

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT ASHEVILLE
FACULTY SENATE

Senate Document Number 3414S
Date of Senate Approval 1/23/14

Statement of Faculty Senate Action:

APC Document 22: Add Directed Research courses to the MLA curriculum

Effective Date: Fall 2014

1. Add: On page 217, new course, **MLA 599, Directed Research in Master of Liberal Arts:**

599 Directed Research in the Master of Liberal Arts (1-3)

Independent research under the supervision of a faculty mentor or with an interdisciplinary team of faculty. An IP grade may be awarded at the discretion of the instructor. Students may take Directed Research twice for a total of 6 hours of credit, in any combination of MLA 599, ENG 599 and CCS 599. Fall and Spring.

2. Add: On page 218, new course, **CCS 599, Directed Research in Climate Change and Society:**

599 Directed Research in Climate Change and Society (1-3)

Independent research under the supervision of a faculty mentor or with an interdisciplinary team of faculty. An IP grade may be awarded at the discretion of the instructor. Students may take Directed Research twice for a total of 6 hours of credit, in any combination of MLA 599, ENG 599 and CCS 599. Fall and Spring.

3. Add: On page 218, new course, **ENG 599, Directed Research in English:**

599 Directed Research in English (1-3)

Independent research under the supervision of a faculty mentor or with an interdisciplinary team of faculty. An IP grade may be awarded at the discretion of the instructor. May be repeated for a total of 6 hours credit. Fall and Spring. Students may take Directed Research twice for a total of 6 hours of credit, in any combination of MLA 599, ENG 599 and CCS 599. Fall and Spring.

Impact: This proposal is aimed at giving academic and load credit to students and faculty for work associated with graduate-level research projects in the MLA program, including CCS and ENG. Currently there is no mechanism or course through which students and faculty can receive academic or load credit for this work in the MLA program. Like our current 499 courses for undergraduate research, this course would provide a method for students and faculty to receive credit for their efforts.

We anticipate that awarding student academic credit and faculty load credit for work on graduate-level research projects will have a moderate impact on the total number of graduate-level Student Contact Hours (SCH) generated at UNC Asheville. We also anticipate that the generation of additional SCH and faculty load credit for work that is already being done will generate additional academic opportunities for students and faculty, as well as funding opportunities for UNC Asheville. In addition, this course will allow outstanding and qualified undergraduates, who have already completed the maximum allowable hours (6-8 credits) of 499, to conduct research at a higher level and receive acknowledgement for the quality of their work. It is expected that the number of students qualifying for this option would be small.

Rationale: As increasing numbers of students in the MLA program are using the interdisciplinary curriculum to further their career aspirations or to prepare for future graduate education, many of them are interested in conducting research in their areas of interest. Sometimes the program is able to meet their needs through individual tutorials (e.g., MLA 610) or individual special topics (e.g., MLA 571-3) courses, but this requires that faculty provide their support through an overload. Moreover, tutorials and individual special topics courses do not accurately reflect the student and faculty work being done. The Directed Research courses (MLA/CCS/ENG 599) would allow the University to properly track and assess graduate-level research conducted in the MLA program. It would also allow us more effectively to budget, recruit new students and faculty to the program, and to fundraise for research support. This will be especially important for students and faculty in the Climate Change and Society certificate program, where there are opportunities to work with NEMAC, the National Climate Data Center, and the Cooperative Institute for Climate and Satellites on funded research projects.

To enroll in Directed Research, students will be required to lay out a plan of research in consultation with a faculty member or a committee of faculty from multiple disciplines, as appropriate to the project. A contract reflecting the main points of the research plan would be signed by the student, the faculty member mentoring the project, and the director of the MLA program. In the case of an interdisciplinary faculty team mentoring the project, one faculty member will be identified as the primary faculty of record. The contract will also specify the amount of course credit for which the student is enrolling, and will subsequently receive when the project is successfully completed.

In addition to graduate students enrolling in the course, faculty will be able to recommend high-achieving undergraduates for MLA/CCS/ENG 599. Contracts for undergraduates taking a 599 course will be signed by the student, the faculty member mentoring the project, the chair or director of the student's home department or program, and the director of the MLA program. Work completed in 599 is expected to be of a caliber that can lead either to publication in a peer-reviewed journal or presentation at a professional conference.

Because this course will appear on the transcript, this proposal allows students to gain a credential demonstrating knowledge and skills to prospective employers and graduate schools. It also allows the University to quantify our faculty's contribution to graduate research and to recognize them for that work.

In a proposal recently accepted by our Board of Trustees and approved by UNC General Administration, faculty will receive one course reassigned from their course load for teaching seven undergraduate research students. They may accumulate undergraduate students, up to seven, over multiple years. In light of the plan for undergraduate research courses, and the recognition that mentorship and advisement for graduate-level research is more intensive, we propose that, initially, faculty will receive one course reassigned from their course load for teaching five 599 students; they may accumulate 599 research students, up to five, over

multiple years. Academic Affairs is currently working with General Administration on the details regarding undergraduate and graduate research and teaching load; therefore, these course reassignment equivalencies may be subject to change. The University has discretion to determine when a course release will be afforded to the faculty member. Department chairs and Deans must plan to assure delivery of the curriculum.

Based on current trends, twenty-five courses will be accumulated for faculty teaching undergraduate and graduate research students in an academic year. Adjunct faculty will be hired to compensate for the faculty released from teaching. An estimated \$60,000 will cover the adjunct hiring, which is entirely manageable through existing resources.