

Minutes (Draft)
of the
Department of English Undergraduate Studies Committee
Monday, October 18, 2004; 2:00-3:30 p.m.
HC 9030D

Members present: Craig Bertolet (chair), Dennis Rygiel, Justin Lowery, Don Wehrs, Chris Forhan, Isabelle Thompson, Marc Silverstein, Jim Ryan (scribe)

The meeting began at 2:00 p.m.

I. Announcements.

The committee chair reported that the number of English majors at Auburn is increasing. Currently, there appear to be at least 250 English majors. It is less clear how many English 'minors' are enrolled in our program, as that information is not readily available until minors graduate and have that information placed on record by the CLA. Some discussion ensued from the committee that considered reasons for the recent increase in English majors. The committee mused inconclusively about whether these increased numbers of majors would be permanent, and how we might handle continued increases in the ranks of our English majors.

It was speculated that increased numbers of 5th year education majors were influencing the number of students completing English majors. Overflow from a full journalism program may be another reason for our increases. There was also some discussion of possible changes by the admissions office in how students are selected for admission and whether that might be having some effect on students electing to major in English.

The chair was also asked to look into the number of double majors who major in English as one of their majors. Some of these majors have not been visible because their first (listed) major is in a field other than English.

II. Approval of minutes.

Revised minutes from the USC meetings of 9-13-04 and 10-4-04 were examined and approved by the committee.

III. Requirement of 9 English credits at Auburn for English Minor.

The clarity of the specific requirements for the Auburn English Minor has recently become a concern. Consequently, the committee decided to add

language to the AU Bulletin that would reflect the requirement that student complete at least 9 of the required credits of the English Minor here at Auburn. This would limit the number of transfer credits applicable to the minor.

IV. Survey Results

- a. American Literature faculty have been polled to determine the desirability of splitting ENGL 3700 (Survey of American Literature) into 2 variants: (1) Beginnings to 1865; and (2) 1865 to the present. Survey says: American Literature faculty were unanimous in desiring this change, and sufficient numbers of American Literature faculty are both willing and able to teach either of the two variants. The committee concluded as well that either of these courses could be used to fulfill concentration requirements in American literature that are outlined on the plan of study.
- b. English 4310: British Drama, Beginnings to 1642. Alas, this course---one devoted to the non-Shakespearean splendors of British drama before 1642---tends to be cancelled because of underenrollment; the course has not “made” since late last century, during the glory days of Winter 1998. Whence this decline in student interest in early nativity plays, folk plays, liturgical dramas, and masques? To say nothing of Shakespeare’s brilliant contemporaries. What, if anything, should be done? Renaissance faculty have been polled for their ideas, but no clear solution has been presented. Currently (2004-2005) the course is not being offered. After some discussion of ways to foster greater interest in the course, and some consideration of whether the course ought simply to be eliminated, the chair agreed to ask the Renaissance faculty about whether the course might be offered as a “special topics” listing.

V. Assessment: Results of the online Senior Survey.

The chair observed that 18 of our majors had completed the very long (perhaps too long?) online survey for English majors. Committee members received printouts of some of these responses, but time did not permit discussion of these responses.

The meeting concluded at 3:30 p.m.