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MEMORANDUM

To: GEC

From: Heidi Breuer and Rebecca Lush, Literature and Writing Studies

Date: October 7, 2015

Hi Yvonne,

We're so happy to hear that the committee finds our proposal compelling! We also appreciate the committee’s concern for student workload. We hope the following responses address the committee’s concerns.

Our course is envisioned a little differently than many study abroad courses, in which students participate in traditional classroom learning while abroad. Instead, we’re focusing on experiential learning while on-site and conducting the more traditional aspects of the course here on campus in both face-to-face and digital classroom environments, before and after the abroad portion.

When developing the reading and viewing requirements, we were sensitive to making sure that even study abroad and summer classes meet the minimum workload and rigor requirement for upper division work within our department. The reading and viewing requirements for LTWR 302 are therefore typical of reading and viewing loads for upper division LTWR 3-unit courses.

The reading quiz before leaving for the study abroad portion is meant to increase the quality and learning experience for all students when visiting the assorted locations on our itinerary. While the pre-trip quiz as described is a small selection of the required texts for the course overall, we understand why the committee feels that this could potentially present a challenge for some students. Missing or failing the pre-trip quiz would not preclude a student from completing the study abroad portion of the course; it could and likely would, however, negatively impact a student's overall participation grade.

We decided to require a portion of the viewing/reading to be completed in advance of the trip so that students will have the necessary context and exposure to the texts to make the site visits useful and effective. One of the assignments is a location analysis that asks students to make connections between the location and the text, which is best accomplished if they have read or viewed the text in advance.

All viewing assignments will be made available using the Cougar Courses page—the students will not be required to buy materials (dvds, etc.). This platform should enable students to more easily complete their viewing as it gives them flexibility about when and where to watch the material. In addition, as students must make a final decision about the trip by March, we can make the viewing available to them on Cougar Courses at that time, so students can get a head-start on the course reading/viewing if they like.

In addition, we have arranged for their hotel accommodations to have Wi-fi so that students can continue viewings from the Cougar Courses page while abroad if they would like. We anticipate that most students will finish the reading and viewing requirements for the course once we return from being abroad.

The syllabus as currently drafted asks students to view the following before the reading quiz: **Viewing Quiz** on *Game of Thrones*Season 1, *Sherlock “*A Study in Pink,” *Goldfinger*, *The Beatles: A Hard Day’s Night*, *Shakespeare in Love*, *King Arthur*, and *Doctor Who* episodes from Season 1 & 2.

We are amenable to modifying the viewing quiz to cover the text selection below instead (which removes about 8 hours of viewing from the initial requirement for the quiz). Students would still need to complete this viewing upon returning from the study abroad portion of the class in order to meet the workload necessary for 3 units of study in LTWR.

New requirements: **Viewing Quiz** on *Game of Thrones*Season 1 episodes 1-4, *Sherlock*"A Study in Pink," *Goldfinger,*and *Doctor Who*Season 1 “Rose,” “The Christmas Invasion” (special), Season 2 “The Shakespeare Code,” and Season 3 “Blink."

In the interest of making the quiz and viewing requirement more clear, we are also amenable to revising the section of the syllabus that currently reads as follows: "You should bring the assigned reading with you to read on the plane. Failure to complete required viewing before the trip will mean you get less out of the study abroad learning experience and it will negatively affect your participation grade."

In light of GEC's questions would be happy to change this to the following: “We recommend you bring the assigned reading with you to read on the plane. The viewing required for the pre-trip quiz ensures that you have a broad working knowledge of key texts from the course materials. You must finish watching and reading all required materials after returning from abroad.  Failure to complete the required viewing specified for the pre-trip viewing quiz will mean you get less out of the study abroad learning experience and may lead to a low quiz grade that could negatively affect your participation grade.”

Finally, we believe that the sentence that’s leading to the confusion about whether viewings are “optional” is the following one: “\*please note that we actually recommend you complete all assigned viewing before the trip if possible.”

We’re happy to amend that to the following to reduce confusion: “\*Please note that while the Viewing quiz only includes a portion of the course viewing requirements, we strongly recommend that students complete all assigned viewing before the trip, if possible.”

We hope these answers and modifications will help address the committee’s concerns. Please let us know if the committee has further queries, and we'll happily answer them.

Best,

Rebecca and Heidi