**Cover Sheet for Connecting Courses to Programs**

**Com 415: International Communication**

***Background & Rationale***

This course is an elective course for all Communication Studies and Public Health majors and is currently taught by a full-time senior faculty member who created the course. I am requesting a modification to the course activity code for primary activity to be adjusted from a Lecture (LEC) to a Seminar (SEM).

The rationale for this request is threefold:

Descriptive and Historical Accuracy. First, COM 415 currently entails intensive analysis and writing that requires individualized attention from the instructor, who provides specific and detailed feedback every class and every week to each student team and helps students learn to use a variety of field-specific scholarly databases as well as aggregate data demographic sources, to construct systematic samples, to manage data correctly, to utilize statistical programs for analysis, and to accurately report and appropriately disseminate research findings. I have written an essay about this writing and research-intensive experience in Pollock, J.C. (2008, January). The “communication commando” model creates a culture of research commitment. *Communication Teacher, 22* (1), 1-5. COM 415 has been functioning not as a “lecture/discussion” but rather as a “seminar” from its inception over 15 years ago when I first started the course, modeling it as an “international” version of COM 390: Research Methods.

Equity. Second, as the COM 415 international communication course currently stands, I ask students to form teams to increase their capacity to sample a wide range of newspapers and gather national-level demographic data from multiple sources, as well as share data analysis, data presentation, and writing multiple paper (and reference) drafts, a team-building and division of labor model useful in producing professional-level papers season after season, year after year (well over 100 papers presented at state, regional, national, or international scholarly conferences). At the same time, I am realistically compelled to focus most of my attention on too few of the student teams, those most motivated and eager to learn. As a result, I am unable to devote the time I would like to the intensive encouragement of students who require more help. I am eager to transform the course into one that inspires not only the best students, but also the students who need more assistance. The best way to accomplish that greater equity in attention to “all” students is to credential the COM 415 course as an official “seminar”.

Parity. Recognizing that I had taught the COM 390 Communication Research Methods as, in practice, an intensive “writing seminar and laboratory” for almost 25 years, last spring (20116) the A&C Curriculum Committee agreed that COM 390 be designated an official “seminar”. The dean at that time vetoed the proposal and indeed all of my seminar proposals, citing administrative reasons. He did not challenge the obvious, empirical contention that the COM 390 Communication Research Methods course indeed “functions” as a true intensive writing seminar. I understand that COM 390 has now been re-approved as a “seminar”. Using the same reasoning it had for the COM 390 proposal, the A& C Curriculum Committee also agreed in spring 2016 that COM 415 International Communication, fashioned as an international version of COM 390, also be granted “seminar” status. I ask that the Committee again “re-approve” the obvious “seminar” functioning of COM 415 as it did last spring, 2016, and as it has done recently, once again, with COM 390: Communication Research Methods. I think it only fair that a course that has functioned since its inception over 15 years ago as a true “seminar and writing laboratory” be awarded that status. Students completing writing projects in both COM 390 and COM 415 have presented papers at the most prestigious state, national, and international professional conferences in the communication studies field, and many have gone on to the most competitive graduate and professional schools in the nation, so much so that the words “pipeline” have been used to describe our department’s relations with leading graduate schools in public affairs (the Maxwell School at Syracuse), health communication (Annenberg School at UPenn), and Johns Hopkins (public health). A large part of the impetus for students to apply to graduate/professional schools of that stature is their experiences presenting refereed papers at leading professional conferences, papers fashioned in COM 390 and COM 415 courses. Both courses are clearly writing intensive seminars.

1. **Learning Goals**

This Com 415 course directly addresses three of the department’s learning goals:

1. *Disciplinary Foundations*

COM 415 engages students to become cognizant and critical of the assumptions and organizing principals that govern research methods in our discipline and others (e.g., development of research questions and hypotheses and utilization of various research methods that lend themselves to answering and exploring those questions and hypotheses).

1. *Critical Thinking and Ethics*

COM 415 engages students to consider both the possibilities and limitations of various research methods, as well as to consider the ethical considerations surrounding the execution of such methods and the responsibilities of reporting findings in an ethical manner.

1. *Communication Research and Analysis*

COM 415 equips students with the skills to implement effective strategies and methods for data collection from national and international databases for scholarly articles/chapters, aggregate data, and media coverage of critical issues. The course will help students acquire a working knowledge of data analysis procedures (e.g., statistical software) and enable them to critically evaluate research findings.

On a program level, the skills students learn in COM 415 will be vital to their success in a planned research capstone sequence in the Public/Mass and Interpersonal/Organizational concentrations.

1. **Student Assessment**

If modified into a Seminar format, the feedback students receive in this course will assist in their learning about core methods, analysis, and reporting within our discipline. This type of project-specific feedback will enable them to become, at minimum, critical consumers of research findings and reporting in academic, mass media, and personal domains. COM 415 will utilize projects on issues selected by students themselves to practice and apply research methods. These course assessments lend themselves to our Program’s learning goals and assessments related to the following: (1) using relevant theoretical frameworks to construct a coherent literature review, (2) developing hypotheses derived from a widely-recognized communication theory; (3) constructing samples and collecting data using mostly quantitative techniques to analyze data, (4) writing several drafts of papers/reports and devising multi-media presentations that meet high scholarly and/or professional standards, and (5) crafting and effectively delivering a prepared speech or project presentation.

1. **Learning Activities**

COM 415 is a foundational and integral part of students’ international learning experiences within the Department of Communication Studies because, overall, it prepares them for both academic and professional careers within our discipline. In curricular and pedagogical terms, the skills learned in this course provide a foundation for excellent performance in other upper division courses emphasizing: (1) writing extensive, accurate, and well-assimilated literature reviews for term papers; (2) critically assessing extant research in the field for analysis and integration into their research or theoretical papers; (3) equipping students with the basic skillset to collect and analyze data for future projects; and 4) enabling students to practice multi-media presentation and oral presentation skills useful throughout the life course. Another important role of this course is to prepare students with a foundation for embarking on their capstone project, a project not yet formally established within the I/O and Public/Mass concentrations.