

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT ASHEVILLE
FACULTY SENATE

Senate Document Number 5113S

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Statement of Faculty Senate Action:

APC Document 45:

Add new courses:

MCOM 295, 395 and 495, and VMP 295, 395 and 495

Effective Date: Fall 2013

1. Add: On page 214, new course, **MCOM 295:**

295 Mass Media Workshop (2-4)

Development and practice of media production skills for journalism and public relations. Topics will vary and may include subjects such as layout and design, editorial writing, opinion writing, feature writing, public relations writing and copy editing. The topic covered in each section will be indicated in the title. MCOM 295 may be repeated with different topic subheadings. Prerequisite: MCOM 201. Fall and Spring.

2. Add: On page 216, new course, **MCOM 395:**

395 Issues in Media Studies (4)

Exploration of current issues in Mass Communications, particularly Journalism and Public Relations. Topics will vary and may include subjects such as international mass communication, media and politics, social media, public relations, and privacy law. The topic covered in each section will be indicated in the title. MCOM 395 may be repeated with different topic subheadings. Prerequisite: MCOM 104 or 201, depending on section topic. Fall and Spring.

3. Add: On page 217, new course, **MCOM 495:**

495 Media Studies Seminar (4)

In-depth exploration of specific Mass Communication subjects such as journalism, Public Relations or advanced print media skills. Topics will vary and may include subjects such as violence in media, crisis communication, public affairs journalism, privacy laws, and communication research. The topic covered in each section will be indicated in the title. MCOM 495 may be repeated with different topic subheadings. Prerequisites: MCOM 104, 201, 295, 395, and either 490 or 492; or permission of instructor. Fall and Spring.

4. **Add:** On page 218, new course, **VMP 295:**

295 Visual Media Workshop (2-4)

Development and practice of media production skills for video, film and photography. Topics will vary and may include subjects such as video editing, photojournalism and cinematography. The topic covered in each section will be indicated in the title. VMP 295 may be repeated with different topic subheadings. Prerequisite: VMP 205. Fall and Spring.

5. **Add.** On page 218, new course, **VMP 395:**

395 Issues in Visual Media (4)

Exploration of current issues in Visual Media. Topics will vary and may include subjects such as media aesthetics, film appreciation, film genres, and documentary film making. The topic covered in each section will be indicated in the title. VMP 395 may be repeated with different topic subheadings. Prerequisite: MCOM 104 or VMP 205, depending on section topic. Fall and Spring.

6. **Add:** On page 219, new course, **VMP 495:**

495 Seminar in Visual Media (4)

In-depth exploration of specific Mass Communication subjects related to visual media. Topics will vary and may include subjects such as directing, field production techniques, and film studies. The topic covered in each section will be indicated in the title. MCOM 495 may be repeated with different topic subheadings. Prerequisites: MCOM 104, either MCOM 490 or 492, VMP 205, 395; or permission of instructor. Fall and Spring.

Impact: The new courses emphasize flexibility of content, so students will be able to take multiple iterations of the courses to satisfy requirements as long as the topics are different. Courses are organized so that skills are taught in the 295 Workshops, content is disseminated in the 395 Issues courses, and important matters in the field are explored in the 495 Seminars. Because there will be a transition period in which students currently declared as Mass Communications majors will need to complete their workshop requirements, we are temporarily listing MCOM 295 and VMP 295 as variable credit courses. This will enable students who need one additional workshop to take a 2-hour course rather than a 4-hour course to complete the requirement. The department expects to be able to remove the range and offer them as 4-hours only in a few years as students transition beyond needing a 2-hour course. The department doesn't anticipate the same problem with the 395 and 495 courses. They have been constructed in such a way that the varying topics will allow for substitution into the old curriculum.

Rationale: Because Mass Communication is an interdisciplinary field, there is a wide array of possible areas for teaching and learning. Limiting the curriculum to certain specific electives has excluded a number of viable options. Further, student interest can vary dramatically from one semester to another, and we have found ourselves offering courses because the catalog specifies the semester of offering even though they may be poorly subscribed, while students request other topics of more interest to them. For example, both Photojournalism and Broadcast Journalism are listed on an every other year basis, yet enrollment in each has unpredictably bounced from six to more than twenty. Offering courses as topics allows faculty the flexibility to schedule with student interests in mind. This is particularly important when a critical mass of students is essential to the success of a course.

While allowing for the repetition of popular and important electives, the variable topic approach also allows faculty the opportunity to update course topics and materials more frequently than the commitment to fixed electives might allow. Trends in media can be followed in courses without continually adding and subtracting from the catalog.

Finally, the flexibility of variable topic courses puts the choice of topic and interest in the hands of the student. While Mass Communication already has one of the most efficient graduation rates on our campus, we hope this approach will further improve this.