PROPOSAL FOR A JUNIOR-SENIOR CLUSTER COURSE

(title sheet)

Please type:
Title of proposed course: American Indian Literature

When will this course be offered?: Spring 1997

Title of cluster: American Studies

Name of cluster proposal coordinator: amelgon

Please address the following matters in your narrative, keying your text to the corresponding item below:

A. COURSE DESCRIPTION (100 words or less).

B. COURSE DEVELOPMENT. Please indicate whether the course is based on an existing course (and if so, specify), or is a new course in development. If the course is a revision of an existing course, please explain what form the revision will take (this may be addressed under item C).

C. GENERAL EDUCATION GOALS. Please describe how your pedagogical goals for the course promote the goals of General Education as adopted by the Faculty Senate. Please review the relevant sections of the General Education Working Group Report, or the September 16, 1994, report of the General Education Committee (both documents are available in the Office of University Studies, 445 NH). Applicants are reminded that the junior-senior cluster courses are expected to focus on program goals related to Human Experience and to Ethical Issues and Social Responsibility, while continuing to build on Inquiry and Communication program goals. Course instructors should use active learning strategies and challenge students to display increasingly sophisticated research and communication abilities. Examples of strategies for each of the General Education program goals are listed in the General Education Working Group Report and in the General Education Committee report (also, please be advised that faculty development events bearing on these strategies will take place in the Winter and Spring, 1995 terms). Attention should also be given to how this course functions in tandem with other courses in the cluster in working toward curricular integration within the cluster.

D. COURSE OUTLINE. Please provide a detailed outline of the proposed course. This need not be a completed syllabus, but should include an outline of topics, a preliminary reading list, and the name(s) or instructor(s) committed to teaching the course during its first year.
American Indian Literature: A Course Proposal

English 309

A. Course Description: American Indian Literature is a survey of some of the best traditional and contemporary literature by and about (but mostly by) American Indian people. We will read background (e.g., Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee), biography (e.g., Black Elk Speaks), poetry, legends, and twentieth-century fiction. Much of our emphasis will be on poetry and fiction by today’s leading Native American writers and on the pleasure and perspective-shifting insights they bring to readers.

B. Course Development: Based on existing course; instructor is planning to incorporate a Service Learning component.

C. General Education Goals:
   a. Inquiry and Critical Thinking: Established at the junior level for over a decade, English 309, American Indian Literature regularly challenges students to reconsider American history where it concerns Native peoples on the North American continent. Much of the course is from the point of view of Indian people who write out of the experience of the conquest and continuing aftermath in the 19th and 20th centuries.

   b. Communication: Discussion in small groups involving Native and non-Native American students has resulted in increased understanding by students from various ethnic backgrounds. Once background and political issues have been worked through, writing assignments involve detailed analysis of a range of literary and intellectual issues posed by the modern poetry and fiction studied.

   c. Human Experience: Students in responding to such novels as James Welch’s Fools Crow often indicate having gone through the experience of seeing from a Native American point of view. For Native American students, becoming acquainted with some of the classics of their own people has been identified in course evaluations as a major benefit of the course. Friendships formed between Native and non-Native students in the past have led to the active involvement of some non-Natives in the Native American community in the tri-county area.

   d. Ethical Issues and Social Responsibilities: Building a Service-Learning component into the course, a project currently under development, should draw upon the increased insights that the course fosters. Specific projects should provide opportunities for interaction between both Native and non-Native students and the Native American community. It is hoped these projects will provide some concrete benefits to the community. Ethical issues confronted involve social justice in current public policy as well as interpersonal sensitivity among people of different ethnic backgrounds.
American Indian Literature
English 309

Portland State University
Dr. Tyree

Syllabus

This course is an upper-division survey of contemporary writings by American Indian men and women. It includes background readings, traditional oratory, biography, poetry, legends, and modern fiction.

Requirements: Attend classes and read the assignments beforehand. Attendance will be taken on sign-up sheets. Our interaction is basic to the course, so your involvement is not only welcome but essential. If you cannot attend regularly and on time this term, please either arrange your schedule so that you can or withdraw from the course. Grades will be based on all work done in the course, including meeting responsibility for participation in small group discussions.

Note: Particulars of oral and written assignments will be given in class.

My office hours: Tues, 3-4 p.m., Thurs. 3-4:30, and by appointment

NH 451-S
Phone (with recorder): 725-3575.

Books for the course are in the PSU Bookstore.

SCHEDULE (with some flexibility)

Week 1  Introduction. Black Elk Speaks

Week 2  Black Elk Speaks (concluded). Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee (Chapters 3, 5, 6, 8, 15, and 16 are optional).

Week 3  Bury My Heart (concluded).

Week 5  Indian Oratory (discussion concluded); Songs From This Earth on Turtle's Back (28 poets assigned).

Week 6  Songs (concluded); Fools Crow.

Week 7  Fools Crow (concluded).


Week 9  Spider Woman's Granddaughters (concluded); The Jailing of Cecelia Capture.

Week 10  The Jailing of Cecelia Capture (concluded); Winter in the Blood. TAKE-HOME FINALS DISTRIBUTED.