods than they currently see, and we should update our theory courses to reflect influential developments over the past 20 years. Statistics 272 addresses the first of these recommendations head-on, while preparing students to take follow-up courses that would address the second recommendation. The model fitting and problem

solving abilities acquired in Statistics 272 would open doors for students in several different directions. Students could take an applied follow-up course, tentatively titled Statistics 322: Advanced Statistical Modeling (we plan to submit a proposal for such a course, to begin in Spring 2005), in which the statistical models explored would require more mathematical and statistical sophistication than those explored in Statistics 272. The sequence of Statistics 272 and Statistics 322 will likely form the core of the new statistics concentration. Alternatively (or additionally), students could take a more theoretical follow-up course, tentatively titled Statistics 372: Statistical Theory (we plan to submit a proposal for this course, to begin in Fall 2005). That course would show students the theoretical underpinnings behind the statistical methods of Introductory Statistics and Statistics 272, along with several modern statistical methods popularized over the last decade (e.g., Bayesian statistics, resampling methods). Statistics 272 would be a natural choice for students who have taken an introductory statistics course and who want to pursue applied statistics further, whether to perform research or read papers in their field or to pursue statistics as a field of its own. Statistics 272 would also be a natural first college course in statistics for the growing cadre of students who enter St. Olaf with credit in AP Statistics. The course proposer (Roback) recently implemented a successful course at Connecticut College, with the same topics and goals, for an audience with mixed mathematical and statistical backgrounds.

Biology 110: Supplemental Biology (0.25 credit)

Catalog Description:

This course emphasizes learning strategies and critical thinking skills as applied to the curriculum of Biology 125. Objectives of the course are met through additional readings, problem sets, brief written assignments, introduction of discipline-specific writing styles, projects (including individual and/or group oral presentation), and library research.

Assignments include new content that complements introductory biology. Requires concurrent enrollment in Biology 125 and permission of instructor.

Rationale:

There is a national mandate to increase the diversity of scientists, mathematicians, and health professionals. One crucial step in this direction is to ensure that students of diverse backgrounds have the fundamentals to succeed along with the best-prepared incoming students. St. Olaf has a long-standing and highly successful program (Student Support Services; hereafter, SSS) for recruiting, preparing, and supporting students with high potential who are relatively underprepared for college work. We teach Biology 121 (a nonmajors course) to about 40 SSS students each August; successful completion of this course is required for matriculation. Each year, 8 or 10 SSS students are inspired to continue in Biology or other science majors. Despite the summer course, however, these students are often unprepared for the depth and speed of the introduction to the Biology major, which begins with very sophisticated chemistry and cell biology. For the past two years we have offered a no-credit tutorial option, which has proved quite successful. Kathy Glampe and Sung Baek (who will teach the proposed course) have worked with Biology faculty to find supplementary exercises and background material to help students master basic concepts in chemistry and cell biology

that most students bring with them to Bio 125. By the end of their first term in Biology, these students have background vocabulary and understanding that more closely match those of other students in the course. This represents extra work and time input for students, which we feel should be acknowledged in their course credit loads. The proposal is to “formalize” this supplemental learning. Given the College's goal to enhance diversity and maintain superb academic standards, the proposal aims to honestly invite—with the expectation that they will succeed—a broader group of students to study Biology and related sciences. The specific goal of Biology 110 is to link learning strategies and critical thinking skills to the content of the Biology 125.

Course objectives include:

1. deeper understanding and better performance in Biology 125;
2. introduction to the pedagogy and conventions of the discipline area;
3. monitored practice in the application of study strategies appropriate to the target course requirements;
4. development of a cooperative, student-centered learning community;
5. creating a supportive environment in which to take academic risks and rehearse meeting educational demands;
6. required use of appropriate educational technology: databases, literature searching, calculator use, presentation software, web searches, etc.
7. exposure to related current material not covered in the target course;
8. fostering peer groups of students who study together.

Course objectives are met through additional reading, problem sets, brief written assignments, introduction of discipline-specific writing styles, individual and group projects and presentations, and library research.

**Education 321: Teaching of Reading 5-12 (0.5 credits)] \ **

Catalog Description:

This course provides a theoretical and practical foundation for teaching and assisting struggling readers, primarily in grades 5--12. The strategies examined are applicable to content area teachers. Topics include vocabulary instruction, comprehension techniques, and standardized testing. Requires 10-hour field experience. Prerequisites: Education 290 and Education 330, or permission of instructor.

Education 322: Teaching of Reading K-6 (0.5 credits)

Catalog Description:

This course provides students with the background needed to teach students (primarily in grades 1-6) how to read. Students will learn to use the whole language, phonics, and balanced reading approaches. Topics also include the reading recovery program and the Minnesota Department of Education reading standards. Requires 10-hour field experience. Prerequisites: Education 290 and Education 330, or permission of instructor.

Rationale:

These courses respond to Minnesota Board of Teaching Standards for Effective Practice specific to teaching reading, secondary, middle level and elementary grades. With the closure this year of the St. Olaf College/University of St. Thomas Elementary Education Cooperative, St. Olaf assumes the post-graduate portion of the elementary licensure requirements formerly provided by St. Thomas, thus meeting our obligation to students currently on campus preparing to be elementary teachers. Education 321 replaces the existing Education 346: Teaching of Reading (0.5). Historically, Education 346 has minimally met standards requirements for the Communication Arts and Literature teaching license and for other teacher candidates for whom reading in the content area is important. At least one full course in teaching of reading (prerequisite to the special methods course) is required for elementary classroom licensure candidates. To address this need, a half-course credit course has been developed that complements the existing reading course and combines for a full course in reading. Education 321: Teaching of Reading 5-12 is essentially the same course as Education 346, required for students seeking a Minnesota CA&L license, and now also for elementary education students. The course number is changed and the course description has been updated. Education 322: Teaching of Reading K-6 is a continuation of Education 321, but with a decidedly different focus. Students learn how to work with emerging readers, including examining language acquisition theories and strategies in helping young learners become interpretive readers. The combination full course meets at least minimally the standards requirement for elementary education. These courses will be offered only in Spring semesters; no additional FTE is required.