Feedback Report
UCA Core Council Assessment sub-committee
February 2019
Re: Review of LD Core Responsible Living Course Offerings

Thank you for providing the information requested by the UCA Core Council assessment sub-committee. The sub-committee is diligently reviewing all courses in the Lower Division Core Responsible Living area to assure that our students are receiving a shared, common experience across the university as regards this Core competency. Your participation is greatly appreciated in this endeavor. The sub-committee would like to provide you with this feedback report documenting our recommendations. If you have questions, concerns, or comments please direct them to the Director of the UCA Core, Jake Held (jmheld@uca.edu)

Course Prefix and Number: WRTG 2325
Course Title: Introduction to Rhetoric

Syllabus: Any syllabus for a course in the UCA Core must include language indicating the course's relative position within the UCA Core. The required boilerplate language can be located here: http://uca.edu/academicaffairs/publications-information/

Syllabus issues: Include Core language, and explicitly articulate how course outcomes align to UCA Core outcomes, thus making the connection between the course and the UCA Core explicit for students.

Lower Division Core standards: Does a majority (greater than 50%) of the course content directly align to the Core outcomes for the goal under which the course assesses? (NB: This is calculated by considering course objectives, readings, lecture/discussion, and assignments as indicated by the course syllabus and provided course materials.)

WRTG 2325 is categorized under Goal A (Ethics) of the Responsible Living category. The outcomes for Goal A are:

Ethical Awareness: Awareness of the core beliefs that consciously or unconsciously influence one's own and others' ethical conduct and reasoning. Core beliefs can reflect one's environment, religion, culture, or training. A person may or may not choose to act on their core beliefs.
Ethical Issue Recognition: Recognition of various ethical issues and their interconnections in complex contexts (i.e., the obvious and subtle connections between/among the sub-parts or situational conditions of a scenario that bring two or more ethical dilemmas/issues into the problem; e.g., relationship of production of corn as part of the climate change issue).
Ethical Application: The application of different ethical theories (e.g., utilitarian, natural law, virtue) or ethical concepts (rights, justice, duty) to analyze the ethical issues of a problem.
The full rubric can be located here: http://uca.edu/core/assessment/

As a lower division Core course, this course ought to provide students with the foundational skills necessary to begin developing the skills indicated under the rubric. In order to provide such an experience it is necessary that students be consistently exposed to these ideas and offered multiple opportunities to develop these skills. The sub-committee found that overall WRTG 2325 as presented failed to align to and promote the learning outcomes of responsible living Goal A (Ethics).

The course as a whole is structured around the teaching of rhetoric, that is, the effective and persuasive use of language. Clearly this skill does benefit a person and it ought to be done ethically. However, the only explicit reference to ethics is the final essay, and this only comprises 10% of the total course grade. So, overall, this course is not structured to provide an introduction to, development of, and therefore formative experience in ethical reasoning. As an LD Core course, this course is the singular, introductory and developmental experience in responsible living that is to prepare a student to later master and demonstrate proficiency in these outcomes. Courses in the lower division need to provide developmental experiences for their respective competency, that is, provide students with basic, transferable skills that can be leveraged later in their course work and where they can demonstrate mastery of these skills in upper division courses.

However, the committee found that the course could readily be aligned to the well-being rubric, noting that rhetoric is clearly an element of living one's best life, a component of eudemonia (to borrow from Aristotle), but the connection to ethics is dubious. Thus, it might be wisest to re-align this course to Goal B (well-being) instead of trying to redesign it to become an ethics course.

Committee Recommendation: Given that WRTG 2325 as presented fails to align the Core outcomes under which it is designated the assessment sub-committee of the UCA Core Council recommends to the Core Council that WRTG 2325 be asked to pursue one of the following options: a) WRTG 2325 submit revised materials addressing all concerns of the sub-committee as addressed above thus offering an assurance argument as to consistency of its content and delivery with respect to responsible living Goal A (Ethics); or b) submit revised materials indicating the choice to be assessed under Goal B (well-being), thus offering an assurance argument as to consistency of its content and delivery with respect to responsible living Goal B ; or c) submit the required paperwork to remove WRTG 2325 from the UCA Core should the requirements necessary to meet Core outcomes be considered too cumbersome.

    Specific recommendations:
1. Greater that 50% of course content needs to explicitly align to the outcomes under responsible living Goal A (Ethics). Use the table in Curriculum Attachment A here: http://uca.edu/core/forms/ as a guide. In addition, provide course materials such as copies of assignments, quizzes, tests, writing assignment prompts, and/or detailed syllabus. The same applies should you decide to petition to assess under Goal B instead.

2. Revise the course syllabus to demonstrate how the course aligns to and addresses the Core outcomes under which it assesses.
3. Course assignments needs to align to Core outcomes, and specifically prompt and require that students engage in activities that assist in developing these competencies.
4. In order to better understand Core requirements and respond to the sub-committee's requests it is recommended that the School of Communication consult with a member of the sub-committee in regard to this report before, or while, revising its submission. Your college representative on the sub-committee is Laura Bowles.

Should the School of Communication choose to submit revised materials for WRTG 2325, those materials should be submitted to the UCA Core Director. The course materials will be evaluated by the UCA Core Council curriculum review sub-committee. The sub-committee will review the materials and make a recommendation to the UCA Core Council as to whether or not they are adequate in addressing the concerns noted above. Should the sub-committee affirm that they are adequate and the Core Council affirm that assessment, no further action will be necessary. Should, however, the sub-committee deem the revised materials to be insufficient and the Core Council affirm this evaluation, or the sub-committee deem the materials sufficient yet the UCA Core Council reject this assessment, the Core Council's decision will be guiding. In the event of either of these previous two outcomes, you will have one semester to revisit the issues and revise the course materials. The same process will then be followed with the decision of the Core Council regarding WRTG 2325's position in the UCA LD Core being final.

If the School of Communication should fail to act on this recommendation by July 1, 2019, WRTG 2325 will be placed on probationary status for Fall 2019. If no progress is made in rectifying matters by the close of Fall 2019, WRTG 2325 will be removed from the LD Core beginning Spring 2020.