Literacy & Critical Inquiry Subcommittee Report

Date: March 28, 2019
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

From ASU: (none)

From MCCCD:
HUM: 250 Ideas and Values in the Humanities

This course meets all criteria.

HUM: 251 Ideas and Values in the Humanities

This course meets all criteria.

Recommend for Revise/Resubmit

From ASU:
HIS 319 History of Aviation

The course meets some, but not all, of the criteria for L designation. The “Short Essay” assigned at the beginning of the course does not appear to meet Criterion 2 or 3 because it primarily demonstrates reading comprehension and is used for the professor to evaluate students’ writing. Criterion 2 specifically states, “The writing assignments should involve gathering, interpreting, and evaluating evidence. They should reflect critical inquiry, extending beyond opinion and/or reflection.” As currently written, the assignment asks students to read a book and demonstrate they understand the argument in the book. The committee understood this to be a reflection rather than critical inquiry involving the gathering, interpreting and
evaluation of evidence. Criterion 3 states, “The syllabus should include a minimum of two writing and/or speaking assignments that are substantial in depth, quality, and quantity. Substantial writing assignments entail sustained in-depth engagement with the material. Examples include research papers, reports, articles, essays, or speeches that reflect critical inquiry and evaluation. Assignments such as brief reaction papers, opinion pieces, reflections, discussion posts, and impromptu presentations are not considered substantial writing/speaking assignments.” The committee recommends the instructor provide an essay prompt with a detailed description of the assignment upon resubmissions to explain how this assignment meets Criterion 2 and 3.

The end-of-term presentation for this course does not meet Criterion 1 or Criterion 3 for the L-designation. Criterion 1 states that “At least 50 percent of the grade in the course should depend upon writing assignments,” and Criterion 3 states, “The syllabus should include a minimum of two writing and/or speaking assignments that are substantial in depth, quality, and quantity. Substantial writing assignments entail sustained in-depth engagement with the material.” Because a paper is not required as part of this assignment; rather, the paper is listed as one of several options (“You will give a ten-minute presentation to the class and you will have to turn in a paper, voice over power point, web page, or another approved format”), it does not meet Criterion 1 or 3. In addition to the issues above, the 5-page paper that is included as part of the Pop-up Museum assignment is separate from the whole assignment and therefore, does not actually constitute the full 15% of the grade for the whole assignment (i.e. the paper, as part assignment, is worth less since it’s part of the 15%). The group portion of the assignment appears to have individual elements to it—yet, on the whole, it is group-focused and therefore does not count toward the L designation. This may be remedied by further clarification of the assignments.

**PHI 417/IAS 417: History of Censorship**
The course meets some, but not all, of the criteria for L designation. The materials provided indicate that the midterm and final exams take place in class; however, in-class exams do not count toward the L designation. The reading responses do not qualify for L designation, as they do not meet Criterion 3, namely that “Assignments such as brief reaction papers, opinion pieces, reflections, discussion posts, and impromptu presentations are not considered substantial writing/speaking assignments.” The examples provided confirm that the reading responses do not meet Criterion 3. While the remaining assignments (Term Paper and Book Report) constitute exactly 50% of the course grade, the Book Report does not constitute “substantial in depth, quality, and quantity.” In particular, the assignment does not
constitute the “quantity” needed for L-designation, with only 2-3 pages (minimum) required for analysis. Minor and probably unimportant note: the assignment prompts included list a different course number than the syllabus and accompanying documentation. Listed courses include: PHI 417/IAS 417 and PHI/REL 494, REL 598. All of this may be remedied by revision and further clarification of the assignments.

*From MCCCD:* (none)

**Recommend for Rejection**

*From ASU:* (none)

*From MCCCD:* (none)