

PROPOSING A WRITING-INTENSIVE COURSE

Information about the person submitting the proposal:

Your name: Camille Tessitore King
(others who teach the course are Anthony Blum & Laura Curry)

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Department: Psychology

College: Arts & Sciences

Information about the course:

Course Title: Great Experiments in Psychology

Course Number: PSYC 203

Course description (*Bulletin* copy is fine): Psychology 203 is an undergraduate course that examines the creative history of psychology by probing some of the most influential studies that have shaped our conceptions of human behavior. The on-going influence of these pivotal works is confirmed by discussing present investigations that have their roots in the original research.

Has this course been offered before?

Yes, but not as a Writing Intensive course

No

Is this course a Gen Ed course?

Yes, carrying the _____ designation

No

Has this course been approved by the relevant curriculum committees in your College/School?

Yes

No

Curricular Information:

- 1.) How many students will typically enroll in this course? If the ratio between the students enrolled in the course and the instructor(s) charged with providing feedback is greater than 20:1, please explain.

20-40 per semester (1- 2 sections of ~20 are offered per term)

- 2.) How does this course's WI emphasis support the academic and programmatic goals of the University or College/School curriculum?

The University Bulletin states that "(w)riting skills are critical for success in college and in life after graduation,". This course, which is targeted principally at our majors, is designed to teach our students to think, understand data, write, and present like a research psychologist. The course provides students with a foundation upon which to build the skills necessary to write successfully in their field --a goal that is in line with the academic goals of the College.

- 3.) After consultation with the Department Chair or Program Director, please explain how this course enhances or complements the regular curricular offerings of the department or program and how the course will be scheduled to avoid conflicts with other course offerings and rotations.

The Department has been offering this course regularly (1-3 times per year) since the spring term of 2004. It has become a 'routine' part of the course scheduling. The course was designed to complement the other 'lower' division course, PSYC 201: Theories of Personality, in which major theories in Psychology are explored. This course (PSYC 203) gives students, early in their academic careers, a greater appreciation and understanding of the empirical side of the discipline.

Please answer each of the following.

- 1.) What are the writing-related learning goals for students in this course? What do students typically know about writing (or what can they typically do with writing) before they come to this class, and what do you expect them to learn over the course of the semester?

Before entering this class, which is a 200 level course, students are expected to have completed the First Year Seminar and/or their English requirement complete. We realize that in some cases that PSYC 203 might be taken concurrently with one of those courses as we occasionally have some first year students in the course.

The overriding goal of the course (in terms of writing) is to learn how to write like a scientist as a means to prepare them for the time when they must write up their own research proposal and senior research project. They learn to how to construct an effective background/introduction, how to translate data & data analysis into readable

text, how to incorporate the existing literature appropriately, and how to tie their findings into that literature.

2.) How is information literacy incorporated in this course? (In other words, in what ways will students be finding, evaluating, and incorporating outside source material into their written texts

- **Shorter, Medium-Stakes Assignments** (3 to 5 page assignments; generally some revision, generally graded

Each student is required to prepare a thorough summary (of background, methods, results, conclusions, etc.) of a contemporary peer-reviewed journal article that relates to one of the classic studies we discuss in the class and to discuss how that current work relates to the original, classic research.

Also included in this category are answers to one (or two) long essay question (which is/are found on each of three exams). These questions require the students to incorporate findings/methodologies, etc. from the studies we have discussed. These essays are an important means by which the student demonstrates his understanding of the science.

- **Extended, High-Stakes Assignments** (10 to 15 page assignments; revised, graded)

As a class we conduct a psychological experiment. The students are required to write up the project in American Psychological Association (APA). This is a MAJOR project, counting the equivalent of a test. The project extends throughout the semester as we break up the assignment into manageable pieces for the students (please refer Appendix A, which details the time course of this assignment from a previous semester). Breaking up the long paper into pieces provides opportunity for the instructors to provide instructive feedback to our students (see below) making the final version of the work much better!

Informal, Low-Stakes Assignments (ongoing through the semester, generally unrevised, often not graded)

Though the following assignments do not provide opportunity for students to incorporate "outside source material", they are important, low-stakes writing components of the course.

There are several in-class labs that require the students to write brief responses or answers. The assignments are graded but each is worth only 10 pts (the total number of graded points upon which their grade is based is 500). There are 7 of these assignments, of which the top 5 are included for grading purposes. As an example, the first lab requires the students to write answers to questions like, "Why did our method of calculation lead to a more accurate measurement of "thinking time?" and "Identify one source of error in the study we conducted". These types of questions require some critical thinking on their part but in a low-stakes manner.

Also, occasionally, we will ask “thought questions” of the students as a means for them to ‘jot’ down their ideas on the study we are discussing for the day.

3.) How much will students’ written assignments count toward the final grade?

Combined, the written work (high-, medium-, and low-stake) account for ~40% of the grade.

4.) How is revision incorporated into writing assignments? How will feedback be given, and which assignments will include required revisions?

For the major manuscript they prepare, the students are asked to turn in the Methods section and the results section for feedback, and then later turn in an Introduction for feedback. The final document has been a much better product since implementing this feedback process.

The students are also given the opportunity to turn in their summary (or parts of it) of the current peer-reviewed journal article for feedback, though this is not required of them.

Approvals:

✓ Writing Program Director

✓ Chair of the Department

✓ Curriculum Committee of (circle one) A&S Business Music

University General Education Committee, as necessary

UCCAP

Attachment A.

DUE DATES for PSYC 203 Manuscript:

Please remember: Not turning in required items in a timely fashion will result in points being deducted from your overall manuscript grade. If I do not receive your work when class starts it is considered as ‘not turned in on time’. *Missing class does not excuse you from turning in the work due that day.*

February 8	Completed Surveys Due
February 22	Data Input Due <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-mail your data file to cking@stetson.edu before class starts
February 24	Have the two background papers read by this day <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write down one thing from each paper that interested you. Bring to class.
March 3:	Descriptive & Inferential Statistics Due
March 15	Methods & Results: Draft due for feedback
March 29:	Introduction: Draft due for feedback
April 12:	Final Manuscript Due

Please start now working on the text for the Methods & Introduction of your manuscript

- A. To assist you, you should currently have (from me):
1. The two research articles (Rosen, Fallon papers) printed out from Blackboard.
 2. The “sample” APA-style research manuscript I handed out in class.
 3. The “Research Report” brief descriptions I typed out for our manuscript.
- B. What you need to do/get (for now)
1. Find a research article (in addition to the two above that I have provided) to incorporate into the Introduction