

BROOKLYN COLLEGE  
OF  
THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK  
FACULTY COUNCIL  
Meeting of April 4, 2017

The Committee on Undergraduate Curriculum and Degree Requirements herewith submits its recommendations in Curriculum Document 387.

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**SECTION A-III: CHANGES IN DEGREE PROGRAMS**  
**Department of English**

**B.A. degree program in journalism**

HEGIS code 0602; SED program code 81099

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Program requirements (~~39-45~~ 48 credits)  
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I. (~~27~~ 24 credits) All of the following: English 2401; 2402; 2403; ~~3403 or 3406~~; ~~3401 or 4402~~; ~~3402 or 3405~~; ~~3407~~; 4401; 4403; 4404; 4405.

II. (6 credits) Two of the following: 3402; 3403; 3404; 3405; 3406; 4402; Television and Radio 4045.

~~III.~~ (3-9 credits) English ~~3404 or 5401~~; or ~~Television and Radio 4729~~ or 5102 or 5103.

~~IV.~~ (9-12 credits) ~~Nine~~ Twelve credits, approved by the director of the Journalism Program, in a single department or interdisciplinary program. No journalism courses may be used to satisfy this requirement. Credits used toward a major or minor in another degree program outside the Journalism Program are acceptable to fulfill this requirement. For approval of the outside concentration, students are expected to demonstrate how the chosen area of study can inform their work in journalism.

Students should note that the prerequisite of English 2401 is one of the following courses with a grade of B or better: English [2.7], 1012, 2115, 2116 or 2302.

Departmental honors in journalism:

Fulfillment of the requirements for the B.A. in Journalism with a B+ or higher average in all advanced work in the major; completion of English 4402 or 4403 with a grade of B or higher; completion of Senior Thesis courses English 5103, or 5104 and 5105, with grades of B or higher.

**Rationale:** The degree requirements for the B.A. in Journalism are changed to add an advanced-level course in multimedia journalism so that students can build on skills in video storytelling developed in the previously existing introductory course and deepen their knowledge of journalism technology in a variety of other ways. The History of News course, which has been a 2000-level lecture course, is being changed to a 4000-level capstone seminar in which students gain a deeper and more sophisticated understanding of news and reporting by integrating historical material with the journalistic experience and knowledge that they will have gained earlier in their program. Prerequisites are revised so that there is an improved sequence of courses, with students learning technical skills for telling stories in audio and video earlier so that they can apply these skills in intermediate and advanced reporting courses. These skills can then be applied in level II courses, in which students will create cross-platform stories. Course descriptions and titles are adapted to incorporate these cross-platform storytelling skills (many courses have already been evolving in this direction). And the required concentration in a field outside journalism – designed to give students a depth of expertise that will aid them as journalists – reverts from 9 credits to 12, highlighting how important it is for journalists to

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develop expertise in a relevant field of study. The overall aim is to infuse cross-platform storytelling across the curriculum; to preserve the program's emphasis on strong writing and reporting skills as a key to journalistic success; and to deepen the students' knowledge of the societal institutions that journalists commonly report on.

**Clearance:** Television and Radio

**Date of departmental approval:** February 14, 2017

**Effective date:** Fall 2017

**SECTION A-III: CHANGES IN DEGREE PROGRAMS**

**Department of English**

**B.A. degree program in comparative literature**

HEGIS code 1503; SED program code 02047

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Program requirements (~~39-41~~ 40-44 credits)  
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I. English 2120 and 2121 (~~6~~ 8 credits)

English 2120 and 2121 are both required. Comparative literature majors should complete either English 2120 or 2121 or be enrolled in one or the other, before continuing in other electives. No ENGL course numbered lower than 2115 may count toward the major.

II. (~~9~~ 12 credits) Three of the following: Comparative Literature 3614, 3615, 3616, 3617, 3618.

III. (~~9~~ 7-8 credits) A total of ~~three~~ two of the following courses chosen from ~~at least~~ two genres:

The novel: Comparative Literature 3606, 3607, 3609.

Drama: Comparative Literature 3610, 3611.

Other genres: Comparative Literature 3601, 3602, 3603, 3604, 3605, 3608, 3612, 3613, 3624, 3625, 3626, 3627, 3628, 3629.

IV. (~~3-4~~ credits) One of the following: Comparative Literature 3613, 3619, 3621, 3622, 3623, 3624, 3625, 3626, 3627, 3629, 3631.

V. (~~6-4~~ credits) ~~Comparative Literature 4601 or 4602 and any course listed under interdisciplinary and thematic studies~~ A 4000-level Comparative Literature or English literature seminar.

VI. (6-8 credits) At least six credits in literature courses numbered higher than 2010 in a classical or modern language.

Students who have successfully completed the Communication 1202 and Humanities 1204 seminars of the Special Baccalaureate Degree Program for Adults or Comparative Literature 11 or the approved equivalents for the latter automatically have the prerequisites for any advanced course in comparative literature.

**Rationale:** The changes in this degree program result primarily from an across-the-board change in the number of credits/hours for ENGL and CMLT courses numbered 2115 and above (excluding certain courses that are cross-listed with other departments), from 3 credits/3 hours to 4 credits/4 hours. The purpose of adding a fourth hour to our courses is to provide additional attention to writing and revision. Adding a fourth hour, dedicated to guided writing practice and peer-critique, addresses a dire and longstanding need for students to develop and hone their writing skills in a structured environment. Below, we describe (1) the crisis in student writing that has prompted this change; (2) how the English department has already begun to meet this challenge by re-prioritizing and re-formulating its goals, objectives and learning outcomes; (3) how the proposed change will — and to a certain extent already has begun to — address the problem; (4) how we can achieve this change with only a minimal reduction in number of

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courses for the major; (5) why the move to 4 hours/4 credits is (part of) the optimal response (as opposed to simply requiring additional 3-hour courses).

## 1. A CRISIS IN UNDERGRADUATE WRITING

An important part of undergraduate education is to develop the ability to express ideas in writing—coherently, persuasively, and with clarity, focus and structure. College undergraduates across the country are not excelling at this crucial set of skills by the time they graduate, and our students at Brooklyn College are no exception. The English department faculty's judgment about our students' writing abilities is echoed (repeatedly) in informal discussions with our colleagues in other departments. And it is supported by reputable scholarly research. A pathbreaking 2011 study of over 2300 students at a wide range of U.S. colleges, by Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa, found that more than a third of undergraduates fail to demonstrate significant improvement, over four years of college, in a variety of important academic skills including writing. [Arum and Roksa, "Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses," University of Chicago Press, 2011.] To measure student learning in their sample population, Arum and Roksa used the Collegiate Learning Assessment, which was administered both when students began college and again at the end of the senior year.

For Brooklyn College students, we have data on students' self-assessment that is largely consistent with Arum and Roksa's findings with regard to writing. According to the 2009 National Survey of Student Engagement (the most recent year available from the BC office of Institutional Research and Data Analysis), Brooklyn College undergraduates were not significantly more likely to report, in their senior year over their freshman year, that their BC education had contributed to their ability to write clearly and effectively. For both first-year students and seniors, over a quarter of those surveyed reported that they had gained only "some" (26% / 23%) or "very little" (3% / 4%) skill at writing, as opposed to "quite a bit" (39% / 38%) or "very much" (32% / 35%). To be clear, these numbers do not demonstrate that we are failing to impart writing skills to our students (or that they believe we are failing to do so). They do, however, give weight to our own judgment that too many of our students are facing challenges in writing throughout their undergraduate careers.

A more recent large-scale study using a very different method — published in Feb 2017 by the American Association of Colleges and Universities — argued for a more sanguine conclusion than that of Arum and Roksa. This study ["On Solid Ground", <https://www.aacu.org/publications>] asked professors from 92 public and private higher education institutions to rate thousands of samples of student work, using uniform rubrics, on a variety of skills including writing. The undergraduates in this study had completed at least three fourths of their required credit hours. Interestingly (the "optimistic" conclusion notwithstanding), even this study found that between 38% and 48% of undergraduates performed at best in the second (out of four) "just adequate" tier of the rubric categories for Written Communication. While this study did not find that a large proportion of students were troublingly deficient at writing, the results hardly argue that students are excelling by the time they are 75% of the way to graduation.

A 2006 study in the Chronicle of Higher Education provides a clue as to one of the reasons that college students face severe challenges in their writing. This study investigated the perceptions of high school teachers' estimations of the preparedness of high school graduates for college level writing, as compared with the estimations of the same population by college faculty members. What the study found was a "perception gap": the high school teachers were much more likely to rate the students as prepared than the college faculty were. According to the Chronicle study, 44% of college faculty reported that incoming first-year students were "not well prepared" for college-level writing, while only 10% of high school teachers rated those students the same way [<http://www.chronicle.com/article/A-Perception-Gap-Over/31426>].

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As it happens, there are very similar data available for Brooklyn-College incoming students' estimation of their own preparedness for college-level writing, and the data tell an interesting story. An even smaller proportion of BC students (5%) judge that they are not well prepared, as compared with the high-school teachers in the 2006 Chronicle study, and nearly half rated themselves as at or approaching "very prepared." [These data are from the Brooklyn College Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement, 2010, made available by the BC Office of Institutional Research and Data Analysis.] This self-estimate on the part of BC students contrasts markedly with the estimates of the Chronicle's high-school teachers (of whom 36% estimated that graduating seniors were very well prepared) and even more so with the Chronicle's college faculty (of whom only 6% judged incoming students very well prepared).

The comparative results are listed below:

Estimates of Preparedness for College-Level Writing

- College faculty estimation of HS graduates (from the March, 2006 Chronicle study):
  - 44% Not well prepared
  - 47% Somewhat well prepared
  - 6% Very well prepared
- HS teachers estimation of HC graduates (from the March, 2006 Chronicle study):
  - 10% Not well prepared
  - 49% Somewhat well prepared
  - 36% Very well prepared
- Incoming BC first year students' self-assessment (from the 2010 BCSSE):
  - 5% 1-2 on a 6-point scale (1 = Not at all prepared)
  - 47% 3-4 on 6-point scale
  - 48% 5-6 on 6-point scale (6 = Very prepared; 23% answered 6)

Arum and Roksa's 2011 study, in addition to arguing for a rather bleak picture of the college learning (and writing) outcomes landscape, also provides very clear support for a particular path forward. They noted that fully one third of undergraduates in their large sample population do not take any courses with more than 40 pages of reading assigned each week, and half "don't take a single course in which they must write more than 20 pages over the course of a semester." Strikingly (although perhaps not surprisingly), Arum and Roksa reported a correlation between the amount of reading and writing assigned and the gains in learning overall (i.e. in a variety of academic skills, not just writing and critical reading): students who took classes that required more than 40 pages of reading per week and more than 20 pages of writing over a semester gained more than other students. This finding suggests that increased rigor, and specifically increased instruction in writing (not merely replacing other instruction) will improve learning outcomes including but not limited to writing proficiency.

In short, there is a crisis of student writing, which appears to result in part from learning outcome deficiencies measurable at the high school level and which continue to pose challenges to students and to instructors throughout the college years.

## 2. A SYSTEMATIC RESPONSE: DEPARTMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

In the fall of 2015, the English department began a large-scale revision of its outcomes assessment strategy and practices, starting with a re-formulation of its mission and goals. One (among several) of the central motivations for this undertaking was to prioritize student writing at all levels of the major, in recognition of the dire situation described above. In March, 2016, the department established a set of four overarching goals which were to serve as the linchpins of its teaching, and by means of which it would conduct its outcomes assessment. Focus on

written (and oral) expression of ideas constitutes one of the four goals in the resulting document:

"Department Goal 3: Express ideas — both orally and in writing — correctly, cogently, persuasively, and in conformity with the conventions of the discipline."

Together with the revised departmental goals established in March 2016, every departmental program further articulated a set of learning objectives associated with each of the four goals, tailored to its specific conventions and content. The English literature program articulated the following three objectives to supplement Department Goal 3:

"Program Objective 1: Identify, write, and edit for currently accepted conventions of standard English mechanics, grammar, and style (including proper punctuation, subject-verb and noun-pronoun agreement, parallel construction, appropriate tense sequences and moods, etc.)

"Program Objective 2: Learn and follow the conventions of literary argumentation, including formulating thesis statement, and conventions of quoting and citing textual evidence.

"Program Objective 3: Learn how to rethink and revise essays."

In conjunction with the revised goals and objectives, the department is carrying out a rigorous modification to its outcomes assessment strategy, focusing on one objective at a time. Since we are at the early stages and have not yet assessed the outcomes associated with this particular department goal, we cannot yet report any assessment data about the degree of success that instructors have had in implementing these program objectives.

However, we can report that many individual English instructors are already implementing strategies designed to subserve the newly articulated writing objectives. In fact, many instructors are already building more rigorous writing instruction into their courses in keeping with these objectives. The increased writing instruction has supplemented, rather than replaced, other classroom activities and instruction. While this has taken place within the framework of 3-credit/3-hour courses, in practice it means that for an increasing number of our courses there is already an increased workload not only for students but also instructors. Moreover, the increased workload has not simply come in the form of more graded assignments, but has entailed additional instruction time: more interaction between faculty and students as well as interaction among students themselves, focused specifically on writing. Out of necessity (due to the fact that classes meet in 3-hour time slots), this has meant that instructors are taking advantage of the online learning technologies that the College and CUNY have supported. But exigencies aside, instruction in writing lends itself especially well to creative strategies like online supplements to in-class instruction. Many of our faculty, then, are already making effective use of additional instruction in order to meet the newly formulated learning objectives.

### 3. MEETING THE CHALLENGE HEAD-ON: ADDING A FOURTH HOUR

The challenges that students face in writing at all levels of their undergraduate careers requires a systematic approach on the part of the faculty. Adding a fourth hour of instruction to English courses is an important component of such an approach; if an instructor were to add assignments and teaching time to support the writing objectives without a concurrent expansion of the course overall, it would entail reducing assignments and time devoted to (other) important course material. As described above, many individual instructors are already implementing increased workload not only for their students but for themselves, using platforms for online learning to gain additional instruction time. But this strategy has been, thus far, unsystematic and ad hoc. The instructors who are using it (to one degree or another) to add instruction time

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are not getting proper workload credit for their increased workload, and their students are not getting proper academic credit for additional work.

Adding a fourth hour will systematize the increased instruction and build in accountability in a way that the informal, ad hoc implementation has not been able to. Under the proposed change to 4-credits/4-hours, the department creates a clear and systematic expectation for increased instruction, and sets up a formal way both for students and instructors to be accountable for the extra work and also to have that work acknowledged in a way that it has, to one degree or another, not been.

Examples of the kind of instructional activities that might be (and have been) used to prioritize writing include:

- Weekly response papers and peer review, guided by the instructor;
- Writing projects that span several weeks, with weekly revisions based on peer and instructor feedback;
- Longer or more substantial pieces that might be assigned less frequently but for which students are responsible for spending one hour per week giving detailed criticism and feedback of classmates' work to serve as the basis for revision;
- Class or small group writing exercises in which each student is expected to write on a topic relevant to the course, and then critique or respond to one another's drafts.

#### 4. MINIMAL CHANGES TO THE MAJOR

Increasing the number of credits/hours for most classes will clearly have an effect on the number of credits for the degree program. The English department faculty believes that some increase in the requirements is appropriate, given the urgent need for extra attention to writing instruction. However, this proposal includes strategies for attenuating the effect of the change, such that the overall number of credits does not increase sharply. First, some of the electives that are cross-listed with other departments will remain 3 hours/3 credits. Consequently, the Genres and Electives sections of the program requirements have a range of credits, with the lower bound determined by the option to take such cross-listed courses.

Second, in order to accommodate the increased number of credits per course without unduly increasing the required credits for the degree program, we have also made reductions in the requirements for several categories of the program. These changes are consistent with the objectives of the program. Moreover, in conjunction with the extra writing instruction afforded for each course, these modest reductions will have the net effect of enhancing the program objectives. The specific changes include:

- Reducing the number of required Genre courses (area III) from three to two;
- Requiring one seminar (area V) in either CMLT or ENGL, instead of one CMLT seminar and one of a small bucket of other courses; the courses in this bucket have now been shifted to either the Genres (area III) or the CMLT electives (area IV), where they fit more naturally from a disciplinary perspective.

#### 5. ADDING A FOURTH HOUR IS THE OPTIMAL APPROACH

While the English department faculty believes that there can be little doubt about the urgent need for devoting extra instruction time to writing, it is nevertheless important to consider whether there are alternatives to adding a fourth hour to English classes. One obvious logical possibility is to leave courses as 3 credits/3 hours, and to increase the number of courses required for the degree program — for instance, by adding required courses specifically devoted to writing instruction.

Material located with ~~strike-through~~ is to be deleted and material underlined is to be added

An alternative along these lines, however, would be a serious error. Good writing is not simply a technical skill that is learned prior to, and independently of, other areas of academic study. Rather, it is part and parcel of developing and refining other skills such as critical reading and thinking, and must be continually practiced in tandem with these other skills. Given the high priority that the department has determined that writing instruction warrants, an attempt to address it by requiring one or a few additional courses would be no less risible than, for example, offering a dedicated course in scales and arpeggios in a music performance program; there, it is assumed that practice in basic techniques is part and parcel of all performance instruction through the most advanced levels. The English Composition courses provide students with a very good baseline in writing instruction. It is in the subsequent courses that these basic skills need to be really developed through continual, guided practice.

Recent social science research bears this out. Recall that the Arum and Roksa study described above reports a correlation between the amount of writing (and reading) required in college courses and the overall learning outcomes of undergraduate education, not just in writing. Their conclusion from this is that a higher proportion of courses should be more writing- and reading-intensive than what college students are currently receiving. Putting an increased focus on writing in all of our courses — and concomitantly increasing the number of credits/hours — is exactly the right approach, if we are to take findings like these seriously.

In fact, the English department faculty believes that, while we have a special responsibility to prioritize undergraduate writing, there is a potential for great benefit to students if other departments in the College likewise increase the amount of writing that students are expected to do in their courses. This would undoubtedly entail more work both on the part of students and instructors, and implementing it may require a strategy like the one that English is proposing to undertake, i.e. moving to 4 credits/4 hours. We leave that suggestion for our colleagues in other departments to consider. For the time being, we believe that our special disciplinary relationship with writing warrants our leading the charge.

**Date of departmental approval:** December 6, 2016

**Effective date:** Fall 2017

**SECTION A-III: CHANGES IN DEGREE PROGRAMS**  
**Department of English**

**B.A. degree program in English**

HEGIS code 1501; SED program code 02043

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Program requirements (~~39–42~~ 38–47 credits)  
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Students may concentrate in the standard English program or in the History and Literature concentration (see “III. Electives” below).

I. English 2120 and 2121 (~~6~~ 8 credits)

English 2120 and 2121 are both required. English majors should complete either English 2120 or 2121 or be enrolled in one or the other, before continuing in other electives. No ENGL course numbered lower than 2115 may count toward the major.

II. Fields of Study (~~15~~ 14–16 credits)

One course from each of ~~five~~ four of the following ~~seven~~ six fields; ~~at least~~ two of the courses must be chosen from Fields 1 through 3 and ~~two must be chosen from~~ Fields 4 through 6:

1. Middle Ages: English 3111, 3112, 3520, 4101; Comparative Literature 3614.
2. Renaissance: English 3120, 3121, 3122, 3123, 3124, 3125, 4102; Comparative Literature 3615.
3. Eighteenth Century: English 3131, 3132, 3133, 4103; Comparative Literature 3616.
4. Nineteenth Century and Romanticism: English 3140, 3141, 3142, 3143, 3145, 3151, 3156, 3157, 3158, 3160, 4104, 4107; Comparative Literature 3606, 3617.
- ~~5. American Literature and Culture: English 2402, 3151, 3152, 3153, 3154, 3156, 3157, 3158, 3159, 3160, 3161, 3162, 3163, 3164, 3165, 4105; Comparative Literature 3622, 3623.~~
- 6 ~~5~~. Modernism: English 2402, 3152, 3153, 3156, 3159, 3160, 3161, 3162, 3163, 3164, 3165, 3170, 3171, 3172, 3173, 3193, 4110, 4107, 4108; Comparative Literature 3607, 3608, 3610, 3618, 3622, 3623, 3624, 3625.
- ~~5~~ 6. Postmodernism and Contemporary Discourses: English 2402, 3154, 3161, 3162, 3163, 3166, 3167, 3174, 3180, 3187, 3191, 3193, 3194, 4105, 4107, 4109, 4110, 4111, 4112, 4113, 4114; Comparative Literature 3609, 3611, 3619, 3621, 3622, 3623, 3625, 4601, 4602.

III. Electives (~~18–20~~ 16–23 credits)

Standard English concentration:

~~Six~~ Five additional courses, one of which must be an English or Comparative Literature seminar numbered in the 4000s. One may be in an allied discipline (Africana Studies, American Studies, Art, Classics, History, Modern Languages and Literatures, Music, Philosophy, Puerto Rican and Latino Studies, Speech Communication Arts and Sciences, or any other with permission of the chairperson.

Or: History and Literature concentration

Six additional courses:

1. English 4113;
2. a second course in a student’s chosen historical period (from Fields 1–~~7~~ 6);

Material located with ~~strike-through~~ is to be deleted and material underlined is to be added

3. a course from the History Department or an American Studies course, cross-listed with History, complementing the two literature courses in the chosen field;
4. English 4114;
5. Either
  - (a) the one-semester senior thesis (English 5103) and one elective (any field or genre in English or Comparative Literature or a course from an allied department); or
  - (b) the two-semester senior thesis (English 5014 and 5015).

To qualify for this concentration, students must have a B+ or higher average and obtain permission from the chair or major's counselor. They should seek guidance in choosing their field of study and consult with the counselor on a suitable thesis advisor.

**Rationale:**

See the rationale for:

A-III: CHANGES IN DEGREE PROGRAMS

Department of English

B.A. degree program in comparative literature

**Date of departmental approval:** December 6, 2016

**Effective date:** Fall 2017

## SECTION A-III: CHANGES IN DEGREE PROGRAMS

### Department of English

#### B.A. degree program in adolescence education: English teacher

HEGIS code 1501.01; SED program code 26812

The Department of Secondary Education and the Department of English jointly offer a program for students who plan to teach English in grades 7 through 12. Additional information may be obtained from the Department of Secondary Education or the Department of English. Adolescence education (grades 7-12) and special subject programs are writing intensive. Students should consult a counselor as early as possible to plan their program.

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Program requirements (~~39-40~~ 42-48 credits)  
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Students must complete the following English Department requirements for the B.A. degree program for English teacher (~~39-40~~ 42-48 credits).

#### I. English 2120 and 2121 (~~6~~ 8 credits)

English 2120 and 2121 are required. Majors in the English teacher program should complete English 2120 or 2121 or be enrolled in one or the other, before continuing in other electives. No ENGL course numbered lower than 2115 may count toward the major.

#### II. Fields of Study (10-12credits)

One course from each of ~~four~~ three of the following ~~seven~~ six fields; ~~at least one course must be chosen from Fields 1 through or 3 and two must be chosen from Fields 4 through 6:~~

1. Middle Ages: English 3111, 3112, 3520, 4101; Comparative Literature 3614.
2. Renaissance: English 3120, 3121, 3122, 3123, 3124, 3125, 4102; Comparative Literature 3615.
3. Eighteenth Century: English 3131, 3132, 3133, 4103; Comparative Literature 3616.
4. Nineteenth Century and Romanticism: English 3140, 3141, 3142, 3143, 3145, 3151, 3156, 3157, 3158, 3160, 4104, 4107; Comparative Literature 3606, 3617.
- ~~5. American Literature and Culture: English 2402, 3151, 3152, 3153, 3154, 3156, 3157, 3158, 3159, 3160, 3161, 3162, 3163, 3164, 3165, 4105; Comparative Literature 3622, 3623.~~
- ~~6~~ 5. Modernism: English 2402, 3152, 3153, 3156, 3159, 3160, 3161, 3162, 3163, 3164, 3165, 3170, 3171, 3172, 3173, 3193, 4110, 4108, 4107; Comparative Literature 3607, 3608, 3610, 3618, 3622, 3623, 3624, 3625.
- ~~5~~ 6. Postmodernism and Contemporary Discourses: English 2402, 3154, 3161, 3162, 3163, 3166, 3167, 3174, 3180, 3187, 3191, 3193, 3194, 4105, 4107, 4109, 4110, 4111, 4112, 4113, 4114; Comparative Literature 3609, 3611, 3619, 3621, 3622, 3623, 3625, 4601, 4602.

#### III. Field Concentration: English Teaching (~~42-43~~ 14-16 credits)

Four courses, one from each of the following groups:

- A. Language: English 3520, 3521, 3522, 3523, 3524, or a course in linguistics.
- B. Composition: English 2115, 2116, 2301, 2302, 3177, or any other writing-intensive course.

Material located with ~~strike-through~~ is to be deleted and material underlined is to be added



C. Literature of diversity: English 3158, 3160, 3161, 3162, 3180, 3189, 3194, 4110, Comparative Literature 3613, 3619, 3622, 3623, 3624, 3625, or any course in literature and culture.

D. Children's and Young Adult Literatures: English 3189.

IV. English 3122 or 3123 (~~3~~ 4 credits)

V. Two additional English Department electives (6-~~8~~ credits)

The following pedagogical courses in the Department of Secondary Education: Secondary Education 2001, 2002, 3401, 3402, 4402, 4408, 3456 (total of 26 credits):

Secondary Education 2001, 2002, 3401, 3402. This four-term sequence may be started in the lower-sophomore term, or upper-sophomore term.

Secondary Education 3456 may be started after completing Secondary Education 2001 and 2002.

Secondary Education 4402: Seminar on Methods of Teaching Social Studies, Student Teaching I.

Secondary Education 4408: Advanced Seminar on Methods of Teaching Social Studies, Student Teaching II.

This program reflects changes in teacher certification requirements recently implemented by the New York State Education Department. Degree programs in adolescence education and include a major in an appropriate department of the college and in the case of social studies may also include an approved selection of interdepartmental courses.

Completion of an adolescence education program as part of a major in English, one of the appropriate social sciences, mathematics, or one of the sciences qualifies students for New York State initial certification in adolescence education for grades 7 through 12.

Students qualifying for the initial certification in adolescence education may obtain an extension to teach English, social studies, mathematics, a modern language, or one of the sciences in grades 5 and 6 by taking Secondary Education 3454.

Students must complete 26 credits in the Department of Secondary Education as specified above.

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Admission requirements and academic standing

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Students must have a GPA of 2.70 or higher based on a minimum of 30 credits in liberal arts and sciences to take Secondary Education 2001 and 2002.

Students must have a B- in both Secondary Education 2001 and 2002 and a GPA of 2.75 or higher based on a minimum of 30 credits in liberal arts and sciences to continue to Secondary Education 3401, and/or Secondary Education 3402, and/or Secondary Education 3456.

To take Secondary Education 4413 students must have a GPA of 2.75 or higher and permission of the head of the program.

Material located with ~~strike-through~~ is to be deleted and material underlined is to be added

To take Secondary Education 4401 students must have a GPA of 3.0 or higher in their English courses, a B- or better in both Secondary Education 3401 and 3402, and/or permission of the head of the program.

To take Secondary Education ~~4401~~ 4402-4406, students must have a GPA of 2.75 or higher, a B- or better in both Secondary Education 3401 and 3402, and/or permission of the head of the program.

To take Secondary Education 4407, students must earn a B or higher in Secondary Education 4401, a GPA of 3.0 or higher in their English courses, and the permission of the head of the program.

To take Secondary Education ~~4407~~ 4408-4412, students must earn a B- or higher in Secondary Education ~~4401~~ 4408-4406, a GPA of 2.75 or higher in their major, and the permission of the head of the program.

**Rationale:**

See the rationale for:

A-III: CHANGES IN DEGREE PROGRAMS

Department of English

B.A. degree program in comparative literature

Secondary Education additions – the course work remains unchanged. What is being changed is that a 3.0 gpa is required to begin student teaching in the English Teacher program taking SEED 4401 and SEED 4407. This is done in response to a review of NYS teacher license exam results.

**Clearance:** Secondary Education

**Date of departmental approval:** December 6, 2016

**Effective date:** Fall 2017

**SECTION A-III: CHANGES IN DEGREE PROGRAMS**  
**Department of English**

**B.F.A. degree program in creative writing**  
HEGIS code 1507; SED program code 87220

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Program requirements (~~42~~ 44-48 credits)  
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I. English 2120 and 2121 (~~6~~ 8 credits)

English 2120 and 2121 are required. Creative writing majors should complete either English 2120 or 2121, or be enrolled in one or the other, before continuing in other electives. No ENGL course numbered lower than 2115 may count toward the major.

II. Creative writing courses (~~15~~ 20 credits)

a) English 2301.

b) One of the following sequences:

1) English 3301, 3302.

2) English 3304, 3305.

3) English 3306, 3307.

c) Two additional creative writing courses in the English Department: The inter-genre creative writing capstone seminar (ENGL 4301); ENGL 2302, or any of the courses 3301–3007 that has not been used to satisfy requirement (ii)b.

III. Fields of Study (10-12 credits)

One course from each of ~~four~~ three of the following ~~seven~~ six fields; ~~at least one course must be chosen from Fields 1 through 3 and two must be chosen from Fields 4 through 6:~~

1. Middle Ages: English 3111, 3112, 3520, 4101; Comparative Literature 3614.

2. Renaissance: English 3120, 3121, 3122, 3123, 3124, 3125, 4102; Comparative Literature 3615.

3. Eighteenth Century: English 3131, 3132, 3133, 4103; Comparative Literature 3616.

4. Nineteenth Century and Romanticism: English 3140, 3141, 3142, 3143, 3145, 3151, 3156, 3157, 3158, 3160, 4104, 4107; Comparative Literature 3606, 3617.

~~5. American Literature and Culture: English 2402, 3151, 3152, 3153, 3154, 3156, 3157, 3158, 3159, 3160, 3161, 3162, 3163, 3164, 3165, 4105; Comparative Literature 3622, 3623.~~

~~6~~ 5. Modernism: English 2402, 3152, 3153, 3156, 3159, 3160, 3161, 3162, 3163, 3164, 3165, 3170, 3171, 3172, 3173, 3193, 4110, 4107, 4108; Comparative Literature 3607, 3608, 3610, 3618, 3622, 3623, 3624, 3625.

~~5~~ 6. Postmodernism and Contemporary Discourses: English 2402, 3154, 3161, 3162, 3163, 3166, 3167, 3174, 3180, 3187, 3191, 3193, 3194, 4105, 4107, 4109, 4110, 4111, 4112, 4113, 4114; Comparative Literature 3609, 3611, 3619, 3621, 3622, 3623, 3625, 4601, 4602.

IV. Additional course requirements (~~9~~ 6-8 credits)

~~Nine~~ Six to eight additional credits in advanced English Department courses. Related courses offered by other departments may be substituted with permission of the English Department chairperson.

Material located with ~~strike-through~~ is to be deleted and material underlined is to be added

**Rationale:**

See the rationale for:

A-III: CHANGES IN DEGREE PROGRAMS

Department of English

B.A. degree program in comparative literature

**Date of departmental approval:** December 6, 2016

**Effective date:** Fall 2017

**SECTION A-III: CHANGES IN DEGREE PROGRAMS**

**Department of English**

**Concentration(s) for majors in early childhood and childhood education teacher programs - English**

The requirements for early childhood education teacher (birth-grade 2) are described under the Department of Early Childhood and Art Education in the Undergraduate Bulletin. The requirements for childhood education teacher (grades 1-6) programs are described under the Department of Childhood, Bilingual and Special Education in the Undergraduate Bulletin. Students who major in either of these programs and who elect a concentration in English must complete at least ~~30~~ 31-35 credits in the English Department with a grade of C or higher in each course. Students must meet with a department adviser to declare their intention to complete this sequence.

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**Concentration requirements**  
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English 1012.

One course from each of the following four groups:

- a) English 3521, 3522, 3524, 3523 or a course in linguistics
- b) English 2115, 2116, 2301, 2302, 3177
- c) English 3180, 3158, 3166, 3190, 3160, 3161, 3162; Comparative Literature 3619, 3621, 3622, 3623.)
- d) English 3189

~~Fifteen credits of~~ Four advanced English or comparative literature electives (12-16 credits).

**Rationale:** The change in this concentration results from a wholesale change in the number of credits/hours for ENGL and CMLT courses numbered 2115 and above (excluding certain courses that are cross-listed with other departments), from 3 credits/3 hours to 4 credits/4 hours. The purpose of adding a fourth hour to our courses is to provide additional attention to writing and revision. Adding a fourth hour, dedicated to guided writing practice and peer-critique, addresses a dire and longstanding need for students develop and hone their writing skills in a structured environment. (A more detailed description both of the need for this program change, and of how the proposed change addresses that need, can be found in the Degree Program change document for the major.)

In order to accommodate the increased number of credits per course, the number of electives is being reduced from five to four. Because ENGL 1012 as well as some electives are to remain 3 credits, the total number of credits for the concentration will range from 31-35.

**Clearance:** Early Childhood and Childhood Education departments.

**Date of departmental approval:** December 6, 2016

**Effective date:** Fall 2017

Material located with ~~strike-through~~ is to be deleted and material underlined is to be added

**SECTION A-IV: NEW COURSES**  
**Department of English**

**ENGL 4404 Advanced Multimedia Journalism**

3 hours; 3 credits

Advanced techniques in reporting local news stories with video and new technology as it develops. Use of social media.

**Prerequisite:** English 2401; English 2403 [3407].

**Contact hours:** 3

**Frequency of offering:** 2 per year in Fall & Spring Semesters

**Projected enrollment:** 20 students

**Clearance:** Television and Radio

**Rationale:**

This second course in cross-platform journalism gives students additional experience necessary in telling local news stories in the digital environment. It will hone their skills in working with video and audio and also introduce them to the newest features of multimedia journalism, such as Virtual Reality (VR) and data visualization. Students will post their videos and accompanying text promos on the Brooklyn News Service website.

**Date of departmental approval:** February 14, 2017

**Effective date:** Fall 2017

**SECTION A-V: CHANGES IN EXISTING COURSES**

**Department of English**

Change in course title, course description and prerequisite/co-requisite

**FROM:**

**~~ENGL 2401 News Writing: An Introduction to Journalism~~**

~~1 hour recitation and conference, 2 hours lecture; 3 credits~~

~~Technique of general news gathering and writing basic types of news stories; examination of the issues and problems confronted by reporters in their work.~~

~~Prerequisite: English 1012 [2] or 2.7 or 2115 [5] or 2116 [5.1] or 2302 [14] with a grade of B or higher.~~

**TO:**

**ENGL 2401 Introduction to News Writing and Reporting**

3 hours; 3 credits

Introduction to news writing and reporting across media platforms. Developing journalistic judgment.

Prerequisite: English 1012 [2] or 2.7 or 2115 [5] or 2116 [5.1] or 2302 [14] with a grade of B or higher.

Co-requisite for declared journalism majors: English 2403.

**Rationale:** The title and description are adapted to conform to changes that have evolved in the course over time to prepare students for writing and reporting in a cross-platform media environment. The hours are adjusted to better reflect how this course has been taught. A co-requisite is added so that journalism majors will integrate the skills learned in this course with the multimedia skills learned in English 3407 (which is to be re-numbered 2403).

**Date of department approval:** February 14, 2017

**Effective date:** Fall 2017

**SECTION A-V: CHANGES IN EXISTING COURSES**

**Department of English**

Change in course number and prerequisite/co-requisite

**FROM:**

**ENGL ~~3407~~ Introduction to Multimedia Journalism**

3 hours; 3 credits

Students produce news stories based on study of techniques in multimedia journalism.

Prerequisite: English 2401 [18.11] or Television and Radio 3728 [28] or permission of the Journalism Program.

**TO:**

**ENGL 2403 Introduction to Multimedia Journalism**

3 hours; 3 credits

Students produce news stories based on study of techniques in multimedia journalism.

Prerequisite: English 2401 [18.11] or Television and Radio 3728 [28] or permission of the Journalism Program.

Co-requisite for declared journalism majors: English 2401.

**Rationale:** The title and description are adapted to conform with changes that have evolved in the course over time to better prepare student journalists for writing and reporting in a cross-platform media environment. Students will be required to take Introduction to Multimedia Journalism as a prerequisite so that they are better prepared to work across media platforms.

**Date of department approval:** February 14, 2017

**Effective date:** Fall 2017



**SECTION A-V: CHANGES IN EXISTING COURSES**

**Department of English**

Change in course title, course description and prerequisite

**FROM:**

**ENGL 3401 Advanced News Writing**

3 hours; 3 credits

~~Classroom drills, outside assignments, lectures, and field trips to expand organizational and writing skills.~~

Prerequisite: English 2401 [18.11].

**TO:**

**ENGL 3401 Advanced News Writing and Reporting**

3 hours; 3 credits

Advanced techniques for news writing and reporting across media platforms.

Prerequisite: English 2401 [18.11] and 2403 [3407].

**Rationale:** The title and description are adapted to conform with changes that have evolved in the course over time to better prepare student journalists for writing and reporting in a cross-platform media environment. Students will be required to take Introduction to Multimedia Journalism as a prerequisite so that they are better prepared to work across media platforms.

**Date of department approval:** February 14, 2017

**Effective date:** Fall 2017

**SECTION A-V: CHANGES IN EXISTING COURSES**

**Department of English**

Change in course title, course description and prerequisite/co-requisite

**FROM:**

**ENGL 3402 Feature Writing**

~~1 hour recitation and conference, 2 hours lecture; 3 credits~~

~~Sources for feature articles. Technique of writing basic types of news features and editorials.~~

~~Prerequisite: English 2401 [18.11].-~~

**TO:**

**ENGL 3402 Neighborhood-Based Feature Writing**

3 hours; 3 credits

This course focuses on a Brooklyn neighborhood to teach students the techniques of feature writing. Students learn to report and write a number of types of feature stories in a cross-platform media environment.

Prerequisite: Eng. 2401[18.11], Introduction to News Writing and Reporting; English 2403: Introduction to Multimedia Journalism.

**Rationale:** The title and description are changed to emphasize the focus on a Brooklyn neighborhood. Students will report and write in a cross-platform media environment. Through examination of a neighborhood, they learn to report and write substantive feature stories on, for example, schools, gentrification, religion, places of work, etc. The prerequisite is added so that journalism majors can integrate the skills learned in this course with the multimedia skills acquired in English 2403 (previously English 3407).

**Date of department approval:** February 14, 2017

**Effective date:** Fall 2017

Material located with ~~strike-through~~ is to be deleted and material underlined is to be added

**SECTION A-V: CHANGES IN EXISTING COURSES**

**Department of English**

Change in course title, course description and prerequisite

**FROM:**

**ENGL 3403 Reporting**

~~1 hour recitation and conference, 2 hours lecture; 3 credits~~

~~Techniques of reporting a story in depth and organizing a large amount of material into a newspaper series or magazine story.~~

Prerequisite: English 2401 [18.11];-

**TO:**

**ENGL 3403 In-depth Reporting**

3 hours; 3 credits

Study of advanced reporting techniques with the aim of producing an in-depth or investigative story using multiple media platforms.

Prerequisite: English 2401 [18.11] and 2403 [3407].

**Rationale:** The switch to require a previous course in multimedia journalism provides the proper foundation for this course, which has evolved to include use of multiple media platforms. The course description is changed to give a more accurate description of the course, which is aimed at producing enterprise journalism – in-depth or investigative reporting, including stories that aim to hold those in authority accountable or illuminate societal conditions– rather than reporting skills needed for breaking news.

**Date of department approval:** February 14, 2017

**Effective date:** Fall 2017

**SECTION A-V: CHANGES IN EXISTING COURSES**

**Department of English**

Change in course title, course description and prerequisite

**FROM:**

**ENGL 3405 Magazine Journalism**

3 hours; 3 credits

~~Study of the great works of magazine journalism and technique of writing for magazines.~~

Prerequisite: English 2401 [18.11]-

**TO:**

**ENGL 3405: Multimedia Magazine Journalism**

3 hours; 3 credits

Study of magazine journalism and the techniques of writing for magazines, both print and online. Audio and photography as important components of reporting and creating stories. Conceptualization and production of an online magazine.

Prerequisite: English 2401 [18.11], 2403 [3407].

**Rationale:** The title and description are changed to reflect the emphasis on reporting and writing in a cross-platform media environment. The English 2403 prerequisite provides the foundation in cross-platform skills required to report for and produce an online magazine.

**Date of department approval:** February 14, 2017

**Effective date:** Fall 2017

**SECTION A-V: CHANGES IN EXISTING COURSES**

**Department of English**

Change in course title, course description and prerequisites

**FROM:**

**ENGL 4401 News Laboratory**

2 hours lecture, 6 hours laboratory, 6 credits

Students act as reporters, rewrite persons, and feature ~~writers~~ covering a day in the life of New York alongside members of the working press. Students' stories are examined in class and compared with those produced by ~~dailies and wire services~~.

Prerequisite: ~~Three of the following: English 3402 [18.13], 3403 [18.14], 3401 [18.16], 4402 [18.19], 3406 [18.20], 4403 [18.21], 3405 [18.22]~~ or permission of the journalism program.

**TO:**

**ENGL 4401 Digital News Laboratory**

2 hours lecture, 6 hours laboratory, 6 credits

Students act as reporters, rewrite persons and feature storytellers, covering a day in the life of New York alongside members of the working press and across all media platforms. Students' stories are examined in class and compared with those produced by many different news outlets.

Prerequisite: English 2403 [3407] and any two of the following: English 3402 [18.13], 3403 [18.14], 3404, 3405 [18.22], 3406 [18.20], or permission of the journalism program.

**Rationale:** The title and description are changed to conform to changes having evolved in the course over time to better prepare student journalists for writing and reporting in a cross-platform media environment. The prerequisites have changed in keeping with other changes in the program requirements.

**Date of department approval:** February 14, 2017

**Effective date:** Fall 2017

Material located with ~~strike-through~~ is to be deleted and material underlined is to be added

**SECTION A-V: CHANGES IN EXISTING COURSES**

**Department of English**

Change in prerequisite

**FROM:**

**ENGL 4402 Seminar: Topics in Journalism**

3 hours; 3 credits

Study of a topic in journalism. Emphasis is on analyzing societal institutions from a journalist's point of view. Topic is selected by the instructor.

Prerequisite: English 2401 [18.11] or permission of the journalism program.

**TO:**

**ENGL 4402 Seminar: Topics in Journalism**

3 hours; 3 credits

Study of a topic in journalism. Emphasis is on analyzing societal institutions from a journalist's point of view. Topic is selected by the instructor.

Prerequisite: English 2401 [18.11] and 2403 [3407] or permission of the journalism program.

**Rationale:** The prerequisites have changed in keeping with other changes in the program requirements; in particular, Introduction to Multimedia Journalism (ENGL 3407) is being re-numbered as ENGL 2403 and is a co-requisite with ENGL 2401 for journalism majors.

**Date of department approval:** February 14, 2017

**Effective date:** Fall 2017

**SECTION A-V: CHANGES IN EXISTING COURSES**

**Department of English**

Change in prerequisite

**FROM:**

**ENGL 4403 Beat Reporting**

3 hours; 3 credits

~~Students who have taken advanced journalism electives~~ cover a beat, such as health, education, immigration, poverty, publishing, the arts or politics. Journalism majors are required to shape a specialty beat informed by their field of concentration. (Majors must complete a 9 credit concentration in nonjournalism courses.)

~~Prerequisite: Three of the following: English 3402 [18.13], 3403 [18.14], 3401 [18.16], 4401 [18.18], 4402 [18.19], 3406 [18.20], 3405 [18.22] or permission of the journalism program.~~

**TO:**

**ENGL 4403 Beat Reporting**

3 hours; 3 credits

Students cover a beat, such as health, education, immigration, poverty, publishing, the arts or politics. Journalism majors are required to shape a specialty beat informed by their field of concentration. (Majors must complete a concentration in non-journalism courses.)

Prerequisite: English 3401 and 2403 [3407].

**Rationale:** The switch to require a previous course in multimedia journalism provides the proper foundation for this course, which has evolved to require reporting across media platforms. The course description is changed to reflect the change in the prerequisite.

**Date of department approval:** February 14, 2017

**Effective date:** Fall 2017

Material located with ~~strike-through~~ is to be deleted and material underlined is to be added

**SECTION A-V: CHANGES IN EXISTING COURSES**

**Department of English**

Change in course title, course description

**FROM:**

**~~ENGL 2402 The Press in America~~**

3 hours; 3 credits

Lectures ~~and readings~~ in the history of journalism from Colonial times to the present.

Prerequisite: English 1010 [1] or 1.7, and either History 3402 [14] or Core Curriculum 1220 [2.2], or History 3005, or an equivalent course.

**TO:**

**ENGL 4405 History of News: From Colonial Times to the Present**

3 hours; 3 credits

Lectures, discussion, readings and films relating to the history of journalism from Colonial times through the present.

Prerequisite: English 1010 [1] or 1.7, and either History 3402 [14] or Core Curriculum 1220 [2.2], or History 3005, or an equivalent course.

**Rationale:** The course is being renamed and changed from a 2000-level lecture course to a 4000-level seminar. The name change will better reflect the material covered in the course as it has been taught for over a decade. The reason for the change in level is that by moving it to the latter part of the student's education, it will afford them an opportunity to reach a deeper and more sophisticated understanding of the history of the news as well as a context for what they have learned earlier regarding journalistic practice. The seminar format will give students the opportunity to participate actively in the discussion of this long and varied history by bringing their own experiences in student journalism as well as knowledge they have acquired in other fields in courses taken outside the program.

**Date of department approval:** February 14, 2017

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**SECTION A-V: CHANGES IN EXISTING COURSES**

**Department of English**

Change in credits

**FROM:**

**ENGL 2115 Advanced Exposition and Peer Tutoring**

~~2 hours lecture, 3 hours tutoring; 3 credits~~

Intensive study of and practice in writing the principal rhetorical forms. Training in principles of peer tutoring and three hours of tutoring writing in the Learning Center or other appropriate setting.

Prerequisite: A grade of A in English 1012 or the equivalent and department permission.

**TO:**

**ENGL 2115 Advanced Exposition and Peer Tutoring**

3 hours; 3 credits

3 hours lecture, 3 hours tutoring; 4 credits

Intensive study of and practice in writing the principal rhetorical forms. Training in principles of peer tutoring and three hours of tutoring writing in the Learning Center or other appropriate setting.

Prerequisite: A grade of A in English 1012 or the equivalent and department permission.

**Rationale:**

The change in number of credits/hours is part of a wholesale change to ENGL and CMLT courses numbered 2115 and above (excluding certain courses that are cross-listed with other departments). The purpose of adding a fourth hour is to provide additional attention to writing and revision. Adding a fourth hour, dedicated to guided writing practice and peer-critique, addresses a dire and longstanding need for students to develop and hone their writing skills in a structured environment. Below, we describe (1) the crisis in student writing that has prompted this change; (2) how the English department has already begun to meet this challenge by re-prioritizing and re-formulating its goals, objectives and learning outcomes; (3) how the proposed change will — and to a certain extent already has begun to — address the problem; (4) why the change to 4 hours/4 credits is (part of) the optimal response (as opposed to simply requiring additional 3-hour courses).

**1. A CRISIS IN UNDERGRADUATE WRITING**

An important part of undergraduate education is to develop the ability to express ideas in writing— cogently, persuasively, and with clarity, focus and structure. College undergraduates across the country are not excelling at this crucial set of skills by the time they graduate, and our students at Brooklyn College are no exception. The English department faculty's judgment

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about our students' writing abilities is echoed (repeatedly) in informal discussions with our colleagues in other departments. And it is supported by reputable scholarly research. A pathbreaking 2011 study of over 2300 students at a wide range of U.S. colleges, by Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa, found that more than a third of undergraduates fail to demonstrate significant improvement, over four years of college, in a variety of important academic skills including writing. [Arum and Roksa, "Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses," University of Chicago Press, 2011.] To measure student learning in their sample population, Arum and Roksa used the Collegiate Learning Assessment, which was administered both when students began college and again at the end of the senior year.

For Brooklyn College students, we have data on students' self-assessment that is largely consistent with Arum and Roksa's findings with regard to writing. According to the 2009 National Survey of Student Engagement (the most recent year available from the BC office of Institutional Research and Data Analysis), Brooklyn College undergraduates were not significantly more likely to report, in their senior year over their freshman year, that their BC education had contributed to their ability to write clearly and effectively. For both first-year students and seniors, over a quarter of those surveyed reported that they had gained only "some" (26% / 23%) or "very little" (3% / 4%) skill at writing, as opposed to "quite a bit" (39% / 38%) or "very much" (32% / 35%). To be clear, these numbers do not demonstrate that we are failing to impart writing skills to our students (or that they believe we are failing to do so). They do, however, give weight to our own judgment that too many of our students are facing challenges in writing throughout their undergraduate careers.

A more recent large-scale study using a very different method — published in Feb 2017 by the American Association of Colleges and Universities — argued for a more sanguine conclusion than that of Arum and Roksa. This study ["On Solid Ground", <https://www.aacu.org/publications>] asked professors from 92 public and private higher education institutions to rate thousands of samples of student work, using uniform rubrics, on a variety of skills including writing. The undergraduates in this study had completed at least three fourths of their required credit hours. Interestingly (the "optimistic" conclusion notwithstanding), even this study found that between 38% and 48% of undergraduates performed at best in the second (out of four) "just adequate" tier of the rubric categories for Written Communication. While this study did not find that a large proportion of students were troublingly deficient at writing, the results hardly argue that students are excelling by the time they are 75% of the way to graduation.

A 2006 study in the Chronicle of Higher Education provides a clue as to one of the reasons that college students face severe challenges in their writing. This study investigated the perceptions of high school teachers' estimations of the preparedness of high school graduates for college level writing, as compared with the estimations of the same population by college faculty members. What the study found was a "perception gap": the high school teachers were much more likely to rate the students as prepared than the college faculty were. According to the Chronicle study, 44% of college faculty reported that incoming first-year students were "not well prepared" for college-level writing, while only 10% of high school teachers rated those students the same way [<http://www.chronicle.com/article/A-Perception-Gap-Over/31426>].

As it happens, there are very similar data available for Brooklyn-College incoming students' estimation of their own preparedness for college-level writing, and the data tell an interesting story. An even smaller proportion of BC students (5%) judge that they are not well prepared, as compared with the high-school teachers in the 2006 Chronicle study, and nearly half rated themselves as at or approaching "very prepared." [These data are from the Brooklyn College Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement, 2010, made available by the BC Office of Institutional Research and Data Analysis.] This self-estimate on the part of BC students contrasts markedly with the estimates of the Chronicle's high-school teachers (of whom 36%

estimated that graduating seniors were very well prepared) and even more so with the Chronicle's college faculty (of whom only 6% judged incoming students very well prepared).

The comparative results are listed below:

Estimates of Preparedness for College-Level Writing

- College faculty estimation of HS graduates (from the March, 2006 Chronicle study):
  - 44% Not well prepared
  - 47% Somewhat well prepared
  - 6% Very well prepared
- HS teachers estimation of HC graduates (from the March, 2006 Chronicle study):
  - 10% Not well prepared
  - 49% Somewhat well prepared
  - 36% Very well prepared
- Incoming BC first year students' self-assessment (from the 2010 BCSSE):
  - 5% 1-2 on a 6-point scale (1 = Not at all prepared)
  - 47% 3-4 on 6-point scale
  - 48% 5-6 on 6-point scale (6 = Very prepared; 23% answered 6)

Arum and Roksa's 2011 study, in addition to arguing for a rather bleak picture of the college learning (and writing) outcomes landscape, also provides very clear support for a particular path forward. They noted that fully one third of undergraduates in their large sample population do not take any courses with more than 40 pages of reading assigned each week, and half "don't take a single course in which they must write more than 20 pages over the course of a semester." Strikingly (although perhaps not surprisingly), Arum and Roksa reported a correlation between the amount of reading and writing assigned and the gains in learning overall (i.e. in a variety of academic skills, not just writing and critical reading): students who took classes that required more than 40 pages of reading per week and more than 20 pages of writing over a semester gained more than other students. This finding suggests that increased rigor, and specifically increased instruction in writing (not merely replacing other instruction) will improve learning outcomes including but not limited to writing proficiency.

In short, there is a crisis of student writing, which appears to result in part from learning outcome deficiencies measurable at the high school level and which continue to pose challenges to students and to instructors throughout the college years.

## 2. A SYSTEMATIC RESPONSE: DEPARTMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

In the fall of 2015, the English department began a large-scale revision of its outcomes assessment strategy and practices, starting with a re-formulation of its mission and goals. One (among several) of the central motivations for this undertaking was to prioritize student writing at all levels of the major, in recognition of the dire situation described above. In March, 2016, the department established a set of four overarching goals which were to serve as the linchpins of its teaching, and by means of which it would conduct its outcomes assessment. Focus on written (and oral) expression of ideas constitutes one of the four goals in the resulting document:

"Department Goal 3: Express ideas — both orally and in writing — correctly, cogently, persuasively, and in conformity with the conventions of the discipline."

Together with the revised departmental goals established in March 2016, every departmental program further articulated a set of learning objectives associated with each of the four goals, tailored to its specific conventions and content. The English literature program articulated the following three objectives to supplement Department Goal 3:

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"Program Objective 1: Identify, write, and edit for currently accepted conventions of standard English mechanics, grammar, and style (including proper punctuation, subject-verb and noun-pronoun agreement, parallel construction, appropriate tense sequences and moods, etc.)

"Program Objective 2: Learn and follow the conventions of literary argumentation, including formulating thesis statement, and conventions of quoting and citing textual evidence.

"Program Objective 3: Learn how to rethink and revise essays."

In conjunction with the revised goals and objectives, the department is carrying out a rigorous modification to its outcomes assessment strategy, focusing on one objective at a time. Since we are at the early stages and have not yet assessed the outcomes associated with this particular department goal, we cannot yet report any assessment data about the degree of success that instructors have had in implementing these program objectives.

However, we can report that many individual English instructors are already implementing strategies designed to subserve the newly articulated writing objectives. In fact, many instructors are already building more rigorous writing instruction into their courses in keeping with these objectives. The increased writing instruction has supplemented, rather than replaced, other classroom activities and instruction. While this has taken place within the framework of 3-credit/3-hour courses, in practice it means that for an increasing number of our courses there is already an increased workload not only for students but also instructors. Moreover, the increased workload has not simply come in the form of more graded assignments, but has entailed additional instruction time: more interaction between faculty and students as well as interaction among students themselves, focused specifically on writing. Out of necessity (due to the fact that classes meet in 3-hour time slots), this has meant that instructors are taking advantage of the online learning technologies that the College and CUNY have supported. But exigencies aside, instruction in writing lends itself especially well to creative strategies like online supplements to in-class instruction. Many of our faculty, then, are already making effective use of additional instruction in order to meet the newly formulated learning objectives.

### 3. MEETING THE CHALLENGE HEAD-ON: ADDING A FOURTH HOUR

The challenges that students face in writing at all levels of their undergraduate careers requires a systematic approach on the part of the faculty. Adding a fourth hour of instruction to English courses is an important component of such an approach; if an instructor were to add assignments and teaching time to support the writing objectives without a concurrent expansion of the course overall, it would entail reducing assignments and time devoted to (other) important course material. As described above, many individual instructors are already implementing increased workload not only for their students but for themselves, using platforms for online learning to gain additional instruction time. But this strategy has been, thus far, unsystematic and ad hoc. The instructors who are using it (to one degree or another) to add instruction time are not getting proper workload credit for their increased workload, and their students are not getting proper academic credit for additional work.

Adding a fourth hour will systematize the increased instruction and build in accountability in a way that the informal, ad hoc implementation has not been able to. Under the proposed change to 4-credits/4-hours, the department creates a clear and systematic expectation for increased instruction, and sets up a formal way both for students and instructors to be accountable for the extra work and also to have that work acknowledged in a way that it has, to one degree or another, not been.

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Examples of the kind of instructional activities that might be (and have been) used to prioritize writing include:

- Weekly response papers and peer review, guided by the instructor;
- Writing projects that span several weeks, with weekly revisions based on peer and instructor feedback;
- Longer or more substantial pieces that might be assigned less frequently but for which students are responsible for spending one hour per week giving detailed criticism and feedback of classmates' work to serve as the basis for revision;
- Class or small group writing exercises in which each student is expected to write on a topic relevant to the course, and then critique or respond to one another's drafts.

#### 4. ADDING A FOURTH HOUR IS THE OPTIMAL APPROACH

While the English department faculty believes that there can be little doubt about the urgent need for devoting extra instruction time to writing, it is nevertheless important to consider whether there are alternatives to adding a fourth hour to English classes. One obvious logical possibility is to leave courses as 3 credits/3 hours, and to increase the number of courses required for the degree program — for instance, by adding required courses specifically devoted to writing instruction.

An alternative along these lines, however, would be a serious error. Good writing is not simply a technical skill that is learned prior to, and independently of, other areas of academic study. Rather, it is part and parcel of developing and refining other skills such as critical reading and thinking, and must be continually practiced in tandem with these other skills. Given the high priority that the department has determined that writing instruction warrants, an attempt to address it by requiring one or a few additional courses would be no less risible than, for example, offering a dedicated course in scales and arpeggios in a music performance program; there, it is assumed that practice in basic techniques is part and parcel of all performance instruction through the most advanced levels. The English Composition courses provide students with a very good baseline in writing instruction. It is in the subsequent courses that these basic skills need to be really developed through continual, guided practice.

Recent social science research bears this out. Recall that the Arum and Roksa study described above reports a correlation between the amount of writing (and reading) required in college courses and the overall learning outcomes of undergraduate education, not just in writing. Their conclusion from this is that a higher proportion of courses should be more writing- and reading-intensive than what college students are currently receiving. Putting an increased focus on writing in all of our courses — and concomitantly increasing the number of credits/hours — is exactly the right approach, if we are to take findings like these seriously.

In fact, the English department faculty believes that, while we have a special responsibility to prioritize undergraduate writing, there is a potential for great benefit to students if other departments in the College likewise increase the amount of writing that students are expected to do in their courses. This would undoubtedly entail more work both on the part of students and instructors, and implementing it may require a strategy like the one that English is proposing to undertake, i.e. moving to 4 credits/4 hours. We leave that suggestion for our colleagues in other departments to consider. For the time being, we believe that our special disciplinary relationship with writing warrants our leading the charge.

**Date of department approval:** December 6, 2016

**Effective date:** Fall 2017

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**SECTION A-V: CHANGES IN EXISTING COURSES**

**Department of English**

Change in credits and correction of typo in description

**FROM:**

**ENGL 2120 Overview of Literary Study I Representative Selections of World Literature**

~~3 hours; 3 credits~~

from the Middle Ages to the Late Eighteenth Century. Studies in the literature and culture of the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the eighteenth century. Part I of a two-course general survey and overview with three principal focuses: 1) the major literary and intellectual movements of world literature, in historical perspective, 2) the close reading of texts in the several genres, and 3) literature as viewed through the various lenses of contemporary theory and critical discourses.

Prerequisite: English 1010 [1] or 1.7

**TO:**

**ENGL 2120 Overview of Literary Study I Representative Selections of World Literature**

4 hours; 4 credits

Studies in literature and culture from the Middle Ages to the Late Eighteenth Century. Studies in the literature and culture of the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the eighteenth century. Part I of a two-course general survey and overview with three principal focuses: 1) the major literary and intellectual movements of world literature, in historical perspective, 2) the close reading of texts in the several genres, and 3) literature as viewed through the various lenses of contemporary theory and critical discourses.

Prerequisite: English 1010 [1] or 1.7

**Rationale:**

The first five words of the bulletin description are missing in the current Bulletin; consequently, the description begins mid-sentence. The missing words have been added back.

See the rationale for:

SECTION A-V: CHANGES IN EXISTING COURSES

Department of English

ENGL 2115 Advanced Exposition and Peer Tutoring

**Date of department approval:** December 6, 2016

**Effective date:** Fall 2017

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**SECTION A-V: CHANGES IN EXISTING COURSES**

**Department of English, Department of Africana Studies, Program in American Studies, Department of Classics, Program in Linguistics, Department of Philosophy, Department of Puerto Rican and Latino Studies, and Program in Women's and Gender Studies**

Change in credits

**The following English (ENGL), Comparative Literature (CMLT), and cross listed Africana Studies (AFST), American Studies (AMST), Classics (CLAS), Linguistics (LING), Philosophy (PHIL), Puerto Rican and Latino Studies (PRLS), and Women's and Gender Studies (WGST) courses are being changed from 3 hours and 3 credits to 4 hours and 4 credits.**

**EXAMPLE:**

**FROM:**

**ENGL 2116 Advanced Exposition**

~~3 hours; 3 credits~~

Intensive study of and practice in essay writing for a variety of audiences and purposes.

Prerequisite: English 1012 [2] or 2.7. Students exempted from English \*1012 [2] may waive the English \*1012 [2] prerequisite for English 2116 [5.1].

**TO:**

**ENGL 2116 Advanced Exposition**

4 hours; 4 credits

Intensive study of and practice in essay writing for a variety of audiences and purposes.

Prerequisite: English 1012 [2] or 2.7. Students exempted from English \*1012 [2] may waive the English \*1012 [2] prerequisite for English 2116 [5.1].

**The courses to be changed are:**

**ENGL 2116 Advanced Exposition**

**ENGL 2121 Overview of Literary Study II: Representative Selections of World Literature**

**ENGL 2301 Introduction to Creative Writing**

**ENGL 2302 Writing Prose Nonfiction**

**ENGL 3111 Medieval English Literature**

**ENGL 3112 Chaucer**

**ENGL 3120 Poetry and Prose of the Sixteenth Century: The Early Renaissance**

**ENGL 3121 Poetry and Prose of the Seventeenth Century**

**ENGL 3122 Shakespeare I**

**ENGL 3123 Shakespeare II**

**ENGL 3124 English Drama from the Beginnings to 1642, Exclusive of Shakespeare**

**ENGL 3125 Milton**

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ENGL 3131 English Literature in the Age of Reason  
ENGL 3132 English Drama of the Restoration and the Eighteenth Century  
ENGL 3133 The Eighteenth-Century Novel  
ENGL 3140 Chief Romantic Poets  
ENGL 3141 Chief Victorian Poets  
ENGL 3142 Major English Novels of the Nineteenth Century  
ENGL 3143 Thematic Studies in the Nineteenth-Century Novel  
ENGL 3145 British Literature in Transition from 1885 to 1914  
ENGL 3151 American Renaissance  
ENGL 3152 American Realism and Naturalism  
ENGL 3153 American Modernism  
ENGL 3154 Contemporary American Writing  
ENGL 3156 Private Lives: American Autobiography  
AMST 3302 Private Lives: American Autobiography  
ENGL 3157 American Folklore  
AMST 3402 American Folklore  
ENGL 3159 New York City Folklore  
AMST 3404 New York City Folklore  
ENGL 3160 African-American Literature to 1930  
AFST 3220 African-American Literature to 1930  
ENGL 3161 Modern African-American Literature  
AFST 3221 Modern African-American Literature  
ENGL 3162 Black Women's Fiction  
AFST 3260 Black Women's Fiction  
WGST 3117 Black Women's Fiction  
ENGL 3163 Brooklyn in Literature  
ENGL 3164 Introduction to Italian American Literature  
ENGL 3165 The Immigrant Experience in Literature, Film, and Photography  
AMST 3304 The Immigrant Experience in Literature, Film, and Photography  
ENGL 3166 Contemporary U.S. Women Writers: Diverse Cultural Perspectives  
WGST 3115 Contemporary U.S. Women Writers: Diverse Cultural Perspectives  
ENGL 3167 Transnational America  
AMST 3307 Transnational America  
ENGL 3170 Modern Drama to 1950  
ENGL 3171 Modern British Fiction to 1950  
ENGL 3172 Modern British Poetry  
ENGL 3173 Modern Irish Literature and Culture  
ENGL 3174 Contemporary British Writing from 1950 to the Present  
ENGL 3177 Theories and Practice of Composition  
ENGL 3180 Literature and Cultural Diversity  
ENGL 3181 From Epic Tradition to Epic Vision  
CMLT 3601 From Epic Tradition to Epic Vision  
ENGL 3182 The Lyric Tradition: Imagery, Structure, and Meaning  
ENGL 3183 The Bible as Literature  
ENGL 3184 Comedy  
CMLT 3604 Comedy  
ENGL 3185 Tragedy  
CMLT 3603 Tragedy  
ENGL 3186 Romance  
CMLT 3605 Romance

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ENGL 3187 Women and Literature  
WGST 3119 Women and Literature  
ENGL 3189 Literature for Young People  
ENGL 3190 The Literature of Fantasy  
CMLT 3612 The Literature of Fantasy  
ENGL 3191 Literature and Psychology  
CMLT 3628 Literature and Psychology  
ENGL 3192 Special Topics in Literature  
ENGL 3193 Contemporary Literary Criticism and Theory  
CMLT 3626 Contemporary Literary Criticism and Theory  
ENGL 3194 Introduction to Postcolonial Literature and Theory  
AFST 3245 Introduction to Postcolonial Literature and Theory  
CMLT 3627 Introduction to Postcolonial Literature and Theory  
ENGL 3301 Writing Fiction I  
ENGL 3302 Writing Fiction II  
ENGL 3303 Creative Writing Workshop: Young Adult and Children's Fiction  
ENGL 3304 Writing Poetry I  
ENGL 3305 Writing Poetry II  
ENGL 3306 Writing Plays I  
ENGL 3307 Writing Plays II  
ENGL 3308 Writing for Musical Theater  
ENGL 3520 History of the English Language  
LING 3027 History of the English Language  
ENGL 3522 Practical English Grammar  
ENGL 3523 Introduction to Semiology  
ENGL 4101 Seminar in the Middle Ages  
ENGL 4102 Seminar in the Renaissance  
ENGL 4103 Seminar in the Eighteenth Century  
ENGL 4104 Seminar in the Nineteenth Century and Romanticism  
ENGL 4105 Seminar in American Literature and Culture  
ENGL 4106 Seminar in British and Anglophone Authors  
ENGL 4107 Seminar in American Authors  
ENGL 4108 Seminar in Modernism  
ENGL 4109 Seminar in Postmodernism and Contemporary Discourses  
ENGL 4110 Queer Literary Studies  
ENGL 4111 Seminar in Children's and Young Adult Literature  
ENGL 4112 Interdepartmental Humanities Seminar  
CMLT 4602 Interdepartmental Humanities Seminar  
CLAS 5000 Interdepartmental Humanities Seminar  
PHIL 4120 Interdepartmental Humanities Seminar  
ENGL 4301 Advanced Seminar in Creative Writing  
CMLT 3606 European Novel of the Nineteenth Century  
CMLT 3607 Modern European Novel  
CMLT 3608 Modern Short Story and Novella  
CMLT 3609 Contemporary European Novel  
CMLT 3610 Modern European Drama  
CMLT 3611 Contemporary European Drama  
CMLT 3613 Folk Literature and Fairy Tale  
CMLT 3614 Medieval Literature  
CMLT 3615 Literature of the Renaissance

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**CMLT 3616 Baroque and Classicism**  
**CMLT 3617 European Romanticism**  
**CMLT 3618 Modernist Movements in Twentieth-Century Literature**  
**CMLT 3619 African Literature**  
**AFST 3205 African Literature**  
**CMLT 3621 Indian Literature**  
**CMLT 3622 New Literature of Latin America**  
**CMLT 3623 Caribbean Literature**  
**AFST 3240 Caribbean Literature**  
**PRLS 3315 Caribbean Literature**  
**CMLT 3629 Special Topics**  
**CMLT 4601 Cross-Cultural Seminar**

**Rationale:**

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  - 44% Not well prepared
  - 47% Somewhat well prepared
  - 6% Very well prepared
- HS teachers estimation of HC graduates (from the March, 2006 Chronicle study):
  - 10% Not well prepared
  - 49% Somewhat well prepared
  - 36% Very well prepared
- Incoming BC first year students' self-assessment (from the 2010 BCSSE):
  - 5% 1-2 on a 6-point scale (1 = Not at all prepared)
  - 47% 3-4 on 6-point scale
  - 48% 5-6 on 6-point scale (6 = Very prepared; 23% answered 6)

Arum and Roksa's 2011 study, in addition to arguing for a rather bleak picture of the college learning (and writing) outcomes landscape, also provides very clear support for a particular path forward. They noted that fully one third of undergraduates in their large sample

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population do not take any courses with more than 40 pages of reading assigned each week, and half "don't take a single course in which they must write more than 20 pages over the course of a semester." Strikingly (although perhaps not surprisingly), Arum and Roksa reported a correlation between the amount of reading and writing assigned and the gains in learning overall (i.e. in a variety of academic skills, not just writing and critical reading): students who took classes that required more than 40 pages of reading per week and more than 20 pages of writing over a semester gained more than other students. This finding suggests that increased rigor, and specifically increased instruction in writing (not merely replacing other instruction) will improve learning outcomes including but not limited to writing proficiency.

In short, there is a crisis of student writing, which appears to result in part from learning outcome deficiencies measurable at the high school level and which continue to pose challenges to students and to instructors throughout the college years.

## 2. A SYSTEMATIC RESPONSE: DEPARTMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

In the fall of 2015, the English department began a large-scale revision of its outcomes assessment strategy and practices, starting with a re-formulation of its mission and goals. One (among several) of the central motivations for this undertaking was to prioritize student writing at all levels of the major, in recognition of the dire situation described above. In March, 2016, the department established a set of four overarching goals which were to serve as the linchpins of its teaching, and by means of which it would conduct its outcomes assessment. Focus on written (and oral) expression of ideas constitutes one of the four goals in the resulting document:

"Department Goal 3: Express ideas — both orally and in writing — correctly, cogently, persuasively, and in conformity with the conventions of the discipline."

Together with the revised departmental goals established in March 2016, every departmental program further articulated a set of learning objectives associated with each of the four goals, tailored to its specific conventions and content. The English literature program articulated the following three objectives to supplement Department Goal 3:

"Program Objective 1: Identify, write, and edit for currently accepted conventions of standard English mechanics, grammar, and style (including proper punctuation, subject-verb and noun-pronoun agreement, parallel construction, appropriate tense sequences and moods, etc.)

"Program Objective 2: Learn and follow the conventions of literary argumentation, including formulating thesis statement, and conventions of quoting and citing textual evidence.

"Program Objective 3: Learn how to rethink and revise essays."

In conjunction with the revised goals and objectives, the department is carrying out a rigorous modification to its outcomes assessment strategy, focusing on one objective at a time. Since we are at the early stages and have not yet assessed the outcomes associated with this particular department goal, we cannot yet report any assessment data about the degree of success that instructors have had in implementing these program objectives.

However, we can report that many individual English instructors are already implementing strategies designed to subserve the newly articulated writing objectives. In fact, many instructors are already building more rigorous writing instruction into their courses in keeping with these objectives. The increased writing instruction has supplemented, rather than replaced, other classroom activities and instruction. While this has taken place within the framework of 3-credit/3-hour courses, in practice it means that for an increasing number of our courses there is already an increased workload not only for students but also instructors. Moreover, the increased workload has not simply come in the form of more graded

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assignments, but has entailed additional instruction time: more interaction between faculty and students as well as interaction among students themselves, focused specifically on writing. Out of necessity (due to the fact that classes meet in 3-hour time slots), this has meant that instructors are taking advantage of the online learning technologies that the College and CUNY have supported. But exigencies aside, instruction in writing lends itself especially well to creative strategies like online supplements to in-class instruction. Many of our faculty, then, are already making effective use of additional instruction in order to meet the newly formulated learning objectives.

### 3. MEETING THE CHALLENGE HEAD-ON: ADDING A FOURTH HOUR

The challenges that students face in writing at all levels of their undergraduate careers requires a systematic approach on the part of the faculty. Adding a fourth hour of instruction to English courses is an important component of such an approach; if an instructor were to add assignments and teaching time to support the writing objectives without a concurrent expansion of the course overall, it would entail reducing assignments and time devoted to (other) important course material. As described above, many individual instructors are already implementing increased workload not only for their students but for themselves, using platforms for online learning to gain additional instruction time. But this strategy has been, thus far, unsystematic and ad hoc. The instructors who are using it (to one degree or another) to add instruction time are not getting proper workload credit for their increased workload, and their students are not getting proper academic credit for additional work.

Adding a fourth hour will systematize the increased instruction and build in accountability in a way that the informal, ad hoc implementation has not been able to. Under the proposed change to 4-credits/4-hours, the department creates a clear and systematic expectation for increased instruction, and sets up a formal way both for students and instructors to be accountable for the extra work and also to have that work acknowledged in a way that it has, to one degree or another, not been.

Examples of the kind of instructional activities that might be (and have been) used to prioritize writing include:

- Weekly response papers and peer review, guided by the instructor;
- Writing projects that span several weeks, with weekly revisions based on peer and instructor feedback;
- Longer or more substantial pieces that might be assigned less frequently but for which students are responsible for spending one hour per week giving detailed criticism and feedback of classmates' work to serve as the basis for revision;
- Class or small group writing exercises in which each student is expected to write on a topic relevant to the course, and then critique or respond to one another's drafts.

### 4. ADDING A FOURTH HOUR IS THE OPTIMAL APPROACH

While the English department faculty believes that there can be little doubt about the urgent need for devoting extra instruction time to writing, it is nevertheless important to consider whether there are alternatives to adding a fourth hour to English classes. One obvious logical possibility is to leave courses as 3 credits/3 hours, and to increase the number of courses required for the degree program — for instance, by adding required courses specifically devoted to writing instruction.

An alternative along these lines, however, would be a serious error. Good writing is not simply a technical skill that is learned prior to, and independently of, other areas of academic study. Rather, it is part and parcel of developing and refining other skills such as critical reading

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and thinking, and must be continually practiced in tandem with these other skills. Given the high priority that the department has determined that writing instruction warrants, an attempt to address it by requiring one or a few additional courses would be no less risible than, for example, offering a dedicated course in scales and arpeggios in a music performance program; there, it is assumed that practice in basic techniques is part and parcel of all performance instruction through the most advanced levels. The English Composition courses provide students with a very good baseline in writing instruction. It is in the subsequent courses that these basic skills need to be really developed through continual, guided practice.

Recent social science research bears this out. Recall that the Arum and Roksa study described above reports a correlation between the amount of writing (and reading) required in college courses and the overall learning outcomes of undergraduate education, not just in writing. Their conclusion from this is that a higher proportion of courses should be more writing- and reading-intensive than what college students are currently receiving. Putting an increased focus on writing in all of our courses — and concomitantly increasing the number of credits/hours — is exactly the right approach, if we are to take findings like these seriously.

In fact, the English department faculty believes that, while we have a special responsibility to prioritize undergraduate writing, there is a potential for great benefit to students if other departments in the College likewise increase the amount of writing that students are expected to do in their courses. This would undoubtedly entail more work both on the part of students and instructors, and implementing it may require a strategy like the one that English is proposing to undertake, i.e. moving to 4 credits/4 hours. We leave that suggestion for our colleagues in other departments to consider. For the time being, we believe that our special disciplinary relationship with writing warrants our leading the charge.

**Dates of department or program approval:** December 6, 2016 (Africana Studies, English, Philosophy, and Puerto Rican & Latino Studies), January 26, 2017 (Classics), January 31, 2017 (Women's and Gender Studies), February 1, 2017 (American Studies), March 31, 2017 (Linguistics)

**Effective date:** Fall 2017

**SECTION A-VI: OTHER CHANGES**

**Department of English**

**Change in Journalism minor**

**Minor in Journalism**

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**Department requirements:** (12 credits)  
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English 2401 and 2403 [3407]

Nine Six credits chosen from the following: ~~English 3404, 3402, 3403, 3401, 2402, 4401, 3406, 4403, 3405, 3407.~~ English 3401, 3402, 3403, 3404, 3405, 3406, 4401, 4402, 4403, 4404, 4405.

**Rationale:**

This minor has been changed to incorporate revised prerequisites for a number of courses. English 3407 has been renumbered to 2403 and is now a required course for the minor, in order to introduce multimedia journalism as an integral component and prerequisite for the electives. A new course, English 4404, has been added to provide advanced instruction in multimedia journalism. History of News has been renumbered from a 2000-level introductory course to a 4000-level seminar so that students can approach the historical content with a deeper appreciation of journalistic practice that they have gained from other courses.

**Date of departmental approval:** February 14, 2017

**Effective Date:** Fall 2017

**SECTION A-VI: OTHER CHANGES**

**Department of English**

**Change in Comparative Literature minor**

**Minor in Comparative Literature**

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**Department requirements**  
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At least ~~42 credits~~ four courses (12-16 credits) in advanced electives in the Comparative Literature Program with a grade of C or higher in each course. Comparative literature minors should consult with the director for recommendations.

**Rationale:**

The change in this minor result from a wholesale change in the number of credits/hours for ENGL and CMLT courses numbered 2115 and above (excluding certain courses that are cross-listed with other departments), from 3 credits/3 hours to 4 credits/4 hours. The purpose of adding a fourth hour to our courses is to provide additional attention to writing and revision. Adding a fourth hour, dedicated to guided writing practice and peer-critique, addresses a dire and longstanding need for students develop and hone their writing skills in a structured (virtual) classroom environment. (A more detailed description both of the need for this program change, and of how the proposed change addresses that need, can be found in the Degree Program change document for the major.)

**Date of departmental approval:** December 6, 2016

**Effective Date:** Fall 2017



**SECTION A-VI: OTHER CHANGES**

**Department of English**

**Change in English minor**

**Minor in English**

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**Department requirements**  
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A program of ~~12 credits~~ four courses (12-16 credits) of advanced electives in the English Department with a grade of C or higher in each course. It is recommended that students meet with a department counselor to plan a coherent program.

Students might choose a sequence of courses constituting a general survey of English and/or American literature; a genre (e.g., fiction, poetry, drama); a period (e.g., medieval, romantic, modern); creative writing, expository writing, journalism; or linguistics.

**Rationale:**

The change in this minor result from a wholesale change in the number of credits/hours for ENGL and CMLT courses numbered 2115 and above (excluding certain courses that are cross-listed with other departments), from 3 credits/3 hours to 4 credits/4 hours. The purpose of adding a fourth hour to our courses is to provide additional attention to writing and revision. Adding a fourth hour, dedicated to guided writing practice and peer-critique, addresses a dire and longstanding need for students develop and hone their writing skills in a structured environment. (A more detailed description both of the need for this program change, and of how the proposed change addresses that need, can be found in the Degree Program change document for the major.)

The second, very minor change is the removal of an extraneous semi-colon that appears in the description after the word "genre."

**Date of departmental approval:** December 6, 2016

**Effective Date:** Fall 2017

## APPENDIX

### Discussion of student concerns as posted on the *FC Undergraduate Curriculum Committee* Blackboard organization

**Author:** Douglas Cohen **Date:** Friday, March 24, 2017 7:48:23 AM EDT

**Subject:** Student Concerns - RE: A-III English

Some of the student members of the Committee have been talking to current English majors about their programs and how the proposed changes from 3-credit to 4-credit courses might impact them. These are their observations and questions.

There are many English majors who are on a pre-medical or other health sciences track and have a substantial number of science courses outside of their majors that they need to take. They also need to enroll in the maximum of 18 credits in most semesters in order to graduate in four years. This makes them very sensitive to the addition of required credits to any of the English majors and to any program changes that make it difficult to schedule 18 credits in a term.

The students were receptive to the case made for the need for greater depth in the courses possible with 4-credit classes but not the need for extra credits in these degree programs.

With regard to the minors, they did not see the need to increase the upper range to 16 credits by requiring 4 classes instead of requiring 12 credits. Especially since there would be so few 3-credit courses available, this would become a de facto increase to 16 credits. It seemed to the students that based on the rationale 3, 4-credit courses were actually better than 4, 3-credit courses, and thus the minors should not change from a requirement of 12 credits.

4-credit courses are difficult to include in a student's schedule and have it reach exactly 18 credits in a semester when all general education courses are 3-credits. The more 4-credit courses a student must take, the more difficult this becomes.

They were concerned by the wholesale change in these programs, switching them all at once from programs with 3-credit courses to 4-credit courses, resulting in a 1-credit increase in over 100 courses. It seemed prudent to begin the conversion with a limited number of courses common to many of the English degree programs, and evaluate how that works first.

They were glad to see that hybrid sections were being considered for these courses but hoped that different balances of online and in class instruction would be tested. For example, many of the students would like more time in the classroom with the instructor on practical application of material that might initially be introduced online instead in of completely in class. Different balances might also be tried, including 50/50 and possibly even completely online if the online interaction with the instructor and the rest of the students in the course are strong enough.

**Author:** Jonathan Nissenbaum **Date:** Monday, March 27, 2017 6:01:59 PM EDT

**Subject:** RE: Student Concerns - RE: A-III English

We are extremely grateful for the comments and the thoughtful reading from the student members. We find ourselves in agreement on a couple of the specific points raised, and we are glad that the students were receptive to the case that we made for the need to increase our

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courses to 4 credits. As for the concern about the impact of an increased credit requirement on majors who are in pre-med and other credit-intensive tracks, we are sympathetic and we believe this issue warrants a larger discussion not limited to the English curriculum but more generally about all of the credit-heavy degree programs at the College. Clearly, the onus should not be on any particular program (Health Sciences, Education, Business, Africana Studies, English, etc.) to reduce program requirements that otherwise have sound justification.

As we describe in our rationale, the English department thought carefully about how to minimize the increase to the credit requirements, and, in practice, the number of credits increases only minimally. For instance, the English degree program is changing from a range of 39–42 to a range of 38–47, and the “standard English concentration” within this program will have a range of 38–44 under our proposed change. We achieved this in part by reducing the “Fields of Study” requirement from five to four courses (which we justify in the rationale). And, while it is true that there will be few 3-credit courses to choose from in the “Fields” requirement, a student in this concentration could very easily expect to complete the degree with 41 to 43 credits: the electives allow a course from another department, and the 5000-level English courses will remain at 3 credits.

Even with an increase of a few credits that a typical major will be required to take to complete the program, English will not be at all out of step among the degree programs in the college. In fact, among 37 departments/programs that grant undergraduate degrees, English currently ranks slightly above the median (measured by the minimum number of credits required): fifteen departments/programs have higher minimum requirements, and twenty have a lower minimum. (English is tied with American Studies at 39.) With the proposed change, and taking 42–44 as the typical requirement for an English major, the result would barely change the ranking: English would move up one-to-two places. (See the list appended below.)

In short, we think we have succeeded in minimizing the impact of the increased number of credits.

As for the suggestion that the English minor remain at twelve credits, we do not think that three courses (in-depth though they may be) is sufficient for a minor. There are no other minors in the college that require fewer than four courses. And again, having a minor of 15-16 credits is not out of step with other departments and programs. While the majority of minors offered at the College have a minimum credit requirement of 12 credits, well over a third have minimum requirements of 15, 18, or even higher. We think that four of our courses, which would typically come to 16 credits, is appropriate for a minor in English at Brooklyn College.

Apart from the broader issue of the number of credits required for the major(s) and minor, the summary of the comments made by the student members covers three other distinct points:

- (1) The observation that mixing 4- and 3-credit courses makes it difficult to register for exactly 18 credits per semester;
- (2) The suggestion that we proceed in steps rather than all at once;
- (3) The suggestion that we consider making some of the 4-credit courses fully in-class rather than making all of them hybrid/partially online.

Taking these in order, we agree that it is difficult to mix 4- and 3-credit courses in a given semester and reach the total of 18. A student would have to take three 4-credit courses and two 3-credit courses, or some other combination plus independent studies, in order to achieve

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exactly 18 credits. We don't completely understand the comment that “the more 4-credit courses a student must take, the more difficult this becomes”; it seems to us that the target is only, or most easily, reachable if *most* of a student's courses are 4-credit. But, more generally, there are many 4-credit courses at the College, including some that satisfy the General Education/Pathways requirement (in particular the lab and some of the STEM-variant courses). If there is a significant population of students under pressure to register for exactly 18 credits, *\*all\** of the 4-credit courses at the College pose exactly the same problem. If we have made a compelling case for the need for 4-credit English courses, then we are in no more of a position to “fix” this issue than any other department with 4-credit courses. But we are in full agreement that the issue of pressure to register for exactly the 18-credit target warrants a serious discussion. We think it should be taken up by the faculty and administration as a whole (again, without the onus falling on any particular department).

As for proceeding in small steps, we find ourselves in agreement that the move to 4 credits should not be taken lightly, and would optimally be tested in a single degree program. And, as it happens, we have undertaken just such a “pilot” version of a 4-credit degree program: several years ago, the Linguistics program changed all of its core courses (wholesale) to 4-hours/4-credits. The program has been running very smoothly ever since, and in fact seen tremendous growth in the number of majors in that period, with increasing demand for its 4-credit courses. The program has had no complaints from majors about any difficulty posed by having 4-credit courses. We take this as a good indicator that such a change can be implemented without causing undue havoc.

Finally, with regard to the suggestion that we consider having a mix of hybrid and fully in-class courses, we are in complete agreement. At the Curriculum Committee's suggestion, we removed the stipulation that the fourth hour be online across-the-board, and in retrospect we are glad that our current proposal allows exactly the kind of flexibility that the student members have suggested.

**Author:** Jonathan Nissenbaum **Date:** Tuesday, March 28, 2017 11:41:32 AM EDT

**Subject:** RE: Student Concerns - RE: A-III English

Addendum to our March 26 response: Upon re-reading the summary of the student members' comments, we thought that perhaps our response addressed the curricular issues in a general way, mindful of constructing the best possible program going forward, but paid insufficient attention to the practical concerns of *\*current\** majors whose programs of study will be directly affected by the changes we have proposed. Certainly, incoming students who plan a course of study leading to a degree in any of our English programs can be expected to take into account the new degree requirements and the number of credits per course. But we are of course aware that current majors, who have already planned their programs at least in part, might be adversely affected by the proposed changes. The English department certainly does not intend to create hardship for such students, and we want to make clear — as we will most assuredly do with our current majors — that we are willing to work with individual students during the interim period (i.e. the period in which there are majors who have already begun under the current degree requirements) and we are willing to apply some flexibility on a case-by-case basis to make sure that students can complete their programs of study without facing hardship that has arisen solely due to the change in requirements and/or the change in number of credits per course.

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