

## LIBERAL STUDIES COMMITTEE

### Meeting Minutes

Nov 15th, 2018

**Present:** Y. Asamoah, M. Fernandez-Gomez, S. Ghosh, L. Hromadik, M. Knoch, S. Massey, V. Ortiz, E. Reilly, B. Siegel-Finer, F. Slack, and M. Williams

#### Curriculum

**ENGL 256 Videogames and Literature**-New Course-Liberal Studies Humanities Literature  
Motion to **NOT RECOMMEND** approval of ENGL 256. Motion passed.

#### Reasons for NOT RECOMMENDING approval:

**Overall comments:** Videogames often highlight socio-cultural context in different geographic scenarios or historic periods, and a lot could be done to study literature on videogames and its evolution in the recent times. However, this course does not clearly explain how students will learn about or explore literature focusing on this particular theme - videogames. SLO 1 could be modified to address this. SLO 3 ... "ways videogames express values, and through playing .... and reading" - needs some explanation, whether students are choosing a videogame as a project and reflecting how it is expressing "values" in certain socio-cultural context. Another comment, to what extent videogames can communicate values or engage player values or communicate "complexity" in our society could also be addressed.

- **Pre-Requisite:** Does not have a pre-requisite. ENGL 121 has ENGL 101 as a pre-requisite and all other literature courses taught in the English Department have ENGL 101 AND 202 as pre-requisites.  
How often will the course be taught? ENGL 121 to my knowledge is taught every time there are classes in session.
- **Catalog Description:** The description needs to be focused more on a Literature perspective. There is no mention in the description about literature or emphasis on literary texts. The focus seems to be more along the lines of narrative, storytelling, rather than emphasizing the literature of or behind videogames. The course description sounds more like a Communications course than an English course. The first sentence sounds like it could be a scriptwriting class. The last sentence of description seems to be a catch-all for everything and anything that could appear.

**For Reference:** *Catalog description for ENGL 121/FNLG 121: An exploration of literature and the methods of close reading. Through encounters with significant literary texts, students will investigate and analyze how literary meaning is constructed; how literature shapes and is shaped by its various contexts; and how literature enables critical inquiry into values. Includes literary texts by women and people from underrepresented communities.*

*Catalog description for ENGL 265 Law and Literature: Explores the historical and cultural connections between selected legal texts and theme as they relate to novels, poems, films, drama, essays, and other literary genres.*

*Catalog description for ENGL 361 Environmental Literature: Focuses on literature devoted to natural and constructed environments, exploring connections among such topics as nature writing, environmentalism, ecocriticism, place studies, bioregionalism, and environmental justice.*

- **Student Learning Outcomes:** As with the description there is no real discussion of the use of literature: there needs to be a mention/reference to an examination of literary texts regarding videogames. The word “literature” seems to be an afterthought in the second outcome.

*Outcome 1: Close read videogames and stories about videogames.*

Are the stories fiction or non-fiction? It is not clear from the list of readings given in the Course Outline what or where these writings are coming from. What is meant by a close read?

*Outcome 2: Recognize and explore connections between videogames and identities and experiences, between videogames and other forms of literature, and between videogames and the historical and sociocultural contexts in which they are played.*

How are videogames a form of literature? Not clear from the course outline which ones address the historical and sociocultural contexts. Unit 3: Playing History needs to give more detail on how and what the historical and sociocultural contexts are addressed. Recognize and explore—pick one—explore??

*Outcome 3: Recognize and evaluate the ways videogames express values and, through playing videogames and reading about them, reflect on values.*

It does look like the proposers did look at the outcomes in ENGL 121 but 256 outcomes are focused on videogames rather than the literature. And again, it is not clear from the outline how values are addressed. Recognize and evaluate—pick one evaluate??

- **Measuring Outcomes:** There needs to be something more specific than what is listed here. If we are adding this course to the Humanities Literature section, there needs to be a paper, project, that will be common. This is along the lines we are working on with a common activity in the 143s. Is it possible to spread out how the outcomes are being assessed for each of the three outcomes?
- **Brief Course Outline:** Little evidence of literature throughout the outline. Perhaps the inclusion of a definition of how literature as it relates to videogames if it is very different than the genres of literature to which we are accustomed. This could be where the outline begins. A unit/discussion on how videogames have/fight for literacy merit? Do videogames provide the same insight as other works of literature. I am not saying this is not addressed in this course. I’m just not sure it can be seen in the outline or course description. A brief review of the suggested readings indicate that they are coming from webpages and short (1-2 page) magazine articles about gaming ( e.g. The Games Journal). Not that there is anything wrong with that but is it possible to tie them into more seminal works in this area? Are there no texts on videogaming that could be incorporated into the course? A rudimentary search online gave me the following:

Thabet, Tamer. *Video Game Narrative and Criticism: Playing the Story.*

Bogost, Ian. *How To Do Things With Video Games.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011.

*Fernández-Vara, Clara. Introduction to Game Analysis. New York: Routledge, 2015.*

Aarseth, Espen J. *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997.

Consalvo, Mia. "Hot Dates and Fairy-Tale Romances: Studying Sexuality in Video Games." *The Video Game Theory Reader*. Ed. Mark J.P. Wolf and Bernard Perron. New York: Routledge, 2003.

Gee, James Paul. **\*\*Isn't he a big name in English/Linguistics??** *What Video Games Have to Teach Us About Learning and Literacy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

McAllister, Ken. *Game Work: Language, Power, and Computer Game Culture*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2004.

McGonigal, Jane. *Reality is Broken: Why Games Make Us Better and How They Can Change the World*. New York: Penguin, 2011.

Unit 3 Playing History: Riot Girls in Music?? Not clear what the reference to videogames is here. Steampunk—more elaboration.

<http://iblog.iup.edu/thisprofessorplays/2018/07/10/videogames-and-literature-an-annotated-syllabus-part-3/>

- **Rationale for Proposal** While in **Section Q** there is a statement that this course has been offered as a special topics course, there is no explanation of the role literature has played in the special topic offering of the course. There needs to be a rationale stating why this course should be offered in the literature section.
- **University Senate Summary of Rationale Section R** is missing from the proposal.
- **Section S** There is no explanation as to how this course fits into the Departmental Offerings.
- **Section U Does it Serve the College/University** There needs to be a lot more detail in this section on why this course needs to be included as an option for Humanities Literature. The brief explanation that is given in this section really belongs in the next section: **Section V Who is the Target Audience**. There is a reference to **Digital Humanities** in this section where the proposer talks about how this course will serve the university beyond the English Department. However, there is no mention of how this will be accomplished in the outline or the role Digital Humanities has in the course.
- **Section T** need to address the overlap with **Comm Media**: How does this course differ from and expand upon the content of COMM 206 and COMM 306. See also reference to scriptwriting courses mentioned at the beginning.
- **Liberal Studies Section**: In the section asking for how this course fits the designation indicated (literature) the explanation only address ENGL 121 rather than Humanities Literature requirements. Reference needs to be made to:

<https://www.iup.edu/liberal/faculty-and-staff/criteria/literature/>

- **Section on perspectives and contributions of ethnic and racial minorities and women** needs to be more specific of what the contributions are in both this section and in the course outline. It is scattered throughout the outline but there does not seem to be a clear focus. Have a unit devoted to this group. Also in this section mention specific contributions of women and racial minorities and not just how they are dealt with in games.