Please attach/submit additional documents as needed to fully complete each section of the form. See Writing Course Resources

I. COURSE INFORMATION

Department: Ecosystem Science and Restoration
Course Title: Restoration Ecology

Course Number: NRSM 465

Type of Request: [ ] New [ ] One-time Only [ ] Renew [X] Change [ ] Remove

Rationale:

I am requested that NRSM 465 be designated as a “distributed writing course” (i.e. little “w”) for majors in the Franke College of Forestry and Conservation. The course has a substantial focus on writing including: all learning outcomes required for advanced college writing courses; a textbook on writing research papers; 20% of class lectures cover aspects of writing; students submit multiple writing assignments including a 12-20 page research paper that is revised after feedback from the instructor and peers, a 750-word (2-page) debate position statement, three critiques of the structure and format of scientific literature (2-4 pages each), and an essay-style mid-term exam. In addition, the course will be collaborating with the “sidecar” program of the writing center in 2018.

Note: Although I am applying for a distributed writing ("little w") designation, the course meets all the requirements of a regular (big “W”) advanced writing course, except for the enrollment limit of 25 students. I would prefer that the course have the big “W” designation, but since the course is required in the major, I cannot limit enrollment to 25.

II. ENDORSEMENT/APPROVALS

* Instructor: Signature ___________________ Date ___/___/___

Phone/Email: 406-241-2478; cara.nelson@umontana.edu

Program Chair: Signature ___________________ Date ___/___/___

Dean: Signature ___________________ Date ___/___/___

*Form must be completed by the instructor who is teaching the course. If the instructor of the course changes before the next review, the new instructor must be provided with a copy of the form prior to teaching the course.

III. OVERVIEW OF THE COURSE PURPOSE/DESCRIPTION

Provide an introduction to the subject matter and course content: This course covers the primary ecological theories that inform the practice of ecological restoration, appropriate experimental design for making inference about the efficacy and effects of restoration treatments, and the nuts and bolts of writing a scientific research paper. Topics covered include community assembly, the dynamic nature of ecological systems, biodiversity and ecosystem functioning, ecological resilience, genetic considerations for restoration, and statistical issues and study design. The course has a substantial focus on critical analysis of the content and structure of research papers and best practices for scientific writing.

IV. LEARNING OUTCOMES

Provide examples of how the course will support students in achieving each learning outcome

- Identify and pursue sophisticated questions for academic inquiry.
  [X] Yes If yes, how will student learning be supported?
Students are required to follow standard formats for presentations of their research papers, including citation formats. They are required to use cite-while-you-write software.

☐ No  If no, course may not be-eligible

**V. WRITING COURSE REQUIREMENTS (SEEFAQS)**

- Enrollment is capped at 25 students. ☐ Yes  ☒ No
  If no, list maximum course enrollment.
  Explain how outcomes will be adequately met for this number of students.

The current maximum course enrollment is 30 students. It is possible that this number will increase to 35 in the future. The instructor spends the additional time necessary to review all students’ work. There are also several class sections devoted to small group discussions of writing topics (using student papers as examples) and seminars in which students as a group critique the writing of published articles. Finally, the UM Writing center’s Sidecar program will be assisting the instructor in spring 2018 (although the course can run smoothly with just the instructor).

Justify the request for variance.
I am requesting a distributing writing course; my understanding is that the enrollment maximum does not apply to these courses. In addition, as mentioned above, the instructor has a set of activities planned to ensure that the learning objectives can be met with enrollment of 30-35 students.

- Briefly explain how students are provided with tools and strategies for effective writing and editing in the major.
  Students receive training through the following:
  1. a textbook covering the structure of research articles and writing strategies,
  2. 20% of course lectures address writing
  3. Students critique the quality of the writing and the structure of three published articles during a seminar and in a seminar paper that they submit.
  4. Students are given instruction on best practices for editing.
  5. Students submit six types of writing assignments: a draft and final research paper; three seminar papers; a debate position statement; edits to draft research papers written by 2 of their peers, and an essay midterm exam.

- Which written assignment(s) includes revision in response to instructor’s feedback?
  The research paper.

**VI. WRITING ASSIGNMENTS**

Please describe course assignments. Students should be required to individually compose at least 20 pages of writing for assessment. At least thirteen of these 20 pages should be new, previously unsubmitted content rather than revised work. Quality of content and writing are integral parts of the grade on any writing assignment. At least 50% of the course grade should be based on students’ performance on writing assignments.

- Formal Graded Assignments
  1. Research paper: One 12-20 page paper is submitted; 37% of grade; students receive feedback on their objectives early on in the course, then on a draft, and then on the final.
  2. Seminar papers: Three 2-4 page papers are submitted; 18% of grade (6% each);
  3. Debate position statement: Two pages (750 word limit); 10% of grade