Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR)
Course Approval Sheet

Department ___Philosophy_________ College_____Humanities___________

Course Number___PHIL 320___ Course Title___Phil Analysis—GWAR___

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This proposal is a: (please check one)

___X___ Minor Modification to an Existing Course
_____ Substantial Modification to an Existing Course
_____ Completely New Course

Relationship of course to major(s). Please indicate how this course fits in the major.

PHIL 320 is already required as a gateway course for both Philosophy and Philosophy & Religion majors. We use it as our primary introduction to philosophical/academic writing.

Prerequisite: A prerequisite for the course is the completion of English 214 or its equivalent with a grade of “C-” or better. ___X___ Yes _______ No

Please attach a course syllabus to this form.

Please indicate how this course meets each of the GWAR criteria:
(Note: You may respond either in the blanks below or on a separate sheet attached to this form.)

Criterion #1 - Class Size: Courses satisfying the GWAR should have an enrollment of 20 students or fewer.

Although this course previously has closed at 40 students, beginning in Fall 2009 it will close at 20. Also beginning in Fall 2009, we will offer two sections every semester instead of one section every semester. We are prepared to offer three sections every semester if we have sufficient demand.

Criterion #2 - Number of Pages/Words: The overall assignments for the course will include a minimum of 15 pages, meaning the equivalent of 4000 words, of formal writing that demonstrates upper-division written English proficiency within the given discipline.

We require students to produce 18-20 pages of polished work, and many more pages of work in the process of writing and revising drafts. Drafts are finished in stages and workshopped in class, with each workshop emphasizing different facets of English proficiency and academic writing. The culmination of the course is a 10-12 page term paper.
Criterion #3 - How Writing Will Affect the Final Grade: At least 60% of the grade in GWAR courses must be based on written assignments and take-home essay exams (e.g., exams designed to allow for revision), which are evaluated for both content and quality of writing.

80% of the final grade is based on writing.

Criterion #4 - Revision of Assignments: GWAR courses must include substantive revision of major, graded, written assignments in response to feedback.

After rough drafts are completed, students bring their drafts to class for a workshop designed to help them with revisions, which are required. Feedback on all papers focuses on writing and is extensive. The instructor offers point-by-point feedback in the form of clear, enumerated recommendations for revisions and future papers. The instructor will keep this feedback on file, so as to determine whether students have taken it into account.

Criterion #5 - Types of Assignments: GWAR courses should include a variety of writing assignments that are distributed throughout the semester, rather than concentrated at the end.

Graded written assignments begin with a three-page paper in the third week of class and continue throughout the semester. A minimum of eight pages of finalized, polished work is required before the students begin their final paper.

Criterion #6 - In-class Attention to Writing: GWAR course syllabi should reflect significant class time devoted to instruction in writing conventions within the given discipline.

A quick examination of the attached syllabus shows that the course is organized around different elements of writing and that several lectures are devoted exclusively to writing. Units include “basic features of philosophical writing,” “reconstructing arguments,” “setting up a problem,” and “warrants and valid arguments.” The course also includes numerous writing workshops, in which drafts of a student’s work is discussed by the instructor and a group of peers, who attend to specific topics in philosophical writing. These include choosing a thesis, establishing a status quo position, destabilizing the status quo position, framing objections and responses, writing introductions and conclusions, and using examples and analogies to clarify difficult concepts, among others.

Criterion #7, Number of Units: GWAR courses should be at least 3 units.

PHIL 320 is a 3-unit course.

Department/Program Chair/Directors

__________________________________________________________  __________________________
Print Name                                                                 Signature