

## Literacy & Critical Inquiry Subcommittee Report

Date: September 26, 2018

To: General Studies Council

From: Literacy & Critical Inquiry Subcommittee

*Jessica Early, Chair*

*Julia Himberg, Member*

*Patience Akpan, Member*

Re: Recommendations for Course Proposals (L, G, HU etc. designation)

### **Recommend for Approval**

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From ASU:

**TWC 453** This course meets all criteria.

From MCCCCD: (none)

### **Recommend for Revise/Resubmit**

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From ASU: (none)

From MCCCCD: (none)

### **Recommend for Rejection**

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From ASU:

**TWC 443:** The course *seems* to meet Criterion 1 with “at least 50% of the grade in the course depending upon writing assignments.” However, while the syllabus assigns point values to each of the writing assignments (e.g. worksheets, grant reports, etc.), it does not clearly show the % for each assignment counting toward the final grade. The reader is left guessing if at least 50% of the grade, is in fact, dependent on written assignments and if these assignments meet Criterion 2 requiring students to “gather, interpret, and evaluate evidence.” The course does not meet Criterion 3 which states that “The Syllabus should include a minimum of two writing and/or speaking assignments that are substantial in depth, quality, and quantity.” None of the assignments on the syllabus include a specific length requirement. Many of the assignments are worksheets, peer review, and emails, which imply short task-driven writing not involving “gathering, interpreting, or evaluating evidence.” The Analysis Report (50 points) might fit these criteria but the description is vague, letting the students know that it is a “short report in memo format” and instructing them to “identify” various aspects of the organization and need for funding. The applicant should include the required/suggested page lengths or word counts for

each assignment. Grant writing is a specific genre of writing, which almost always involves “gathering, interpreting, and evaluating evidence and critical inquiry.” However, as the syllabus is currently written, the grant writing in this course does not clearly require these components. Furthermore, the substantial writing assignments for this course are labeled as “midterm exam/essay” and “final exam/essay. If these are treated as exams, and not in-depth writing assignments, then they are take-home and, therefore, not eligible for the L-designation.

**CEL 100:** The course meets Criterion 1 that “at least 50% of the grade in the course should depend upon writing assignments.” The course has two writing assignments and, together, count for 70% of the grade. However, the writing assignments do not clearly fulfill Criteria 2 and 3, that the writing assignments “should involve gathering, interpreting, and evaluating evidence,” and “two writing and/or speaking assignments that are substantial in depth, quality, and quantity.” It is not clear how much of the writing content goes beyond analyzing the views of Great Thinkers on democracy and equality to meet fully Criteria 2 and 3. Furthermore, ENG 101, 107, or ENG 105 are not prerequisites for this course. In addition, the final exam/essay seems to be a combination of the first two assignments, totaling 2500 words. The professor provides feedback one time and students receive peer reviews once, which does not meet Criterion 4, that “these substantial writing or speaking assignment be arranged so that the students will get timely feedback from the instructor on each assignment.” Students receive feedback from the instructor only on the “Midterm Essay” but not on the “draft version” of the final essay/exam.

*From MCCCD:*

**HUM 253:** The course meets Criterion 1. However, Two-thirds of the writing for the main assignments in this class do not clearly meet Criterion 2 as they do not “reflect critical inquiry, extending beyond opinion and/or reflection.” For example, the “Reaction/response logs” are divided into three parts, according to the syllabus. The first two parts are statements of facts (“should simply objectively report where you went, what you saw, and when”) and opinion (“Explain how you felt about what you saw. Be honest!”), respectively. The prompt states “Step Three,” the analysis, is “the most challenging paragraph and the one that will carry the most weight for your grade on the assignment” yet the prompt requires each section to be a paragraph in length. These written assignments are designed to be largely opinion-based responses and are short responses not clearly reflecting critical inquiry, extending beyond opinion/reflection.” The same could potentially be said for the “Response Logs,” as it is not clear that writing is a tool for critical inquiry in these assignments. The written assignments should be revised or more clearly articulated to show they meet Criterion 2. It is also unclear from the syllabus whether the first exam is in-class or take-home, which matters for the L designation. Also, on the course schedule, December 12 lists “Exam 2” and “Exam 3: In-class final exam.” This may be an error but because point values are listed with them (200 and 100 points, respectively) it is unclear. In addition, the second “Analytical Paper” instructs students to “Submit as Part of the Final Exam” yet the syllabus includes separate point values/class percentages for both of them. The applicant should explain what percentage of the final exam grade comes from the second “Analytical Paper.” The syllabus states that the 2 “Analytical Papers” are worth 20% of the overall grade and the “Examinations” are worth another 20%. Does this mean though that part of both of those percentages comes from the same assignment? This should be explained in the syllabus and

assignment prompt. Until these point values and percentages are cleared up, it is not clear if this course meets Criterion 1 that “at least 50% of the grade in the course depending upon writing assignments.”

**HUM 251:** Two-thirds of the writing for these assignments do not meet Criterion 2 as they do not “reflect critical inquiry, extending beyond opinion and/or reflection.” They are designed to be largely opinion-based responses. The “Reaction/response logs” are divided into three parts, according to the syllabus. The first two parts are statements of facts (“should simply objectively report where you went, what you saw, and when”) and opinion (“Explain how you felt about what you saw. Be honest!”), respectively. The prompt states “Step Three,” the analysis, is “the most challenging paragraph and the one that will carry the most weight for your grade on the assignment” yet the prompt requires each section to be a paragraph in length. The same could potentially be said for the “Response Logs,” as it is not clear that writing is a tool for critical inquiry in these assignments. If those two sets of assignments do not meet the criteria, then the course does not meet the requirement that 50% of assignments “should depend upon writing assignments.”

In addition, the second “Analytical Paper” instructs students to “Submit as Part of the Final Exam” yet the syllabus includes separate point values/class percentages for both of them. The applicant should explain what percentage of the final exam grade comes from the second “Analytical Paper.” The syllabus states that the 2 “Analytical Papers” are worth 20% of the overall grade and the “Examinations” are worth another 20%. Does this mean though that part of both of those percentages comes from the same assignment? This should be explained in the syllabus and assignment prompt.