

AREAS OF OVERLAP BETWEEN ADPR221, SPMC250 and JOUR 200A/B

ADPR221

Kelli Britten and Mike Hanus have taught ADPR221. They indicate that about two-thirds of the material in ADPR221 overlaps with the current JOUR 200A/200B course material.

Topics taught in ADPR221 that will also be taught in JOUR 200A/B include*

AP style and grammar
Clear writing
News writing
Inverted pyramid
Information gathering
Resume and cover letters
Headlines and lead writing

Topics that are not covered include:

Creative-focused writing
Commercial writing
Writing with an objective (to change consumer behavior)
Copywriting (creative writing for advertising students)
Speech writing
Crisis communication strategies
Strategy and ideation/creative concepting

SPMC250

Topics taught in SPMC250 that will also be taught in JOUR200A/B include*

News writing and lead writing
AP style and grammar
Information gathering
Feature story writing
Interviewing and note taking
Using quotes and attribution
Legal and ethical issues in news

Topics that are not covered include:

Locker room reporting
Promotional writing
Writing for an audience (for example taking an 800-word feature story written for a news publication and then using that information to write the story for an audience on a platform such as a university website or company website)
Press release writing
Game coverage
Marketing and promoting a team
Writing conversationally
Statistical concepts important in sports coverage or promotion

John Shrader indicated that while there is some overlap, SPMC250 is an important part of the sports major program. John is the best person to talk to about areas of overlap and any concerns there might be with eliminating SPMC250.

*Information gathered via interviews and discussions, syllabi

ESSENTIAL WRITING SKILLS

We were asked to identify and define the writing skills that are a mark of a good writer. We want all graduates to have the ability to:

- Apply grammar and style guidelines, recognize errors and fix them
- Write to an audience and understand the role audience has in decisions made about writing style
- Write in clear sentences without wordiness and limit the use of passive voice
- Organize information; take a large amount of information and condense it into a focused piece of writing
- Integrate sources into a piece of writing that flows using transitions, quotes and background
- Quote and attribute sources accurately and according to style, understand what constitutes plagiarism
- Write a clearly focused piece with a theme
- Understand the differences between various writing styles such as those intended to inform, persuade and entertain
- Understand how to gather background and research a topic
- Conduct research and synthesize research into writing
- Generate creative and unique ideas

Writing Task Force Options and Summary

In evaluating these options, it's important to consider the college's goals.

Do we want all our graduates to be trained in journalistic skills with solid backgrounds in reporting, editing and news writing?

Do we want our graduates to have had more exposure to sports, advertising, public relations, broadcast journalism and print journalism writing styles?

Do we want our graduates to have strong writing skills regardless of discipline?

The answers to these questions will likely inform the choices made.

Alternative teaching models could be considered for these options. Alternative teaching methods include the large lecture/small recitation model or a carousel model.

All options except one include an online, prerequisite one-credit hour grammar and writing course taught by an instructor. Many of the journalism colleges at the universities we researched required a grammar and essential writing skills course. Depending on the options chosen, AP style could be added to this course or added as another required module within in a course. It's important this course is taught by an instructor because students will have questions.

The task force members would be happy to discuss development and rationale for these options and our recommendations.

Recommendations

Option 2 satisfies the desire for all our students to have fundamental writing and editing skills, but also retains specialized writing classes by major. (Four members recommended)

Option 6 gives students a solid writing and grammar foundation that is non-major, non-industry specific. It also retains the specialized writing classes by major. (Four members recommended)

Two members did not vote.

OPTION 1

*Online prerequisite one-credit hour grammar and writing course taught by an instructor.

Required writing classes offered by major

ADPR 221 (ADPR students)

SPMC 250 (sports media)

JOUR 200A/B (journalism and broadcast students)

Concerns

Writing skills: There remains to be an inequity between the amount of dedicated writing classes required among the majors.

Benefits

More specialization in the 200-level: Moving editing, grammar and clear writing out of 221 and 250 would allow for more specialization.

More choices: More choices in upper level electives compared to other options we are considering

OPTION 2

*Online prerequisite one-credit hour grammar and writing course taught by an instructor.

All majors take JOUR200A - a re-tooled fundamentals course that incorporates the essential writing skills developed by the task force

Majors then take their choice of a JOUR200B - a specialized skills class based on major
JOUR/BDRC - some elements of beginning reporting such as meeting coverage, enterprise story.

ADPR - a more specialized advertising and/or PR class that could include copy writing exposure

SPORTS - material from SPMC250, room for even more specialized sports reporting instruction

Concerns

Credit hours: It adds three credits (four credit hours with the online grammar/writing course) to sports and ADPR.

Staffing: This is a concern for the entire task force. The classes have to be 20 or fewer students per the college's accreditation. It's a skills course.

Double majors: Creates issues for double majors.

Course requirement concerns for double majors: For example, would journalism faculty members be OK with a double major taking the ADPR 200B course, and then moving on to take advanced journalism classes (having skipped the 200B for journalism and broadcast students)?

Less emphasis on editing: There would be less editing instruction.

Benefits

Solid writing skills: Provides a solid writing fundamental course for all students

Specialization: There is more specialization in the 200-level. Moving editing, grammar and clear writing out of ADPR221 and SPMC250 would allow for more specialization.

OPTION 3

*Online prerequisite one-credit hour grammar and writing course taught by an instructor.

All majors take JOUR200A, a re-tooled fundamentals course that incorporates the essential writing skills developed by the task force

All majors take JOUR200B, taught in a carousel manner where teachers of different subjects rotate (one credit hour per teacher):

5 weeks: JOUR/BRDC teacher

5 weeks: SPMC teacher

5 weeks: ADPR teacher

Concerns

Less specialized instruction for any major.

Benefits

No double major issues: This option solves the double major issue

Exposure: Exposes students to all majors in the college

Innovative course design: Students have opportunities to meet with multiple professors and explore all the majors

OPTION 4

*Online prerequisite one-credit hour grammar and writing course taught by an instructor.

All majors take JOMC200A and JOMC200B - revised courses that would also incorporate journalism, ADPR, broadcast and sports.

JOMC200A: 8 weeks adpr; 8 weeks sports/broadcast/jour

JOMC200B: 8 weeks adpr; 8 weeks sports/broadcast/jour

Concerns

Credit hours: This adds three credit hours to sports and ADPR

Staffing: Finding staff qualified to teach a class that incorporates all the majors could be a challenge

Skills: By incorporating sports, advertising, public relations, broadcast and journalism, students may not develop any one specialized skill.

Benefits

Unified: Everybody takes the same class, representing a unified core curriculum

Exposure: Everyone is exposed to all elements of the college's majors

OPTION 5

*Online prerequisite one-credit hour grammar and writing course taught by an instructor.

All majors take JOUR200A and JOUR200B (based on the current syllabi for JOUR200A and JOUR200B) as part of an integrated, core curriculum with a journalism focus

Concerns

Staffing: There are staffing concerns for this model.

More classes: Non-journalism/broadcast majors would not be exposed to any kind of writing in their major for six hours; the college may have to create another dedicated specialized class for non-journalism/broadcast majors

Benefits

Unified: Unified, core curriculum

More writing: More focus on writing for all majors

Students are graduating with a bachelor's in journalism so they would be trained in six hours of journalism writing and skills

OPTION 6

Everyone would take a three-credit hour essential writing skills class. It would focus on good writing and grammar. Writing instruction would be non-major, non-industry specific. This would be a gateway course. It would be similar to the former Art of Writing class.

After taking this course, students would branch off into specialized writing classes. ADPR221, SPMC250 and JOURA/B would stay the same.

Concerns

Staffing: Creates staffing problem.

Credit hours: Adds three credit hours

Bottleneck: This could create bottleneck

Benefits

Writing skills: Focus on well-rounded writers

Specialization remains: Does not dilute other classes