

Add Course Request

Submitted on: 2011-09-24 12:09:13

1. COURSE SUBJECT	ECON
2. COURSE NUMBER (OR PROPOSED NUMBER)	2500W
3. COURSE TITLE	Writing in Economics
4. INITIATING DEPARTMENT or UNIT	Economics
5. NAME OF SUBMITTER	Marjorie I Aston
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8. CONTACT PERSON	Susan Randolph
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11. EMAIL of of contact person	Email: susan.randolph@uconn.edu
12. Departmental Approval Date	9/2/2011
13. School/College Approval Date	9/13/2011
14. Names and Dates of additional Department and School/College approvals	
15. Proposed Implementation Date	Term: Spring, Year: 2012
16. Offered before next printed catalog is distributed?	Yes
17. General Education Content Area	
18. General Education Skill Code (W/Q). Any non-W section?	W No
19. Terms Offered	Semester: Fall Spring Year: Every_Year
20. Sections	Sections Taught: 3-5
21. Student Number	Students/Sections: 19
22. Clarification: One of the signal motives behind proposing this course is the high demand for W courses in the major and the programmatic costs of supplying enough seats in regular 19-student 3-credit courses. As it now stands, we are devoting a considerable amount of tenure-stream time to small W sections and thus are being forced to stint on upper-division field courses	

and to staff many – perhaps even the bulk -- of them with graduate students. ECON 2500 would help redress this problem by shifting some of the W teaching load to (suitably qualified and trained) TAs, which would free up regular faculty to teach upper-division field courses.	
23. Number of Credits	1 if VAR Min: Max: credits each term
24. INSTRUCTIONAL PATTERN One 50-minute class every week. The course would be scheduled for one hour of common lecture or discussion section each week. Each section would be limited to 19. The number of sections offered each semester would vary depending on the availability of qualified TAs. As there are nearly 600 Economics majors, however, we can expect that perhaps 120 will want to take a W in the major each semester, which means six sections of ECON 2500	
25. Will this course be taught in a language other than English?	No If yes, then name the language:
26. Please list any prerequisites, recommended preparation or suggested preparation: ECON 1200 or both ECON 1201 and 1202; ENGL 1010 or 1011 or 3800.	
27. Is Instructor, Dept. Head or Unit Consent Required?	No
28. Permissions and Exclusions: Open only to Majors	
29. Is this course repeatable for credit?	No If yes, total credits allowed: Allow multiple enrollments in same term?
30. Grading Basis	Graded
31. If satisfactory/unsatisfactory grading is proposed, please provide rationale:	
32. Will the course or any sections of the course be taught as Honors? AsHonors	
33. Additional Details:	
34. Special Attributes:	
35. REGIONAL CAMPUS AVAILABILITY: Once this course has been run successfully at Storrs, we will work to deliver it to the branches using distance technology for the lectures and local discussion sections.	
36. PROVIDE THE PROPOSED TITLE AND COMPLETE CATALOG COPY: ECON 2500W. Writing in Economics. Either semester. One credit. Prerequisite: ECON 1200 or both ECON 1201 and 1202; ENGL 1010 or 1011 or 3800. Techniques for, and practice in, research, writing, citation, and data presentation in economics.	

37. RATIONALE FOR ACTION REQUESTED

This course represents an effort to make the delivery of W courses in Economics both more efficient and more valuable to students.

Economics is one of the more popular majors in the University – 586 declared at last count -- and the need to staff enough small W sections is currently imposing costs on faculty and student and endangering the quality of the major. At the same time, students are now receiving highly variable and uncoordinated instruction in writing and information literacy. Economics 2500W would address both of these issues by providing a more streamlined 1-credit format in which students would be exposed to a well-thought-out and more-uniform curriculum. The course would emphasize the process of research in economics as well as the process of writing and citation, introducing students to the modes of argument and presentation typical in professional publication. The course would stress not only the mechanics of presenting data and theoretical results but also the culture and ethos of economic argument. (The textbook proposed in the attached syllabus and already widely used in our W courses – McCloskey’s *Economical Writing* – famously advances the view that all writing is argument and persuasion and presents the craft of writing in economics as an exercise in rhetoric in the classical sense.)

ECON 2500 is a variant on the model of one-credit W courses used elsewhere in the University. It would effectively be taught as a large-lecture class with sections. The primary instructor would coordinate the sections as well as provide lectures and materials on writing style, finding sources, proper citation, and the presentation of economic data. Many resources for these lectures are already in place. See

<http://web.uconn.edu/langlois/writing/writing.html>

<http://web.uconn.edu/langlois/courses/shunda.html>

The sections would be taught by graduate students who have had the requisite training from the Writing Center. The section instructors would closely monitor student work, provide feedback on drafts, orchestrate peer-review, and ultimately grade the result.

Students would be required to write a paper on the subject matter of an economics field course. Students would be encouraged to write on the subject of a course they are taking concurrently, but they may also write on another subject with instructor approval. In the event the student is writing about the topic of another course he or she is taking concurrently (or, indeed, has recently taken), the student would be encouraged to consult with the instructor of the field course in framing a topic.

We envision featuring this course on our website and in our advising as a kind of “junior research seminar” in economics – something that students should take fairly early in their careers. After we have gained experience with the course, we can reconsider whether to make this course a prerequisite for other courses or otherwise formally require students to take it early.

Economists believe in specialization. It is our view that this model of a specialized writing

course will not only ameliorate staffing and programmatic concerns but will also provide a better experience for learning writing. We can assign our better writing instructors to this course and provide a less-variable quality of writing instruction.

38. SYLLABUS:

Online URL: (https://web2.uconn.edu/senateform/request/course_uploads/anp05007-1320764743-ECON2500W_Revised_Syllabus.doc)

39. Course Information: ALL General Education courses, including W and Q courses, MUST answer this question

a. Goals: This course seeks to enhance students' ability to effectively 1) research issues in economics, 2) present data to convey economic information, 3) develop, organize and analytically convey ideas about economic issues, and 4) clearly and cogently write properly referenced and cited technical economic papers.

b. Course requirements: Weekly readings from a book on effective writing in economics will be assigned. Students will apply the skills learned through lectures and readings in the process of writing and revising a substantial analytical paper of at least 15 pages on a topic in economics. Additionally, the course material will be reinforced through large and small group discussions and participation in the critical review of other students' papers.

c. Major Topics: Major topics addressed in the course will include: 1) writing as a means to understand economic issues, 2) research methods in economics including information and data sources as well as information search strategies, 3) strategies for developing, organizing, and analytically supporting ideas, 4) the use and presentation of data to support economic analysis, 5) types of writing in economics (eg. literature reviews, analytical essays), 6) elements of style (eg. voice, cohesion and flow, cadence), 7) syntax (eg. floating and misplaced clauses, agreement in number), 8) usage (eg. that/which, due to, between/among), 9) punctuation, and 10) citation (when to cite, citation style, avoiding plagiarism).

40. Goals of General Education: All Courses Proposed for a Gen Ed Content Area MUST answer this question

41. Content Area and/or Competency Criteria: ALL General Education courses, including W and Q courses, MUST answer this question.: Specific Criteria

a. **Arts and Humanities:**

b. **Social Sciences:**

c. **Science and Technology:**

i. **Laboratory:**

d. **Diversity and Multiculturalism:**

43. **International:**

e. **Q course:**

f. **W course:**

1. Enhancement of content and weight of "W" component: The content of this course directly focuses on writing as a means of understanding economic issues, making analytical economic

arguments, and conveying economic information. Students will apply the course content in the process of researching, drafting and revising a substantial economic paper of at least 15 pages on a topic approved by the instructor. Students will be encouraged to select a paper topic related to a course in economics they are taking at the same time, thus also reinforcing material learned in that course. The writing components of the course will constitute 95% of the course grade in total, with the final paper itself constituting 60% of the course grade.

2. Modes of instruction: The modes of writing instruction will include formal large and small group lecture, small group discussion, written feedback on paper drafts by both the discussion section leader and peer reviewers.

3. Revision: Two drafts of the final paper will be required. The discussion section leader will provide written feedback on the first draft. Students will be required to revise their papers on the basis of these comments and additional information learned in lectures and through assigned readings. Written comments on the second draft will be provided via peer review. Students will be expected to edit the second draft of their paper in response to these comments and other course material in preparation of the final draft of their paper.

4. Informing students of the requirement to pass the "W" component to pass the course: The Course grade summary on the second page of the syllabus makes it clear that 95% of the course grade is based on the course writing components. An additional note to the student is included directly under the course grade summary explicitly stating that in order to pass the course the student must pass the "W" component of the course.

42. **RESOURCES:**

Does the department/school/program currently have resources to offer the course as proposed
YES

If NO, please explain why and what resources are required to offer the course.

One of the signal motives behind proposing this course is the high demand for W courses in the major and the programmatic costs of supplying enough seats in regular 19-student 3-credit courses. As it now stands, we are devoting a considerable amount of tenure-stream time to small W sections and thus are being forced to stint on upper-division field courses and to staff many – perhaps even the bulk -- of them with graduate students. ECON 2500 would help redress this problem by shifting some of the W teaching load to (suitably qualified and trained) TAs, which would free up regular faculty to teach upper-division field courses.

43. **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

at request of W subcomm, syllabus revised. updated syllabus attached.

ADMIN COMMENT:

Senate approved new course & W 2.27.2012 // GEOCWapp_120511AP.
WSubcommApp_113011AP. revisedSyllUploaded_110811AP. newW_092611AP.

Economics 2500

Writing in Economics

Richard N. Langlois

Example Syllabus

In this one-credit W course you will learn about research, writing, citation, and data presentation. The course will meet both in a large group for lectures and in small sections for discussion, peer review, and instructor feedback.

Textbooks:

- 1) Deirdre McCloskey, [*Economical Writing*](#) (Waveland Press, 2nd edition, 1999)
- 2) Frank Bonello and Isobel Lobo, [*Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Economic Issues*](#) (McGraw Hill, 15th edition, 2012).
- 3) In addition, we will make use of some online resources:
<http://web.uconn.edu/langlois/writing/writing.html>
<http://web.uconn.edu/langlois/courses/shunda.html>

You may also benefit by consulting the [UConn Writing Center](#).

Papers:

You will be expected to write a paper of at least 15 pages on a topic in economics. You are encouraged to write about the subject matter of another economics course you are taking this semester, but that is not an absolute requirement. You may also get ideas from reading and discussing *Taking Sides*, a collection of essays written by prominent economist on controversial real-world issues. Some of the lectures will be devoted to reviewing these ideas with the objective of helping you identify paper topics. Your topic must be approved by the instructor and you may not change the topic without consulting the instructor.

Grading: You will be evaluated on the drafts you turn in as well as on the final paper. The grade you receive on the drafts will primarily reflect effort and the timeliness of your submission; you will also receive an “advisory” grade that will track the quality of your writing but will not count toward the course grade. The final draft will be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

- a. **Researching the topic:** Were relevant and good quality reference materials researched and mastered? These sources may include professional books and journal articles, including those published in online journals (e.g., Berkeley series) and the online versions of printed articles, but not websites that are not subject to any kind of screening.
- b. **Documentation and Citation:** Were all sources documented and cited appropriately? Under the [Student Code, Part VI on Academic Integrity](#), you are responsible for providing proper citation for all direct quotations, paraphrased ideas, and statistical and other information coming from other sources. Make sure to include at the end of each paper a list of “Works Cited.” For further assistance, please refer to [UConn Library’s guide on “Citing Sources.”](#)
- c. **Argument:** Is there a central idea, a thesis that is consistently sustained throughout the paper? How clear, sophisticated, and original is the idea? Does it convey a clear knowledge of the material and a recognition of alternative perspectives?
- d. **Support:** How well is your argument supported? Are the contents clearly and consistently relevant to the main topic? Are examples, quotations, statistical and other information skillfully used to support the argument(s)?
- e. **Organization:** Is the paper well-organized? Make sure that your objective is clarified at the beginning, each section has a clear role in meeting the objective, and that ideas flow logically from one paragraph or section to the next.
- f. **Paragraphs:** Are the paragraphs coherent and well-organized? Is there one clear idea per paragraph, introduced by a clear topic sentence and developed consistently by other well-connected sentences?
- g. **Sentences:** Are the sentences efficient and well-constructed? Work on constructing clear, concise sentences by avoiding words and phrases that do not fit well. Use vague pronouns and passive voice only when absolutely necessary.
- h. **Mechanics:** Are the mechanical elements of writing (grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc.) free of errors? Using your word processor to check “spelling and grammar” before printing the paper can go a long way. But be careful: your word processor does not know if you meant “there” or “their”. You also need to proofread yourself to eliminate all errors.

Peer Review:

You will also be asked to provide feedback on another student’s paper, and you will

be graded in part on your effort and the thoughtfulness of your review.

Course grade summary	
First Draft	10%
Second Draft	10%
Peer Review	15%
Class Participation	5%
Final Draft	60%

Course Calendar

WEEK	LECTURE	DISCUSSION
1	Presentation from University Writing Center.	Introduction and plan of course.
2	Researching the topic. <i>Takings Sides</i> , Unit 1	Discussion of paper topics.
3	Presentation by University Libraries Economics liaison on research resources.	Workshop on research.
4	<i>Takings Sides</i> , Unit 2	Workshop on getting started.
5	<i>Takings Sides</i> , Unit 2	Workshop on first draft.
6	Documentation and Citation	Preview of peer-review exercise.
7	Argument, Support	First draft due. In-class peer review.

8	Presenting Data	Workshop on second draft.
9	Organization, Paragraphs	Workshop on second draft.
10	Improving your writing I	Workshop on second draft.
11	Online discussion	Second draft due. In-class peer review.
12	Improving your writing II	Workshop on final draft.
13	Online discussion	Workshop on final draft.
14	Online discussion	Final draft due.