

University Studies
North Carolina A&T State University

Pilot Course Offerings Fall 2004
Workshop for Instructors Sep 7 2004

Conducted by Scott Simkins

Present:

Barnes, Claude (Political Science)
Bell, Shirley (English)
Brown, Milicent (History)
Clarke, Thomas (Mathematics)
Cousins-Cooper, Kathy (Mathematics)
Davis, Robert (Sociology)
Depolo, Jason (English)
Dewberry, Nita (Foreign Languages)
Fersner, Peggy (Civil Engineering)
Gayle, Godfrey (Bioenvironmental Engineering)
Hornsby, Karen (Philosophy)
Kemei, Conchita Ndege (History)
Sarin, Sanjiv (Engineering)
Simkins, Scott (Economics)
Turman, Byron (English)
Uzochukwu, Godfrey (Natural Resources)

Comments:

In response to the question: *How is your course different?*

- Laboratory exercises from different disciplines are required
- Increased emphasis on critical thinking. Students have to write position papers and speak at public forums.
- Multi-discipline data sets will be used in projects
- Service learning introduced
- Course is now totally online
- Students are required to write essays on demonstrate interdisciplinary connections
- Portfolios of weekly life-cycle events include reports on current issues. Papers on how a current news item relates to major and/or society.
- Arguments for/against topics, for example, global warming
- Students conduct research in library
- Political science is taught as political economy
- Use of Blackboard to conduct weekly discussions of current topics
- Encouraged civic engagement in a pre-approved activity
- Web assign to conduct instant surveys of students
- Introduced “critical language awareness” – how language operates in and through individuals.

- Conventions of academic writing introduced – how Biologists write differently from Historians
- Students asked to relate the course to their majors
- Students visit museums
- Invited speakers from native-American culture
- Dramatic presentation by students on world figures (Cleopatra, Gandhi, etc)
- Students are “doing” more
- Communication skills are integrated in the course
- Students are engaged with the outside world
- Students are making connections with other disciplines

Comments:

In response to the question: *What have you learned?*

- Need better coordination with library and bookstore
- The term “pilot” may scare some students
- Need more workshop materials to explain concepts
- The work is more than what I anticipated. Need a TA
- Need for much more critical reflection on the part of the instructor
- Students should have flexibility in changing course syllabus, even mid-way through the semester
- We can be creative in pedagogical examples. For example, students can tutor Spanish speaking students to learn the language
- Students can compile well but they may not be synthesizing well. Information is not equal to knowledge

Recorded by
Sanjiv Sarin