

Western Kentucky University
Office of the Dean
745-2446

REPORT TO THE UNIVERSITY SENATE

DATE: November 2009

FROM: Graduate Studies and Research

The Graduate Council submits the following items for consideration. Items marked with an asterisks [*] are information items. All other items are consent items:

I. Temporary Course

ENG 475 Writing Workshop II: Fiction*

ENG 468G Writing Early Modern English Literature*

II. Create a New Course

ECON 532 Topics in Microeconomics

III. Revise a Program

105 Master of Arts in Sociology

Proposal Date
3/01/09

**Gordon Ford College of Business
Department of Economics
Proposal to Create a New Course
(Action Item)**

Contact Person: Dr. Michelle Trawick michelle.trawick@wku.edu 745-8803

1. Identification of proposed course

- 1.1 Prefix and number: ECON 532
- 1.2 Title: Topics in Microeconomics (Topical Coverage & Title Varies)
- 1.3 Abbreviated title: Topics in Micro
- 1.4 Credit hours and contact hours: 3
- 1.5 Type of course: K (Workshop)
- 1.6 Prerequisites, corequisites and/or special requirements:
ECON 502 (Applied Microeconomics) and 506 (Applied Statistical Methods)
or consent of the instructor
- 1.7 Catalog course listing:
Discussion and application of current and developing topics in microeconomics.
Specific topics vary.

2. Rationale

- 2.1 Reason for developing the proposed course:
The economics department began offering a renewed and restructured Master's degree in the fall of 2007. The degree emphasizes application and the preparation of students for a variety of analyst positions. The 30-hour program provides limited opportunity for electives, especially in developing specialties as well as smaller sub-specialties. Econ 532 provides the opportunity to expose students to concepts and application in such developing areas of microeconomics that do not require an entire semester but are valuable to students. Allowing for flexible topical coverage will permit the incorporation of newer topics and matching with faculty interests. The course has been offered on a one-time basis with very favorable reception by students. The topics covered were antitrust methods and cases, market structure and definition, and strategic game concepts and applications. Examples of other topics would include transfer pricing, economics and regulation of telecommunications, anti-trust issues, alternative pricing mechanisms, in-firm markets, and economics of executive compensation.
- 2.2 Projected enrollment in the proposed course:
10-15 per year. This estimate is based on estimated enrollment for the Masters degree with allowance for alternative elective courses.

- 2.3 Relationship of the proposed course to courses now offered by the department:
The course is an extension of core concepts in ECON 502 (Applied Microeconomics).
- 2.4 Relationship of the proposed course to courses offered in other departments:
No substantial overlap with courses in other departments exists. The flexible topical structure is similar to BA 580 (Contemporary Issues), where MBA students are required to complete multiple sections of 1.5 hour courses as part of their program.
- 2.5 Relationship of the proposed course to courses offered in other institutions:
Miami University (Ohio) offers “Advanced Topics in Microeconomics” where “in these courses, students are exposed to current debates and controversies in a specific area of economics and are shown the role of theory and testing in the evolution of the issues.” the course’s objective and the Miami program is similar in structure to one offered at WKU. A number of other masters as well as Ph.D. programs offer similarly titled courses with flexible topics.

3. Discussion of proposed course

- 3.1 Course objectives:
Students will be exposed to the analysis of particular microeconomic topics. The course will emphasize particular cases that balance analytical insights with empirical studies and methods. The goal is for students to develop the ability to take an issue within a particular topic, break out the key analytical elements, understand appropriate empirical tools that may be applied to the issue, and critically assess analytical and empirical presentations.
- 3.2 Content outline:
Course outlines will vary depending on topics.
- 3.3 Student expectations and requirements:
Students will be assigned weekly readings evaluated by quizzes and oral participation. Students will be assigned regular written assignments on specific cases. Students will be given an end of semester exam to assess overall comprehension of material.
- 3.4 Tentative texts and course materials:
Text and resources will vary depending on topics.

4. Resources

- 4.1 Library resources:
Library resources will depend on topic. In general, library materials for microeconomic topics are sufficient. See library attachment
- 4.2 Computer resources:
Existing resources sufficient.

5. Budget implications

- 5.1 Proposed method of staffing:
Existing faculty will staff the course

5.2 Special equipment needed:
No special equipment needed.

5.3 Expendable materials needed:
N/A

5.4 Laboratory supplies needed:
N/A

6. Proposed term for implementation:
Spring 2010

7. Dates of prior committee approvals:

Economics Department/Division 3/1/09

GFCOB Curriculum Committee NA

GFCOB Graduate Curriculum Committee 6/12/09

University Teacher Education Committee NA

General Education Committee NA

Graduate Council 10/15/09

University Senate _____

Attachments: Bibliography, Library Resources Form, Course Inventory Form

**Potter College of Arts and Letters
Department of Sociology
Proposal to Revise A Program
(Action Item)**

Contact Person: Jerry Daday, Jerry.daday@wku.edu, 745-8765

1. Identification of program:

- 1.1 Current program reference number: 105
- 1.2 Current program title: Master of Arts in Sociology
- 1.3 Credit hours: 34 credit hours (Plan A), 40 credit hours (Plan B)

2. Identification of the proposed program changes:

- 2.1 Modifying Admissions Requirement: The Department of Sociology currently requires all applicants for the Master of Arts in Sociology to submit a formal application, GRE scores, and official transcripts. The Sociology Department proposes adding a Letter of Intent to the application requirements for the MA in Sociology program.
- 2.2 Modifying Research Tool Requirement: The Sociology Department proposes adding the existing SOCL 515 Advanced Data Analysis course as another option in fulfilling the Research Tool Requirement for the Master of Arts in Sociology. Currently, the SOCL 520 Professional Research and Writing in Sociology is the only option available to students to fulfill the Research Tool Requirement. The SOCL 515 Advanced Data Analysis course would provide students with an important and valuable second option.

3. Detailed program description:

Current MA in Sociology Program – Catalog Description	Proposed Changes to MA in Sociology Program – Catalog Description
Change # 1: “Interested students should send application for admission, GRE scores, and transcripts to the Office of Graduate Studies. Students seeking assistantships should also include applications for assistantships and three letters of recommendation. Acceptance is competitive, but some advantage is usually gained by early applicants.”	Change # 1: “Interested students should send application for admission, GRE scores, transcripts, and a letter of intent to the Office of Graduate Studies. Applicants should discuss the following information in their letters of intent: 1) prior background and life experiences that could contribute to graduate coursework and research in sociology, 2) personal reasons for pursuing graduate studies in sociology at Western Kentucky University, 3) the applicant’s areas of interest in the discipline of sociology, 4) the applicant’s viewpoint on the importance of sociology for the study of the social world, and 5) future plans. Students seeking assistantships should also include

	applications for assistantships and three letters of recommendation. Acceptance is competitive, but some advantage is usually gained by early applicants.”
Change # 2: “The research tool requirement may be met by either passing a foreign language examination that demonstrates reading proficiency in a foreign language or earning a grade of a “B” or better in SOCL 520, Professional Research and Writing in Sociology. If the research tool requirement is satisfied by a foreign language exam, SOCL 520 may be used as an elective course in the graduate program.	Change # 2: The research tool requirement may be met by completing one of the following three options (a) passing a foreign language examination that demonstrates reading proficiency in a foreign language, (b) earning a grade of a “B” or better in SOCL 520, Professional Research and Writing in Sociology, (c) earning a grade of a “B” or better in SOCL 515, Advanced Data Analysis. SOCL 520 or SOCL 515 may be used as an elective course in the graduate program if not used in fulfilling the research tool requirement.

4. Rationale for the proposed program change:

Change # 1: The Sociology Department believes a holistic approach is necessary in reviewing applications for the Master of Arts in Sociology program. A letter of intent will provide the Sociology Department’s Graduate Committee with information on each applicant’s 1) prior background and life experiences that could contribute to graduate coursework and research, 2) personal reasons for pursuing graduate studies in sociology at Western Kentucky University, 3) areas of interest in the discipline of sociology, 4) viewpoint on the importance of sociology for the study of the social world, and 5) future career plans. This information will allow the Graduate Committee in the Department of Sociology to make an informed decision on the admission of future applicants to the Master of Arts in Sociology.

Change # 2: The course currently offered in the Sociology MA Program to fulfill the Research Tool requirement is SOCL 520: Professional Research and Writing in Sociology. This course serves a need for some graduate students by helping them to develop their MA thesis proposals and research projects. However, the department has graduate students who do not need focused help and guidance in developing their MA thesis research projects and proposals, and an additional Research Tool option is necessary. The SOCL 515 Advanced Data Analysis course is currently an elective in the MA in Sociology Program, and it represents the ideal course in fulfilling the spirit of the Research Tool requirement. In SOCL 515, students learn to analyze quantitative data by writing syntax in several of standard statistical analysis programs, such as SPSS, SAS, and STATA.

5. Proposed term for implementation and special provisions (if applicable): Spring 2010

6. Dates of prior committee approvals:

Sociology Department:

August 26, 2009

PCAL Curriculum Committee

October 1, 2009

Graduate Council

__10/15/09__

University Senate
