THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78712

Office of the Chairman
Department of English
(512) 471-4991

28 April 1981

MEMORANDUM

To: E346K Committee

From: Joseph J. Moldenhauer, Chairman

Subject: Course Descriptions

Please read immediately the two descriptions enclosed. If you have
suggestions for revision, please give them to me at once. Copies
of the third version will be distributed later today, I hope. Unless
a snag develops, the three descriptions will go to the department
tomorrow (Wednesday).

JJM:psw

Also enclosed: Memo from Library Component Subcommittee

E 346K, Writing in Natural Sciences and Technologies

Course Description

This is an upper-division course in the kinds of writing used in pure and applied sciences. The basic purpose of E 346K, Writing in Natural Sciences and Technologies , is to enable students to do the kinds of writing those fields require. In addition, the course aims to increase students' critical awareness of the intellectual models and value-dimensions of those fields.

To write effectively in the sciences and technologies, students must master general writing skills and some special ones; must learn to research the professional literature in those fields; and must become familiar with the formats in which scientific and technological writing commonly appears.

This course is organized primarily to review and strengthen general writing skills, to introduce appropriate special skills and formats, and to give students practice in library research in their professional fields. Individual units of the course focus on developing skills such as writing with particular scientific and technological aims, writing for particular scientific and technological audiences, using specialized vocabularies, organizing various kinds of scientific and technological writing, avoiding stylistic problems characteristic of scientific and technological writing, and researching professional literature.

The writing assignment in each unit is an exercise of the particular skills the unit focuses on, as well as an exercise of basic writing skills. During the course, students will produce about 6 pieces of writing in various formats, including a library research report. While instructors may sometimes assign writing topics, they will also encourage students to choose topics from their own fields--to write as professionals in their fields.

Readings in classical and contemporary scientific and technological literature provide, among other things, models of some particular skills and/or occasions for their use by the student. Readings may also provide explicit critical perspectives on scientific and technological fields. Or, such readings may provide examples for analysis of the implicit intellectual models and value dimensions that the language of sciences and technologies projects.

Required texts for the course will include Mills, Gordon H., and John A. Walter, Technical Writing, 4th ed. , plus one book of readings, plus the further option of Kuhn, Thomas, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions.   Current candidates for the readings include Bowen, Mary Elizabeth, and Joseph A. Mazzeo, Writing About Science (an anthology), and single longer works such as   Eiseley, Loren Journey or Darwin's Century, or Watson, James, The Double Helix. The choice of a book of readings and the option of The Structure of Scientific Revolutions will depend somewhat on the individual instructor's approach to developing students' critical awareness of value-dimensions of their fields.

WRITING IN THE SOCIAL/BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

Course Description

An upper-division writing course based on the kinds of writing found in the social sciences: anthropology, economics, education, history, government, linguistics, psychology, and sociology. Students will analyze essays in these disciplines and focus on the conceptual bases for formulating and solving problems, asking and answering questions. The emphasis on certain subject matter areas may vary from section to section. Primary emphasis is on writing practice, on rhetorical strategy rather than on the disciplinary theories involved in the various subject matter areas. Requirements include several (4-6) short essays and at least one longer paper. Students will model their own writing on high quality examples of writing in the various disciplines and will practice writing for the educated nonspecialist rather than for the advanced specialist.

Rationale

Writing in the different disciplines is surface expression of deeper variation. Writing is different across disciplines because of what practitioners of the disciplines believe about what they know, how they know it, and how it can best be presented to their audience. Students involved in advanced study of various disciplines may accept most of these distinctions, may already have internalized the assumptions in their field of study. They may or may not be aware of how those assumptions relate to writing.

Writing for the Social Sciences begins by exposing students to different viewpoints among the disciplines on similar subject matters. It is important that students begin to discover how different patterns of thinking produce different patterns of writing. From these discoveries students should become more self conscious about their own writing, about how their own approach to fundamental human questions relates to others, and about what knowledge and expectations an educated nonspecialist is likely to hold. These insights, along with continuous attention to the traditional concerns of effective writing, should lead to better writing.

Texts

Elaine Maimon and others. Writing in the Arts and Sciences (Winthrop, 1981).

Bert Hoselitz and others. A Reader's Guide to the Social Sciences. (Free Press, 1970).

Victor Finkler and Herbert Graves, eds. Social Science and Urban Crisis 2nd ed. (Macmillan, 1978).

[While this text is not perfect, it fits the design
of the course. Supplemental readings in anthropology
and linguistics will be provided. Instructors are
encouraged to discover and use other
interdisciplinary readers.]

Other Possible Texts

Hulon Willis. _Writing Term Papers_ (Harcourt, 1977).

Joseph Williams. _Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and
Grace_ (Scott Foresman, 1981).

4.28.81

Memorandum

To: Members of the Committee on E346K, Writing in Different Disciplines

From: Michael King MK

Re: Library Component Subcommittee

        Maxine Hairston, John Walters and I met with Linda Beaupré
and Barbara Schwartz of the general library staff last Thursday,
April 23, to discuss the library component which might be included
in the syllabus for the various sections of E346K. The discussion
was primarily informational; we exchanged materials from the various
subcommittees and talked over the possibilities for library materials
for the course. In general, the consensus was that any library
materials developed for the advanced courses would have to allow a
significantly greater degree of flexibility to the student-researcher,
than the materials now in use for the freshmen courses.

        Some further notes:
        1. The materials already developed and in use for
E317 (Technical Writing) will easily adapt to the new course, Writing
in the Natural Sciences and Technology. For those interested, these
materials are currently available through the library, for your infor-
mation, commentary, and use.
        2. The librarians pointed out that reference-materials
of a general sort will be less likely for the Social Sciences and the
Humanities sections, and more likely to be "discipline-specific" according
to the teacher's or student's specific field of interest.
        3. Rather than concentrating on the UGL collection (as is
current practice for freshman courses), the advanced materials will
direct students to begin their work at PCL (as necessary) and then to
emphasize the various specialized libraries around campus, for the
particular disciplines.
        4. The library staff will begin working first on
materials related to the Social Sciences, as more readily available
and likely to be in more demand, at least at first. They would like
to be kept informed on new developments in the program, particularly
if we manage to get some "pilot" or "experimental" sections scheduled
for next academic year.

cc: Linda Beaupré
    Barbara Schwartz

WRITING IN THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES

An upper-division course in writing skills, particularly those involving analysis, with readings drawn from classic and contemporary essays and books. More than half of the readings should have been written originally in English (i.e., not be translations), so that students can imitate effective styles for discussing art, philosophy, literature, popular culture, and related topics. A standard grammar and style book should be assigned. Readings will average one major essay or chapter per class meeting for sections meeting three times per week.

The course is intended for all students in the arts and humanities, not merely those majoring in English. Therefore its format and subject matter can explore a range of questions concerning Western art, ideas, and languages (European and American civilization, in other words, will be the primary "content" stress of the course). The instructor leads discussions of the techniques of effective writing and investigations of the history of music, painting, sculpture, philosophy, and literature.

No more than three weeks should be devoted to the study of any individual literary text or primary author, however important that work or figure may seem to the instructor; in the other weeks the class studies other products of creative and intellectual endeavor, as well as the writing skills expected of students who have majored in the arts and humanities by employers and graduate schools. Variant sections can only be accommodated if they offer practice in standard procedures of written communication and close analytical reading of a wide range of creative and humanistic works.

The possibilities under consideration as uniform textbooks include: The Humanities: Cultural Roots and Continuities, ed. Witt et al. (2 vols., Heath, 1980); The Conscious Reader, ed. Shrodes et al., 2nd ed., Macmillan, 1978); The Riverside Reader, ed. Trimmer and Hairston, Houghton Mifflin, 1981); Joseph M. Williams, Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace (Scott, Foresman, 1981); and Maimon et al., Writing in the Arts and Sciences (Winthrop, 1981). Probably each section will use three textbooks: a rhetoric, a book chiefly of primary materials (like The Humanities), and a book of expository matter (either an anthology of essays or a supplementary single-author expository text.

Suggested supplementary titles include books as diverse as the Bible, film criticism by James Agee or Pauline Kael, The Norton Reader, Edith Hamilton's Greek Mythology, Gombrich on art and perception, Kenneth Clarke's Civilisation, Leslie Fiedler on archetypes in literature, Ernest Becker's Birth and Death of Meaning, and the books titled Learning to Look and Learning to Listen.

Course Description

The basic purposes of E 346K, Writing in the Natural Sciences and Technologies, are twofold. The primary one is to enable students to do the kinds of writing those fields require. The secondary purpose is to increase students' critical awareness of the intellectual, philosophiscal, social, and ethical dimensions of those fields.

To write effectively in the sciences and technologies, students must master general writing skills and some special ones; must learn to research the professional literature in those fields; and must become familiar with the formats in which scientific and technological writing commonly appears. This course is organized primarily to review and strengthen general writing skills, to introduce appropriate special skills and formats, and to give students practice in library research in their professional fields. Individual units of the course focus on developing skills such as writing with particular scientific and technological aims, writing for particular scientific and technological audiences, using specialized vocabularies, organizing various kinds of scientific and technological writing, avoiding stylistic problems characteristic of scientific and technological writing, and researching professional literature. ~~Thexmeanexxthexxcoursexxemploysxtoxxachievexxthese xmkmx~~

The means the course employs to achieve these ends include both writing and reading assignments. The writing assignment in each unit is an exercise of the particular skills the unit focuses on, as well as an exercise of basic writing skills. Readings in classical and contemporary scientific and technological literature provide, among other things, models of some particular skills and/or occasions for their use by the student. While instructors may sometimes assign writing topics, they will also encourage students to choose topics from their own fields. That is, students will be encouraged to write as professionals in their fields.

There are many ways for students to achieve the secondary purpose of the course, to become critically aware of the intellectual, philosophical, social, and ethical dimensions of their fields. One approach might be for them to inquire directly into issues which expose, e. g., intellectual or social dimensions of particular disciplines. Another approach might be for students to analyze how the language itself of scientific and technological writing constructs the intellectual, philosophical, social, and ethical dimensions of those fields. The course is organized to include a unit xpg focused on such dimensions.

Whatever the approach to this ~~xsssxkxy~~ important secondary end of the ~~wse~~, the means also include writing and reading assignments. Readings ~~essical~~ and/or contemporary literature in or about sciences and ~~logies~~ may provide ~~xrtkfxxkxpxxxpxxxkixxxxxxxkkxxxxkxxxxxkx~~ ~~critical perspectives. Or, such readings may provide examples ~~sis~~ of the implicit intellectual, philosophical, social and ethical ~~t~~ the language of sciences and technologies ~~xxxkx~~ projects.

~~ng~~ the course, students will produce about 6 pieces of writing in