

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA ASHEVILLE

FACULTY SENATE

Senate Document Number SD3324S  
Date of Senate Approval 03/07/2024

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Statement of Faculty Senate Action:

**APC Document 27 (PWR):** **Revise the requirements for the minor in Professional Writing and Rhetoric**

**Effective Date: Fall 2024**

**1. Delete:** On pages 155-156, the requirements for the **Minor in Professional Writing and Rhetoric:**

**Minor in Professional Writing and Rhetoric**

At least 20 hours, including: LANG 354, 395; 2-4 hours of LANG 340; 8-10 hours from AMS 498, ANTH 336, DRAM 213, HWP 335, LANG 260, 311, 312, 350, 366, 396, LIT 240, LL 313, MCOM 201, RELS 312, 313. A minimum of 18 hours of LANG/LIT courses is required for the minor. Special topics courses in LANG may be substituted with the approval of the department chair. Note that some of the courses for the minor have prerequisites that may increase the total number of hours needed for the minor.

**Add:** On pages 155-156, in place of deleted entry:

**Minor in Professional Writing and Rhetoric**

At least 20 hours, including: LANG 354, LANG 395; 2-4 hours of LANG 340; 8-10 hours from AMS 498; ANTH 336; ATMS 464; DRAM 213; HRST 301; HWP 335; INTS 494; LANG 260, 311, 312, 350, 366, 396; LIT 240; LL 313, 320; MCOM 201, 393 (Exploring Literary Journalism); NM 101; RELS 312, 313; VMP 293 (Screenwriting). Other courses with appropriate content may be substituted with the approval of the department chair. Note that some of the courses for the minor have prerequisites that may increase the total number of hours needed for the minor. English majors who pursue this minor must complete at least 10 hours of coursework not in LIT or LANG.

**Impact:** We have confirmed concurrences from the chairs of all six departments whose courses we are asking to include among the elective options for the PWR minor: Victoria Bradbury (New Media, for NM 101), Sonya DiPalma (Mass Communication, for MCOM 393 and VMP 293), Chris Godfrey (Atmospheric Sciences, for ATMS 464), Peter Haschke (Political Science / Human Rights Studies, for HRST 301), Jinhua Li/Sonia Kapur (Interdisciplinary Studies, for INTS 494), and Greta Trautmann (Languages and Literatures, for LL 320).

Because the total number of PWR students remains low, we do not anticipate that these departments would experience significant labor or resource implications. In fact, one hope we share is that inclusion of

their course(s) might encourage their own students to undertake the PWR minor. (They also welcome students from other departments.) As for the English department, as we noted in our initial proposal, the only resource implication for us might be an increase in the number of PWR advisees and/or demand for internships or the other required courses (LANG 354 Professional Writing and LANG 395 Contemporary English Grammar). We would, however, welcome increased demand for what we're offering.

**Rationale:** In the three full years that the PWR minor has operated (2020-2023), and in keeping with expectations we articulated in our original proposal, we have indeed attracted students from a variety of majors, including ENVR (2 students), MCOM (3), and PHIL (1). We have also succeeded in drawing wider attention to the relevance of writing across fields and to ways that English faculty can collaborate with other departments. One sign of this success is the number of additional courses we seek to add to PWR's elective options through this proposal, each of which not only enriches what PWR students can learn but may also encourage a wider array of majors to give this minor a closer look. We continue to believe that this minor resonates with the university's core values of diversity and inclusion (by attending to language variations across situations and cultures), innovation (through ongoing efforts to reframe how we support writing instruction across our curricula), and sustainability (through nurturing collaborations with other departments and internship partners).

At the same time, however, our overall numbers have remained small. For one, we had assumed that English majors—who have expressed interest in the minor—were not allowed to pursue it; we have since learned this is actually not the case as long as there is explicit language addressing that students in the major can complete this minor, and have added language to clarify this, while also trying to limit double-dipping that would undermine the goals of the minor. Indeed, we want English majors to benefit from a wider perspective on disciplinary and professional writing conventions, too. A second reason for our low numbers may be suggested by a structural challenge we've seen a couple of students run into. One example may illustrate the larger problem: One recent PWR graduate, a MCOM major, fully embraced PWR's interdisciplinary spirit and took not only the required Prof. Writing, Grammar, and internship courses, but also HWP 335 (Health Communication) and LL 313 (Language and Contexts)—only to discover that they were short on courses with LIT or LANG prefixes. We worked out substitutions (as we did in a previous, similar case), but relying on substitutions long-term is not ideal. In short, the requirement that students take 18 hours (of 20 total) with LIT or LANG prefixes effectively undermines the larger goal of the program—to call student (and faculty) attention to expert writing across a variety of contexts.

This framing of the problem, however, also suggests a solution. We included this 18-hour provision in our original proposal only because we interpreted the catalog to require us to do so: "A minor that is awarded by an academic department shall require at least 18 semester hours from the minor discipline, as indicated by the course prefix." We would argue, however, that the "minor discipline" represented by PWR transcends, or at least is not exclusive to, LIT and LANG prefixes. That is, other departments also teach the discipline of rhetorically-contextualized, professional communication, either through critical analysis or practical application (or both). Indeed, so do all of the courses already approved, as well as those we're requesting to add.

To be sure, not all of these courses may use rhetorical terminology in the same way that LANG 354 and LANG 395 do—but if they are attending explicitly to matters of effective communication, of choices and effects across a range of compositional modalities and situations—then they are squarely in the realm of what we're calling professional writing and rhetoric.

In short, LIT/LANG-prefixed courses do not hold the corner market on the discipline of professional writing and rhetoric, and we shouldn't restrain students from exploring this rich array of possibilities by insisting they must take 18 hours of exclusively LIT/LANG courses. We expect that this greater flexibility would not only ease our current students' path to completion of the minor, but also attract more students.