

GENERAL EDUCATION COURSE ENHANCEMENT GRANT COMPETITION 2021-2022

1. **List the course title and course number of the proposed/enhanced course and name of the sponsoring department or program. (For new courses that many not have been assigned a number yet, use a proposed title and generic number that indicates the course level: e.g. POLS 2XXX) ENGL**
 2XXXW: Introduction to Professional and Technical Writing.
 ENGL 3XXXW: Variable Topics in Professional and Technical Writing.
2. **Describe your project and the work that will be done during the grant period on course content, course design, and/or teaching approach. Provide a clear statement of the objectives of the project in terms of student learning.**

We are proposing to build two courses that will work together, though they would not have to be taken together or in sequence; the 2XXXW course is *not* a prerequisite to the 3XXXW course. The first course is *Introduction to Professional and Technical Writing*—a 2000-level W course that would acclimate students to the larger issues and fundamental principles and practices of the fields of professional and technical writing (PTW). Such a course might make a vital offering for the new [Writing Minor](#) @ UConn. The syllabus for the Introduction course will be built so that at least one unit is always focused on social justice in PTW.

Along with the introductory course, we are proposing *Variable Topics in Professional and Technical Writing*, a 3000-level W course in professional writing that would vary special topics based on instructor expertise, topics relevant to current events, and student interest. Primary examples include but are not limited to:

- *Professional & Technical Writing in and for Social Justice, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion*
- *Professional & Technical Writing for Environmental Work*
- *Professional & Technical Writing for Nonprofits* • *Professional & Technical Writing in the Arts*
- *Professional & Technical Writing in STEM Fields.*

For the course development grant, we aim to build a potential syllabus (shell) for each of these five possibilities while our more focused development will be on robust syllabi for the first two (SJEDI and Environmental Work). In both of these courses, students will practice and learn about writing as a tool for liberatory, non-oppressive communication and practice to support marginalized communities through group and individual projects involving research into multimodal writing from non-profit organizations, social justice organizations, identity groups, and corporate policy

Professional and technical writing is an expansive and expanding field that includes creators and editors of multimodal content for contexts such as social media, textbooks and educational materials, web pages and online resources, scientific and medical writing, public health communication and research, advertising and fundraising, corporate documents and communication, legal writing, governmental policy, and more. (See, for example: [The Society for Technical Communication](#) and the [Association of Teachers of Technical Writing](#).) Many UConn graduates across the University's departments and disciplines will find future work in fields where they will engage with professional and technical writing to varying degrees.

We were inspired to create this pair of courses through our work in a graduate seminar taught by Dr. Brenda Brueggemann and attended by PhD student Psyche Ready in the spring of 2021: *Teaching and Doing Professional Writing*. This Spring 2021 seminar was intended to both acquaint students with their own potential work as professional writers in various fields as well as their potential to teach professional writing courses to college undergraduates. In this course, students

engaged deeply with current research in PTW, including focus on topics such as working with multimodal writing, anti-racist and anti-ableist principles, and PTW as a field for social justice and progressive social change. Class participants were excited to discover that PTW is brimming with many developments in multimodal writing, anti-racist/anti-ableist practice, and social justice (see sources in the Works Cited). As a final collaborative project, students in this seminar developed sample syllabi for undergraduate courses in Variable Topics in Professional Writing. The work that was generated in this course made at least these three things obvious: that professional and technical writing is a field that is growing and changing; that the work and world of professional and technical writing holds many significant possibilities for advancing social justice; and that the work we did in developing course content for undergraduates would benefit students at the University of Connecticut—both the undergraduates who would take the courses and the graduate students who would teach them.

Most of the grant funds we are requesting will go toward summer funding (May-June 2022) for Ready and two other graduate students in English or relevant departments. Ready's research is at the nexus of writing studies and disability studies. She will work with the other two graduate students on the dual course development: reviewing potential course texts; researching similar course offerings at peer universities; reaching out to potential collaborators across UConn; developing connections with possible internship sites related to each course; and consulting with CETL to develop the kernel/foundational course modules and activities. Brueggemann will meet weekly with the team of graduate students to guide, consult, and collaborate. The research, course development, and syllabus/module construction will happen in May and June 2022; the CARs for the two courses will begin movement through the course approval process immediately in September 2022. We hope to get the courses on the books by spring of 2023 and have them run in Fall 202. We will request that the English Department assign Ready and the other doctoral students—including the three other graduate students who participated in the Spring 2021 seminar and who have already drafted course syllabi, writing assignments, and schedules for courses in Professional Writing and Social Justice—to teach the initial courses in Fall 2023 as part of their regular-year graduate assistantship. Brueggemann and selected graduate students with research specialties in writing and social justice will likely continue to teach sections of the course in 2023, 2024, and 2025.

Student learning objectives for *Introduction to Professional Writing*. Students will:

- Identify basic principles and practices of professional and technical writing.
- Evaluate the significance and kinds of rhetorical choices made in professional writing in a variety of fields.
 - Perform rhetorical analysis on a range of texts from academic disciplines, governmental agencies and nonprofits, journalism, the arts, and social media.
 - Trace how ideas travel across those various disciplines and domains and circulate in the public.
 - Articulate such evaluations of rhetorical choices in discussions, group work, informal writing, and formal papers/projects.
- Assess the ethics and inequities in various areas of professional and technical writing, with emphasis on social power structures and the role of communication in bolstering or dismantling those structures
- Analyze case studies—historical and contemporary—of successful and unsuccessful professional writing in certain domains.

- Appraise local and global social justice issues/texts in professional writing and summarize those in critical annotation writing.
- Practice iterative writing processes that include drafting, peer feedback, instructor feedback, revision, and editing.
- Assemble a portfolio of revised, edited writing and multimodal texts. This portfolio will include reflection on possible trajectories for further engagement with social justice, professional writing, and directions for further development as a writer.

Student learning objectives for *Variable Topics in Professional Writing*. Students will:

- Develop familiarity with the rhetorical conventions and best practices of various genres of professional and technical writing.
- Review current scholarship on issues of social justice in order to develop a foundational understanding of the broad theories and practices of the work of anti-racism, feminism, disability justice, etc.
- Evaluate and relate current scholarship that makes connections between social justice issues and professional and technical writing.
- Identify and experiment with recent, groundbreaking multimodal texts from non-profit organizations, social justice agencies, and public interest groups that align with students' research or professional interests.
- Assess foundational scholarship on ethics in professional and technical writing, and connect and complicate that scholarship with social justice issues at large.
- Select and reflect on case studies of professional and technical writing that illuminate ethical and rhetorical challenges and principles frequently experienced by professional writers in those domains.
- Assemble a portfolio of revised, edited writing and multimodal texts. This portfolio will include reflection on possible trajectories for further engagement with social justice, professional writing, and directions for further development as a writer.

3. How do you intend to evaluate project objectives once the course, as proposed, is offered? Please identify intended learning outcomes and assessment tools.

There are at least three principle ways the course objectives and student learning outcomes can be assessed for these courses. First: beyond the obvious modes of assessment (enrollment numbers, SET ratings, student testimonials), we will review the student writing produced against the learning outcomes articulated above. Such an assessment would best take place after each course has been taught twice. Second: course instructors will also keep teaching logs and for at least the first 3 years the courses run, there will be a meeting with all past and future PTW course instructors (each semester) to review together what seemed most/least successful in the course and to suggest adjustments to future courses; Brueggemann will convene these meetings. Finally: the rubric for the student's final portfolio assignment will point back to the course objectives and students will complete a "self-assessment" for their work in the course (using the objectives as prompts for that self-study).

4. Describe how the course will fit into UConn's General Education curriculum. (The General Education guidelines can be found at: <http://geoc.uconn.edu/geoc-guidelines/>) How will the course serve the broad goals of UConn's General Education program (flexibility in thinking, foundations for learning at UConn and later in life, critical analytical skills, etc.)?

Brueggemann has a deep commitment to general education and has served on GEOC herself for three years now—in capacities related to First-Year Writing, the “W” competency, and more recently, in connection with the revision of the Information, Digital, and Media Literacy (IDML) framework. This course will be accessible to students from a wide range of majors, including students at regional campuses. It speaks to an urgent social concern—social justice—by cultivating competencies of open-mindedness, dialogue, rigorous analysis, argument, attention to language, interdisciplinarity, creative making, and sustained writing. (See more under #7 below.)

5. Describe how the course meets the specific criteria for the given priority areas of this year’s competition ([EL](#), [JEDI](#)).

Both courses will focus on issues of social justice in the readings, assignments, and course goals, and they will both engage principles of social justice pedagogy, especially in the teaching of writing. (As two of our models for social justice pedagogy, see: a recent 2020 issue of [Radical Teacher devoted to “Writing for Justice in First-Year Composition”](#) and a

2010 edited collection, [Social Justice Pedagogy Across the Curriculum: The Practice of Freedom](#)).

While the Intro course will have a broader, more foundational focus supplemented by sections on social justice issues in PTW, the Variable Topics course will focus entirely on a rotating individual social justice issue in various domains each semester it is offered. (Examples: *Anti-Racism in Professional and Technical Writing*; *Access and Anti-Ableism in Professional and Technical Writing*; *Professional and Technical Writing for Nonprofits*; *Environmental Literacy in Professional and Technical Writing*.) Students will explore recent research and scholarship in PTW on anti-racism, feminism, and anti-ableism and access, including works from: Godwin Agboka, Lisa Meloncon, Kristen Moore, Miriam F. Williams, and Sean Zdenek, among others. Students will consider how writing can be a tool for liberatory, non-oppressive communication and practice to support marginalized communities through group and individual projects involving research into multimodal writing from non-profit organizations, social justice organizations, identity groups, and corporate policy. Finally, we intend that the development of these courses will support the building of bridges between Social Justice issues and PTW as well as PTW as it takes place in fields as diverse as STEM, the Arts, Social Work, and Education.

6. Describe how the course will fit into the general education plan for any departments involved in its development.

Both courses will be designated as options and opportunities for fulfilling requirements in the new [Writing Minor](#) (housed by the Department of English but with courses expanding across many other departments @ UConn). The English Department has just recently revised its major and Plan of Study for undergraduates who declare an English major. Under the [new Plan of Study](#), the 3000-level W “Variable Topics in Professional and Technical Writing” course may fulfill a requirement in one of the four “core curriculum” areas:

Antiracism, Globality, and Embodiment. The new English major also offers 8 different tracks.

The 2000-level “Introduction to Professional and Technical Writing” course would fit in the “Writing and Composition Studies” track and potentially in the “English Teaching” track if that course also includes significant material about the teaching of PTW. The 3000-level variable topics course may well also fit into any of these tracks, depending on the course topic: Cultural Studies/Media Studies; English Teaching; Literature, Antiracism and Social Justice; Literature of Place and Environment; Writing and Composition Studies.

7. For which content areas (CA1-4), competencies (W, Q), or literacies (Environmental – E) will the course be proposed and how will it address the specific criteria for courses in these content areas and/or competencies?

Writing (W): Central to the course will be an iterative process of composing, revising and editing, including cycles of peer and instructor feedback on formal writing assignments, as well as a portfolio system for final assessment. Writing assignments may include close readings, analyses of case studies, literature reviews, research papers, multimodal compositions, creative nonfiction, and public writing; some sections may include service-learning projects. (Ultimately, the CAR will narrow down those possibilities to a more focused set of assignments.) Regular informal, write-to-learn assignments will also be included. The writing elements will be integrated with the social justice elements. Thus, both courses will carry a significant “W” component *in practice*—while they are also *about* writing in theory/principle.

Information, Digital, Media Literacies (IDML): The [new IDML competency](#) takes up the more pressing concern of immersing and animating “a UConn student’s education in more complex thinking through the analysis and evaluation of information and media, and their skilled synthesis in new products and expressions.” Both of these new courses will critically engage the complexity of social justice, inequities, and exclusions in the “information and media” (writing and communication) of professional and technical organizations and work spaces (at large, and in more specific topics/domains).

Content Areas: The two courses proposed all engage Gen Ed’s “diversity and multiculturalism” content area (4) and depending on the variable topic area of the 3XXX W course, it might also connect in Arts & Humanities (CA1), Social Sciences (CA2), or Science & Technology (CA3). We do plan to develop syllabus shells for the 3000-level variable topics course that focus on PTW in the Arts; PTW in STEM fields; and PTW in Nonprofits (where social science often intersects as well). Finally, one of the variable topic syllabi developed for the 3XXX course will specifically angle towards the environmental literacy element of the Gen Ed curriculum and all topics and versions of the two courses will address and engage IDML (information, digital, media literacies).

8. How will the course add to and/or enhance existing course offerings? Does the course fill other important curricular gaps? How does it compare to current offerings or pedagogy? What will be distinctive about the course?

Currently there are no (known) offerings at UConn for undergraduates to engage the theory and practice of professional and technical writing. Most other “research one” universities have a plethora of these courses! These courses will expand the new Writing Minor through creation of more unique offerings in writing courses for undergraduates. We also hope that these courses will expand opportunities for UConn students to explore and land writing-based careers in a variety of fields. For those students who decide to take careers and jobs in fields where they carry out a good deal of professional and/or technical writing, these courses will allow them to take their studies to the next level through engagement with social justice issues and genres of writing and content creation that are relevant to their own interests and goals. (See also #6 above)

9. Why are you the most qualified person/team to teach this course? If this is not your primary field of study, what resources will you use to help you develop this course?

Brueggemann is the most qualified person to develop and teach this course for several reasons. First, she has directed eight (8) UConn undergraduates in the last four years in a for-credit “writing internship” with the international journal she edits, [Disability Studies Quarterly](#), and she has

acclimated these student-interns to the issues, processes, and daily work of a quarterly professional publication with a large global readership. Second, she designed and taught the first-ever graduate seminar on the *Teaching and Doing Professional Writing* at UConn in Spring 2021. Third, she is an activist-academic and scholar-citizen in Deaf Studies and Disability studies where she has, throughout her career, professionally written: over \$300,000 in grant and funding applications; regular scholarly, research texts; and many public-at-large texts. Ready and the other graduate students who participated in the seminar are qualified to teach these courses thanks to their own scholarly backgrounds in the theory and pedagogy of Composition; their familiarity with scholarship and conventions of the field of PTW through their participation in the spring 2021 seminar; and their experience having drafted a syllabus, course calendar, and assignments for a course in PTW and social justice as their final project for the spring 2021 seminar. In addition, Ready and several of the other graduate students have past and current professional experience in PTW fields as editors and writers.

10. Will your course serve as a model to assist others in their efforts to improve the general education curriculum? If so, how?

University coursework on social justice issues tends to be siloed. It is our belief that social progress takes place not only in the abstract realm of theory, but also in practice—in the daily acts of professionals in many fields; writing is just such a primary and daily act for most professionals. Professional Writers comprise creators of content for social media; textbooks; manuals; web resources; internal corporate documents; advertising; educational materials; governmental policy and more. Many UConn graduates are going onto work in fields that engage with professional and technical writing to some degree. These UConn students will benefit from experience and engagement with the ideas of how to foster social progress through the work they do. It is our hope that courses like ours will emerge in other disciplines at UConn and beyond: for example, in Social Work, STEM, Technology, Education, Fine Arts, etc.

Working Bibliography

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[Disability Studies in Composition: Position Statement on Policy and Best Practices.](#)

Hobbel, Nikola, Ed. *Social Justice Pedagogy Across the Curriculum*. Routledge, 2010.

Meloncon, Lisa (ed.) *Rhetorical Accessibility: At the Intersection of Technical Communication and Disability Studies*, Routledge, 2014.

McCoy, S. A. (2020). Writing for Justice in First-Year Composition (FYC). *Radical Teacher*, 116, 26-36.

Moore, Kristen R. "Black Feminist Epistemology as a Framework for Community-Based Teaching." *Key Theoretical Frameworks*, 185-211.

[National Council of Teachers of English \(NCTE\) Statement on White Language Supremacy.](#)

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Williams, Miriam F. & Octavio Pimentel. *Communicating Race, Ethnicity, and Identity in Technical Communication*, Routledge, 2014.

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2021-2022 GENERAL EDUCATION ENHANCEMENT GRANT COMPETITION

Proposer Name (s): Brenda Brueggemann and Psyche Ready

Course Proposal Title: Two Courses in Professional & Technical Writing.

Introduction to Professional & Technical Writing (ENGL 2XXXW) and

Special Topics in Professional & Technical Writing (ENGL 3XXXW)

Email Address of *Department Fiscal Manager*: Melanie Hepburn.

[<melanie.hepburn@uconn.edu>](mailto:melanie.hepburn@uconn.edu)

**** PLEASE READ ALL OF THE FOLLOWING CAREFULLY
BEFORE COMPLETING THE BUDGET FORM.****

Guidelines for Funding:

- The maximum amount available for each proposal is \$7500.
- All funds must be paid out in the 2022 fiscal year (i.e. before June 30, 2022).
- Funds for supplies or research will be paid out to recipients by February 2022.
- PLEASE NOTE, funds must be paid into a “2-Ledger” account (i.e. an account beginning with the number 2). Most faculty research accounts are “4-Ledger” accounts, so funds cannot be transferred directly to your research account. Supply and/research funds can be paid to a departmental 2-Ledger account, and then your fiscal manager can help you access them from there. You are encouraged to talk to your department’s fiscal manager about your budget plan before you submit it.
- Funds for summer salary or other payroll expenses will be paid out before June 30, 2022. For 9-month faculty, this means that your grant start date will be May 23, 2022, and your full summer salary will be paid out in one pay period after that before July.
- For faculty who are on 10-, 11-, or 12-month contracts, please be aware that requesting summer salary will put you in a state of “dual employment.” You may still request summer salary; just be advised that there is significantly more paperwork involved.
- Fringe costs for faculty summer salary must be calculated and are included in the \$7500 maximum cost per year (see rate listed below the table). GEOC will adjust budget line items to reflect correct fringe if rates change or if calculations are incorrect.
- If you are requesting funds for student labor (graduate or undergraduate), the funds will be paid to a 2-Ledger departmental account, and your department will be responsible for hiring and paying the student(s) before June 30. (Again, please advise your fiscal manager of this.) Fringe costs are still applicable here for grad students.
- All funds must be used before June 30, 2022 for purposes that support the activities of the grant proposal and conform to University of Connecticut guidelines.
- PLEASE NOTE that salary requests are still subject to all regular taxes and salary deductions.

Proposers can request funds in the specified amount for the current grant year to use for any of the following options in support of course development or revision:

- **Faculty summer salary** to be paid out before June 30 of the current fiscal year. The appropriate fringe rate (currently 25.8%) must be factored into the award amount, and proposers should be

aware that all regular taxes and salary deductions will also be taken from the gross salary amount after fringe.

- **Student Labor, both graduate or undergraduate.** Note that undergraduate student labor does not have fringe costs, but a Graduate Assistant has a fringe rate of 18%. This must be factored into your request.
- **Supplies to be used in support of the class.** Funds can be transferred to a 2-Ledger account and must be used before the end of the fiscal year. Supplies should directly benefit the course itself, not the instructor. (e.g. A new laptop solely for the instructor's use would not be appropriate.) Supplies should be reusable, or the department must be able to commit to replenishing supplies after the first year.
- **Travel to benefit the development of the course.** Travel must be paid for before the end of the fiscal year (June 30), but the travel does not have to occur by this time. (e.g. Travel can occur in the August after the fiscal year ends as long as plane tickets, hotels, fees, etc. have been fully paid before June 30.) *NOTE: Some review committees have been very reluctant to fund proposals that request travel funds; they have felt that travel tends to benefit the proposer more than the course itself. Proposers are encouraged to state very explicitly how travel will benefit course development over professional development.*
- **Research conducted to develop or enhance the class.** Funds can be transferred to a 2-Ledger account to support the implementation of a study or studies that have direct benefit to the course being proposed.
- **Other options TBD.** Proposers may request funds to cover other options that do not fit into the categories described above as long as awards can be used before the end of the fiscal year and their use adheres to any other university guidelines that govern the use of internal funds.

Fiscal Year 2022	Amount Requested	Fringe for Summer Salary *	Total
Faculty Salary (calculate a fringe rate of 25.8%)	Brenda Brueggemann: \$500	\$129	\$629
Student Labor (calculate a fringe rate of 18% for Grads)	Grad student 1: (Psyche Ready) \$2,000 Grad student 2: \$2,000 Grad student 3: \$2,000 \$6000	\$1080	\$7080
Supplies	None. BB will use her personal research account to buy any books, if needed.	N/A	
Travel		N/A	
Research (Faculty Account)		N/A	

Other		N/A	
Total	\$7000	\$1209	\$8209

* The 2022 Fiscal Year fringe rate for Faculty Special Payroll summer salary is currently **25.8%**. (See <http://budget.uconn.edu/fringe-benefit-rates/>). To calculate this amount, multiply your desired salary by .258 and then add the amounts. See the example in the table above. Fringe for a Graduate Assistant is 18%.

Justification:

Please explain how the expenditure of all funds will support this proposal (100-400 words).

Proposers should explain how any expenses, especially travel, will benefit the COURSE, not necessarily the professional development of the proposer.

The primary expenditures for the budget are for a collaborative four-person team of one faculty member and 3 graduate students to develop the two courses in tandem during May-June 2022; for the 3000-level special topics course they will also develop two sample syllabi in-depth and 3 other potential versions in “shells.” The collaboration for this course development is important for many reasons. First, because the practice of professional writing in the field does, in fact, happen collaboratively. Second, collaborative development of this course will also ensure that the focus of the course will not be overly narrow, but the course will, by design, be adaptable to shift focus on different special topics relevant to the instructors and their areas of expertise or to current events and issues. Finally, because the courses are intended to focus on issues of social justice and diversity as they intersect with professional writing, collaborative development of the class will ensure that multiple perspectives and identities will converge in its content and structure.

We are asking for graduate student collaboration in developing the course because these GAs will also have the opportunity to teach the course and because the opportunity to engage course development --especially across a sequence of courses --is an important asset on their resumes for future positions in both academic and professional work worlds.

These course development dollars will be used for:

- research labor in reviewing potential course texts;
- research labor in reviewing similar course offerings at peer and aspirant universities; conversations and contact with potential collaborators across UConn;
- collaboration time spent exchanging and responding to many working drafts of the syllabi and course activities in development;
- and consultations with CETL to develop the kernel/foundational course modules.