

# GEOC Meeting May 1, 2013

## In attendance:

*Mike Young – Chair, (Karen Piantek – Admin), Scott Campbell, Ana Maria Diaz-Marcos, Tom Long, Gustavo Nanclares, Peter Kaminsky, Eduardo Urios-Aparisi, Tom Meyer, Mary Ellen Junda, Fatma Selampinar, Stephanie Milan, Kathleen Tonry*

## Regrets:

*Tom Abbott, Eric Schultz, Michelle San Pedro*

Meeting called to order at 9:39am.

### **1. Minutes of April 10, 2014 meeting were accepted.**

### **2. Announcements**

- A. 2014 Institute on Gen Ed – The deadline has passed.
- B. Content Area/Competency Guideline Revision – This is on hold until Fall 2014.
- C. Update on revision of the Computer and Info Lit competencies –Nothing to report at this time.
- D. Suggestions for new GEOC members requested: CA1, W, Q, Computer Competency members are needed.
- E. Report of the President’s Task Force on Civility and Campus Culture:
  1. Create a new undergraduate General Education Competency in civil discussion and debate and/or stress the techniques of civil discussion and debate in Content Area IV (Diversity).
  2. Consider a life skills competency that addresses such topics as health, sexuality, safety, and relationships, and that could be met through taking current courses, redesigned courses, or new courses.
  - Forums occurred this week hosted by President Herbst, Chief of Police Barbara O’Connor and Elizabeth Conklin from Title IX. The question was raised about why UConn isn’t educating students about civility.
  - Sally Reis noted that it is probably time for a complete review of General Education at UConn. It has been a while since the current system was put in place.
  - M. Young advised the committee that any decisions concerning these recommendations would come exclusively from the faculty, and they were here for discussion only in the broadest context.
  - Two initiatives that have started in the Senate – both W and civility – need GEOC review and/or action.
  - SEC will hold Fall forums about writing.
  - P. Kaminsky noted that there is a difference between the promotion of civility and the assessment of civility. If it was included in the competencies, how could/would it be assessed?
  - T. Meyer noted that the initiative seems a little like the compliance and ethics training that faculty and staff go through. He questioned whether regular faculty without a background in law would be qualified to “teach civility.” It could also easily become a slippery slope for faculty to begin proselytizing about how to live or what values to adopt.
  - In general, members and others consulted seemed to prefer revising CA4 guidelines over the idea of a new competency.
  - M. E. Junda felt that it was not an education problem but a campus culture problem and expressed reservations about being able to cover the topic in a class. A number of CA4 instructors agreed that in some limited respects they do address the topic concerning minorities

in their multicultural courses, but they were not comfortable teaching the broader issues of civility.

### 3. Subcommittee Reports

#### CA1 Report

- P. Kaminsky noted that for the DMD course, the CAR was somewhat incomplete compared to the syllabus. The syllabus demonstrated CA1 compliance, but the CAR did not.
- To maintain consistency, GEOC felt this course should be tabled until the CAR was corrected.
- T. Meyer asked about what the practice or guidelines are for reviewing courses seeking multiple Content Areas since the DMD course is also seeking a CA3 designation. It was suggested that subcommittees should not be informed if a course is seeking multiple designations so that they can review the course independently. This would be difficult to do, and ultimately the answer to the question was that subcommittees should concern themselves only with determining if there is enough content in the course to warrant their designation.

**Motion to table DMD until the CAR is completed (P. Kaminsky, T. Long) was approved.**

**Motion to accept the rest of the report and recommend the GERM, ART, ARTH, and ANTH courses for CA1 was approved.**

- It was suggested that the CA1 subcommittee should push to get DMD finished and approved by an e-vote before the end of the semester. This course of action was supported by the CA1 subcommittee and the GEOC at large.

#### CA2 Report

- No discussion

**Report approved as submitted.**

#### CA4 Report

- No discussion

**Report approved as submitted.**

#### W Report

- At the GEOC's request, the subcommittee severed the other business and moved forward the 11 courses noted in the report.

**Report approved as submitted.**

Discussion regarding the other items on the W subcommittee report:

- Both SEC and Sally Reis have endorsed forums to discuss issues with the writing competency.
- E. Schultz and M. Young also noted that they are looking into a way to "ping" Gen Ed instructors at the beginning of the semester to remind them to review the guidelines. This capability is under development with the Registrar.
- M. Young met with all instructors of un-aligned courses, and all were very grateful and receptive to feedback.
- S. Campbell expressed concern about referencing accurate numbers regarding students not taking First Year English; he noted that about 25% don't take FYE. He also noted that UConn does not want FYE to become what it is in Florida state schools where first year writing courses are essentially remedial courses; this creates a kind of a class separation or academic hierarchy.
- One GEOC member suggested a friendly amendment to change "Writing-intensive" to "W" in items #2 and 4 of the "Exit Expectations" section of the report. This was accepted by the W subcommittee.
- It was also noted that ENGL 3800 no longer exists and so should be changed to ENGL 2011.

- One member had a question about the phrase “does not have a credit-hour restriction” in exit guideline #4. It was clarified that this means the student can take a 1-credit or 2-credit course to fulfill this requirement; it doesn’t have to be 3 credits.
- There was a question about what “2000+” means; it was suggested that “2000 or above” is better.
- One member noted the idea of putting a W on the First Year English courses
- All solutions to the issue are imperfect solutions.
- One member noted that faculty with a research focus sometimes see being asked to teach a W course as a punishment. Another member suggested that faculty can no longer complain about student writing until they have taught a writing course.
- The question arose about who would enforce these proposed changes. If you don’t take a first year writing course, do you not graduate? It is a university-wide problem that a “must” isn’t always a “must.” M. Young indicated that schools/colleges still have a final say and can choose not to comply with guidelines. The GEOC needs to convey “requirements” carefully to faculty. It was suggested that the word “must” be changed to “should” or “will” in Exit Expectation items #1 and 2.
- The committee felt it might be very difficult to enforce making a student take a first year writing course other than 1010/1011.
- T. Long suggested that faculty teaching GEOC courses be asked to include certain items on the syllabus, partially to help streamline the W subcommittee’s job. By far the W subcommittee receives the most course requests. Requiring elements in the syllabus is a controversial request, though; the syllabus can be a legal document.

Meeting adjourned at 10:55am.

Respectfully submitted,  
 Karen Piantek  
 GEOC Administrator

CA1 Report:

GERM 1175: Human Rights and German Culture is proposing a small change in the catalog description of the course in order to better reflect its current more dominant focus on philosophical foundations of Human Rights. As far as CA1 is concerned, the course clearly fulfills several of the criteria and there is no doubt that it should be kept as part of CA1. Additionally, both the CAR form and the syllabus provided are exemplary in their thoroughness and clarity. The committee supports approval for CA1.

DMD 2010: History of Digital Culture is requesting inclusion in CA1. The committee appreciates the quality of the course and the thoroughness of the syllabus provided. The rationale for inclusion in CA1 through criteria 1 and 4 could be more specific and provide further information on the ways in which the course fulfills those criteria. At the same time, the syllabus makes a good case for fulfilling these criteria, in its synthesis of critical-historical inquiry and active student participation in the inquiry process through employment of an array of digital tools. (It is possible that the inexperience of the instructor with the GenEd application process—and that of DMD in general—resulted in over-documenting the general criteria for GenEd and under-documenting the criteria for CA1 in the CAR.) In light of the above, the committee recommends approval for the course, along with a note to the submitter to specify more clearly the fulfillment of CA-specific criteria in the future.

ART 1128: Global Perspectives on Western Art: Renaissance to the Present is requesting a small change in the title of the course in order to reflect its global perspective in the study of Western art. The course was already

approved for CA1, and the content remains the same with this request. (The title change is part of the intention of the Art and Art History Department within SFA to update and spiff up some of the titles to existing courses.) The Committee supports approval of the course.

ARTH 1141: From Sun Gods to Lowriders: Introduction to Latin American Art is requesting a minor change in the title of the course. Everything else will stay exactly as it was. The course clearly belongs in CA1. As in the case of ARTH 1128, the course was already approved for CA1, and the content remains the same with this request. The Committee supports approval of the course.

ANTH 3450W: Anthropological Perspectives on Art is requesting to be included in CA1. The instructor of the course provides a clear rationale in which she addresses several of the criteria for inclusion in CA1. Additionally, the syllabus provided further justifies inclusion of the course in CA1. The committee supports approval of the course for CA1.

\* 5-6-2014 Revised CA1 Committee Report: DMD 2010

Following revision of the CAR rationale, the proposer has documented successfully that DMD 2010 meets the specific criteria for CA1 in relation to the syllabus and course content. The CA1 subcommittee therefore recommends approval of the course for CA1.

Respectfully submitted:

Gustavo Nanclares, Peter Kaminsky

CA2 Report:

**GEOC CA2 Subcommittee Report - May 1, 2014**

The CA2 subcommittee has found that the following course continues to meet CA2 requirements in a condensed format and recommends approval for offering in intensive session:

1. GEOG 2100 Economic Geography

CA4 Report:

CA4 Course Approval

Submitted by: Eduardo Urios-Aparisi, Mary Ellen Junda, Joseph Abramo

LCL	GERM 1175	Human Rights and German Culture	CA4
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Catalogue copy change: Course description

We unanimously approve the change in the course description to address “the study of philosophical discourse on human rights” and “the analysis of related ethical problems.” This description more accurately reflects the course content.

Art & Art History	ARTH 1128	Introduction to Western Art II: The Renaissance to Present, A World Perspective	CA4
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We unanimously approve course name change to “Global Perspectives on Western Arts: Renaissance to the Present.”

Art & Art History	ARTH 1141	Introduction to Latin American Art	CA4
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We unanimously approve course name change to “From Sun Gods to Lowriders: Introduction to Latin American Art.”

Art & Art History	ARTH 3050	African American Art	CA4
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We unanimously agree with the course creator that this course fulfills CA4, #1 and 2.

Art & Art History	ARTH 3050W	African American Art	CA4
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We unanimously agree with the course creator that this course fulfills CA4, #1 and 2.

## W Report:

### **Course Proposal Reviews**

#### *Courses Recommended for Approval*

ANTH 3450W Anthropological Perspectives on Art: Both the CAR form and the sample syllabus provided detailed information concerning the W course criteria, including the two graded writing assignments and their review/revision/resubmission.

ARTH 3050W African American Art: The submitter provided detailed information in the CAR form and in the syllabus. The syllabus identifies the schedule of draft submission/revision/resubmission of papers that fulfill W course requirements. Assignments are relevant to the discipline in which the course is taught. Although both tests and writing constitute the course grade, the syllabus stipulates that students need to pass the writing portion in order to pass the course.

ARTH 3720W The Art of China: The submitter provided detailed information in CAR form and in the syllabus. The syllabus identifies the schedule of draft submission/revision/resubmission of papers that fulfill W course requirements. Assignments are relevant to the discipline in which the course is taught. Although both tests and writing constitute the course grade, the syllabus stipulates that students need to pass the writing portion in order to pass the course.

ARTH 3740W Far Eastern Painting: The submitter provided detailed information in CAR form and in the syllabus. The syllabus identifies the schedule of draft submission/revision/resubmission of papers that fulfill W course requirements. Assignments are relevant to the discipline in which the course is taught. Although both tests and writing constitute the course grade, the syllabus stipulates that students need to pass the writing portion in order to pass the course.

DMD 3010W Critical Perspectives on Digital Media: Both the CAR form and the mockup syllabus are detailed, including explicit instruction on writing, several graded writing assignments, and their draft review/revision/resubmission. W course policies are explicitly stated.

EPSY 3120W Fundamentals of Assessment in Special Education: Although the CAR form is not as detailed as we would like, the mockup syllabus provides detailed information about the course's explicit writing instruction and draft/revision/resubmission processes.

HRTS 3149W Human Rights through Film: W designation is requested for an existing GEOC course. The CAR form is complete, and the syllabus provided does stipulate that students must pass the writing portion of the course and will produce at least 15 pages of graded revised writing. However, the initially submitted syllabus only assigned a research paper of 7 to 9 pages, and the mechanisms of explicit writing instruction and of draft review/revision were not stated.

We requested these revisions of the submitters, who sent them to us promptly (in addition to a paper other revised writing is assigned to meet or exceed the W course minimum).

HRTS 3835W Refugees and Humanitarianism: Both the CAR form and the syllabus are detailed. Shorter area analysis papers are reviewed and revised, a final research paper (also reviewed and revised) is assigned, and students submit a portfolio of course work at the end. Although the largest percentage of grades derives from revised writing, the syllabus does not state explicitly that students must pass the writing portion in order to pass the course. We have asked the submitter to make that one change in the syllabus; the change has been made.

MATH 2710W Transition to Advanced Mathematics: The submitter responded in detail to our previous queries and has satisfied our concerns. The subsequent information provided and the revised syllabus will be added to the CAR.

PSYC 3100W The History and Systems of Psychology: The CAR form is complete and detailed in explaining how the W version of the course meets the specifications. However, the syllabus is less clear about the mechanism of draft review/revision/resubmission and there is no clear specification of the length of the two writing assignments. We requested these revisions of the submitters, which they promptly supplied.

PSYC 3600 Social-Organizational Psychology: Both the CAR form and the syllabus are detailed. Multiple writing assignments are assigned with opportunities for review/revision/resubmission.

### **Other Business**

#### *One-Credit W Course Assessment*

Tom Deans reports that he is moving ahead as planned with Allied Health, Animal Science, Economics, and Nutritional Science. He has signed up all the faculty coordinators and scorers; they are now finalizing the rubrics and will start meeting on May 15.

#### *Proposed New Language to GEOC W Exit Expectations*

Following submission of the GEOC Statement of Concern about Writing and General Education at the 10 April 2014 GEOC meeting and at the request of GEOC members present, the W Subcommittee moves adoption of the following additional language (**in bold**) to the GEOC Exit Expectations for W Courses. (See <http://geoc.uconn.edu/writing-competency/>) This formal proposal will allow for formal discussions to begin with the University Senate and among departments, schools and colleges.

Exit Expectations:

1. All students must take either English 1010 or 1011. Students with Advanced Placement English scores of 4 or 5 and students passing ENGL 3800 are exempted from the ENGL 1010 or 1011 requirement.
2. Additionally, all students must take two writing-intensive courses, one of which must be approved for the student's major (see Departmental Responsibility above). These courses may also satisfy other Content Area requirements. (Note: English 1010 or 1011 is a prerequisite to all writing-intensive courses.)
- 3. Students exempted from ENGL 1010/1011, must take a 1000-level or 2000-level writing-intensive course during their first year.**
4. A writing-intensive course approved for the student's major does not have any credit-hour restriction, but it is to be at the 2000+level.

#### *Proposed New Language for W Course Criteria*

As reported at the meeting of 10 April 2014, the W Subcommittee during its course alignment review discovered that the supposedly mandatory W statement in syllabi (i.e., "Students must pass the writing portion of this course in order to pass the course") is not in fact explicitly mandated among the eight criteria. (See <http://geoc.uconn.edu/writing-competency/>) In some courses in which a mixture of graded tests, quizzes and writing is assigned, the statement is needed; in courses in which graded writing is the only or the major portion of the course grade, the statement seems unnecessary. However, for the sake of consistency across departments, we recommend the following revision (**in bold**) of criterion 8:

- 8. Require that students must pass the writing component in order to pass the course, and state this requirement explicitly in the syllabus.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Tom Long & Kathleen Tonry