

November 2010

Board of Regents
University System of Georgia
270 Washington Street
Atlanta, GA 30334

Board of Regents:

To pursue its mission as a growing regional university seeking a national reputation, the department of English at Valdosta State University seeks approval to develop a GeorgiaOnMyLine Master of Arts program in Literature and Language (CIP 23.0101).

This program is aimed specifically at middle-grades and high-school language arts teachers who wish to expand their content knowledge in areas of English studies directly related to their work in the classroom. These areas include literature, rhetoric, composition, linguistics, and creative writing.

Students in the program will acquire

1. A depth of general knowledge of the major subfields of contemporary English studies.
2. The ability to produce cogent written work blending knowledge of each subfield and its implications for the teaching of language arts.
3. The ability to articulate their own work.
4. The ability to work in each subfield in light of key facts and concepts.
5. The ability to produce systematic and researched work appropriate to the discipline.

VSU has enjoyed past success in developing GOML degree programs and has demonstrated a general commitment to quality distance learning. In spring 2008, Valdosta State became one of five original USG institutions to join the GeorgiaOnMyLine distance-learning initiative. Since that first semester, student enrollment in GOML programs offered by VSU has increased significantly, from 51 students in the spring of 2008 to 259 students in spring 2009, a 407 percent increase in individual program headcount enrollment in one calendar year. Additionally, VSU has reported the highest individual enrollment headcount of any participating GOML program each semester since spring 2008. The consistent increase in enrollment and continuing success of the GOML programs at VSU are the result of a demonstrated institutional commitment to providing quality distance education programs which serve our region and our state.

The experience of its faculty and the contingent support services make VSU an ideal candidate for what we think will prove to be the first online degree of its kind in Georgia and in the greater U.S.

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VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL

Reviewed
by Grad Fac Conts ✓

Background

In the field of Language Arts, certified, working teachers often encounter difficulty pursuing an advanced degree in a traditional bricks-and-mortar setting, often resulting in individuals' taking several years to complete the degree. This situation iterates the need for online alternatives for teachers, especially middle-grades and secondary language arts teachers.

The University System of Georgia conservatively anticipates serving an additional 100,000 students by the year 2020, an increase of 40 percent over present levels. Currently, 31 percent of USG institutions (11 of 35) offer some type of an English language-focused major. According to the most recent program enrollment available, fall 2008, 307 students are enrolled in these majors. The enrollment in these programs over a five-year period decreased at an average of 4 percent per year, so one could forecast enrollment to be approximately 295 students throughout the USG System in fall 2009. The USG headcount for students in Master's or Education Specialist's degree programs in fall 2008 was 24,283; students in English graduate degree programs represented 1.3 percent of the total USG System's enrollment.

GOML currently offers a Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.) in Reading, Language, and Literacy Education Online Program and a Master of Education (M.Ed.) in Reading, Language, and Literacy Education Online Program through Georgia State University. Furthermore, the University of Georgia has a Master of Arts in Teaching degree offered in English, but the total enrollment over the previous five years has been four students.

However, we believe that the weakness in the above numbers may be attributable more to the available degrees than to the actual demand. This supposition is supported by the fact that the number of undergraduate degrees conferred in English/Language Arts Teacher Education and English programs in Georgia has grown from 780 in 2006 to 828 in 2008. These numbers suggest a growing potential audience. Moreover, with many school teachers now pursuing graduate degrees, we believe that an online degree program will allow working teachers to enhance their teaching certification levels and strengthen their content knowledge. Such programs insure that Georgia's teachers meet the needs of its citizens and that the state continues its efforts to be a leader in teacher education and K-12 instruction.

Furthermore, eleven USG institutions offering some form of a graduate-level English or language-focused degree have awarded 458 degrees during the past three fiscal years for an average of about 153 degrees per year. Therefore, there are potentially 1,181 candidates (graduates during fiscal year 2008) for an online Master of Arts in Language and Literature. Moreover, through our own and GOML's marketing efforts, we hope to achieve a national audience for the degree by the program's second year. The national numbers support this optimism: In 2006, middle school teachers in the United States held about 674,000 jobs, and secondary school teachers held about 1.1 million positions. Employment is expected to grow as fast as the national average (7-13 percent) annually.

We believe our program will be very attractive and draw students from across our service area, the state, and eventually the greater U.S. Unlike a traditional M.A. program in English, which is typically designed to teach advanced research skills and the content knowledge required for a

Ph.D. programs in either literature or rhetoric and composition, our program will serve the *specific needs of language arts teachers*, offering intensive study of virtually every sub-area in English studies including literature, composition, rhetoric, linguistics (including second language learning), and creative writing. What's more, the courses themselves have been designed for our specific target demographic. Below are three examples from the draft curriculum.

- **American Literature for Language Arts Teachers**

A survey of major American literary authors and movements, especially those appropriate for use in junior-high and high school classrooms. This course may also introduce students to writers and texts less well-known, but which are currently in the process of becoming traditional university survey assignments. The course provides depth of coverage including coverage of historical and cultural context.

- **History of the English Language: English Language Change Past and Present**

A study of past and present changes in the English language relevant to the concerns of language arts teachers. This course surveys changes in the English sound system and how these have and have not been reflected in its spelling; changes in English vocabulary through word formation, borrowing through language contact, and semantic shift; and the change of English from a more inflected to a less inflected language. Students will engage in close study of a specific present-day change in English to successfully fulfill the requirements of the course.

- **English Grammar for Language Arts Teachers**

A study of the grammatical standards and principles of effective writing. Students will improve their own writing through a review of grammatical principles and a study of rhetorical and stylistic techniques. Students will also work to articulate their own standards for writing as a means of developing effective methods for the teaching of grammar and of writing in the language arts classroom.

Finally, our degree does not require any credit hours in pedagogy. We think this will be very attractive to language-arts teachers who want to go back to school and study English, but are looking for an alternative to the present curriculum.

Institutional Resources

Faculty for the program in year one will come from tenured and tenure-track faculty in the department who are members of VSU's Graduate Faculty. In the event that outside labor will be required, the program will adhere to SACs standards and established VSU Graduate School requirements for hiring adjunct graduate faculty. According to a cursory analysis by the VSU Department of Strategic Research and Analysis of the English Department's seat and room capacity for fall 2006-2009, the department is already teaching an average of 104% of its total seats offered, so it may be necessary to hire faculty to accommodate the new program after year

one. Overall, however, the SRA analysis found that already-existing resources are adaptable to the needs of the new program.

The SRA also undertook a cost-benefit analysis to assess the impact of the prospective program on institutional resources. As the table in appendix A suggests, existing resources are adequate for initializing the program and carrying it through to its first review.

We are currently developing the course requirements, syllabi and online delivery standards in anticipation of approval of this letter.

Sincerely,

Mark Smith, Ph.D.
Professor of English and Department Head

Appendix A

Program Expenses (academic yr):	Yr 1 (FY10)	Yr 2 (FY11)	Yr 3 (FY12)	Yr 4 (FY13)	Yr 5 (FY14)
Full Time Faculty					
Salary (fall/spring)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Benefits	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Operating Expenses ex. supplies, equipment, travel	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Indirect Costs ex. inst'l support, student services	\$ 11,786	\$ 11,786	\$ 11,786	\$ 16,501	\$ 16,501
General Education Costs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
TOTAL COSTS	\$ 11,786	\$ 11,786	\$ 11,786	\$ 16,501	\$ 16,501
Income (per academic year):					
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
State appropriation (instruction) and tuition	\$ 20,404	\$ 20,404	\$ 20,404	\$ 28,565	\$ 28,565
Total Income from Instruction	\$ 20,404	\$ 20,404	\$ 20,404	\$ 28,565	\$ 28,565
State appropriation (other support)	\$ 11,786	\$ 11,786	\$ 11,786	\$ 16,501	\$ 16,501
Total Other Monies Entering VSU	\$ 11,786	\$ 11,786	\$ 11,786	\$ 16,501	\$ 16,501
Less 25% capital risk	\$ (8,048)	\$ (8,048)	\$ (8,048)	\$ (11,267)	\$ (11,267)
Total Reductions	\$ (8,048)	\$ (8,048)	\$ (8,048)	\$ (11,267)	\$ (11,267)
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 24,143	\$ 24,143	\$ 24,143	\$ 33,800	\$ 33,800
TOTAL INCOME/COST	\$ 12,356	\$ 12,356	\$ 12,356	\$ 17,299	\$ 17,299

Appendix B

Degree Requirements (36 Hours)

- I. **Comprehensive Exam**
- II. **Required Courses (27 Hours)**
 1. Intro to Graduate Study for Middle and Secondary English Teachers
 2. American Literature Survey for Language Arts Teachers
 3. British Literature Survey for Language Arts Teachers
 4. Multicultural Literature Survey for Language Arts Teachers
 5. Creative Writing for Language Arts Teachers
 6. Composition Theory for Language Arts Teachers
 7. English Language Change Past and Present
 8. English Grammar for Language Arts Teachers
 9. Rhetorical Theory for Language Arts Teachers
- III. **Electives (9 hours total including up to three credits from outside the program)**

At least three credits from among the following:

 1. History of Rhetorical Theory
 2. Language in School Community and Society
 3. English Language Learners

At least three credits from among the following:

 1. Special Topics in CW
 2. Special Topics in American Lit
 3. Special Topics in Brit Lit