Course: ENGL 023 American Voices

1. Date of Application: 11/30/201
2. Name, Dept of Proposer: Sandra Grayson, English
3. Name of Dept/Program housing course: English
4. Name of Chair/PD: Sandra Grayson
5. How often is the course taught: biennial
6. Course Prerequisites:
7. Unit value of course: 1
8. Normal Class Size: 22
9. Number of sections expected Fall 2012: 2
10. Number of sections expected Spring 2013: 0
11. Is the course appropriate for first-year students: Yes
12. Relevant Learning Goal(s): Artistic Understanding, American Diversity
13. Chair will oversee submission of student work: Yes
14. Chair will oversee instructor participation in norming/asst: Yes

15. Teaching: "The catalog description for American Voices reads: An introduction to some of the many voices that constitute the diverse literary cultures of the United States. Readings may include novels, poems, short stories, slave narratives, Native American chants, or diaries and letters organized around a theme or issue. Examples of possible offerings: The Immigrant Experience, Race and Sexuality in America, The City in American Literature, American Autobiography, or Growing Up in America.

As this description indicates, in this course students must analyze and interpret texts chosen to represent different voices within the complex and changing American community. The course is by design comparative, presenting students with multiple literary perspectives on American experience and identity. It satisfies the Artistic Understanding criteria, as it examines texts with attention to their formal features (1a, 1b, 1c) and historical and social contexts (1d). It also satisfies the requirements for the American Diversity designation, as it constructs a view of a society that is diverse in terms of categories such as ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, and religion (1) and, because of the nature of the texts studied, it focuses closely on how the experience of individuals is shaped by social categories and power structures (3, 4). One purpose of the course is to deconstruct the idea of a dominant national literature -- instead, the course focuses on many voices, many perspectives (1)."

16. Learning: "Student learning will be addressed in various ways. Students will be required to submit regular, informal writing assignments (weekly response papers, blogs, journal exercises, and/or in-class writing) in which they respond to the literary texts (Artistic Understanding 1a). In these informal writings, they will be taking their first steps toward analyzing the form and meaning of each text (Artistic Understanding 1b). They will also examine ways in which the texts interrogate structures of power and explore how these structures have implications for the lives of the characters and the students' own lives (American Diversity 3, 4).

Students will also write two formal essays in which they interpret one or more literary works and explore the work(s) within the context of the American experience (Artistic Understanding 1a, 1b, 1d, American Diversity 1). In these essays, students will be evaluated on their ability to employ the vocabulary of literary analysis (Artistic Understanding 1c), and their ability to juxtapose different perspectives in order to analyze systems of oppression (Artistic Understanding 1d, American Diversity 4)."
Finally, the students will take a final exam which will again assess their ability to analyze literary texts (Artistic Understanding 1a, 1b, 1c), their understanding of the different perspectives these texts address (Artistic Understanding 1d), and finally their understanding of how these perspectives are shaped by social categories and power structures (American Diversity 1, 3, 4).