**Minimum State University, Mankato**

**Curriculum Proposal**

Please type or select the requested information. Print completed forms, add appropriate paper attachments, and route through MSU's curricular process for recommendations and decisions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College: Arts and Humanities</th>
<th>Effective Date of Change: 10-2-07</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department: English</td>
<td>Academic Year: 2007-08 (For Office Use Only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program: Technical Communication</td>
<td>CIP #</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Type of Change: COURSE PROPOSALS

Proposed: New Course

Title Current: Document Design and Usability

Title Proposed: Document Design & Usability

24-Char. Abbrev.: Doc Design & Usability

- **Course Designator and Number**
  - Eng 468/568
  - Credits: 4

Include a course or program description for the Bulletin (30-40 words maximum for courses, 100 for programs):

Covers approaches to the design, development, and testing of (print and online) technical documents, focusing on feedback-driven design and usability testing.

**Rationale or Justification for change:**

Feedback-driven design and usability testing has become a common development and testing methodologies within industry and academia. Courses in documentation and usability testing are standard fare within technical communication programs. This course has been offered previously (3 times) as a topics course, each time drawing well.

***For General Education or Cultural Diversity Courses Only***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GE Category #</th>
<th>GE Category Name (Maximum of 3 Categories)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* For Writing Intensive Courses, attach a description of the kind and quantity of writing.
* For Upper Division Courses, include a description of the respects in which it is broad and general rather than narrow and specific, and so suitable as GE.

Attach paper copies of the following:

a. Syllabus or course outline.
b. Course's student learning outcomes associated with each GE competency or CD designation.
c. List of strategies to be used to assess students' achievement of each GE competency or CD designation.

***For New Courses***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Type: Lecture/Lab</th>
<th>Course will be offered:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>x Course is an elective.</td>
<td>Fall Semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x Course is required for program</td>
<td>Spring Semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre- or Co-requisites:</td>
<td>Summer Session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x Other courses are being changed or eliminated. (Explain.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Course content or title is similar to courses in other departments. (Attach copy of letter of agreement with other program(s) contacted. Indicate the nature of the discussions and/or resolution of differences or potential conflicts.)

Attach paper copies of the following:

a. Syllabus or course outline.
b. Course's student learning outcomes.
c. A list of resources required to offer and support this course.
d. A description of how teaching this course will affect department staffing.
e. If 400/500 level course, an explanation of added expectations of graduate students.

**Received:**

**Revised September 2002**
Minnesota State University, Mankato
Curriculum Proposal

***Signature Page***

Department

- Recommended (Category/ies__________)
- Not Recommended (Category/ies__________)

Date: 10/11/07

Department Chair

Comments:

College Curriculum Committee

- Recommended (Category/ies__________)
- Not Recommended (Category/ies__________)

Date: 10/31/07

Committee Chair

Comments:

College Dean

- Recommended (Category/ies__________)
- Not Recommended (Category/ies__________)

Date: 11/01/07

Dean

Comments:

General Education Subcommittee

- Recommended (Category/ies__________)
- Not Recommended (Category/ies__________)

Date: 10/10/07

General Education Subcommittee Chair

Comments:

Undergraduate Curriculum and Academic Policy Committee

- Recommended (Category/ies__________)
- Not Recommended (Category/ies__________)

Date: 10/10/07

UGAP Faculty Chair

Comments:

Faculty Association Graduate Committee

- Recommended
- Not Recommended

Date: 10/10/07

Faculty Association Graduate Chair

Comments:

Graduate Dean

- Recommended
- Not Recommended

Date: 10/10/07

Graduate Dean

Comments:

Academic Affairs Council

- Recommended (Category/ies__________)
- Not Recommended (Category/ies__________)

Date: 12/20/07

Assistant Vice President

Comments:

Senior Vice President and Vice President for Academic Affairs

- Approved (Category/ies__________)
- Not Approved (Category/ies__________)

Date: 12/20/07

Sr. Vice President / Vice Pres. Academic Affairs

Comments:

Revised September 2002
Document Design and Usability (Eng 4/568)

Instructor: Roland Nord
Office: 229E AH
Office Hours:
Phone: 507-389-5402
Fax: 507-389-5362
Email: roland.nord@mnsu.edu

Required materials

Required texts:
Berkley: New Riders. [PWU]

Schriver, K. 1997. Dynamics in document design: Creating
texts for readers. New York:
John Wiley & Sons, Inc. [DDD]

Readings from the web or posted on reserve in Memorial Library

Recommended texts:

New York: Longman.


Portland, OR: Intellect.

Hackos, J. and J. Redish. 1998. User and task analysis for
interface design. New York:
John Wiley & Sons, Inc.


Course description and learning outcomes

This course is designed for students who are designing and
testing documents—documents being used in the broadest sense of
the word to include everything from print to electronic
documents—from memos to brochures to books to websites to interfaces.

In addition to the required and recommended readings, participants are
encouraged to research and read in the following areas: typography
and graphic design, cognitive psychology, instructional design, training,
computer-based training, rhetoric, software and hardware applications,
human factors, human-computer interaction, and on-line
documentation and visual literacy.

I have set the following goals and objectives for this course:

To introduce students to the research literature of document design and
usability testing:
• read required texts and articles
• publish a selectively annotated bibliography or webliography (graduate students)
• present analyses of readings and research
• (re)design 1 document as an individual project

To develop students' abilities to conduct usability testing of technical documents--either print or electronic documents:
• complete usability testing of 1 site as a collaborative class project
• complete (development of and) usability testing of 1 site as an individual project
• report application of readings to development or testing of web sites

Every attempt will be made to accommodate qualified students with disabilities. If you are a student with a documented disability, please notify me as early in the semester as possible to discuss the necessary accommodations, and/or contact the Disability Services office at (507) 389-2825 (V) or (800) 627-3529 (MRS/TTY).

Evaluation

Your grade will be based upon your performance on your projects, exercises, assignments, quizzes, and final exam. I will provide point totals for each assignment in the assignment specifications.

Students' work will be assigned grades based upon the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%</th>
<th>468</th>
<th>568</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90–99 = A</td>
<td>superior performance</td>
<td>superior performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80–89 = B</td>
<td>better-than-average performance</td>
<td>above-average performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70–79 = C</td>
<td>satisfactory or average performance</td>
<td>below-average performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60–69 = D</td>
<td>below-average performance</td>
<td>unacceptable performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0–59 = F</td>
<td>unacceptable performance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Definitions of grades are taken from the MSU 2003-2005 Graduate Studies Bulletin (5) and the MSU 2006-2007 Undergraduate Bulletin (31).

Major projects include

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of grade</th>
<th>468</th>
<th>568</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Document (re)design</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usability test and report</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report &amp; selectively annotated bib</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignments, exercises, quizzes</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam (presentations)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I expect you to use your texts and any appropriate reference materials on all exercises, assignments, quizzes, and exams. When working collaboratively, submit a single document for the entire group; however, be sure each collaborator 'signs' the document.

Any work that you submit late must be accompanied by a cover memo explaining why the work is submitted late and why I should comment on and evaluate the work. I will not accepted work that is submitted late because of unexcused absences. Any requests for deadline extensions must be made in writing and must be submitted before the assignment is due.

Tentative reading and writing assignments
The instructor reserves the right to modify this syllabus.

Week #1

*DDD*, Chapter 1, "What Is Document Design," 1-12

*PWU*, Preface, xv-xxiv

*PWU*, Chapter 12, "Final Thoughts: Design That Works," 393-95


Websites


Week #2

*DDD*, Chapter 2, "Evolution of the Field," 13-103

*PWU*, Chapter 1, "Introduction: Nothing to Hide," 3-19

Nielsen, Jakob. 27 June 2005. Usability: Empiricism or ideology? *Useit.com*  


Nielsen, Jakob. 22 August 1999. Do interface standards stifle design creativity. *Useit.com*  

Websites


Assignments due

D2L discussion question(s)

Favorite website & explanation
Week #3

*DDD*, Chapter 3, "How Documents Engage Readers' Thinking and Feeling," 151-208


Nichani, Maish. 17 August 2006. The changing face of university websites. *PebbleRoad*  

**Websites & forms**


Special Interest Group on Computer-Human Interaction (SIGCHI). n.d. *ACM*  

Usability data sheet: *Word* or *PDF*

**Assignments due**

D2L discussion question(s)

Week #4

*DDD*, Chapter 4, "The Impact of Poor Design: Thinking about Ourselves as Users of Texts and Technology," 209-48

*PWU*, Chapter 3, "Revisiting Early Web Usability Findings," 57-121

Nielsen, Jakob. 2 May 1999. "Top Ten Mistakes" revisited three years later. *Useit.com*  


**Websites**

Usability.gov n.d. *US Department of Health & Human Services*  


Assignments due
D2L discussion question(s)
Usability sample task #1 (flash video: 3:05 min)
Usability sample task #2 (flash video: 1:22 min)

Week #5

DDD, Chapter 5, "Seeing the Text: The Role of Typography and Space," 249-302
PWU, Chapter 4, "Prioritizing Your Usability Problems," 123-35

Websites
Tognazzini, Bruce. n.d. AskTog: Interaction design solutions for the real world. AskTog


Assignments due
D2L discussion question(s)

Week #6

DDD, Chapter 5, "Seeing the Text: The Role of Typography and Space," 303-60
PWU, Chapter 5, "Search," 137-69

Websites


Special Interest: Group on Design of Communication (SIGDOC). n.d. ACM

Assignments due
D2L discussion question(s)
Proposal for selectively annotated bibliography

Week #7

DDD, Chapter 6, "The Interplay of Words and Pictures," 361-406
PWU, Chapter 6, "Navigation and Information Architecture," 171-211

Websites

Search for usability

Documents
MSU screenshots (Word document)
MSU screenshot links (Word document)

Assignments due
D2L discussion question(s)

Week #8

DDD, Chapter 6, "The Interplay of Words and Pictures," 407-42

PWU, Chapter 7, "Typography: Readability & Legibility," 213-50

Websites
Bogaards, Peter. n.d. InfoDesign: Understanding by design. InfoDesign


Assignments due
D2L discussion question(s)
Analysis of a website using Gestalt principles
Analysis of prose & graphics on MSU web pages (in-class exercise) [Word.dot] [Word.doc] [PDF]

Week #9

DDD, Chapter 7, "What Document Designers Can Learn from Readers," 443-96

PWU, Chapter 8, "Writing for the Web," 253-283

Websites
Browser News > Stats > Trends. 7 October 2006. Charles Updell - Website Design

Assignments due
D2L discussion question(s)
Writing for the Web vs. Print (in-class exercise)

Week #10

PWU, Chapter 9, "Providing good Product Information," 285-319

Websites
Documents

MSU screenshots—Instructions for creating webpages (Word document; in-class exercise)

Sample data sheet—Instructions for creating webpages (Excel document; in-class exercise)

Sample spreadsheet

MSU screenshots—Tuition rates & fees (Word document; in-class exercise)

Assignments due

D2L discussion question(s)

Selectively annotated bibliography

Week #11

*PWU, Chapter 10, "Presenting Page Elements," 321-348*


Websites


Documents

MSU screenshots—Tuition rates & fees (Word document; in-class exercise)

Assignments due

D2L discussion question(s)

Document (re)design

Week #12

*PWU, Chapter 11, "Balancing Technology with People's Needs," 351-390*


Websites

Eyetrack III. 2006. *Poynter Institute*  

Assignments due

D2L discussion question(s)

Presentations of research

Week #13

Class does not meet
Week #14


Websites

Assignments due
D2L discussion question(s)
Usability test and report
Presentations of research continued

Week #15


Search ACM Digital Library for "Whose profession is it anyway?" (Skim results 1-14.)

Websites

Assignments due
D2L discussion question(s)
Final exam or project
Presentations of document (re)designs or of usability test results

Week #16

Final exam or project
Presentations of document (re)designs or of usability test results
Document Design and Usability (Eng 4/568)

Learning outcomes
See attached syllabus.

List of resources required to offer and support this course
No additional resources are required. The course will serve as an elective for the undergraduate major, minor, and certificate as well as an elective for the MA and graduate certificate. Our initial plan is to offer the course every other year, rotating between face-to-face and online course.

Affect on department staffing
At this point, none. Document design and usability has previously been offered as a 4/500-level and as a 600-level topics course.

Added expectations of graduate students
Much of the reading and many of the assignments will be the same; however, graduate students will read more theory and conduct research of the literature (as demonstrated in a selectively annotated bibliography) as well as demonstrate their practical expertise in document design and usability testing.
English Department Meeting  
9:00 a.m., September 26, 2007, AH 208  
Minutes


1. Approval of minutes for September 5 and 27, 2007, was moved, seconded and approved.

2. Committee Reports:
   
   Assessment & Program Review (Banschbach): The track self-studies will be due at the end of October. There will be meetings in November to complete the department’s self-study.
   
   Curriculum (Haas): Several proposals for changes in the technical communications curriculum were moved, seconded and approved. The title of English 680 was changed to Proposals. Four new courses were approved: English 272 Business Communications, English 480 Proposals, English 4/568 Document Design and Usability, and English 4/569 Project Management in Technical Communications. Program requirements were changed: English 272 can be used as an entrance requirement to the programs, and English 480, 4/568, 4/569, 674, and 680 can be used as electives.
   
   Departmental, Student and Community Relations (Sewell): Sigma Tau Delta’s first event of the year will be an evening of bowling on October 3rd. Everyone is invited; see Candace for information.
   
   Personnel (Robbins): Heather Camp, the new director of composition, will join the department on February 29.
   
   Professional Development & Research Activities (Sheffer): No report.
   
   Scheduling: (O’Meara): The first draft of 2008-2009 teaching assignments will be available this week. Please check the assignments carefully to see that program needs are being met.
   
   Technology (Flaherty): The department’s equipment request list is almost ready. There has been no announcement yet about allocations.
   
   Graduate (Stoynoff):
   a) The Career Workshop will be held October 23rd from 11-1 p.m. in CSU 284.
   b) Graduate student enrollments are now 3% higher than last year’s.

1. Other Topics:
   
   • Fall 2007 enrollment numbers indicate a gradual decline in several areas. There was discussion about ways to reverse the decline through changes in scheduling and through recruitment, and about the need to consider this in the department’s self-study.
   
   • Lee Tesdell’s sabbatical application was voted on and approved by the department.
   
   • Terry Flaherty’s application for phased retirement was voted on and approved by the department.

Dates and Events:
October 11 Good Thunder: Robert David Clark, Gwen Hart, Thomas Maltman
October 12 Faculty Improvement Grant applications due
October 12  Faculty Research Grant applications due
October 19  Teaching Scholar Fellowship applications due
November 1  Andreas faculty research grant applications due
November 1  Good Thunder: Robert C. Wright Minnesota Writer Residency:
            Luke Rolfes and Marie Myung-Ok Lee
November 7  Department meeting

Respectively submitted

Kate Voight
Administrative Assistant
English Department