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FEB - 8 2010

Request for Curriculum Council Action

TO: Zahia Drici, Associate Dean of Curriculum

DATE SUBMITTED: 2-8-10

(Please submit 1 double-sided copy of your proposal)

FROM: (Name) ALISON SAINSBURY (Department) ENGLISH

1. Proposed Action (Please check all that apply):

	Title	Number	Units
<input type="checkbox"/> New Course (No Gen Ed)		/	/
<input type="checkbox"/> New Course (Gen Ed)		/	/
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gen Ed for Existing Course:	English 220 Thinking Like a Mountain	Eng 220	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Deletion		/	/
<input type="checkbox"/> Change title from		/	/
to		/	/
<input type="checkbox"/> Change number from		/	/
to		/	/
<input type="checkbox"/> May Term Course		/	/
<input type="checkbox"/> New Major/Minor			
<input type="checkbox"/> Revised Major/Minor			
<input type="checkbox"/> Other		/	/

2a. Please check the category, if any, for which you are requesting General Education unit credit:

- Analysis of Values
- The Arts
- Contemporary Social Institutions
- Cultural and Historical Change
- Formal Reasoning
- Gateway Colloquium
- Intellectual Traditions
- Literature
- Second Language
- Life Science Issues
- Life Science Lab
- Physical Science Issues
- Physical Science Lab
- Physical Education
- Fitness

2b. Please check the flag(s), if any, you are seeking:

- Writing Intensive
- Global Diversity
- U.S. Diversity

course already receives gen ed credit in LT

2c. In what way will you assess how this course has met the goals of the Gen Ed category and/or flag(s) for which you are applying?

please see attached

3. Please insert here the proposed catalog course description. Course descriptions should be limited to no more than 50 words, not counting (a) title; (b) prerequisites; (c) General Education category; and (d) when offered.

please see attached

4. Please list any prerequisites: gateway

5. When will this course first be offered? Fall 2010 with the new W designation (has been offered since 2000)

6. Please indicate how often course is offered. Check only the single item that best describes this course. Because these are the only intervals used in the University Catalog, please do not edit or alter the list to fit a particular course. For example, if your course is offered every third year—an interval that does not appear in the Catalog—you might choose "Offered as needed" or "Offered occasionally" instead.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Offered each semester | <input type="checkbox"/> Offered in alternate years, Spring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Offered each Fall Term | <input type="checkbox"/> Offered in alternate years, May Term |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Offered each spring | <input type="checkbox"/> Offered annually |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Offered each May Term | <input type="checkbox"/> Offered every third semester |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Offered each semester and May Term | <input type="checkbox"/> Offered as needed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Offered occasionally | <input type="checkbox"/> Offered on request |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Offered in alternate years | <input type="checkbox"/> Offered by arrangement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Offered in alternate years, Fall Term | |

7. Is/are any other department(s) affected in any way by this request (e.g., course is cross-listed, team-taught, etc.)?
 No. Yes. In what way? This course contributes to the ES program, but is not part of cross-listed.

Signature of the Head(s) of the Affected Department(s), School(s) or Program(s)

8. **WRITTEN RATIONALES:** If this proposal presents a new course (whether for General Education credit or not), an existing course for which General Education credit is now being sought, a May Term course, or a new major, minor or concentration, please attach a written rationale, following the guidelines found in the *Curriculum Development Handbook*. Please note that CC cannot evaluate incomplete proposals, so to expedite consideration of your submission, you are encouraged to read and follow the guidelines carefully.

9. The Curriculum Council assumes that the faculty members of your department have seen and approved of this request. Please sign below if this assumption is correct:

Alison Saunders
Signature of Faculty Member Primarily Responsible for This Proposal

[Signature]
Signature of the Head of the Department, School or Program

Request for Writing Intensive Flag for Already Existing Course

English 220: Thinking Like a Mountain: Literature and Environmental Consciousness

Submitted by Alison Sainsbury
Associate Professor of English

Thinking Like a Mountain has been taught every other fall since fall semester of 2000. It currently carries general education credit in Literature. The course has been revised in order to meet the requirements for a Writing Intensive flag as part of the faculty initiative to require all students to complete one of their writing intensive courses by the end of their sophomore year. I was given a grant to revise this course by the writing implementation committee under the auspices of the Mellon Foundation Writing Intensive Curriculum Development Grant Program.

Course Description:

English 220: Thinking Like a Mountain: Literature and Environmental Consciousness
Course currently receives general education credit in Literature, and counts for the major and minor in English and in Environmental Studies.

From Aldo Leopold's attempt to think "like a mountain" to Gary Snyder's challenge to bring "the wild" into our lives no matter where we live, writers and poets have played an important part in the forging of a contemporary environmental consciousness. Readings for the class include the classic and the contemporary, the pragmatic as well as the visionary.

This course may differ in approach, focus, and requirements from other courses you've taken. I will ask you not only to engage aspects of the discipline—to learn to read and write about imaginative literature with more subtlety, for example, or to place literary works in their social and political contexts—but also to consider the effect what you're reading and learning has on your own thinking about the issues raised in and by the texts. Because this course is designated writing intensive, it has also been designed to give you significant practice in writing, with opportunities for revision.

In addition, some of the coursework is predicated on the assumption that literature about the natural world and our relation to it can be best understood and appreciated when we engage that natural world, with our imagination, our intellect, our emotions, and with our physical senses and selves. To complement the texts and questions of our intellectual study I have therefore designed into the course assignments that call for experiential and imaginative engagement with the natural world.

Assignments

Environmental Consciousness Response Journal
Tree Journal
Half-Hour of Place
Writing Haiku
Discussion context (2)
Paper of Literary Analysis

All course assignments except the two Discussion Contexts are writing based. Several ask for reflective analysis of texts or experiences (Environmental Consciousness Response Journal; Tree Journal; A Half-Hour of Place); one requires formal literary analysis; one is a creative exploration in response to course content (Writing Haiku).

In addition to writing assignments, students also read and apply a secondary source to one of the primary sources—for the first such Discussion Context assignment, pairs of students read essays by Gary Snyder, and are then responsible for framing our class discussion of Snyder's poetry with ideas from his essays. For the second Discussion Context assignment students conduct simple research; each student finds information on some aspect, idea, or allusion—the Volterra Principle, locavore movement, the chestnut breeding program, canned hunts, animal transgenics, etc.—in one of the last three novels (Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*, Barbara Kingsolver's *Prodigal Summer*, or Carl Hiaasen's *Sick Puppy*), and uses that information to illuminate for the class that aspect of the primary text.

How the course meets the four goals for a writing intensive flag

Goal #1: Give students significant practice in writing

The overall amount of writing, which consists of both informal and formal writing, meets the requirements for goal #1. The Environmental Consciousness Journal and the Tree Journal require both informal and formal writing. The students write regular entries—about 12 pages for each—followed by a more formal meta-cognitive reflection. The Half-Hour of Place assignment, a reflective analysis, is three pages in length. The Literary Analysis is an 8-10 page paper.

Goal #2: Focus on writing as a process, with opportunities for revision

The literary analysis is the main vehicle for this goal. The literary analysis assignment consists of related steps in a larger process, one that takes students from a single, isolated response to an idea in a text to a nuanced and mature analysis that attends to how this idea is developed throughout the text and in relation to ideas in the secondary reading. It requires students to build on two earlier assignments, the student's responses in the Environmental Consciousness Journal and their secondary reading of Snyder's essays.

This stages both the cognitive and writing processes, while opening opportunities for revision. Students respond in their Environmental Consciousness entries to ideas raised by the texts, then review their responses, testing them with others in class discussions and group work to identify a promising topic for their paper; they further refine their position in conference with me and in relation to the secondary material they've read as part of the course texts; they then produce an initial draft (one that incorporates both primary and secondary reading) to be shared with me in conference and with a work group, and, finally, re-draft the paper to bring it to a finished state.

Goal #3: Enable students to understand that writing varies according to purpose and audience

The variety of types of assignments meets goal #3. For example, initial entries in both the Environmental Consciousness Response Journal and the Tree Journal are meant as private "thinking out loud" discovery pieces, whereas the last entry in those journals is a formal, reflective, and focused distillation of ideas, written to inform a public audience. The literary analysis asks them to engage in the practice of literary criticism, writing within a disciplinary framework.

Goal #4: Give students opportunities to use writing as a tool for invention and discovery

The assignments "Environmental Consciousness Response Journal," the "Tree Journal," and "Half hour of Place" all meet this goal. In the Environmental Consciousness Journal, for example, students examine their own ideas in light of the texts' exploration of environmental values and ideas, and then respond in their journal entries to aspects of the text that challenge their own thinking. In addition, the Tree Journal and Half-hour of Place pieces ask students to engage in reflection and analysis of their own experience.

**Request for Writing Intensive Flag for Already Existing
Course**

**English 220: Thinking Like a Mountain:
Literature and Environmental Consciousness
Alison Sainsbury**

ASSESSMENT OF FLAG GOALS: REVISED

Assessment of the flag goals will be met through meta-cognitive aspects of the assignments. The Environmental Consciousness Journal, the Tree Journal, and the Half-Hour of Place assignment ask students to reflect in writing on their experiences, thoughts, and processes, and then to draw conclusions based on the experience of completing the assignment. The goals of the writing intensive category are spelled out in the assignment sheet, and the students' reflection on their experience then allows me to assess whether the category goals are being met. In reading the students' assessments, I am in turn able to assess how successfully an assignment meets the goals of the category.

For example, in the "Half-Hour of Place" assignment, students are told that the activity they are engaging in, and their writing about it, is designed for them to discover something about the way we experience our surroundings when we are walking and when we are driving. After they record and reflect in writing on their experience, they (also in writing) draw conclusions from it. Here's an illustration of a conclusion that a student drew from her experience: "Walking allows for a complexity of sensation: the crunch of a leaf becomes a smell." In asking students to reflect in writing on their experience and draw a conclusion from it, the student is using writing for discovery, meeting flag goal #3, and I assess the success of the assignment in meeting the goal by the type and quality of the conclusions students draw. In the example from the student above, I can easily see that the assignment has indeed met the goal of "writing for discovery."

For the Literary Analysis assignment, students write, in addition to the literary analysis itself, a "writer's commentary," a thinking piece I routinely require in Creative Nonfiction, my other sophomore-level course earning credit in Writing Intensive. In the writer's commentary, students step back from the main assignment to assess specifically their writing process from the

conception of the idea through the development and refinement of the paper. What they have to say about that process allows me to assess whether the assignment as I have designed it is accomplishing its goal, or whether I need to revise the assignment.