

Curriculum Committee Minutes
April 5, 2004

Members Present: Richard Anderson-Connolly, Bill Barry, DeWayne Derryberry, Mott Greene, Sue Hannaford (chair), Christine Kline, Lynda Livingston, David Lupher, Ken Rousslang, Douglas Sackman, Joyce Tomashiro, Brad Tomhave, Carrie Washburn

Visitors Present: none

Hannaford called the meeting to order at 2:07 p.m.

approval of minutes:

It was noted that the elucidating footnotes to the minutes do not appear in the web version. This is an abomination!

Washburn M/S/P minutes of March 29.

announcements:

Tomhave (present) announced that “registration is going well.” woohooo!

Anderson-Connolly wondered if the greater-than-usual turnout that he observed at Spring Campus Day would translate into a larger incoming class. Washburn, although unable to predict the future with complete certainty, can say that our goal is to have a freshman class of 675 instead of the heretofore-customary 650.

SCIS subcommittee report: postponed

Writing and Rhetoric subcommittee report:

Kline introduced Tamiko Nimura’s WR 137 proposal, “On Multiculturalism.” She described the proposal as “in good shape.” The course will utilize a variety of materials and approaches (e.g., essays, pop culture, the creation of a media portfolio) to develop in students the capability for intensive thinking. The instructor’s goals include students’ developing skills in writing and argumentation.

While supportive of the proposal, the subcommittee members have requested that Nimura flesh out the descriptions of assignments. Thus, the motion to accept the course is contingent upon the subcommittee’s receipt of more explicit assignments. Kline will take responsibility for all follow-up.

Hannaford wondered if the proposal adequately addressed WR’s requirement for pro/con reasoning. Kline replied that the assignments’ requirements for “argumentation supported by evidence” make it clear that the proposer understands the need for such a component; however, this is one of the main areas that needs clarification.

Hannaford further wondered if we should approve the course on a one-year basis, after which it could be revised and resubmitted. Kline was open to this idea (although it was not ultimately made part of the approved motion).

Kline M/S/P approval of WR 137, “On Multiculturalism,” for the Writing and Rhetoric core (subject to receipt of explicit assignments meeting the subcommittee’s approval).

Special Interdisciplinary Major (SIM) subcommittee report:

Sackman reported on the proposal of Chai Blair-Stahn for a SIM in “Religion and Literature.” He distributed the following:

Chai Blair-Stahn
Proposal for SIM in “Religion and Literature”

Advisory committee:
David Macey (Primary Advisor): English Department
Stuart Smithers: Religion Department
Jonathan Stockdale: Religion Department

12 unit major:

1. Introductory class: Crisis and Culture [section had strong religious component]
2. British and American literary foundation: British Lit II; American Transcendentalism
3. Western foundation: Religions of the Book; Celtic Literature
4. Non-western foundation: Native Am. Lit; Hinduism; Japanese Religious Traditions
5. Other upper division: Consciousness and the Bourgeoisie (Rel 301)
6. Methodological classes: Anthropological Study of Religion (CSOC 203); Critical Theory Since 1930s
7. SIM thesis: “Human Nature and Natural Enlightenment: Reading the Body in Religion and Literature”

(end insert)

Sackman led discussion on the following:

history of the proposal:

This SIM was originally proposed in October, 2003. It was revised in January and March of 2004. The most recent iteration addressed some of January’s deficiencies (e.g., some unsubstantiated claims, vagueness, lack of scholarly detachment).

evaluation of and support for the proposal:

Four faculty (the members of the advisory committee, plus Bill Breitenbach of the History Department) have written strong supporting letters. The SIM subcommittee members have spoken to all of these letter-writers. They have also interviewed Chai twice, and have solicited writing samples from him.

Barry praised the proposer's "impressive" and "dogged" pursuit of his goal, and noted that the efforts have resulted in a more "scholarly, detached, and defined" proposal.

scope of the proposal:

The current embodiment of the proposal does a better job of defining its topic (and transcending an apparent quest to fulfill personal goals). It addresses "ways literature and religious traditions create prescriptions for ways people can find out more about themselves." It is a broad proposal (it "shoots off in space and time"), but does include an articulation of the types of texts and methods to be employed.

Lupher wondered if a proposal of this type ought not to include a linguistic component. For example, Greek and Latin would be valuable. And witness the amount of non-Western coursework in the proposal! Surely the proposer will not simply study translations? Sackman: Yes, he will. Many of the courses are included primarily for breadth; the focus of the thesis will undoubtedly narrow. Thus, while a linguistic component can be critical for some religious studies, perhaps it is not as much so here (although the proposal would certainly be stronger with such a component). In any event, the proposer will study the works of writers who write in English.

Washburn wondered at the inclusion of a freshman seminar among the requirements. These aren't supposed to be applied toward a major. (Barry noted that the course in question was actually a Comm I course then.) Sackman replied that the course is not necessary to make the proposal work.

Lupher: "Why SIM?" Why not an English/religion double major? Sackman replied that some graduate programs meld these together, in the spirit of this proposal. There are also some time constraints faced by the proposer that may preclude such a course.

Hannaford asked how much coursework there was yet to be completed—i.e., how much refinement we could expect. Sackman: the SIM thesis plus four courses (one of which, Rel 301, is a methods course taught by the primary advisor).

the Grand Metaphor:

Anderson-Connolly asked about the "Reading the Body" title. Is this the spiritual body? the physical body? Responses: Sackman—"metaphoric." Lupher and Greene—abstruse comments regarding "inscribing the body" and nonanatomic, humanities-type concepts. (Greene declined to be interviewed for this article.) The proposer will work closely with Stuart Smithers on the incorporation of this metaphor.

final questions:

Kline asked if the proposal were "distinctive and coherent." Sackman: yes.

Sackman M/S/P acceptance of Chai Blair-Stahn's SIM proposal. (2 abstentions)

Never ones to overstay our welcomes, we **adjourned at 2:56 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Lynda S. Livingston