

Characteristics of Social Science Advanced Writing Courses

Other Characteristics	
Anthropology	It is my conjecture that most of the anthropology faculty are unlikely to know what is taught in the advanced writing course.
	Only two instructors are currently willing to teach this course.
	= last course of the discipline, so none of the skills are transferable to undergraduate experience.
Economics	Few classes have writing assignments
History	All faculty rotate teaching both the intro and capstone courses, so all faculty know what to expect from students' writing.
	All history courses are required to have a major writing assignment.
Political Science	It is my conjecture that most of the political science faculty are unlikely to know what is taught in the introductory writing course and that therefore, students do not have a uniform Capstone experience.
Psychology	The Department Chair self-reports that all but one faculty member is unwilling to teach the course.
	It is my conjecture that most of the psychology faculty are unlikely to know what is taught in the advanced writing course.
	1 full professor is willing to teach the course; 2/5 Instructors have Psychology PhD's (non-tenured); 1/5 instructor has a Master's in School of Family Life; 1/5 instructor has PhD in Psychology (College Writing Specialist) and is tenured
	The former department chair claims that this course is not well-liked and is not respected by the department faculty, based mostly on the reason that the department members did not create the course (the college writing specialist did). Therefore, there is no "investment" in having the course succeed. However, none of the faculty are willing to create an alternate course.
School of Family Life (SFL)	Since the College Dean has encouraged every department to have its own advanced writing course, SFL created a committee to work on it. I was invited to meet with the committee chair. He self-reported that none of the faculty want to teach an advanced writing course and that few would be qualified to do so. These claims were echoed by the previous department chair. Both also claimed that students who take this major for the most part want to be stay-at-home Mothers and therefore will not need to know how to write for academic audiences. This appears to be the rationale for not only not having an advanced writing course in this discipline, but also for not offering instruction in writing and for not including challenging writing assignments in most of the classes.
	It is my conjecture that most of the SFL faculty are unlikely to know what is taught in the advanced writing course.
Sociology	A committee was created for the express purpose of creating an advanced writing course for sociology students. This committee included the department chair and a representative for each of the three branches of sociology offered: qualitative, quantitative, and theoretical. I was invited to participate in several of the committee meetings. Two pilot courses were created and taught. A writing course for qualitative sociology students and one for quantitative sociology students was created and pilot tested. The course for quantitative requires that students complete two semesters with the same instructor. The department faculty then voted on the pilot versions and approved the two-semester version. The department is now undergoing university approval for the two-semester quantitative version. Several concerns for the two-semester version include that it is operative under a single professor at this time as well as that students must commit to two- semesters in advance. Members of the committee self-reported that few faculty want to teach an advanced writing course and that few would be qualified to do so.
	It is my conjecture that most of the sociology faculty are unlikely to know what is taught in the advanced writing course.