Departmental eLearning Policy

Definitions
This policy follows the University eLearning Policy regarding definitions and criteria to distinguish traditional face-to-face, hybrid, and online courses. This policy also applies to relevant portions of televised courses offered though the Department when a televised course is paired simultaneously with another section of the same course in online format.

I/ General
1. The department charges the Curriculum Committee with responsibility for ensuring compliance with this policy, conducting course authorizations and re-authorizations, revising this policy as needed, and working with other committees as needed to assure compliance.

2. The department charges the curriculum committee to organize and support an annual best practices meeting of the curriculum committee and all faculty teaching online courses. These workshops will be open to all department faculty. Current online instructors would be required to demonstrate their course, on that day get critical feedback, and commit to making various suggested changes.

II/ Best Practices for Course Design
The Philosophy department recommends the adoption of best practices for course design and implementation, including:

1. **Online Course Quality** All fully online courses offered though the Philosophy Department should be the best quality understood in terms of design for student learning, engagement, and success. To this end, the following resources are available to instructors to use in developing or revising their online courses or online course components for hybrid courses:
   a. Quality Matters [https://www.qualitymatters.org/](https://www.qualitymatters.org/)
   b. Rubric for Assessing Course Quality (requires creating an individual account)
   d. Quality Matters Self Review for courses (requires creating an individual account).
   f. Department Checklist – required submission for course approval (see attached or link here).

2. **Student and peer communications** should be prompt and complete. According to best practices, prompt communications with students in online courses supports their engagement with the material. All instructors teaching online and hybrid courses will be required to
   i. Indicate clearly on their syllabi when they will or will not be available for student advisement and consultation, and the best medium for that communication.
ii. Respond to inquiries from students and peers within the day for working days, and by the earliest resumption of the working day (expected M-F, 9:00am-5:00pm).

3. **Student Feedback** should be offered as completely as possible, at least consistent with a face-to-face version of the course. According to best practices, students engage and succeed in higher numbers when they have regular and helpful feedback from instructors.

4. **Early, Frequent and Constant student assessment** is increasingly the norm in this department. This allows students to assess their likelihood for success in the course. Assessments should be structured and should have definite deadlines/due dates, such that students will be able to determine their progress toward completion and success in the course.

5. **Instructor Virtual Presence** All courses must contain regularly updated instructor created content, e.g.: screen casts or synchronous engagement, which would fulfill the function normally satisfied by activities performed in a physical classroom.

6. **Universal Design for Learning** All course material (syllabi, instructions, assignments, course content, etc) should be prepared for universal accessibility. In the course of developing an online or hybrid course, the instructor should be attentive to the likelihood that students with various disabilities (not limited to learning disabilities) will be interested in the course. Designing the course, from the beginning to end, to be universally accessible will benefit everyone. We recommend visiting these sites:
   b. Access Project from Colorado State University here [http://accessproject.colostate.edu/udl/](http://accessproject.colostate.edu/udl/)
   c. CSUS IRT Captioning services [http://www.csus.edu/irt/fsrc/captioning.html](http://www.csus.edu/irt/fsrc/captioning.html)

7. **FERPA Compliance** All course material must comply fully with FERPA requirements, and assure privacy for all students in the course.
   a. If video recordings of in-class activities are used in a different section of the course, in a later iteration of the course, or for a different course, then faculty must obtain permission from the students in the recorded class to use their participation in another course. Dissenting students must not be recorded.
   b. If students can be identified in the video recording, then it cannot be used beyond the original course use without express written consent of the students. Dissenting students must be removed or made unrecognizable in the recording.
   c. The possibility of in-class recordings, as well as the option not to be recorded without academic penalty, must be explicitly stated on the course syllabus.
   d. **The department strongly recommends not using in-class recordings beyond the duration, extent, and purpose of the original course section.**

### III / Course Approval Process
The Department requires all courses to be reviewed according to the terms of this policy. Any course developed into a hybrid, online, or televised mode must be approved prior to being offered in any semester, including those offered during winter or summer intersession. The Department’s Curriculum Committee will conduct the course approval and re-authorization process.
1. Submission for Approval All eLearning courses offered by the department must be approved by the Department’s Curriculum Committee prior to being offered in the course schedule for the first time. This is a two step approval process. The first step informs the Department Chair and Curriculum Committee that a course is being proposed for eLearning format. The second step requires courses to be substantially developed prior to approval.

a. Step One: The committee cannot approve the idea or proposal without substantial progress already having been made. Before investing the time and effort, it is advisable to seek the Department Chair and Curriculum Committee’s advice regarding the suitability of the proposed course for development into an eLearning format.
   i. Identify the course to be developed.
   ii. Provide an outline of the online course, in as much detail as possible.
   iii. A proposed timeline for implementing the course.

b. Step Two: Approval requires the submission of the following:
   i. A brief statement of how this course will:
      1. Achieve student success by reference to the specific learning outcomes relevant to the course (Departmental, GE/GR).
      2. Contribute to the goals of the department regarding program and GE commitments.
   ii. Complete syllabus which includes:
      1. Proposed student assessment plan
      2. Weekly course schedule.
   iii. Provision for the committee to access online course content (instructor access to Blackboard page, or links to other locations where the course content resides), which includes:
      1. A representative sample of the new course content.
      2. Evidence that students are required to “check-in” with the course frequently and regularly through the semester.
      3. Samples of student assessment tools representing the majority of the work on which students’ grades will be based.
      4. Evidence of frequent, constant and early assessment: At least weekly assessment in the first four weeks of semester, with rapid relevant feedback to students. It should establish instructor expectations for the course and allow the student to determine whether or not she/he is prepared for the course or willing to commit to the expected workload.
      5. Evidence of regular and obvious instructor accessibility to students, including mode and frequency of advising and communication with students in the course.
      6. Evidence of regular and constant instructor virtual presence in the course.
      7. Evidence of Universal Design for Learning in all course material and content.
c. **Timeline:** Proposals for final authorization (step two) must be submitted at least two months prior to the enrolment start date for the semester in which the course is to be offered. Submission should be made by
   i. the first week of February for inclusion in the fall semester, or
   ii. the first week of September for inclusion in the spring semester.

2. **Peer Evaluation and Regular Review** All eLearning courses, regardless of the mode of instruction (hybrid, online, televised, etc), will be included in the regular departmental peer and student evaluation process.
   a. All evaluations will be included in the instructor’s WPAF, and will become part of the regular basis for evaluation of satisfactory performance.
   b. Faculty who received less than “Good” in their peer evaluations and less than 4.0 in their student evaluation may lose the opportunity to teach the online course in subsequent semesters. This determination will be made by the Department Chair, in consultation with the Curriculum Committee Chair, and the Instructor.

3. **Re-Authorization Process** It is the responsibility of the instructional faculty to ensure their eLearning courses remain current with best practices, developing technologies, and departmental curricular and pedagogical expectations. To this end, the department requires all eLearning courses to be re-authorized *every three years*. This process is a modified version of the initial approval process.
   a. Submission of current syllabus (as above).
   b. Provision for the committee to access online course content (as above).
   c. All peer visitation reports for the course.
   d. All student evaluation summaries for the course.
   e. Each semester’s grade distribution summaries for the course.
   f. **Timeline:** At least two months prior to the enrolment start date for the semester in which the revised/continuing course is to be offered. Submission should be done by
      i. the first week of February for the fall semester, or
      ii. the first week of September for the spring semester.

4. **Eligibility** The following requirements apply:
   a. **Faculty** Any instructional faculty wishing to develop and teaching online courses must meet the following criteria
      i. Must have a full-time teaching appointment; if temporary faculty (lectures), then must be in a three-year contract at full-time appointment.
      ii. Must have taught the course in a traditional format (face-to-face or hybrid) in question for at least two semesters, have received at least two peer evaluations of at least Good for this course, and student evaluations of at least 4.0 in this course for at least two or the most recent times it has been taught.
      iii. If the proposed course is originally an online course (not redesigned from an existing traditional or hybrid course), then the instructor must meet these requirements in each course taught in the preceding two semesters.
   b. **Courses**
i. All courses proposed for development or redesign into online format must be approved for inclusion in the University Catalog according to the usual process.

ii. Courses must be able to be competently taught at a higher enrolment cap than the traditional in-class iteration of the course (typically 20% higher), unless it is a Writing Intensive course or otherwise has restricted enrolment caps.

iii. Generally, seminar (190, 192) courses will not be offered in online format.

iv. Where the department indicates a preference for certain courses to be developed into online format, then those courses will receive priority in the approval process.

v. Courses offered in the summer or winter inter-sessions may be treated as opportunities to experiment with online design or re-design. However, the same process for approval must be followed as outlined below.

IV/ Faculty eLearning Workload

The opportunity to conduct courses in an eLearning format may be appealing to many instructors for a variety of reasons. It also bears considerable risk for increasing instructional faculty workloads unless some clear expectations are articulated.

1. **Proportion of instructional load** devoted to eLearning formats may vary.
   
   c. For Hybrid courses, there is no limitation on the proportion of a faculty member’s instructional workload which may be conducted in hybrid format.
   
   d. For fully online courses, there is a cap of no more than 75% (3 course equivalents, 9 WTU) of an instructor’s instructional workload. At no time in the regular academic year will any faculty member have more than 75% of their instructional workload consist of fully online courses.
   
   e. Exceptions which require no additional authorization are limited to summer and winter intersession, where 100% of instructional workload may be conducted fully online.
   
   f. Exceptions requiring additional authorization are treated on a case-by-case basis and will require substantial justification, as well as approval by Department Chair and College Dean.

2. **Maintain Departmental Duties** All tenure-track faculty members are expected to continue to perform their departmental and university functions, participate in regular departmental business, and maintain an on-campus office with regular office hours for student advising and to contribute to departmental collegiality, regardless of the proportion of their teaching load is conducted in an eLearning mode.

3. **Maintain office hours** of at least one hour per course per week. Generally, this will entail 3-4 hours availability for teaching-related student consultation and advisement. These office hours should include a combination of virtual and actual (face-to-face) formats in proportion to the distribution of the online/traditional teaching modes. Instructors should not assume that students in their online courses are able to come to campus. Instructors should also not assume that they can meet all their professional student consultation and advising responsibilities virtually.