**Potter College of Arts & Letters**

**Western Kentucky University**

**745-2345**

**REPORT TO THE UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM COMMITTEE**

Date: September 27, 2012

The Potter College of Arts & Letters submits the following items for consideration:

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| --- | --- |
| **Type of Item** | **Description of Item & Contact Information** |
| Action | **Proposal to Create a New Course**  PS 377 Politics of the American South  Contact: Joel Turner, [joel.turner@wku.edu](mailto:joel.turner@wku.edu), 5-2728 |

Proposal Date:8/27/12

**Potter College of Arts & Letters**

**Department of Political Science**

**Proposal to Create a New Course**

**(Action Item)**

Contact Person: Joel Turner, joel.turner@wku.edu, 5-2728

**1. Identification of proposed course:**

* 1. Course prefix (subject area) and number: PS 377
  2. Course title: Politics of the American South
  3. Abbreviated course title: Politics of the American South
  4. Credit hours and contact hours: 3 hours
  5. Type of course: L
  6. Prerequisites/corequisites: None
  7. Course catalog listing: Examination of politics in the American South from the pre-Civil War era to the present.

**2. Rationale:**

* 1. Reason for developing the proposed course: This course is necessary to provide students with the opportunity to explore the political, social, and cultural aspects of the American South, a region that scholars have long recognized as being both unique and important. The course will be a critical addition to courses offered within the broad discipline of political science and the subfield of American politics. This course, which will enable students to fully understand the important role the South plays in the American political system, would be a valuable addition to the political science major and the minor in southern studies, and would generally be an important component of majors and minors in sociology, psychology, African-American studies, and history. Creating this course would also permit the political science department to be proactive in addressing the needs of its major, as feedback from current and former students has indicated a desire for the department to offer Southern Politics as part of its regular course offerings.
  2. Projected enrollment in the proposed course: Based on enrollment in a similar course taught under the PS 400 seminar format, I anticipate an enrollment of twenty to thirty students.
  3. Relationship of the proposed course to courses now offered by the department: The course uses concepts from American politics, race and politics, public opinion, media and politics, political psychology, state government, and public policy. Although the political science department offers courses on all of these topics, there is no course currently offered in the department, the college, or the university that specifically provides an in-depth analysis of the political importance of the South. This course will fill this void.
  4. Relationship of the proposed course to courses offered in other departments:

This course complements a variety of courses across disciplines. It relates to courses offered in English (ENG 495 Southern Literature), Folk Studies (FLK 281 Roots of Southern Culture), and Religious Studies (RELS 330 Religion in the American South) that focus on various cultural aspects of the South. It also complements courses in African-American studies that deal with the Civil Rights Movement and courses in the Southern Studies minor currently offered by History.

* 1. Relationship of the proposed course to courses offered in other institutions: This course is a vital part of the political science curriculum at a variety of other institutions, such as the University of Georgia (POLS 4660 Southern Politics), Louisiana State University (POLI 4039 Southern Politics), the University of Mississippi (POL 318 Politics of the American South) and the Citadel (PSCI 307 Southern Politics).

**3. Discussion of proposed course:**

* 1. Course objectives: Students who successfully complete this course should emerge with an understanding of the distinctive nature and history of Southern politics, of the roles of race, class, and religion on the evolution of Southern politics, and of the current state of research on various aspects of Southern politics.
  2. Content outline: Course topics include:
* the defining characteristics of “traditional southern politics”.
* the politics of the Civil Rights Movement and the mobilization of a significant African-American political influence in the region.
* the extent, causes, and consequences of the partisan realignment in the South, which resulted in the emergence of a Republican challenge in what had been the solidly Democratic South and, more recently, GOP dominance in the region.
* the personalities and events that shaped the political decisions in individual states and the influence that the South has exercised in national politics.
  1. Student expectations and requirements: Students are evaluated on their performance on examinations, writing assignments, and participation on a discussion board. Students are expected to attend class, participate in class discussions, and complete assignments on time.
  2. Tentative texts and course materials:
* Charles Bullock and Mark Rozell. 2007. The New Politics of the Old South. 3rd ed.
* Woodward, J. David. 2006. The New Southern Politics.
* Applebome, Peter. 1997. Dixie Rising: How the South is Shaping American Values, Politics, and Culture.
* Reed, John Shelton. My Tears Spoiled My Aim: and Other Reflections on Southern Culture.

**4. Resources:**

* 1. Library resources: The course is not heavily dependent on library resources but students may use audio-visual materials from the library and the research materials for any special projects associated with the course.
  2. Computer resources: Students will use existing computer resources to access course materials and write papers.

**5. Budget implications:**

* 1. Proposed method of staffing: Current staffing is sufficient. However, if this course and program grow as we hope, the department might need to request a faculty line in the future to help support the growth.
  2. Special equipment needed: None.
  3. Expendable materials needed: None.
  4. Laboratory materials needed: None.

**6. Proposed term for implementation: Spring 2013**

**7. Dates of prior committee approvals:**

Political ScienceDepartment: November 2, 2011

Potter College Curriculum Committee September 6, 2012

Undergraduate Curriculum Committee \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

University Senate \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Attachment: Bibliography, Library Resources Form**, **Course Inventory Form**