

Curriculum Committee Minutes

April 20, 2006

Members Present: Jim Jasinski (chair), Carlo Bonura, Brad Dillman (secretary), Alyce DeMarais, Linda Williams, Christine Smith, David Lupher, Brad Tomhave, Zaixin Hong, Grace Livingston.

Jasinski called the meeting to order at 8:08 a.m. The committee approved the minutes for its April 13, 2006 meeting.

Report of the First Year Seminar subcommittee:

Bonura, subcommittee chair (other members Hands, Hong, and DeMarais), moved approval of CSOC 118, Social Organization and Change in the Developing World, proposed by Elizabeth Petras, for the SCIS core.

Bonura noted that the subcommittee judged the course content to be an excellent introduction to the subject. The course was unanimously approved.

Report of the Connections subcommittee:

Lupher, subcommittee chair (other members DeMarais, Barnett, Smith, and Gray), moved approval of STS 330, The Idea of Evolution, proposed by Kristin Johnson, for Connections core. (See attached report) The course was unanimously approved.

Lupher noted that the subcommittee would not make a recommendation this semester on HUM 304, Ancients and Moderns, because the course proposers have yet to respond to questions from the subcommittee.

Report of the subcommittee for Fine Arts, Humanistic, and Social Scientific Approaches Courses:

Demarais (other members Barnett, Livingston, and Martin) moved approval of FLIA 205, East Asian Literature, proposed by Jan Leuchtenberger, for the Humanistic Approaches core rubric.

The committee judged the course content to be fully consistent with core objectives and guidelines (see attached report). The course was unanimously approved.

Report of the Mathematical Approaches Core subcommittee:

Smith (other members Hong, Demarais, and Tomhave) moved approval of the subcommittee review report of the Mathematical Approaches Core. The subcommittee concluded that the objectives and guidelines of the Math Approaches Core are being met.

Smith noted that the Mathematics and Computer Science Department intends to draft an amendment to the Mathematical Approaches Core guidelines so that the guidelines more adequately address the abstract reasoning skills that are developed in Calculus. Jasinski raised the question of whether amended guidelines would need Senate approval. Smith noted that there were a range of remarks (i.e., no consensus message) on the particular challenges that transfer students face.

Smith noted that one of the issues raised during discussion with the department was how to strengthen students' algebra skills. Tom have clarified that MATH 111—which does not meet the core requirement—covers material that most students normally take in high school, while the lower-numbered MATH 103—which does meet the core requirement—is designed for students who will take just one math course.

The review report of the Mathematical Approaches Core Subcommittee was unanimously approved (see attached report).

2005-2006 Curriculum Committee Final Report:

Jasinski moved approval of the Committee's 2005-2006 Final Report. Jasinski noted that among the recommended charges for the committee in 2006-2007 will be a consideration of "double counting" of some course work and an examination of guidelines for assigning activity versus academic credit. In reference to the academic calendar, Jasinski noted that the fall semester is now essentially one week shorter than the spring semester. The Final Report was unanimously approved.

Livingston, on behalf of all members, thanked Jasinski for his leadership of the committee this year.

The committee adjourned at 8:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bradford Dillman

The Connections Sub-Committee moves approval of STS 330 ("The Idea of Evolution") for Connections Core

There were some concerns and suggestions that we have passed along to the instructor (Kristin Johnson), but we did not believe that the sub-committee's motion to approve needed to be delayed until these matters are addressed. They are:

- a suggestion that the journal assignments include ones that explicitly foster the students' "understanding of the relationship of fields of knowledge" (to quote the official language).
- a gentle hint that Ms. Johnson be alerted to the existence of a finals week here and the possibilities it offers for some kind of "summing-up" experience (not *necessarily* a final exam).

We also expect that some of the class meetings will be adjusted in light of next year's actual schedule. For example, Monday, Oct. 16, for which a class meeting is scheduled on the syllabus, is the first day of our grand new two-day fall break. Also, the syllabus lists the last class meeting as occurring on Friday, Dec. 8, but that falls in reading period. The last class meeting should be Wednesday, Dec. 6.

All members of the sub-committee agreed that this looks like an excellent course, well-conceived, challenging, and very timely.

Curriculum Committee
20 April 2006

NON-NATURAL SCIENCES APPROACHES SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

The Subcommittee for Fine Arts, Humanistic, and Social Scientific Approaches courses recommends for approval one course for the Humanistic Approaches core rubric.

MOTION (comment to follow the second to the motion)

I move approval by the Curriculum Committee of the following course for the Humanistic Approaches core rubric:

Foreign Languages and Literature 205 - East Asian Literature, proposed by Jan Leuchtenberger (Foreign Languages and Literature)

This course, new to the curriculum this year and already taught, is an introduction to "the cultures of Japan and China and the fundamental modes of thought that inform them" through the study of major works of literature from each tradition (cover memorandum, 1). The subcommittee judges the course content to be fully consistent with core objectives and guidelines toward "an understanding of how humans have addressed fundamental questions of existence, identity, and values" (HM core learning objectives) and is pleased to recommend approval for the core.

Subcommittee

Suzanne Barnett, chair
Alyce DeMarais
Grace Livingston
Richard Martin

Report from the Mathematical Approaches Core Subcommittee

Subcommittee members: Zaixin Hong, Alyce DeMarais, Christine Smith (chair) and Brad Tomhave

The subcommittee reviewed the course outlines of the classes that fulfill the Mathematical Approaches core and examined the responses to a questionnaire sent to all of the faculty teaching in the Math and Computer Science Department—which is the only department offering courses in this core area. The subcommittee also met with the Math and Computer Science Department on April 14 to discuss the core and to get feedback from those who regularly teach in this area.

Overall the Math/CSci Department is satisfied with the way that their courses meet the Mathematic Approaches Core. Below are some of the issues raised during the discussion:

- The current wording of the guidelines for the Math Approaches core does not adequately address the abstract reasoning skills that are developed in Calculus, which is a course that currently fulfills the requirement. Thus, the Math/CSci Department intends to draft an amended version of the guidelines so that Calculus meets the guidelines.
- The distribution of students in the various core classes was discussed. Intro to Stats accommodates $\sim 2/3$ of the campus Math Approaches core; however more students are fulfilling the requirement with Calculus than in previous years. In contrast, fewer students than in previous years are choosing to take Intro to Contemporary Math and Finite Math.
- The diversity of student background/skill level in core courses was addressed. The consensus was that Calculus tends to have a broader audience whereas Intro to Stats tends to be more uniform. These observations did not appear to cause any difficulties for instructors of these courses.
- Students should be aware of the purpose of the core because all Math Core courses share departmental syllabi that explicitly state the objectives of the core.
- The Math/CSci Department has developed an assessment tool for the Intro to Stats course that addresses student ability to statistically analyze a data set given at the beginning of the term and a second data set given at the end of the term. This assessment was given last year with inconclusive results and has been revamped for use with this year's students.
- There was some discussion about how algebra skills are addressed in the core. Toward this end, remedial worksheets will be available in the Center for Writing and Learning.

The Math Approaches Core subcommittee concludes that the objectives and guidelines of the Math Approaches Core are being met and offers no recommendation for changes to this core area.