# Writing Committee Annual Report, April 22. 2021

## Writing Committee Members

**Faculty Members**

Jessica Dougherty, Missoula College (2023) - Chair
Amy Ratto-Parks, English - fall
Elizabeth Dodson, Forest Management- fall (2021)
Sarah Halverson, Geography -spring (2023)
Jeanie Castillo, English Language Institute (2023)
Kate Zoellner, Mansfield Library (2023)
Oliver Serang, Computer Science (2023)
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**Student Members**Talia Nicholls

**Additional Representatives** (Ex-Officio)
Nathan Lindsay, Vice Provost
Shareen Grogan, Director, Writing & Public Speaking Center
Erin Wecker, Director of Composition and Faculty Member in English
Amy Ratto-Parks, UPWA Program Director - spring

## Writing Course Review

* The following Writing Courses were reviewed in and given provisional approval. Members were given a short demonstration of how to use Coursedog on October 10th. Four workgroups divided the forms to conduct the review of new courses and renewal of LIT, WRIT and Fine Arts writing courses. PHL 400 *Writing in Philosophy* was submitted in the spring as a 1 credit add-on to content courses to meet the advanced writing requirement and required additional documentation. The requestor was given the Political Science form as an example.

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| Course  | Title | Form Type |
| BOE 447 | Ecosystem Ecology (emergency approval September) | Advanced – distributed  |
| HSTA 401 | Public Problems & United States Democracy | Advanced  |
| HSTA 427 | Freedom, Slavery, Equality: Early American Perspectives | Advanced (spring review) |
| CSCI 215 | Social and Ethical Issues in Computer Science | Intermediate  |
| SOCI 306 | Sociology of Work | Intermediate  |
| HSTA 325 | Digital Worlds of Early America | Intermediate |

* The [Rolling Review summary](https://umt.box.com/s/z81pjm4w1rv878lp2eafz7t543oxni9u) was presented to the Faculty Senate on April 22nd. There were minor issues with a few of the Coursedog forms not showing complete answers. These were repaired. Twelve advanced writing course forms were submitted. Four courses received full approval, 3 provisional and 5 were granted extensions. Thirteen Intermediate Writing forms were submitted. Eleven received full approval, 1 is in provisional status, and 1 was granted an extension. Of the six courses not submitted, four are no longer offered and 2 (MART) were given extensions given the stress of teaching during the Pandemic. Several forms required clarification and/or revision. A feedback message was sent and in some cases included the rubric.

Professor Ratto-Parks talked with the English Department Chair regarding the submission of LIT 110. It was resubmitted in the spring and received full approval. Chair Dougherty also met with the English Department Chair to talk through the issues with several of the literature courses and the instructors were granted extensions to submit revisions early next fall. Some faculty were confused by the assessment requirement. Faculty not using rubrics should provide commentary on students writing that gives evidence or findings based on the learning outcomes. Continued efforts are needed for faculty development in this area.

Several forms were identified as examples including the revised LIT 110, THTR 330 and MUSI 417. Camie will reach out to the instructors and post the forms on the website for others to reference. Many of the Literature courses were granted extensions.

Members noticed that the rubric, guidelines, and Coursedog needed to be aligned. The Committee will work over spring semester to improve the forms and develop additional resources and instructions for next year’s rolling review. Chair Dougherty and Camie will work on this over the summer.

## Intermediate Writing Course Appeals

* The Committee considered five [Intermediate Writing Course Appeals](https://umt.box.com/s/35kq9fiwnycnh8ax7aqdhxawlrup2n3t) . Three were approved. Follow-up was requested from one of the appellants and another was provided information on an alternate process more appropriate for the situation.
* Members provided feedback to a potential transfer student to consider whether a course she is currently taking at the University of Arizona will satisfy the Intermediate Writing Course requirement. It wasn’t clear from the syllabus that information literacy or revision based on instructor feedback was required. The student would still need to provide the documentation for the exemption request. If additional requests of this type are received, the committee may consider revising its procedure.
* An advanced writing substitution was requested from Sociology after the last meeting. Chair Dougherty reviewed the information, requested clarification and asked the Committee to respond electronically.

Policy Item

* The following language was added to the Intermediate Writing Course Exemption procedure for reference. However, the criteria and learning outcomes on the procedure need to be updated to match the last revision. This will be reviewed over the summer. The Committee will also need to communicate to admissions.

*Equivalent courses*

*Students who transfer courses (Dual Enrollment, CCN or out-of-state) or placement exams (IB or AP ) that equate to an approved intermediate writing course (LIT 110 or other) at UM also receive intermediate writing credit. However, these students should be advised that although not required, they would benefit from additional writing intensive courses to improve writing skills in order to be successful in their required advanced writing course. Proficient writing skills are required by employers and graduate programs.*

## Communication Items:

* The Writing Center annual report was shared with the committee and Director Grogan provided an overview. The Center successfully transitioned to 100% online delivery. The Writing Center is working to find new ways to reach out to students and has hired a social media coordinator. During the COVID environment the Writing Center is offering 2 one-day retreats during the non-instructional days in March, a Jump Start at the end of the semester, and Public Speaking Workshops. It is also providing a weekly drop-in SOS and doing lots of outreach, including meeting with dual enrollment students.
* The [UPWA Report](https://umt.box.com/s/ga4rtjcw8atf1ayg6n7c4bs7oazj5tau) was shared with the committee and Director Ratto-Parks provided highlights.
* The 7th annual Fall Writing Symposium, Adaptable Writing Courses: Using the UPWA Rubric for Planning & Assessment, was held on Friday, November 6, from 1-2:30 pm. The goal of each annual symposium is to offer a continued and more practical application of an observation made during the spring writing workshop. This year, we chose to answer a more qualitative question that has arisen in multiple past assessment workshops: how can we use the UPWA rubric in the classroom? This year, we decided to take up that question because it offered us a way to engage with faculty who are immersed in asking big questions about how to adapt their courses across various platforms so that they can adapt to changing community health needs.

One of the specific goals of this was event was to present rubrics as living documents that can be revised and tailored for different purposes and assignments. The handout included re-broken analytic versions of the holistic UPWA rubric and conversation about how this might shift our understanding of how the rubric is used in the UPWA. Concerns about disciplinary understanding were expressed and will be considered. The event had a small group from Biology, Pharmacy Practice, Missoula College the Writing Center, and English, though others reached out to request the details and information from the event.

* Given the safety protocols for COVID-19, a mini UPWA Workshop was held on April 28th.
* The Writing Requirements FAQ is available on the English Departments [website](https://hs.umt.edu/english/composition/faq.php).
* Professor Ratto-Parks started as an Associate Director of the Writing Center spring semester.
Amy is still coordinating the English Placement exam according to the MUS requirements. The prerequisite language for WRIT 101 is changing to be consistent with the ACT and SAT grading changes accepted by MSU. This will eliminate a barrier for UM Students. The SAT is eliminating the essay exam.
* Professors Keith Graham and James Randall (Ad Hoc General Education Committee) visited with the committee to gather input regarding UM’s general education program. The results of the survey and focus groups were shared with the Faculty Senate in March.
* The Advanced Grading Techniques in Moodle include rubrics and allow for more consistent grading and time efficiency. The training offered in February was [recorded](https://youtu.be/hPS1XsJirsA) and is a good resource for faculty and Teaching Assistants. The training will be recorded.
* Professors Megan Stark and Kate Zoellner provided an overview of the *Information Literacy-Core* resource published by Credo available to faculty and students. The online subscription resource includes videos, tutorials, and quizzes that cover topics such as searching for information, evaluating information, and citations and academic integrity.  The Library is considering ways to work with writing instructors at all levels to integrate the resource into writing instruction via Moodle. The Committee shared other ideas for how to use the resources, such as introducing it to TAs during graduate student orientation. The Writing Committee will help communicate with instructors about library faculty plans in the fall.