

October 15, 2009

1 **Proposal to Revise the Graduate Certificate in the Teaching of Composition**

3 **I. Introduction**

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9 The Certificate in the Teaching of Composition is designed primarily to prepare students
10 to teach writing at the community college or college level. Although the program is
11 grounded in theory and research, the core courses for the certificate have a strong
12 emphasis on pedagogy and teacher training. The Certificate program introduces students
13 to the field of composition, and gives them the practical tools to teach writing (how to
14 design an effective lesson plan, how to respond to student writing, how to design a
15 syllabus). The program also offers students the possibility of teaching undergraduate
16 composition courses as graduate teaching assistants. Students have multiple opportunities
17 to observe experienced teachers, and to work as tutors in the writing center.

19 The certificate courses are drawn from our core courses in our MA in Composition
20 program. This proposal seeks to align the certificate courses with changes we have
21 proposed to our MA in English with a Concentration in Composition program.

23 Our faculty conduct research in the areas of literacy and composition studies, teacher
24 education, writing across the curriculum, and reading/writing connections. In all their
25 fields of scholarship, composition faculty members share an interest in teaching and
26 learning as reflective practices and serious areas of inquiry.

29 **II. Nature of the Request**

31 The graduate faculty in the MA in English with a Concentration in Composition program
32 propose to update the Certificate in the Teaching of Composition by altering our
33 requirements and revising some of the certificate courses. We are not changing the
34 number of units required in the certificate, which would remain at 12. Specifically, we
35 would like to:

36 **A. Eliminate redundant or unnecessary requirements**

37 We would no longer require English 657: Grammar and Rhetoric of the
38 Sentence (it will be replaced with a revised English 704: Pedagogical
39 Grammar);

40 We would no longer offer English 705: Composition Pedagogy II; We
41 would require English 710: Seminar in Integrated Reading and Writing in
42 its place.

44 **B. Change the title and focus of English 704.** Currently, it is titled “Composition
45 Pedagogy I.” It will become “Pedagogical Grammar.” This new course will
46 incorporate material from English 657; it will also update that material with recent

1 research on grammar instruction as well as recent theories about linguistic
2 diversity and writing pedagogy.

3
4 C. Change English 700: Introduction to Composition Theory from a
5 recommended elective to a requirement; this would replace the elective in our
6 current certificate;

7
8 D. Require English 709: Seminar in Integrated Reading and Writing I in place of
9 the old version of English 704: Composition Pedagogy I.

10 11 **III. Reasons for the Changes**

12
13 *We would no longer require English 657: Grammar and Rhetoric of the Sentence.*
14 *It will be replaced with a revised English 704: Pedagogical Grammar;*

15
16 English 657 has occupied a central place in our program. In this course, future
17 teachers learn how to untangle grammar problems in student sentences, to
18 recognize patterns of student grammar errors, and to think critically about how
19 best to teach writing at the sentence level. But in its current form and position,
20 the course is both over-emphasized in our program, and marginalized. It is over-
21 emphasized in that it has been the first course that all students must take, before
22 they can move on in the program. This gives students the potentially problematic
23 idea that sentence-level concerns are the most important or dominant concerns for
24 teachers of writing. Much current research in the field rejects this point of view.
25 It also makes it difficult for students to place grammar instruction and sentence-
26 level concerns in a larger pedagogical context, as much recent scholarship and
27 practice in the field suggests. We would like to move this course so that students
28 take it slightly later in their program of study. We hope that this move will allow
29 students to better conceptualize and prioritize the place of sentence-level
30 instruction in the teaching of writing, as something important but not necessarily
31 central or a priori to successful literacy education.

32
33 In addition, the content of English 657 and English 704: Pedagogy in
34 Composition I overlap in some significant areas. Traditionally, English 704 has
35 served, in part, as a review of material covered in 657, providing students with
36 additional practice identifying errors and patterns of errors in student writing. We
37 plan to move the subject matter taught currently in English 657 to English 704 in
38 order to eliminate this redundancy, and to rename the course “Pedagogical
39 Grammar.” We hope to continue to offer English 657 or a similar course to
40 undergraduates interested in understanding sentence-level issues in more depth,
41 and will develop an elective graduate seminar for those who would like more
42 depth of knowledge in the subject.

43
44 The new English 704: Pedagogical Grammar that we are proposing would
45 continue to focus on understanding student writing at the sentence-level, on
46 teaching grammar in the context of student writing, and on rhetorical use of

1 sentence structures. Topics may include: current research on pedagogical
2 strategies for addressing sentence-level errors in student writing; current theories
3 about the place and efficacy of grammar instruction in writing classrooms; current
4 research on linguistic diversity and the teaching of grammar.

5
6 *We would no longer offer English 705: Pedagogy in Composition II. Instead, we*
7 *will require English 710: Integrated Reading and Writing II*

8
9 Many of our Certificate students also pursue the Certificate in Post-Secondary
10 Reading. These students thus end up taking English 705 and English 710. Both
11 courses serve as teaching practica – that is, they prepare students for the nuts and
12 bolts of teaching writing. In both courses, students design lesson plans and learn
13 how to create daily classroom activities. In both courses, students write a syllabus
14 for a lower-division writing course. In both courses, students read scholarship
15 about best practices in literacy instruction. The difference between the two is that
16 English 705 focuses specifically on composition courses such as English 114,
17 where as English 710 focuses on integrated reading and writing courses, such as
18 English 104, 105, and 106. Because all composition courses actually involve, or
19 should involve, an integration of reading and writing, we are proposing to
20 eliminate English 705 and require English 710 of all of our certificate students.

21
22 This move allows us to accomplish several things: first, as stated above, it
23 reinforces in our curriculum the idea that reading and writing are interrelated
24 processes that cannot be taught in isolation from each other. Teaching reading and
25 writing as integrated processes brings our program more solidly in line with best
26 practices and current research in the field of Composition. Secondly, it helps
27 eliminate redundancy in the Certificate program for those students who also
28 pursue the Certificate in Post-Secondary Reading.

29
30 *We would require English 700: Introduction to Composition Theory, rather than*
31 *offer it as an elective.*

32
33 English 700 is an introductory course that gives students an overview of the field
34 of Composition. As such, it provides an important grounding in the field and
35 gives students a context for the learning that comes later in the Certificate.
36 Currently, we advise our Certificate students to take 700. Going forward, we
37 would like to require it. We are making room for this change by eliminating an
38 elective (most students use the elective to take English 700 anyway; this change
39 merely formalizes the practice). Our total number of required courses for the
40 Certificate will not change.

41
42 *We would require English 709: Seminar in Teaching Integrated Reading and*
43 *Writing I.*

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45 Requiring this course, which is currently part of the required core courses for the
46 Certificate in Post-Secondary Reading, reinforces in our curriculum the idea that

1 reading and writing are interrelated processes that cannot be taught in isolation
 2 from each other. Teaching reading and writing as integrated processes brings our
 3 program more solidly in line with best practices and current research in the field
 4 of Composition. In addition, English 709 is the only course that focuses on Basic
 5 Writing, which is an important component of our field, particularly for our
 6 students, many of whom go on to teach at the community college, where Basic
 7 Writing courses predominate.

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IV. Descriptions of the Changes

Current			Proposed		
		<i>Units</i>			<i>Units</i>
Required courses			Required courses		
ENG 657	Grammar and Rhetoric of the Sentence	3	ENG 700	Introduction to Composition Theory	3
ENG 704	Pedagogy in Composition I	3	ENG 704	Pedagogical Grammar	3
ENG 705	Pedagogy in Composition II	3	ENG 709	Seminar in Teaching Integrated Reading and Writing I	3
Electives: select one		3	ENG 710	Seminar in Teaching Integrated Reading and Writing II	3
ENG 429	Stylistics				
ENG 656	Topics in Reading in the Secondary School		Total for program		
ENG 658	Projects in Study and Reading Techniques				12
ENG 700	Introduction to Composition Theory				
ENG 701	Theoretical Backgrounds in Community College and College Reading Instruction				
ENG 706	Seminar in Sociolinguistics of Composition				
ENG 707	Current Issues in Composition				
ENG 708	Computers and the Teaching of Writing				
ENG 709	Seminar in Teaching Integrated Reading and Writing I				
ENG 710	Seminar in Teaching Integrated Reading and Writing II				
ENG 715	Pedagogy and Practice in Post-secondary Reading				
ENG 717	Projects in the Teaching of Literature				
ENG 718	Supervision of Teaching Experience				
ENG 722	Seminar: TESOL Reading and Writing Skills				

ENG 800	Special Topics in the Study of Composition and Reading	
Total for program		12

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V. Consultations

1. Ann Hallum

2. Library

The proposed changes do not have any implications for other departments or programs beyond our own composition certificate program, which we have revised in accordance with the proposed changes to the MA. We do not anticipate that these changes will result in decreased enrollment or a need for additional sections.

VI. Resource Implications

The proposed changes will not affect FTE or resources, or the numbers or types of students expected to enroll in the revised program.

VII. Provisions for Program Assessment

In all of our courses, we strive to create students who are reflective practitioners, able to reflect on their own practices in order to continue growing, changing, and learning throughout their teaching careers. Specifically, our goal for the Certificate in Teaching Composition Program is to produce students who are:

1. conversant in recent theories and research in the field of composition and aware of the field as a community of teachers and as a resource for teachers;
2. conversant in the linguistic knowledge necessary to work effectively with student writing at the sentence level;
3. conversant in theories addressing the processes of learning to read and write and the nature of such literacy practices;
4. aware of the most up-to-date classroom strategies and principles of effective teaching.

We will assess these goals by assessing student work in each of our courses.

In English 700, we will assign and assess seminar papers and more informal reflective writing that engages students with the most recent theories and research in the field of composition.

In English 704, we will assess students' knowledge of research on teaching and learning at the sentence level. Students will have multiple opportunities to analyze sample student writing, situate the problems they see in that writing in larger conversations in the field about the role of grammar and grammar instruction in writing, and create effective teaching strategies and ways of responding to students' grammatical learning in the classroom.

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1 In English 709, we will assess students' understanding of reading and writing as
2 intertwined literacy practices. Students will have the opportunity to create
3 teaching materials that reflect this understanding, as well as to write reflective
4 essays on this topic.

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6 In English 710, we will assess students' knowledge of classroom strategies and
7 principles of effective teaching. Students will have opportunities to create
8 teaching materials and syllabi, as well as to write reflective essays on their
9 learning.

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12 Because our certificate courses are also the core courses in our MA in English with a
13 Concentration in Composition, part of our assessment of the certificate will occur as we
14 assess the MA students' Culminating Experience projects.

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16 **Level One and Level Two Writing Requirements**

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18 Currently, we assess students' Level One and Level Two writing in English 657.

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20 Going forward, we plan to determine students' Level One Writing Proficiency by:
21 1) relying on their home department's Level One Writing Requirements;
22 2) For those Certificate students not matriculated in another program on campus, we will
23 determine Level One Writing Proficiency by requiring a writing sample with the
24 student's admission file. The writing sample will be read by our admissions committee
25 and assessed using program-approved criteria.

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27 We plan to determine student's Level Two Writing Proficiency by assessing their work in
28 English 700.

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30 **VIII. Advising / Transition Guidelines**

31 We will accommodate all students so that they may follow the path laid out in the bulletin
32 that they came in under. Because we are a small program, we anticipate being able to
33 advise and accommodate such students individually based on courses they have already
34 completed. For example, if a student has already taken 657 when we implement the
35 changes, we will allow 657 to count for 704. We will offer courses or alternative courses
36 for as long as necessary so that students who came in under an earlier bulletin will be
37 able to make progress toward their degree.

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1 **IX. Bulletin Copy for Revised Program Upon Approval**

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3 **CERTIFICATE IN THE TEACHING OF**
4 **COMPOSITION**

5 The Certificate in Teaching of Composition is designed to provide theoretical and
6 pedagogical preparation for students who plan to teach writing in post-secondary
7 classrooms.

8 **Admission to Program**

9 For matriculated students, admission to the certificate program requires completion of an
10 application form, available in the Composition Office, HUM 209. Anyone who wishes a
11 certificate but is not currently matriculated will need to apply to the university, using the
12 published admissions process, before being considered for admission to the composition
13 certificate program. For information about how to complete this application, students
14 should consult the appropriate graduate coordinator of the Division of Graduate Studies.

15 Students interested in admission to the certificate programs need not have completed
16 undergraduate degree programs in English literature or language studies, nor need they be
17 enrolled in master's programs offered in the Department of English. Graduate students
18 from master's programs offered in this department should contact their advisers to find
19 out how many of the courses taken for composition certificate they may use to meet
20 degree requirements in the MA program. Unclassified graduate students and candidates
21 for degrees in other departments may be accepted into the program with the approval of
22 the composition faculty.

23 All certificate candidates should familiarize themselves with the general guidelines for
24 earning a certificate on this campus. A student planning to earn an undergraduate or
25 graduate certificate must meet the requirements listed in the [Certificate Programs](#) section
26 of this *Bulletin*. Any student who decides he/she wishes to enter the MA program in
27 composition must consult his/her adviser immediately to find out how best to proceed.

28 **Certificate in the Teaching of Composition**

29 ***Written English Proficiency Requirement***

30 **Level One:** Students who are already matriculated in a graduate program on campus will
31 have satisfied Level One via their home department's criteria. Students who are
32 returning for the certificate only must submit a writing sample with their application.

33 **Level Two:** Students must earn a grade of B or better in English 700.

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