

October 6, 2004

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

At the October faculty meeting CEPC will move that the seven day rule be waived, and then move the approval of the following new courses.

Math 236: The Mathematics of Biology

Catalog Description:

Introduces students to the mathematics of complex systems as they apply to problems from biology. Topics include discrete and continuous models of single species and multiple species populations, age structure in populations, disease spread, evolution and game theory, and competition. Prerequisites: Math 126 or 128, and Math 220. Offered spring only.

Rationale:

Interdisciplinary research is the basis of an increasingly large sector of scientific activity. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the interface between biology and mathematics. Even so, St. Olaf's current offerings in biomathematics are almost nonexistent. The proposed course begins to address this weakness in our curriculum and is part of the ongoing program to bring interdisciplinary teaching into the mathematics and statistics curriculum at Saint Olaf College.

Math 236 will be taught at a level accessible to both mathematics and biology majors. Substantial areas of applied mathematics not currently in our curriculum – dynamical systems, deterministic and stochastic modeling, etc. – will be covered in a context that reveals the true power of the techniques. Biology itself is a vast discipline and this course will be able to demonstrate the value of abstracting mathematical ideas from one biological scenario to others. This skill in abstracting mathematical ideas is central to the study of mathematics and is becoming central to work in biology as well.

Political Science 254: Japanese Politics and Society

Catalog Description:

This course familiarizes students with the social and political forces characterizing contemporary Japan, the world's second most powerful economy and a leading example of a successful liberal democracy. Students examine how Japanese citizens, interest groups, bureaucrats and politicians are negotiating issues related to economic prosperity, the ageing of their society, inequality, globalization, and international affairs. Students also consider major features of Japan's democracy—governmental structures, electoral procedures, and political history. One previous course in Political Science or Asian Studies is recommended.

Rationale:

On the basis of internal and external reviews recently undertaken, the Asian Studies department determined that offering courses on political issues in Asia would best complement prior strengths in language, history, art, and economics. The Freeman Grant received in 2002 provided funds for a new, continuing faculty position in Asian politics. The proposed course is one step towards fulfilling the plans to offer a full array of courses to St. Olaf students on an area of the world that is increasingly important politically, economically, and culturally. A course dedicated to Japan is helpful for majors in both Political Science and Asian Studies, because it familiarizes them with the society and politics that support the world's second most powerful economy, which is also a major example of a successful, long-running liberal democracy in a non-western setting.

This course will count for major credit in both Asian Studies and Political Science, and for the concentration in Japanese Studies. In the future, we hope that the course will be cross-listed in the two departments. (MCS-G)

Dance 105: The Beat Goes On (0.25 credit)

Catalog Description:

Students explore pulse and rhythm through a range of dance and movement activities, including African Dance, hand drumming, tap dance, Latin dance, body percussion, and voice work. The class investigates how rhythms are established as we shift body weight, manipulate time, and emphasize a pulse. Students also explore the connections between rhythm, the innate instinct to follow rhythmic patterns in life, and the predisposition to generate our own rhythms.

Rationale:

This course will add range and diversity to level-I movement technique offerings in the Dance Department. Also it will add emphasis and clarity in an area which is fundamental to all dance and movement—rhythmic organization, pulse, beat—but frequently taken for granted. This course will focus on the physical grounding of rhythm, in weight sensing, weight shift, and movement flow as it explores a variety of movement activities. (PHA)

Dance 301: Advanced Body Movable (0.5 credit)

Catalog Description:

Advanced Body Movable deepens and expands the body awareness focus of Dance 201: The Body Movable, articulating the somatic perspective in which it is grounded. The somatic disciplines of Body-Mind Centering, Bartenieff Fundamentals, Ideokinesis, and Experiential Anatomy provide the theoretical foundation of this course. It includes exploration of the “attention-intention-action cycle” as life practice. Prerequisites: Dance 201 and Dance 111b or Dance 115.

Rationale:

This course will offer an advanced level of study in one of the foundation areas of the dance curriculum—body awareness. It will give interested students the opportunity to deepen their experience with the somatic perspective that was introduced in Body Movable. Students will have an opportunity at this advanced level to increase their physical skills, their depth of attention, and their theoretical understanding of somatics.

English 272: Utopias**Catalog Description:**

Explores both the literary features and the social functions of utopias. Readings include Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* of 1516, the work that set the genre, and a variety of utopias throughout history. As a final project, students construct either a utopia or a critique of a familiar literary utopia.

Rationale:

"Utopias" was developed as a course for the general education in 1995; it was approved for ALS-L credit in March 1995. "Utopias" was first taught during January 1996, and repeated most recently in January 2001. Thus, no changes in FTE are anticipated. Essentially, the only differences between the flourishing Interim course known as "Utopias" and this "new" semester course are the following: 1) more time during the semester, which enhances learning opportunities by sustained reflection as well as greater attention to student writing; 2) ORC has been applied for, which reflects the already sequenced assignments involving the theory and practice of oral communication, viz., panel presentations, speeches, and small-group editing sessions. (ALS-L, ORC applied for)

English 227: King Arthur Through the Ages**Catalog Description:**

A study of the Arthurian legend, from its Celtic origins through the classic medieval romances of Chretien and Malory, to Victorian adaptations of Tennyson and the Pre-Raphaelites, to contemporary novels and film. Analysis focuses on the myth's characteristic forms and ideas; the errant knight's adventures, the grail quest, triangulating desire, and adulterous love.

Rationale:

English 227 explores the perennial appeal of the Arthurian myth, from its Celtic origins through the classic medieval romances of Chretien and Malory, to Victorian and 19th-century American adaptations, to contemporary novels and films. It thus offers students seeking ALS-L credit a wide-ranging reading experience while balancing the study of each text within its specific cultural context.

Arthurian literature has previously been offered at level I as an interim course. The change to a full semester course at level II is warranted by the richness of the field and the appropriateness of

this study both for General Education and English majors.
(ALS-L)

Greek 370: Topics in Greek Literature

Catalog Description:

Students translate selections from one or more genres of ancient Greek literature while exploring a specific topic or theme chosen by the instructor. Close study of the text is combined with discussion of broader literary, historical, and cultural questions. Possible topics: "Famous Speeches in Ancient Greek Texts," "Praise and Blame in the Greek Poetic Tradition," "Tall Tales from Homer to Lucian." Prerequisite: Greek 231 or equivalent. Offered every third year.

Rationale:

Until recently, it was rare for a student majoring in Greek or in Classics with a Greek emphasis to exhaust all the Greek courses that our department offers. Now, though, we are attracting more students who have studied Greek in high school and can jump right into our intermediate-level Greek courses. If they take one Greek course every semester, by the time they are seniors, they will have run out of Greek courses to take. Also, more of our students are studying Greek while on international studies programs; sometimes they return to find us offering a course very similar to the one they have just taken abroad.

An "extra" 300-level Greek course, which could be offered when needed (we anticipate only once every three years), would give us another option besides our having to supervise independent studies for these students. The course would not, however, replace any of the four courses (Greek philosophers, historians, drama, and epic) in our current Level III Greek cycle; we would not, in other words, be moving to a five course cycle. Greek 370 would simply interrupt the cycle for one semester.

We like the idea of a topics course because it would allow the instructor to design the course to suit that particular group of students. Also, the instructor could choose authors and texts different from the usual ones, lending variety to our Greek curriculum. Finally, if we happened to have a visiting professor one term, it might work out well to have that person teach the topics course in his or her area of expertise.

The idea for this topics course grew out of our departmental self-study in 2003-04. It is one way in which we can accommodate (without increasing our FTE) the growing number of St. Olaf students choosing to major in Classics, Greek, or Latin: 9 in the class of '05, 16 in the class of '06, 8 already in the Class of '07. We plan to offer the course in second semester this year.
(FOL)

Latin 370: Topics in Latin Literature (Fall, 2006)

Catalog Description:

Students translate selections from one or more genres of ancient Latin literature while exploring a specific topic or theme chosen by the instructor. Close study of the text is combined with discussion of broader literary, historical, and cultural questions. Possible topics: “Greek Myths Transformed into Latin Poetry,” “Ancient Biographies of the Roman Emperors,” “The Letter-Writing Tradition from Cicero to Augustine.” Prerequisite: Latin 231 or equivalent. Offered every third year. (FOL-L)

Rationale:

The rationale for Latin 370 is essentially the same as that for Greek 370.

Religion 217: Christian and Islamic Ethics: Conflicts and Cross-Pollination

Catalog Description:

This course compares Christian and Islamic conceptions of the relationship between God and humanity as foundations for thinking about moral excellence and obligation. It also considers and compares how theological commitments and methods in each religious tradition affect approaches to particular ethical issues, such as those concerning sexuality, dying, war, and politics. Students work with scripture, film, polemical literature, and judicial and theological texts.

Rationale:

Given the increased interaction of Western and Islamic civilizations, the course addresses a timely topic and affords students the opportunity to reflect on how different traditions of ethical inquiry address current ethical problems. Students will learn about the historical development of the two traditions, as well as the possibilities of conflict and cross-pollination between them.

Currently, the department only offers this course during the interim, and it does not offer other courses on comparative religious or Islamic ethics. Therefore, the course will enhance the current offerings of the department in Christian theology, ethics, and Islam. It will not cause other courses to be eliminated or taught less often. (EIN)

Computer Science 336: Logic Programming

Catalog Description:

Students learn a style of programming based on first order predicate logic. Topics include declarative programming, Horn clauses, declarative and procedural semantics of logic programs, relations clauses, goals, backtracking, and resolution. Programming projects and exercises use Prolog, the most significant logic programming language. Additional topics include the relationship of Prolog to logic and applications to artificial intelligence. Prerequisites: Computer Science 253 or Computer Science 276 or instructor permission.

Rationale:

Logic Programming is a standard advanced (i.e. St. Olaf level III) course in the undergraduate Computer Science curriculum nationally. The proposed course incorporates the topics and programming experiences typically appearing in such courses, and it satisfies the local criterion for level three computer science courses (“core” courses as prerequisites). As such, it is appropriate for inclusion as a level three elective in our new Computer Science major.

We note also that three of the four main programming paradigms (imperative, functional, object-oriented) utilized in computer science have been taught in our curriculum for many years. This course addition will support in our curriculum both the set of abstractions and the practical programming implementations of this major intellectual transept in computer science. As well, the content of this course is highly interdisciplinary with many of the abstract and logical areas in mathematics.

The proposed course CS 336 was included in the Computer Science Major proposal that was approved by the College in Fall 2002 and the course is now being brought to the faculty in anticipation of its first offering in Spring 2005. It utilizes the expertise of one of our faculty members. It will be offered in alternate years.

Sociology/Anthropology 234: Native North American Cultures and Religions

Catalog Description:

As an overview of belief systems and ways of life, this course explores ethnographic case studies of Native American groups from the major culture areas of North America north of Mexico. Topics include language families, social organization systems, ecological and economic adaptations, material culture, religions and revitalization movements. Also examines the impacts of colonial encounters upon Native American cultures.

Rationale:

This course, an ethnographic overview of Native North America, fills a lacuna in the course offerings at St. Olaf College, which has not offered this survey of “traditional” Native American cultures. Such a course is a standard offering of most undergraduate curricula. At St. Olaf many students desiring this course have enrolled in SO/AN 235, “Contemporary Native American Issues,” which does not directly address their needs. The addition of this course increases the number of Native American courses offered to four, two in history and two in sociology/anthropology. Students taking courses in world music, ARMS, multicultural literature, and religious and philosophical diversity who wish to learn more about Native American cosmology and ceremonialism will be able to pursue in depth any interest in this subject piqued by other courses. (HBS and MCS-D applied for)