

13-85
UWUCC: App-10/29/13
Senate: App-12/3/13

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL TO USE W-DESIGNATION

LSC #
Action AP-10/19/13

COVER SHEET: Request for Approval to Use W-Designation

TYPE I. PROFESSOR COMMITMENT

- Professor Dr. Alison Downie Phone 7-1360
 Writing Workshop? (If not at IUP, where? when?) _____
 Proposal for one W-course (see instructions below)
 Agree to forward syllabi for subsequently offered W-courses?

TYPE II. DEPARTMENT COURSE

- Department Contact Person _____ Phone _____
 Course Number/Title _____
 Statement concerning departmental responsibility
 Proposal for this W-course (see instructions below)

TYPE III. SPECIFIC COURSE AND SPECIFIC PROFESSOR(S)

- Professor(s) _____ Phone _____
Course Number/Title _____
Proposal for this W-course (see instructions below)

SIGNATURES:

Professor(s) Alison Downie
Department Chairperson Stuart Chadle
College Dean Alan 10/2/13
Director of Liberal Studies Dr. N. Pugh

COMPONENTS OF A PROPOSAL FOR A WRITING-INTENSIVE COURSE:

- I. "Writing Summary"--one or two pages explaining how writing is used in the course. First, explain any distinctive characteristics of the content or students which would help the Liberal Studies Committee understand your summary. Second, list and explain the types of writing activities; be especially careful to explain (1) what each writing activity is intended to accomplish as well as the (2) amount of writing, (3) frequency and number of assignments, and (4) whether there are opportunities for revision. If the activity is to be graded, indicate (5) evaluation standards and (6) percentage contribution to the student's final grade.
- II. Copy of the course syllabus.
- III. Two or three samples of assignment sheets, instructions, or criteria concerning writing that are given to students. Limit: 4 pages. (Single copies of longer items, if essential to the proposal, may be submitted to be passed among LSC members and returned to you.)

Please number all pages. Provide one copy to Liberal Studies Committee.
Before you submit: Have you double-checked your proposal against "The Liberal Studies Committee's Most Frequently Asked Questions"?

Gail Sedquist
UWUCC 10/29/13

Received
OCT 21 2013

Liberal Studies

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OCT 2 2013

Liberal Studies

Writing Summary: Seminar in Religious Studies (RLST 480)

RLST 480 is an advanced forum for focused study of instructor's choice. Enrollment is limited to majors in the Honors track, minors with a minimum overall GPA of 3.25 and a GPA of 3.5 within the major, or permission of instructor. The Spring 2014 RLST 480, Religious Autobiography: Experience and Identity, is proposed for identification as a "W" course. This course examines theoretical questions regarding the meaning of religious experience and identity through reading life narratives written within a variety of cultural and religious contexts.

Three types of writing will be required in this course:

1. Writing for integrating learning, metacognition, and creative reflection.

Students will write two personal life narratives, one at the beginning of the term and one at the end of the term. These writing tasks will provide students with an opportunity to experience themselves as meaning makers through their own story-telling. The first paper will be written before they have read the stories of others, while the second paper will be written after having read many stories from a variety of authors. Students will have the opportunity to integrate their reflection upon the stories of others' lives with their own. Written informal reflections upon our readings will also be done in class in order to promote critical thinking and group discussions. These out of class papers and in class reflections will be required but not graded (10% of grade).

2. Writing for evaluation

There are two major examinations, a mid-term and a final. Students will write their answers during the 1-1/2 hour class period, but have copies of the major essay questions ahead of time. Students will be asked to integrate theory concerning religious experience, identity and self, with reference to specific narrative texts (65% of grade).

3. Writing for analysis and integrating independent learning to support a thesis

Students will write a research paper on a full length religious autobiography of their choice. In addition to demonstrating a sound understanding of the religious tradition in which the author locates him/herself, the paper will also support a thesis regarding this life narrative. The thesis will be critical analysis using theoretical approaches of the course for discussing themes of religious experience and identity. This project will be guided in stages, giving students opportunity to revise in response to instructor feedback. The finished essay will be evaluated on sophistication of content, coherence of argument, and writing excellence (25% of grade).

Writing Summary: Seminar in Religious Studies (RLST 480)

RLST 480 is an advanced forum for focused study of instructor's choice. Enrollment is limited to majors in the Honors track, minors with a minimum GPA of 3.0, or permission of instructor. The Spring 2014 RLST 480, Religious Autobiography: Experience and Identity, is proposed for identification as a "W" course. This course examines theoretical questions regarding the meaning of religious experience and identity through reading life narratives written within a variety of cultural and religious contexts.

Three types of writing will be required in this course:

1. Writing for integrating learning, metacognition, and creative reflection

Student will write two personal life narratives, one at the beginning of the term and one at the end of the term, which will be evaluated on a credit/no credit basis according to distributed rubrics. These writing tasks will provide students with an opportunity to experience themselves as meaning makers through their own story-telling. This assignment does not assume students have a religious background or wish to belong to any religious tradition. It asks them to identify and probe their own development regarding ultimate values and meaning of life.

The first life narrative will be written before students have read autobiographies of others. The rubric for assessing credit on this assignment will be as follows:

1. Submitted on due date	Y	N
2. Required length	Y	N
3. Describes a single event or a theme in student's life	Y	N
4. Uses supporting detail to describe event or theme	Y	N
5. Demonstrates self reflection	Y	N

The second life narrative assignment will have the same criteria but also require students to use the learning of the semester in order to revisit the topic and deepen the reflection begun in the first paper.

1. Submitted on due date	Y	N
2. Required length	Y	N
3. Describes a single event or a theme in student's life	Y	N
4. Uses supporting detail to describe event or theme	Y	N
5. Demonstrates deeper self reflection than first paper	Y	N
6. Demonstrates use of semester material in self reflection	Y	N

2. Writing for evaluation

There are two major examinations, a mid-term and a final. Students will write their answers during the 1-1/2 hour class period, but have copies of the major essay questions ahead of time.

Students will be asked to integrate theory concerning religious experience, identity, and self, with reference to specific narrative texts (65% of grade).

3. Writing for analysis and integrating independent learning to support a thesis

Students will write a research paper on a full length religious autobiography of their choice. In addition to demonstrating a sound understanding of the religious tradition in which the author locates him/her self, the paper will also support a thesis regarding this life narrative. The thesis will be critical analysis using theory discussed in the course regarding themes of religious experience and identity. This project will be guided in stages, giving students opportunity to revise in response to both peer review and instructor feedback. Students will share their finished work with each other at the end of the term. The paper will be evaluated on sophistication of content, coherence of argument, and writing excellence.

Summary Chart for Writing Assignments*

A. Writing Assignments					
Assignment Title	# of Assignments	# of total pages	Graded (Yes/No)	Opportunity for Revision (Yes/No)	Written Assignment represents what % of final course grade
Research paper	1	10-12	Yes	Yes	25%
Personal reflection essays	2	8-10	No	No	10%
Totals	3	18-22	NA	NA	35%

B. Examinations (Complete only if you intend to use essay exams/short answers-as part of the required number of pages of writing.)			
Exams	Approx. % of exam that is essay or short answer	Anticipated # of pages for essay or short answer, or approx. word count	Exam constitutes what % of final course grade
1.	Mid term 50%	2 pages	30%
2.	Final 100%	5 pages	35%
3.			
Totals			

**Total writing assignments should contain at least 5000 words (approximately 15-20 typed pages) in two or more separate assignments; written assignments should be a major part of the final grade—at least 50% or more.*

COURSE SYLLABUS

RLST 480

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION

RLST 480 Honors Seminar

Course Title: Religious Autobiography: Experience and Identity

Prerequisite: Honors Track status or instructor permission

Examines theoretical questions regarding the meaning of religious experience and identity through reading life narratives written within a variety of cultural and religious contexts. The course explores the place of personal narrative in the task of meaning-making.

II. OBJECTIVES

- A. To challenge and develop students' analytical skills through the close reading of theoretical texts on religious experience and identity
- B. To challenge and develop students' synthetic skills by pursuing a theme of life narrative as expressed in distinct religious traditions
- C. To encourage and develop students' creativity as well as research and critical thinking/writing skills in production of a major research paper

III. COURSE OUTLINE

- A. Contested theoretical questions (2 weeks)
What constitutes "religious" experience? How does religion contribute to the shaping of personal identity and a sense of self and how does individual life experience shape a person's religiousness (or lack thereof)? What kind of truth can autobiography tell? These themes will be introduced in readings in the first two weeks and revisited throughout the semester as we read, interpret and discuss life narratives of various religious traditions.
- B. Native American Narratives (2 weeks)
- C. Hindu narratives (2 weeks)
- D. Buddhist narratives (2 weeks)
- E. Jewish narratives (2 weeks)
- F. Christian narratives (2 weeks)
- G. Muslim narratives (2 weeks)
- H. Concluding observations and sharing of student research projects

IV. EVALUATION METHODS

Final Course grade is determined as follows:

Mid-term: 30%

Final: 35%

Research Paper: 25%

2 Personal reflection essays and class participation: 10%

VI. REQUIRED READING

Mary Karr, *Lit: A Memoir*, Harper Perennial, 2010

Reading Packet (assembled by instructor). No anthology of religious autobiographies is currently in print. Therefore, I have selected excerpts of autobiographical writing from various religious traditions.

In addition to the autobiographical excerpts, the reading packet will also include selected essays and excerpts from longer works representative of critical theory in areas of religious experience, identity construction, and personal narrative.

Assignment Sheet: Research Paper

The research paper will be a 10-12 page sustained analysis of some aspect of a full length religious autobiography. A bibliography of life narratives in various religious traditions is provided. If you are interested in a work not on the list, you may consult with me for approval. The paper must draw upon at least six academic sources, which may include critical reviews.

Your paper must develop a critical thesis about an aspect of this autobiography which interests you. For example, you might demonstrate how particular aspects of the author's religious tradition have shaped the author's life in specific ways. Conversely, you may argue that particular life experiences of the author have shaped his or her religious identity and sense of self.

While your thesis will be your own specific assessment of a particular work, the paper must demonstrate that you can use the theoretical tools of the course to analyze themes of experience and identity in a given religious life narrative.

Evaluation of Research Paper:

1. Content (60 points)

points

a. Analysis	unacceptable	poor	fair	good	very good	excellent
Accuracy of facts	unacceptable	poor	fair	good	very good	excellent
Comprehensiveness	unacceptable	poor	fair	good	very good	excellent
Appropriateness and insightfulness	unacceptable	poor	fair	good	very good	excellent
b. Thesis	unacceptable	poor	fair	good	very good	excellent
c. Revision (use of instructor comments)	unacceptable	poor	fair	good	very good	excellent

2. Style (30 points)

points

a. Vocabulary	unacceptable	poor	fair	good	very good	excellent
Word choice	unacceptable	poor	fair	good	very good	excellent
Variety	unacceptable	poor	fair	good	very good	excellent
b. Sentence structure	unacceptable	poor	fair	good	very good	excellent
Grammar	unacceptable	poor	fair	good	very good	excellent
Variety	unacceptable	poor	fair	good	very good	excellent
c. Organization	unacceptable	poor	fair	good	very good	excellent
d. Effective use of quotes	unacceptable	poor	fair	good	very good	excellent
e. Introduction	unacceptable	poor	fair	good	very good	excellent
f. Conclusion	unacceptable	poor	fair	good	very good	excellent

3. Presentation (10 points)

points

a. Title	unacceptable	poor	fair	good	very good	excellent
b. Spelling (including typos)	unacceptable	poor	fair	good	very good	excellent
c. Capitalization	unacceptable	poor	fair	good	very good	excellent
d. Punctuation	unacceptable	poor	fair	good	very good	excellent
e. References	unacceptable	poor	fair	good	very good	excellent
f. Format/print quality	unacceptable	poor	fair	good	very good	excellent
g. Timely submission	late (days)				on time

OVERALL GRADE

RLST 480 Assignment Sheet: Personal Life Narrative #2

Two non-graded personal reflection essays frame this semester's work. At the beginning of the term, you wrote a life narrative which focused upon your sources for meaning making. Please re-read that paper.

By now, as the term draws to a close, you have read many religious autobiographies and have encountered a variety of voices from quite different traditions which recount many different experiences. You have also studied theory regarding how people form a sense of self, how people construct their identities, how people interpret their experiences, and the place religion plays in these tasks for those who identify with a religious tradition.

In this second life narrative assignment, you are asked to use all you have encountered this term re-write a life narrative. You may do this in a variety of ways, which may or may not overlap with your first essay. Some suggestions follow:

Perhaps you would like to speculate upon how you would interpret a particular event in your life if you identified as Buddhist, or if Islam were your guiding interpretive frame, perhaps modeling your story upon one of the life stories that you found memorable in our reading.

Is a religious identity an important source of meaning making for you? If so, you might choose to tell a story about your life in using a particular religious identity as your interpretive lens.

Or perhaps you would like to consider an "identity marker" that is important to you (body markings, hairstyles, jewelry, etc.) and describe how this marker tells your story.