

Curriculum Design Experience at Governors State University

Note: All work done solo unless indicated; all work successfully passed through university approval processes. Tabular summary followed by narrative description.

Year	Course/Program	graduate	upper division	lower division	fully online	traditional delivery	outside home unit
2006	Graduate Seminar in Women's Literature	✓				✓	
	Graduate Seminar in World Literature	✓				✓	
2007	Introduction to Gender Studies (with Division Chair)			✓		✓	✓
	Minor in Gender Studies (with Division Chair)						✓
2008	Introduction to Graduate Studies in English	✓				✓	
2010	Studies in Genre	✓	✓		✓	✓	
2011	Play Analysis			✓		✓	
	Minor in Theatre and Performance Studies (as part of 4-person committee)						✓
2013	Women Writers	✓	✓		✓	✓	

ENGLISH

Graduate courses:

When I joined the faculty at GSU in the fall of 2006, one of my first tasks was to create two new graduate seminars in order to offer students a non-thesis route to the M.A. degree, as recommended in the 2002 external program review. Program faculty had selected world literature and women's literature as the topics to add, and my ability to design and teach these courses was a factor in my hiring as the primary British literature faculty member. I researched offerings in these areas at both teaching and research institutions, after which I made decisions about key issues. For world literature, this included policies on literature in translation, and the desirability of comparative approaches. For women's literature, questions were whether to include feminist criticism and theory, and the difference between a course on women writers versus one on images of women in literature: should our new course be women and literature? women in literature? women writers? I designed the two courses, **Graduate Seminar in World Literature** and **Graduate Seminar in Women's Literature**, and wrote the copy for the revised graduate program they facilitated, and got everything through the university's curriculum approval process. When the courses were offered for the first time in the 2007-08 academic year, students responded positively. I taught the courses that year, and students coming out of a self-imposed hiatus returning to complete their

degrees under the new non-thesis option joined current students to create a lively atmosphere in the English graduate program my second year at GSU.

Additional curriculum development work I have done for the graduate program includes a 2008 redesign of Research Techniques, a course often taught by library staff rather than English faculty, into an **Introduction to Graduate Studies in English** course that added history of the discipline, professional issues, scholarly publication, and a thorough introduction to our program. After researching current practices in other M.A. programs, I elected to go with a research and professionalization focus to complement our existing required graduate course in rhetorical and critical theory. The redesigned course has been a requirement for the M.A. program beginning with the 2009-10 academic year.

Undergraduate courses:

On the advanced undergraduate level, I updated a moribund literary genre course and created a new course in women writers. Both of these are offered as fully online courses and have also received approval for traditional classroom delivery. Both courses are cross listed at the 4000 and 6000 levels, so that both undergraduates and graduate students can take the course as an elective. While there was a literary genre course on the books, it hadn't been offered in years, and it defined genre in traditional categories such as dramatic poetry and narrative fiction. The new course, **Studies in Genre**, reflects a more student-centered concept of genre, and makes space for popular literary genres, film, and television. The new model lends itself to connections with faculty specializations, and it has enrolled well. I have been teaching the course as one on crime fiction since it was first offered in Spring Semester 2012. The **Women Writers** course was motivated by our 2012 external reviewer, who noted that while the graduate program includes literary study beyond the Anglo-American traditions, our undergraduate majors were not offered comparable courses. Because the course is available to graduate students as an elective, I opted for the women writers model, to further differentiate the course from the graduate seminar in women's literature. (The seminar is an 8000-level M.A. program core course; this one can be used as a 6000-level elective for graduate students.) That course is on the schedule for the first time in Spring Semester 2015, and I have chosen to teach a slate of canonical English writers.

GENDER STUDIES

My second semester at GSU, I was asked by the Division Chair to work on a proposal for women and gender studies. We were trying to work as much as possible with existing courses, with a short-term goal of an undergraduate minor and a long-term goal of a designated disciplinary prefix, a major, and faculty hiring. During the spring and summer of 2007, I researched other programs, examining their offerings, their location in their university's structure (both courses and faculty), and additional resources. After evaluating the pattern of required core courses, and the variable naming, the Division

Chair and I agreed to call our proposed program Gender Studies and to create one new course, a general introduction to theory and practice in the field. In October of 2007, we submitted our proposals, which included paperwork for a RAMER (Reasonable and Moderate Extension Request) which requires approval from various university bodies and the Illinois Board of Higher Education. The course, **Introduction to Gender Studies**, received all approvals that academic year; the RAMER creating the **minor in Gender Studies** received final IBHE approval in March, 2009. In 2010, I handed on primary responsibility for Gender Studies to a colleague in Communications. As coordinator of Gender Studies, he subsequently led the process of getting the program to the next level, including its designated prefix of GNSX (Gender and Sexuality Studies).

The new introductory course was successfully offered for the first time in Spring 2011 under an Interdisciplinary Studies course prefix; I team-taught it with the coordinator for Gender Studies. We used a multi-disciplinary anthology, supplemented by two literary texts: Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* and Michael Cunningham's *The Years*. He has continued to teach the course, bringing in guest lecturers from across campus. My most recent guest appearance, to talk about literary study, was in Fall Semester 2013; as the instructor has retained the Cunningham novel, my task in these appearances is to provide some context for the novel, some tools for analyzing literature, and discussion leadership.

THEATRE AND PERFORMANCE STUDIES

In the fall of 2011, a 4-person committee was convened to develop a **minor in Theatre and Performance Studies**. This project was part of the provost's academic master plan, and the committee was charged with developing a minor that could be in place by Fall 2012, when a new tenure-track hire would take the reins for further program development. The new program is housed in the Division of Communications, Visual and Performing Arts, and the other committee members came from that unit; the committee chair invited me to represent English and our home division of Humanities and Social Sciences. Committee members shared out the work of investigating comparable existing programs and reviewing current course offerings for possible inclusion. After the initial round of deliberations, I was asked to develop a new course, to be housed in English, to meet the need for students to have a literature-based approach to drama. The course I designed, **Play Analysis**, received all of its approvals during the 2011-12 academic year. With the arrival of an energetic assistant professor dedicated solely to TAPS in Fall Semester 2012, the program has really taken off, and I am pleased to have contributed by helping lay the groundwork for one of the most exciting new programs on campus.