**PROPOSAL FOR W COURSE RECERTIFICATION**

If you have any questions about filling out this form, consult the Chair of the W & C Course Advisory Committee (Dr. Valerie Balester, 458-1420 or v-balester@tamu.edu), the Checklist of W Course Requirements, and the Rubric for Evaluating W Course Proposals.

Send electronic copies of representative syllabi that have been used for this course. You do not have to send syllabi for every section or instructor, but those you send should provide an accurate view of how the course is being taught.

**Name of Faculty Proposing Course:**

W. R. Klemm

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**PLEASE PLACE REQUESTED INFORMATION IN WHITE TEXT AREAS. BOXES WILL RESIZE AS NECESSARY.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>March 18, 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>979-845-4201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email Address</td>
<td><a href="mailto:wklemm@cvm.tamu.edu">wklemm@cvm.tamu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Mail Stop</td>
<td>4458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Department</td>
<td>Veterinary Integrative Biosciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course Prefix/Number</td>
<td>VIBS 408</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course Title</td>
<td>Neuroscience and Religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Sections per Academic Year</td>
<td>one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment per Section (Avg.)</td>
<td>25 (maximum)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Credits</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the course appropriate for majors in your department?</td>
<td>Yes (especially pre-medical students)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**List any courses this course is cross-listed with. Cross-listed courses should be demonstrably relevant to the major using it for a W course. Status forms should be submitted for each cross-listed course.**

**Have there been any significant changes to the course?**

Yes

1. Originally in the first semester, the didactic portion of the course (basic neuroscience) was bundled in with the writing/discussion portion of neuroscience and religion. The writing suffered because students were cutting short their efforts to master the requisite neuroscience. Therefore, I split out the didactic portion into a separate, all-on-line course, "Core Ideas in Neuroscience" (VIBS 407). That course, hosted by eCampus, has weekly quizzes on neuroscience and a final examination and must be taken concurrently by 408 students. The 407 course has a journaling requirement, but there is not sufficient writing for me to request W certification for 407.
2. The writing component of the 408 course has been increased by a new requirement for weekly personal journal entries. This course has a "participation" grade (25%) of the final grade, which includes diligent journal entries, discussion in class, and oral presentations of essays. The journal entry each week should list in bullet format three key ideas from the essays of four other students that week that the student thinks are important enough to remember and reflect upon. The purpose is to ensure that students are engaged with each essay. The entries will help them remember important ideas. They will get full credit each week for a proper entry. Being late or incomplete will result in grade deduction.

The original overall writing requirements remain the same, namely:

- Find a peer-reviewed neuroscience or theological publication that is relevant to that week's topic. On alternate weeks, each student will either write a one paragraph summary of the information source or write an original 500-800 word essay that provides explanation and insight on the relationships of science and religion, with particular emphasis on how they inform each other. Summaries and essays will be posted in the forum of eCampus, open only to class enrollees.
- Post each week at least two comments on the posts of classmates. Anonymous posts are not acceptable. On-line commentary on the posts is an integral aspect of student participation. Comments should contribute to the ideas involved.

Have there been any significant changes in the staffing of the course? Have any assistants been added or removed? Explain.

No

If applicable, have there been any significant changes in the way you monitor the work of assistants (graduate or undergraduate)?

Is the graded writing evaluated by any assistants (i.e., GATs or undergraduates)? If so, who will evaluate it? Include all assistants, and indicate if they are graduates or undergraduates. You do not need to use specific names; rather, you can specify "7 undergraduates not taking the course," or "3 Graduate Assistants."

I do all the grading without assistance, using the submitted rubric.

Could students pass this course without earning a passing grade for the writing component? Failure to earn a passing grade on the writing requirements precludes the assignment of W credit, irrespective of the student's making a passing grade for the entire course on a straight calculation basis. Students cannot receive W credit for this course without earning a passing grade on the writing component, no matter how the points are distributed.

Absolutely not. The grading requirements based on writing constitute well over 75% of the final grade.

List all graded writing assignments along with the approximate word count of each assignment and the percentage of the final grade each represents. (Note that for most 12-point fonts there are about 250 words on a page if double-spaced and 500 if single-spaced.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Word Count</th>
<th>Percentage of Final Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Seven essays</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>50% of final grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Seven summaries</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>25% of final grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. 13 journal entries</td>
<td>1. Three &quot;take-home&quot; lessons from the week's work of at least four classmates.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Roughly 1/3 of the participation grade, which is 25% of the final grade.

[Indicate which of the above assignments are collaborative, if any. Explain how collaboration is monitored to ensure equal participation. Table will resize as necessary.]

Students do not collaborate in the sense of shared writing of a jointly authored document. But they most certainly collaborate in idea sharing. Everybody sees and discusses what everybody else writes, except for journals, which are private.

Add word count of each graded writing assignment and put total word count here.

500-800 words for each essay. Total = 3,500 to 5,600 words, not counting summaries and journal entries.

Add the percentage of final grade based on writing and put the total percentage here.

> 75%

Describe the formative feedback provided on student writing, especially on major assignments. Do NOT include commenting on finished, graded work unless there are at least 5 assignments of the same typed spaced throughout the semester. Appropriate forms of feedback may include peer review or in-class draft workshops, written or oral instructor comments on written drafts, Calibrated Peer Review, or other methods. Formative feedback should focus on helping students improve their drafts.

I copy each essay into MS Word, and insert comments at appropriate in-context locations within the document. At the head of the document, I insert three categories of evaluation:

1. The features of the essay that I thought were especially useful or well done.
2. Questions that arose in the essay that were not addressed, yet relevant.
3. Recommendations to improve the essay.

At the end of the grade document, I insert the rubric and complete the scoring. The grade document is e-mailed to the student at the end of the same week in which it was submitted.

During class discussions, when an essay is particularly well done, I tell the students about my evaluation of the writing.

Describe how you provide writing instruction. For example, do you assign readings related to writing in your field? Do you use lecture, modeling, discussion, in-class writing, or other methods to help your students learn to write in your discipline? For more information about possible teaching methods, see the Pedagogy section of the UWC web site at [http://writingcenter.tamu.edu/for-faculty/teaching-writing/](http://writingcenter.tamu.edu/for-faculty/teaching-writing/).

On the first day of class, I summarize my view of good writing and give specific guidance on the requirements for essays, summaries, and journals.

At the beginning of each face-to-face meeting on Friday, I discuss writing techniques, pointing out special strengths and weaknesses that I noticed in that week’s submissions.

Many specific suggestions are made in the graded document that I return to each student.

If you have any further comments you think the committee should consider about your course, include them here:

Despite the heavy workload, students are attracted to this class. At the last registration, the enrollment quota was filled within a few hours after registration became open.

Submit this form electronically to Dr. Valerie Balester, W & C Course Advisory Committee (v-balester@tamu.edu), along with a copy of representative syllabi. A Status Form also needs to be routed for signatures and submitted through campus mail to the University Writing Center at mail stop 5000.