

Academic Affairs Committee Minutes

March 28, 2017

Present: Fernando Gouvea, Sahan Dissanayake, Jacob Adner, Muheb Esmat, Adrienne Carmack, Jenner Foster, Margaret McFadden, Jim Scott, Jim Sloat, Barbara Moore,

I. Approval of the Minutes

The minutes were approved.

II. New course approvals

After extensive discussion of how civic engagement courses are funded, and of the rationales behind the specific requirements to designate a course as meeting one of more distribution requirements, the following courses were approved as submitted:

- ED 3XX: Girls, New Civics and Youth-Fueled Activism
- ES 3XX: Climate Change, Justice, and Health
- FR 2XX: Paris
- GM 3XX: Contested Subjects in German Culture
- GO 2XX: Introduction to Race, Ethnicity, and Politics
- HI 3XX: Daily Life Under Putin
- HI 2XX: Nuclear Visions
- HI 2XX: Children and Youth in African History
- HI 3XX: Global Histories of Food
- IT 2XX: Noisemakers (remove I)
- IT 3XX: Zine!
- MA 3XX: Fourier Analysis
- RE 3XX: Gender and Religion in US Prisons
- RE 1XX Intro to the Study of Religion (remove A and I; offer S)
- SP 2XX: Becoming Vulnerable (offer I)
- SP 3XX: The Jesuits and Environmental History

III. Economics Department update

The Economics department announced that they plan to change scheduling of their basic courses. They have traditionally had a fourth hour of meetings, but they are now pursuing a policy that will allow faculty to decide whether or not they want to meet for three or four hours. All enrolled students would receive the same credit. The main reason is that some faculty do not require as much time to teach the material effectively, while others prefer teaching methods that require the longer time frame. Many regard the fourth hour as “extra” time they don’t need. There was some discussion of a few other multi-section courses that have different meeting time requirements (e.g., and EN 115 section with a required film screening).

This proposal raised many concerns among the committee members. These include: the inequity among students, who might rationally choose sections with fewer contact hours or who might be forced into sections with more time requirements than others taking the same course; and the precedent that this might set in departments where many sections of basic courses are taught in four contact hours—can a colleague just decide only to teach for three hours, unilaterally? Despite significant reservations, the committee decided to defer to the department’s solution, with a plan to review next year after this policy has been in operation for a while.

