Graduate Student Course Development:

Application Procedures

Undergraduate Course and Program Committee

Department of Germanic Studies
University of Texas at Austin
(3/97; updated 6/02)

This handout is designed to help graduate students who wish to develop their own course syllabi for future teaching assignments. It describes the available courses and the materials which must be submitted to the Undergraduate Course and Program Committee, and it outlines some of the conditions under which students may be assigned to teach such courses.

When do I submit course materials to the Course Committee?

UT Austin sets its final catalogue copy for the Course Schedule approximately one year in advance in order to have all materials available for preregistration. Meeting departmental deadlines as given in memos soliciting courses will insure that your course and your name get into the right edition of the Course Schedule. A course that is not listed in the original Course Schedule has very little chance of meeting minimum enrollment standards, and so it will likely be cancelled, even if it has been scheduled. Please submit your proposal by 1 October, one year in advance.

You are potentially eligible to teach one of these self-designed courses after you have taught the 506-312K sequence, have been admitted to Ph.D. candidacy, and are working on your dissertation. You may apply to be assigned before you take your Admission to Candidacy examination, but your ability to teach the course will be contingent upon timely completion of program requirements and on the Department's ability to finance the course.

If you are assigned to teach one of these courses, expect to teach a split load (that is, two different three-hour courses), since only rarely (and only in the case of 312L) can two sections of the same course be guaranteed to one instructor.

What do I need to submit to the Course Committee?

Your application to teach a special course will be evaluated on the basis of the package of materials that you submit to the Committee. Each course number requires a somewhat different package of materials, but each package must be complete and available to the Committee before a course can be accepted. Note, too, that the list of materials required would be adequate to
submit as a sample of teaching materials for job applications. The hope is that, by being explicit about the pedagogy involved in designing a course, the designer ought to be able to export this course to other institutions.

**Follow-Ups?**

The Department would like to keep file (and electronic) copies of each of these courses after they are taught, including the final versions of the syllabi, tests and assignments, and all class handouts. In this way, a course development library can gradually be evolved to help everyone in the department find materials and teaching techniques.

A member of the Course Committee will serve as your mentor. Your mentor will assist you with all questions and problems you might encounter in designing and teaching the course. S/he will visit your course at least once and write a report to be filed in your dossier. You might want to ask your advisor(s) as well to sit in. Apart from the useful feedback they can offer, you will in turn provide them with detailed information about your teaching. Designing and teaching your own course is an achievement which thus can be duly emphasized in job applications and reference letters.

**GERMAN 312L: Fourth-Semester German**

German 312L is a fourth-semester German course that is intended to build on the first three semesters in a consistent way. The typical 312L course is built around a topic that relates to the student's graduate speciality or strong minor interest and it requires students to do more intensive work in reading, listening, and writing than does 312K. At the same time, 312L should also incorporate a grammar review and regular speaking practice. Note that the Department requires that Larry Wells, *Handbuch zur deutschen Grammatik* be used for the course. There is an answer key for this book available. The Committee strongly recommends integrating review of complex grammar/syntax early in the semester (particularly passive and subjunctive).

**Required materials**

Consult the Course and Program Coordinator if you are not familiar with any of the following items.

A course proposal consists of:

- a course description, suitable for posting, including grading criteria as required by UT
- a list of texts
- an extended description of the course (up to 500 words) for the Course Committee, describing the rationale for offering such a course (what students it would appeal to, which upper-division courses it would prepare students for, what particular language practice your selection of materials offers . . .)
- a detailed syllabus, indicating sequence and schedule of readings, exercises, tests, assignments, and the students' requirements for each class period and for homework (design the class for a 15-week semester, either two 1.5-hour classes or three 1-hour class sessions per week)
One semester later, you will be asked to submit these additional materials:
• the texts for the course
• detailed lesson plans for a representative week of class meetings, indicating how the materials will be treated in class, how class time will be used, what kind of pedagogical strategy/ies will be implemented in integrating materials and reviewing grammar
• sample quizzes and tests, to indicate how the materials and strategies taught will be tested.

Student-Developed German 312L courses, recently taught:
• “Third Reich, Emigration, Holocaust – Anna, ein Kind der Nazizeit” (Heiko Wiggers; fall 2002)
• “Märchenstunde – Es war einmal auf Deutsch” (Erol Boran; spring 2001)
• “Topics of German 20th century youth culture in literature and film” (Thomas Bosch; spring 1998)

**GRC 301: Introduction to Germanic Studies**
"Germanic Civilization Courses" are topics courses taught in English, and designed to help beginning undergraduate students fulfill graduation requirements for "Significant Writing Component" courses while they are introduced to a set of materials in any area of Germanic Studies.

To qualify in the College Curriculum Committee as having a "Significant Writing Component," a course must have at least three separate writing assignments (which can include substantive rewriting) that require a minimum of 16 (250-word) pages of writing. The course syllabus must clearly indicate how students will get timely and regular feedback on their writing (one final paper will NOT qualify), and the course grade must be given primarily on the basis of these writing assignments (although tests, quizzes, and other kinds of oral participation may also count towards the final grade).

A "GRC" at UT is typically a cross-listed course with between 18 and 30 students, and so is the kind of course that could be taught in a humanities division, in a western or world civilization track, as part of a comparative literature or cultural studies requirement, as a supplement to the offerings in another department or program (e.g., as "Germanic Studies across the curriculum") or as an introduction to area studies concentration that complement a German major.

**Required materials**
Consult the Course and Program Coordinator if you are not familiar with any of the following items.

A course proposal consists of:
• a course description, suitable for posting, including grading criteria as required by UT
• a list of texts
• an extended description of the course (up to 500 words) for the Course Committee, describing the rationale for offering such a course (what students it would appeal to, which upper-division courses it would prepare students for, what particular kind of writing practice your selection of materials offers . . . )
• a detailed syllabus, indicating sequence and schedule of readings, exercises, tests, assignments, and the students’ requirements for each class period and for homework (design the class for a 15-week semester, either two 1.5-hour classes or three 1-hour class sessions per week)
• description of all writing assignments and the assessment criteria to be used in evaluating that writing

One semester later, you will be asked to submit these additional materials:
• detailed lesson plans for one week of class meetings, indicating how the materials will be treated in class, how class time will be used, what kind of pedagogical strategy/ies will be implemented in integrating materials
• other sample quizzes and tests, to indicate how the materials and strategies taught will be tested (if applicable)

In designing this kind of course, consider the kinds of research and writing activities that are appropriate to freshmen, who are likely to be unfamiliar with the mechanics and materials of writing Sachprosa (technical prose of any kind) or with critical reading/thinking/writing of any sort. Particularly appropriate for Germanic studies context are: short research reports requiring library work (including bibliographic data bases) and proper footnotes; critical essays (comparison, critique, evaluations); book reviews or annotated bibliographies (requiring critical assessments about texts, audience, usability, etc.). For exemplary descriptions of such assignments and discussions of evaluation criteria, see Barbara E. Fassler Walvoord, Helping Students Write Well: A Guide for Teachers in All Disciplines (2nd ed.; New York: MLA, 1986). Also consult with Germanic Languages faculty who regularly teach GRC courses in your proposed course area.

Student-Developed GRC 301 course, recently taught:
“Death’s Door and German Art” (Cecilia Pick, spring 1999)