

Writing Plan Cover Page

Linguistics Program

WEC Unit Name

Languages, Linguistics, and Comparative Literature

Department

Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters

College

Michael Hamilton

Assistant Professor of Linguistics

WEC Faculty Liaison (Print Name)

Title

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Email

Phone**Writing Plan Ratified by Faculty**

Date:

If

Vote:

yes

total

Process by which Writing Plan was ratified within unit (vote, consensus, other- please explain):

Unit Profile: Linguistics Program (in Department of Languages Linguistics and Comparative Literature)

Number of Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty:

2	Professors
3	Associate Professors
1	Assistant Professors
1	Instructors
6	Total

Major(s) Please list each major your Unit offers:	Total # students enrolled in major of 2019-2020	Total # students graduating with major AY 2019-2020
Linguistics Program	106	24 (approx.)

WEC Implementation Process	Date	Participated	# invited
Meeting 1	10/14/2019	5	6
Meeting 2	11/4/2019	4	6
Meeting 3	2/3/2020	4	6
Meeting 4	4/20/2020	5	6

Signature Page

Electronic signatures may be submitted in lieu of this page. If this page is submitted as a hard copy, please include a print out of the electronic signature chain here.

WEC Faculty Liaison

Michael Hamilton	Assistant Professor of Linguistics
WEC Faculty Liaison (print name)	Title
	5/29/2020
Signature	Date

Department Head/Chair

Marcella Munson	Chair of the Department of Languages, Linguistics, and Comparative Literature and Associate Professor of French and Comparative Literature
Print Name	Title
	
Signature	Date

College Dean

Michael J. Horswell	Dean of the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters and Professor of Spanish & Latin American Literature
Print Name	Title
Signature	Date

WRITING PLAN NARRATIVE

The field of linguistics is predominantly article-based, thus, the linguistics faculty has set our goal for our graduating seniors to be able to write a full research paper. This involves every aspect of the write up from the background framing of the paper, the methodology, the application (of analysis and theory to data), and formatting of the paper. As such, we are placing an emphasis on 7 writing abilities that are of fundamental importance to the writing of a paper. These 7 writing abilities are: (i) summarizing and (ii) hypothesizing in the context of previous research and theoretical frameworks (i.e., the framing of the paper); (iii) design of the paper (i.e., the methodology); (iv) analyzing and (v) integrating the central results, e.g., data and generalizations, with the framing of the paper (i.e., application of the background framework); as well as the (vi) organization and (vii) register, e.g., scientific, concise writing, and style, of the paper (i.e., overall formatting).

Although a portion of our graduating seniors have exemplary writing abilities, we are taking the WEC initiative as an opportunity to improve overall writing level amongst all of our undergraduate students. Given the goal of writing a research paper by graduation, we have decided to introduce a writing assignment in which students engage with an important research paper in an area of linguistics at the beginning of their familiarity with the field. We have decided to introduce this assignment in our Introduction to Linguistics class (LIN 3010), because it is (i) the first class that students engage with linguistic theory, (ii) a required course in our major (and minor), and (iii) a prerequisite for 4000-level classes. The goal of this assignment is to provide a tangible example of a research paper that they can model in their own writing. As such, students will be required to identify central aspects of the paper, such as the theoretical background, research question, hypothesis/proposal, methodology, important data points, analysis, and further research questions. Students will be required to summarize portions of the paper and follow formatting norms. This assignment will play a central role in our assessment process.

With the goal of understanding the effectiveness of our curriculum in aiding helping students reach the writing goals, we will begin immediately assessing a 4000-level final research paper for each graduating student at the end of the academic year. This will give us an initial idea about what the general writing level is of these students. We will also begin a corpus of the new LIN 3010 assignments, so that we can assess these along with the 4000-level paper for each graduating student in order to provide us with longitudinal data to see if our upper level courses are successful in developing students' writing abilities. This data will then allow us to revisit and revise the curriculum as necessary.

In order to achieve our goals we are requesting support for (i) a part-time Graduate Teaching Assistant (from the MA in Linguistics program) for four semesters (Fall 2020, Spring 2021, Fall 2021, and Spring 2022), (ii) accessing electronic resources for our students and faculty, and (iii) a yearly award for the best undergraduate linguistics research paper. The part-time GTA will be trained in the Writing Center (University Center for Excellence in Writing) and half of their assignment will involve assisting with undergraduate student writing. The other

half of their assignment will involve assisting with the new LIN 3010 assignment, WEC administrative support, and support for other courses. For electronic resources, we are interested in accessing a website with up-to-date information on the world's languages (Ethnologue; ethnologue.com). The yearly writing award will help to motivate students and complement a similar award for in lingua courses (i.e., French, Italian, and Spanish) in our Department.

Section 1: Discipline-specific Writing Characteristics

What characterizes academic and professional communication in this discipline?

The field of linguistics is predominantly article-based, thus, short and concise research papers are the typical means of written communication. Although the field of linguistics is broad in terms of the specific research methods employed, the resulting data, and analytical tools, the common thread is an adherence to a scientific style of writing. Concise writing is emphasized, as well as the understanding of technical terminology, some of which can be general to the field of linguistics, but most of which is specialized to the subfield of study. Argumentation is conducted with the support of data, which can vary from sound wave measurements, to acceptability of sentences by native speakers, to data gathered from questionnaires. Formatting writing given specific guidelines, such as the APA-style, is also very important. As such, we emphasize the ability to write a research paper as our primary goal for our graduating seniors.

Section 2: Desired Writing abilities

With which writing abilities should students in this unit's (department's) major graduate?

The linguistics faculty identified 7 writing abilities that we expect our majors to graduate with. This set of characteristics closely follow different stages of the scientific method and, in parallel, the different sections of an academic research paper in linguistics. Below is a list of these 7 writing abilities with a brief description.

1. **Summarize:** the ability to identify and explain relevant data, background literature, theoretical frameworks, and previous findings and their implications (e.g., a background section in a research paper)
2. **Hypothesize:** the ability to identify gaps in data and/or theory, ask appropriate questions, and anticipate feasible answers (e.g., the proposal, hypothesis, and justification for a research paper)
3. **Design:** the ability to select, critique and execute research design and methodology (e.g., methodology section of a research paper)
4. **Analyze:** the ability to understand and apply appropriate analytical tools, such as distinguishing and contrasting patterns/generalizations, examining statistics, and

extracting representative examples (e.g., the data, generalizations, and/or results section of a research paper)

5. **Integrate:** the ability to (i) determine connections between findings and the hypothesis, background literature, and theoretical framework, and (ii) assess implications and limitations as well as pose further research questions (e.g., discussion and conclusion sections of a research paper)
6. **Organize:** the ability to write in a coherence, cohesive, and concise fashion, which includes the logic, order, and clarity in argumentation
7. **Format:** the ability to utilize appropriate: (i) linguistic terminology, (ii) scientific register, (iii) APA-style, and (iv) presentation-specific formatting

Section 3: Integration of Writing into Undergraduate Curriculum

How is writing instruction currently positioned in this unit's undergraduate curriculum (or curricula)? What, if any, structural plans does this unit have for changing the way that writing and writing instruction are sequenced across its course offerings? With what rationales are changes proposed and what indicators signify their impact?

Currently, there is only one class with systematic writing instruction: FOL 3880 Research & Bibliographic Methods. In this core course, students are explicitly instructed in several aspects of writing a research paper, such as proper paper formatting, research methodology, data analysis standards, abstract preparation, and paper organization. Apart from this class, writing instruction varies by course and is largely based on instructor preferences. This is partly by design, since each class tends to target a specific subfield of linguistics each of which often have their own set of theories, terminology, methodology, data, and analysis. As such, each instructor navigates the introduction of a specific subfield based on a variety of different criteria, which often leads to a heterogeneous set of assessments and expectations across the curriculum. However, the one commonality is the expectation that at the end of each course, students are able to engage with primary research of each subfield. As such, understanding and being able to produce a piece of primary research is an important goal of our curriculum.

In order to achieve our goal, we have decided to introduce an assignment in our main core linguistics course at the 3000-level, Introduction to Linguistics (LIN 3010). We chose this course, because it is a required course which is a prerequisite for all other upper-level courses, thus, must be taken earlier in students' course plan. In this assignment, we will provide students with a set of fundamental, yet accessible, primary research articles across a variety of subfields in linguistics, and ask them to read, identify key components, and summarize the paper. The goal of this assignment is to provide a tangible example of a research paper that they can model in their own writing. As such, students will be required to identify central aspects of the paper, such as the theoretical background, research question, hypothesis/proposal, methodology, important data points, analysis, and further research

questions. Students will be required to summarize portions of the paper and follow formatting norms.

The first goal of this assignment is to introduce students to primary research articles at an early stage in their major in order to set expectations. This will be helpful in highlighting important aspects of a research paper, which we hope students will be able to readily identify and ultimately produce. The second goal is assessment, as we would like to gauge students' writing abilities at an early stage in order to compare with their writing upon graduation (see details in Section 4 Assessment below). Apart from these primary goals, we see this assignment as a means to attract more students into the linguistics major by showcasing interesting areas of research. This is because in addition to our majors, a significant portion of the enrollment of LIN 3010 is of students that are undeclared or have other majors. Finally, we hope that the increased familiarity of students with primary research papers will encourage our students to engage in their own research projects.

Section 4: Assessment of Student Writing

How does this unit currently communicate writing expectations (see section 1 &2) to undergraduate students? How satisfied is the unit faculty that students are adequately familiar with these expectations? How satisfied is the unit faculty that student writers are successfully meeting the identified expectations by the time they graduate? Why? If less than satisfied, what plans does the unit propose for closing the gap?

Currently, there is no general set of writing expectations for our undergraduate majors. Expectations are only provided within courses and communicated on an assignment by assignment basis in class via grading rubrics, instructor guidance and feedback. While students understand the course specific expectations, they may be missing a more general understanding of the writing conventions that are typical in our field as a whole. While the linguistics faculty is relatively satisfied with the writing level of students upon graduation, we feel that the WEC initiative can be helpful in improving the writing level of our students in general. With each cohort, we typically see three levels of students: (i) students that write a very proficient level (and typically move on to graduate studies), (ii) students that write at a satisfactory level (and move on to jobs in industry; both linguistics-related and unrelated), and (iii) students that have several issues with their writing (and move on to jobs in industry; both linguistics-related and unrelated). While we hope to improve the writing of all students, we are targeting the students that write as a satisfactory or lower level. We feel that with a clearer set of expectations and more direct instruction, we can achieve this.

Our plan is to begin a corpus of the new writing assignment in LIN 3010 (detailed above). Then for our graduating senior students, we will compare their LIN 3010 writing sample with a Final Paper from a 4000-level course completed in their last semester. Since LIN 3010 is a prerequisite for all upper-level linguistics courses, comparing a writing sample from this class with one from their last semester will give us longitudinal data to assess the development of

students writing within our core linguistics classes. Specifically, we are hoping that the increased familiarity of students with primary research articles (from LIN 3010 on) will provide a good model for students to base their writing on. This is particularly important since our writing expectations (as outlined in detail above) are such that we expect our graduating majors to be able to write a research paper.

Section 5: Summary of Implementation Plans and Requested Support

Based on above discussions, what does the unit plan to implement during the period covered by this plan? What forms of instructional support does this unit request to help implement proposed changes? What are the expected outcomes of named support? What kinds of assessment support does this unit request to help assess the efficacy of this Writing Plan? What are the expected outcomes of this support?

Beginning in Fall 2020, our plan is to introduce the writing assignment into LIN 3010, begin a corpus of these assignments for future assessment, and begin the assessment process of one 4000-level final paper for each graduating senior. Once introduced, the writing assessment will be a permanent part of the curriculum of LIN 3010, with the corpus building to continue as a component of our longitudinal assessment until revised. The assessment process will begin on only the most appropriate 4000-level course in the graduating seniors' final semester until the first cohort with the new LIN 3010 assessment reaches graduation (potentially in Spring 2022), and at this point we will begin the longitudinal comparison.

We are requesting the support of a part-time Graduate Teaching Assistant (an MA in Linguistics student) to assist with several aspects of our implementation plan. We would like our GTA to be trained in the Writing Center (the University Center of Excellence in Writing), in order to assist with writing specifically for our undergraduate students. Assisting our undergraduate students in the Writing Center will be half of this GTA's assignment, roughly 5 hours a week. The other half of the assignment, roughly 5 hours per week, will be assisting with (i) the LIN 3010 assignment, both assisting students with the assignment and assessing them with the instructor, (ii) the WEC initiative with a variety of administrative tasks, such as aiding in the creation and revision of assessment templates, as well as building and adding to the corpus of LIN 3010 assignments, and (iii) specific writing aspects in other courses, such as FOL 3880.

In addition to a GTA we are requesting funds for resources to aid the faculty and students in supporting undergraduate writing. We are interested in an electronic resource, specifically a yearly subscription to Ethnologue (ethnologue.com), a website with extensive data and up-to-date information about languages of the world. In many of our linguistics classes, we place a focus on a diverse variety of languages and give writing assignments to students in which they research less common, understudied, and often endangered languages. Having access to this website would be an essential resource for students and would undoubtedly aid in their writing. In addition, the faculty would be able to update their lecture

and assignment materials. At least 50% of our courses have writing assignments which the students would be able to make use of this resource.

Finally, we are requesting funds for a yearly award (\$200) for best undergraduate research paper in Linguistics. We would like to increase motivation amongst students when writing their Final Papers. We have seen the success of a similar yearly award given for best writing in lingua, i.e., in French, Italian, and Spanish, in our Department. We would like to encourage our students in the same manner.

Below is a breakdown by semester of our requested support.

Term	Activity	Budget
Fall 2020	Part-time GTA: half of assignment in Writing Center, half of assignment assisting with new LIN 3010 assignment, other Linguistics courses, and WEC administrative support	\$2,225 part-time GTA (15 weeks x 10 hours/week)
	Linguistics resources (Year 1)	\$1,600
	Semester total	\$3,825
Spring 2021	Part-time GTA: half of assignment in Writing Center, half of assignment assisting with new LIN 3010 assignment, other Linguistics courses, and WEC administrative support	\$2,225 part-time GTA (15 weeks x 10 hours/week)
	Award for best undergraduate Linguistics paper	\$200
	Assessment of a 4000-level final paper for graduating students	
	Semester total	\$2,425

Fall 2021	Part-time GTA: half of assignment in Writing Center, half of assignment assisting with new LIN 3010 assignment, other Linguistics courses, and WEC administrative support	\$2,225 part-time GTA (15 weeks x 10 hours/week)
	Linguistics resources (Year 2)	\$1,600
	Semester total	\$3,825
Spring 2021	Part-time GTA: half of assignment in Writing Center, half of assignment assisting with new LIN 3010 assignment, other Linguistics courses, and WEC administrative support	\$2,225 part-time GTA (15 weeks x 10 hours/week)
	Award for best undergraduate Linguistics paper	\$200
	Assessment of a 4000-level final paper for graduating students	
	Semester total	\$2,425
Total	Budget for Fall 2020-Spring 2022	\$12,500

Section 6: Process used to create this Writing Plan

How, and to what degree, were stakeholders in this unit (faculty members, instructors, affiliates, teaching assistants, undergraduates, others) engaged in providing, revising, and approving the content of this Writing Plan?

Since the linguistics program is a part of the LLCL Department, when beginning our separate WEC initiative, the original survey conducted in 2014 with stakeholder feedback about LLCL as a whole was discussed. However, apart from this, the Writing Plan here was devised with the participation of the linguistics faculty, under the facilitation of Jeffrey Galin and Julianne Zvolensky. There are 7 members of the linguistics faculty, and each member was present at multiple meetings, apart from Dr. Martha Mendoza (Professor of Spanish and Linguistics) who has been on sabbatical for the entire 2019-2020 academic year. The 6 members (1 instructor, 1 junior faculty, and 5 senior faculty members) that have been involved are: Dr. Prisca Augustyn (Professor of German and Linguistics), Dr. Geraldine Blattner (Associate Professor of French and Linguistics), Dr. Michael Hamilton (Assistant Professor of Linguistics; WEC liaison), Dr. Viktor Kharlamov (Associate Professor of Linguistics; Head of the Linguistics Program), Dr. Romain Rivaux (Instructor of French and Linguistics), and Dr. Justin White (Associate Professor of Spanish/Second Language Acquisition and Linguistics). We did not reach out to other LLCL faculty members, graduate teaching assistants (GTAs), or undergraduate students during this process. During this 2-year implementation plan, we hope to get feedback from GTAs, including our funded part-time GTA, as well as undergraduate students.