Proposal Date: 9/13/13

Potter College of Arts & Letters

School of Journalism & Broadcasting

Proposal to Create (Renew) a Temporary Course

(Action Item)

Contact Person: Josh Meltzer, josh.meltzer@wku.edu, 270-745-2070 (o), 270-799-9839 (c)

1. **Identification of proposed course:**
   1. Course prefix (subject area) and number: JOUR 241
   2. Course title: Visualizing Data in Journalism
   3. Abbreviated course title: Data Visualization
   4. Credit hours: 3
   5. Schedule type: C Lecture/Lab
   6. Prerequisites/corequisites: None
   7. Grade type: \_X\_\_\_ standard letter grade \_\_\_\_ pass/fail \_\_\_\_in progress (IP)
   8. Course description: : Students will learn to find and examine large sets of data to identify embedded trends and stories, and display this data. (course fee)
2. **Rationale**
   1. Reason for offering this course on a temporary basis:

This course will be offered as a pilot or trial course for future course(s) on the topic of information graphics and data visualization. Processing data and synthesizing meaning from raw information has become more and more important not only for journalists, but for anyone who stands to benefit from understanding, analyzing and displaying the massive amount of statistical information available in nearly any discipline.

For journalists, being able to comprehend and find non-fiction narratives buried within data sets is no longer a specialty of a few members of a newsroom, but is becoming a base requirement for the profession. For students in other fields, learning to display statistical data that explains trends, informs decision makers or helps larger populations understand complex topics is imperative today.

This course will be offered as a trial to help to understand the kinds of students such a course will attract both from within the School of Journalism & Broadcasting and from the university as a whole.

* 1. Relationship of the proposed course to courses offered in other academic units:

This course will complement content producing courses in other academic areas. For non-journalists, learning to display information and data relevant to business or the sciences, for example, is key. Presentations that nearly all students produce for classes can and should display information in accurate and powerful ways. This course (JOUR 241) will help them learn to analyze and present information to audiences, no matter the discipline.

1. **Description of proposed course**
   1. Course content outline
2. Introduction to scope of visualizing data

II. Where to find data, how to organize it

III. Being accurate and ethical with data

IV. Analyzing the data to find the story

V. Hands on design tools in graphic software

A. Video tutorials

B. Drawing exercises

VI. Storytelling with Graphs

A. Different types and uses of graphs

VII. Mapping

A. Esthetics and Usability of Mapping

VIII. Diagrams

A. Thinking sequentially and telling stories in steps

B. Drawing with the pen tool and using vector graphics

C. Copyright and use of imagery

IX. Interactivity and data visualization

* 1. Tentative text(s)

*The Functional Art: An introduction to information graphics and visualization,* Alberto Cairo. New Riders Publishing, 2012.

1. **Second offering of a temporary course (if applicable)**
   1. Reason for offering this course a second time on a temporary basis:

The course will be proposed to become a permanent course beginning in the fall of 2014, when the SJ&B is submitting significant changes to all of its programs. Allowing this course a second time on a temporary basis will insure that it can be fine-tuned even further before implemented as a permanent course, and will allow students to continue to take the course as a possible restrictive elective in the current curriculums.

* 1. Term course was first offered: Fall, 2013
  2. Enrollment in first offering: 15/18

1. **Term of Implementation:** Spring 2014 (term course will be offered a second time)
2. **Dates of review/approvals:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| School of Journalism & Broadcasting |  | **Sept 23, 2013** |
| Dean, Potter College of Arts & Letters |  | **Sept 29, 2013** |