



Office of Academic Affairs

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April 15, 2009

Dr. Susan Herbst
Chief Academic Officer & Executive Vice Chancellor
Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia
270 Washington Street, SW
Atlanta, GA 30334

Dear Dr. Herbst,

Please find enclosed the Letter of Intent for the Master of Arts degree in English, with an emphasis on Critical Studies in Literacy and Communications. The proposed program has been reviewed by Georgia Southwestern State University's College of Arts and Sciences faculty committees and has also been approved by the Graduate Affairs Committee of the university.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Brian U. Adler

Brian U. Adler
Vice President for Academic Affairs

Pc: Dr. Melinda Spencer, Chief of Staff, Academic Affairs
Dr. Marci Middleton, Director, Academic Program Coordination

**Master of Arts Critical Studies in Literacy and Communication
Letter of Intent**

Institution: Georgia Southwestern State University (GSW)
Institutional Contact: Dr. Brian Adler, VPAA
Division: College of Arts and Sciences
Department: English and Modern Languages
Name of Proposed Program: Critical Studies in Literacy and Communications
Degree: Master of Arts
Major: English
Degree Inscription: Critical Studies in Literacy and Communication
CIP Code: 23.1001 **Anticipated Starting Date:** Spring Semester 2010
Program Classification:

1. **Program Description and Objectives**

Our proposed program tackles the explosion of literacies in our world and anticipates students' need to learn and use these multiple literacies as each of the distinctive modes of communication develop. Such communication in diverse modes is essential to successful careers, leadership roles, productive citizenship, and a satisfying quality of life. Our proposed degree invites students from all disciplines to engage in rigorous critique of today's rhetorical modes.

This program will be founded on the ancient traditions of rhetorical and critical inquiry, but will seek to apply these traditions not only in existing oral, visual, and written contexts and modes, but also in the emerging digital contexts and modes. In addition, the interdisciplinary program will explore how emerging modes and contexts alter existing rhetorical and critical traditions, thereby building students' foundations in the liberal arts and sciences.

The bulk of our face-to-face classes will be offered during the summer with evening hybrid courses throughout fall and spring semesters, thus allowing our students to work and attend classes toward their degree.

2. **Description of the program's fit with the institutional mission and nationally accepted trends in the discipline.**

This program will build upon GSW's iteration of the University System's commitment to meet the education needs of students in the 21st Center in three ways. First, it will allow GSW graduates to further their knowledge and skills at the graduate level. In addition, instructors who serve the graduate program will develop new approaches that will revitalize their undergraduate teaching.

Second, it will develop teachers to meet the 21st-century educational needs of their students. This development will help further GSW's pledge to achieve the USG strategic goal of improving P-16 cooperation.

Third, it will allow us to retain our close association with the National Writing Project, which insists that the Project be aligned with a degree program. Through the National Writing Project, GSW currently serves teachers in a 40 county area of Southwest Georgia; without this program those graduate students will no longer attend GSW.

Since the inception of the Southwest Georgia Writing Project (SWGWP) in 1985, the writing project courses, while listed with English prefixes, have served degree programs in the School of Education (SOE). After the SOE lost its accreditation of all graduate programs in 2007, most of which were Master of Education programs, it was decided that the best approach to regaining a graduate program was to completely revamp their programs and their course offerings. During the process of switching to the Masters of Teaching model, the writing project courses were written out of the graduate degree at GSW. Thus, there is no longer a way for students who take the SWGWP for graduate credit to apply those credits towards a graduate degree at GSW. Moreover, the students in the SWGWP increasingly include professional and technical writers who come through our undergraduate program and whose numbers have begun to rival the number of teachers who attend the project.

3. Description of how the program demonstrates demand and a justification of need in the discipline and geographic area and is not unnecessary program duplication.

Our program provides an avenue for area teachers as well as professional writers to earn Professional Learning Units within a reasonable proximity to their home institutions since the closest MA in English is at Valdosta State, which is more than 100 miles away from GSW. To date no program exists in the state of Georgia or the southeastern region of our country that focuses an MA in English Critical Studies in Literacy and Communications. Nationally, there are three such programs: Michigan State University: MA Critical Studies in Literacy and Pedagogy, New Mexico State University, MA English: Emphasis in Rhetoric and Professional Communication, and San Diego State University, MA in Curriculum Development with an emphasis in Critical Literacy and Social Justice. In each case, programs are geared toward teachers.

It is well known that employers in all fields require potential employees to demonstrate well-developed communication skills as well as critical thinking skills early in their interview process. Moreover, as the global economy evolves and changes, employers require employees who are capable of continuous educational and personal development. This program will develop graduates who are both adept with current textualities and also capable of analyzing and responding to developing literacies in a digital medium. Our graduates will be prepared to take places in the global economy as well as help others develop literacy skills. To ensure our commitment to provide an MA that is applicable to a wide variety of career fields, This degree program is designed to include cross-

disciplinary teaching, we have already enlisted the cooperation of our Departments of Fine Arts, History and Political Science, Psychology, as well as the schools of Business and Computer Science.

4. **Institutional Resources that will be used specifically for the program**

Costs associated with this program will include salaries for adjunct faculty in order to reassign current (graduate) faculty to the MA program. These costs should total approximately \$15,000 per year.

Costs associated with this program may eventually involve the hiring of additional full-time faculty to provide instruction at the undergraduate level or the graduate level. The addition of a new faculty member in the 2nd year of the program would add approximately \$60,000 (in salary and benefits) to the annual budget.

While an increase in state appropriation at a later date may well follow acceptance of this proposal, it is also important to note what will be lost without this program—the continued financial support from the National Writing Project, which increases each year. This year we will receive \$46,000 to support P-16 teachers. In the last 23 three years, this funding has provided for our local area teachers numerous professional development opportunities, access to over 1000 professional development texts, equipment for use within individual classrooms, and a network of strong professionals who mentor, lead, and support continued growth in the teachers and the students in southwest Georgia.

We anticipate no additional costs when the program undergoes its first comprehensive review program.

Curriculum and Delivery Proposed Course of Study

Required Courses

ENGL 5xxx Seminar in Writing and Social Justice (Hybrid)

ENGL 6xxx Rhetorical/Cultural Studies (Hybrid)

ENGL 6xxx Seminar in Media

Electives Choose five of the following:

*ENGL 5xxx Seminar in Advanced Composition (traditional classroom)

*ENGL 5xxx Seminar in Introductory Studies in Composition and Modern Rhetorical Theory (traditional classroom setting)

ENGL 5xxx Multimedia Theory and Production (Hybrid)

ENGL 5xxx Seminar in Writing and Social Justice (Hybrid)

ENGL 6xxx Rhetorical/Cultural Studies (Hybrid)

ENGL 6xxx Seminar in Film Theory (Hybrid)

Or

ENGL 6xxx Seminar in Film History (Hybrid)

ENGL 6xxx Seminar in Major Author (Hybrid)
*ENGL 7xxx Seminar in Special Problems in English (Hybrid)
ENGL 7xxx Seminar in Critical Literacy (Hybrid)
ENGL 7xxx Seminar in Advanced Grammar (Hybrid)

Choose one of the following:

ENGL 7xxx Graduate Studies in Ethnographic Research (traditional classroom)
ENGL 7xxx Graduate Studies in Empirical Research (traditional classroom)

*These are courses that are currently being taught as core components of the Writing Project.