

Proposal:

A Hybrid Edition of an Existing Humanities Course

Course: H-Humanities 3112

Sections: Those offered by proponent

Submitted by Professor Serena Anderlini-D'Onofrio, PhD

Before the President of the Curriculum Committee of the Department of Humanities for processing
by the said Committee

Revised according to the recommendations of said Curriculum Committee released in February 2016

In view of being presented for departmental approval in accordance with the departmental direction

Semester: Fall 2016 – Second of 2016-17 Academic Year

Justification

A. The proposal supports student centered learning and university strategic growth

1. Student Centered Learning

- I. The proposal intends to open up the hybrid edition of one of the modular courses in the department of Humanities at UPRM. The course, Humanities 3112, is part of a two-semester sequence often taken by students of various disciplines as a socio-humanistic elective course. Its internal revision, in 2005, includes the option of a thematic approach to emphasize chronology and offer conceptual continuity.
- II. I have implemented this option, which has resulted in good student response to the quality of content and administration of the course. I am persuaded that the hybrid edition will considerably advance learning and improve the quality of the educational experience students have in the course.
- III. Sources show that faculty who have taught hybrid courses generally emphasize two benefits: 1) “the technology, when used well, permits new opportunities for student learning and can improve learning outcomes; and, 2) faculty are less consumed by preparing and reviewing lecture materials and have increased time for interaction with their students.”¹
- IV. In relation to my sections of Humanities 3112 course, the following resources are available toward the said goals:
 - 1) The series of nine one-hour videos covering the historical content of the course from 1500 to the present that I’ve recently produced under the UPRM A & S aegis.² These videos are optimized versions of the lectures of the course I’ve given in past presential editions of the course.
 - 2) My practice in successfully learning open-source LMSs, including Canvas and others of the open-source kind.
 - 3) My practice in successfully using the 25 percent online time allowed for presential courses to build content and test materials, and to improve students’ experience in the course.

- VI. I'm persuaded that a number of students would feel empowered by the opportunity of enrolling in a hybrid edition of Humanities 3112. Reasons include:
- 1) It makes attendance more agile and flexible
 - 2) It rewards interested students' digital skills and their investment in digital technologies
 - 3) It offers more opportunities for participatory and interdependent learning
 - 4) It alleviates some of the external costs students face, including transportation and self care
 - 5) It makes the experience of learning more involving, exciting, and profound.

2. Strategic Growth

- I. The development of hybrid editions of basic courses in a department's curriculum resonates with a number of aspects in the overarching possibilities for strategic growth, transformation, and evolution of the University of Puerto Rico, and the Mayaguez campus in particular.
- II. The 2006 UPRM Senate Certification known as 06-43 established the value of hybrid and online teaching. Justifications include "the innovation of teaching and learning processes designed to keep an avant-garde position in the use of technology and to contribute to the excellence of education" (06-43, II.3).
- III. Sources show that the area of distance learning is one of the fastest evolving areas in higher education in our days.³ The portal EdX hosts free online courses, also known as MOOC, from Harvard, Princeton, UC Berkeley, La Sorbonne, and other world-class universities.⁴ Universities that have established their reputation from conventional teaching can amplify its scope by evolving distance courses that offer the world a sample of their curricula.
- IV. It appears that, in 2016, the potential of digital technologies in education has been widely recognized.
- V. The proposal under evaluation intends to actualize a potential that has been widely recognized. Therefore, the proposal falls within the scope of the 2006 Senate recommendations.
- VI. UPRM has also designed an overarching Strategic Plan.⁵ This proposal aligns with at least seven of its specific objectives. A list of these objectives and the proposal's contribution to their achievement is enclosed.⁶enclosed.⁷ Overall, the actualization of the proposal sustains the Strategic Plan in supporting growth in a significant area of academic endeavor.
- VII. The project also aligns with the recommendations of the recent Program for Change for the University of Puerto Rico designed by AGB, which recommends it as a strategy to accelerate growth.⁸
- VIII. The project also aligns with point III.3 of the 06-43 Senate Certification. The point stipulates that for any course offered, the option of presential and hybrid sections be available to students. Humanities 3112 is offered presentially by numerous colleagues each semester.
- IX. The above-mentioned video series (see point A.1.IV.1) was produced based on UPRM credit hours, which offsets the stipulation of point V.1, the 06-43 Senate Certification. Therefore, the proposal can be actualized without any extra costs to the college or department.
- X. As it has become more professionalized, the development of hybrid editions of existing courses has evolved into area of professional growth where the practice of academic freedom can support wider goals of strategic growth.

Evaluation Plan

The proposal avails itself of an articulate and substantial self-evaluation plan

- I. Hybrid courses offer many opportunities for ongoing evaluation and self-evaluation. Elements that support the measurement of learning outcomes include:
 1. Use of statistical data offered by LMS to assess learning outcomes for each exam⁹
 2. Use of survey tools offered by LMS to assess achievement of course objectives
 3. Use of current online COE to assess student response in COE designated areas
 4. Input by colleagues and supervisors invited into the LMS course as observers
- II. Hybrid courses also encourage participants' honesty and ethical behavior. Elements that sustain this behavior include:
 1. Facilitating identity verification via the use an identification code feature
 2. Promoting the creation of large and diverse questions banks
 3. Enabling the administration of numerous, ongoing, diverse, and self- assessing examinations.
- III. The Senate Certification 06-43 stipulates that departments are equally responsible for watching over the quality of presential, hybrid, and online courses (06-43, II.2). The evaluation plan for this project integrates these elements into a coherent and invites collegial support.

Comparative Narrative and Other Enclosures

As the recommendation in the Protocol issued by the department's Curriculum Committee, I attach the following enclosures:

1. Narrative that compares the presential and the projected hybrid editions of Humanities 3112
2. Template syllabus of the current course Humanities 3112 I teach
3. Template syllabus of the projected H-Humanities 3112 I would like to teach.
4. Sample of digital content developed for the course, in the form of a link to the playlist where the nine one-hour videos for the online lectures are stored.¹⁰

Respectfully submitted, March 28, 2016



Dr. Serena Anderlini-D'Onofrio

¹ UCSC Office of Academic Affairs on Online Education. <http://academicaffairs.ucsc.edu/online-education/faqs.html>, retrieved March 25, 2016

² Playlist H-Huma 3112 – Part II. <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLSR-dwq0vlhyHMO2A-W1EVSMuAy8wyLGe>, retrieved on March 25, 2016

³ Jose Antonio Bowen. *Teaching Naked*. San Francisco: Wiley, 2012 (1-51 and passim).

⁴ EdX: <https://www.edx.org/> retrieved March 25, 2016

⁵ *Plan Estrategico, 2012-22*. <http://oiip.uprm.edu/docs/Plan%20Estrat%E9gico/Plan%20Estrat%E9gico%202012-2022-RUM.pdf>, retrieved March 25, 2016

⁶ Impacts can be described as follows:

Objective # 1—The LMS statistics offer valuable tools to implement an institutional culture of planning and self-evaluation.

Objective # 2—The rapid growth of distance education and the way this new frontier is being embraced by prestigious and well established universities around the world suggests that being part of this evolution helps to keep our institution at the cutting edge of higher education in Puerto Rico.

Objective # 3—Distance education is also the fastest growing market in higher education. This suggests that even a tiny step in the direction of this burgeoning market can help to envision ways to increase and diversify the sources of income for the institution. This consideration is especially important at this time of crisis.

Objective # 4—The agility with which an LMS can organize students, process test data, and provide evaluation information has the potential to significantly help to implement agile and efficient administrative processes.

Objective # 5—The creation and implementation of hybrid editions of existing courses requires a significant amount of creative research. In this case, this includes the online history videos, and the large question banks related to each Lecture. Once the bulk of this is in place, the existence of hybrid courses can release time for other research projects.

Objective # 6—The availability of free online teaching materials produced by the University of Puerto Rico impacts the population that accesses and learns from these materials while it shines a favorable light on the institution that produces, thus resulting in a positive impact on Puerto Rican society.

Objective # 7—The experience of distance learning provides access to a sense of belonging and institutional pride to the range of students who appreciate distance learning.

⁸ Building a Sustainable University System, p 25-26.

http://juntaysenado.uprc.edu/pluginfile.php/325/mod_resource/content/4/Association%20of%20Governing%20Boards%20of%20Universities%20and%20Colleges.pdf, retrieved March 25, 2016

⁹ For each course, group evaluation statistical tools include average score, highest score, lowest score, standard deviation, average time. In addition, a discrimination index is available for each question.

¹⁰ H-Huma 3112 - <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLSR-dwq0vIhyHMO2A-W1EVSMuAy8wyLGe>, retrieved on March 25, 2016