Here is the proposed catalog description:

Introduces departmental majors to discipline-specific forms of argumentation through in-depth exploration of key topics and debates within sociology and anthropology.  Topics will vary but all sections focus on the development of students' informational literacy, writing, and analytic skills relevant to sociological and anthropological inquiry. This is a required course for majors, taken in the sophomore year. It fulfills the University Studies Intermediate Writing requirement.

Here is the proposed U.S. rationale:

**RATIONALE/DESCRIPTION**

This class teaches students the basics of discipline-specific writing and argumentation during their sophomore year, supporting our Informational Literacy, Writing, and Research Learning Goals.  The course lays the groundwork for writing and research expectations of upper-level electives and the senior capstone. The small size allows for group interaction and individualized feedback on student assignments. At least 75% of the course grade is based upon writing assignments totaling between 20-25 pages of low-impact writing and 15-20 pages of formal writing,.  Low-impact writing assignments may include short weekly assignments or journaling. All sections will include an 8-10 page research paper and other formal writing assignments such as a literature review, audience-specific writing, and analytic/comparative essays.  Pedagogical approaches include:

  the use of peer review;

  iterative drafts, library-based sessions on informational literacy skills;

  intensive feedback on writing assignments; and

  the use of the Department’s Peer Writing Tutors.

Each section of this course will focus on a specific topic in the instructor’s area of expertise. All topics will support the Department’s content-related learning goals including the development of a critical understanding of the concepts of culture and society; systems of inequality and the dynamics of local and global distributions of power; and the constructed nature of gender, race, ethnicity, class, and culture.

**2XX Topics course: Thinking through Writing in Sociology and Anthropology**

**RATIONALE/DESCRIPTION**

This class teaches students the basics of discipline-specific writing and argumentation during their sophomore year, supporting our Informational Literacy, Writing, and Research Learning Goals. The course lays the groundwork for writing and research expectations of upper-level electives and the senior capstone. The small size allows for group interaction and individualized feedback on student assignments. At least 75% of the course grade is based upon writing assignments totaling between 20-25 pages of low-impact writing and 15-20 pages of formal writing,. Low-impact writing assignments may include short weekly assignments or journaling. All sections will include an 8-10 page research paper and other formal writing assignments such as a literature review, audience-specific writing, and analytic/comparative essays. Pedagogical approaches include:

* the use of peer review;
* iterative drafts, library-based sessions on informational literacy skills;
* intensive feedback on writing assignments; and
* the use of the Department’s Peer Writing Tutors.

Each section of this course will focus on a specific topic in the instructor’s area of expertise. All topics will support the Department’s content-related learning goals including the development of a critical understanding of the concepts of culture and society; systems of inequality and the dynamics of local and global distributions of power; and the constructed nature of gender, race, ethnicity, class, and culture.

## COURSE OVERVIEW: SOC/ANT 2XX- Thinking through Writing in Sociology and Anthropology

Introduces departmental majors to discipline-specific forms of argumentation through the in-depth exploration of questions about the social and cultural world. Specific topics will vary from course to course, but all will explore questions under debate within sociology and anthropology. All sections focus on the development of students' informational literacy, writing, and analytic skills relevant to sociological and anthropological inquiry.

This course will be a core requirement for majors who are expected to take this course during their sophomore year. They may take it before or concurrently with SOC 200 (Introduction to Social Thought), which is also to be taken sophomore year. Prerequisites are SOC 101 OR ANT 111 OR SOC/ANT 113. This class will be a prerequisite for SOC/ANT 420, the Capstone Seminar (or SOC/ANT 492 and 493, the Senior Thesis).

(Currently SOC/ANT 316 meets the Intermediate Writing Requirement, but we will remove that designation once this 200-level course is in place. We envision this switch will be effective starting with for undergraduates entering in Fall 2014 with less than 30 credits. There will be one year of overlap in 2014-2015 as our current cohort of students moves through. By 2015-16, and SOC/ANT 316 will no longer serve as an Intermediate Writing class.)

**COURSE-SPECIFIC LEARNING OUTCOMES**

This 200-level course supports the development of students’ informational literacy, research and writing skills, and overall departmental learning objectives. The specific content areas are used primarily to engage students in developing these discipline-specific skills and learn to think clearly and creatively through writing.

Departmental Learning Goals for Informational Literacy, Research Skills and Writing include:

**I. Find relevant information and critically assess sources**

1. ***Find relevant sources of information using discipline-specific approaches*** (including scholarly books and articles, current news source & popular media, on-line sources, primary interview/observation/print data, unpublished material)
2. Identify key sources for finding information, etc.
3. Develop effective search strategies for finding relevant information

***B. Understand which kinds of sources are appropriate for which purpose***

1. Understand difference between kinds of sources including: peer reviewed/non-peer-reviewed; popular/scholarly material; primary/secondary sources; published/unpublished
2. Recognize the value/appropriate usage of each of these different sources of information
3. Critically assess credibility of various kinds of sources

**II. Synthesize information into a clear, accurate and critically reflective argument/analysis**

1. Identify, comprehend and critically assess key points/essential argument of discipline-specific scholarly work
2. Understand that existing information can be combined with original thought and/or analysis to produce new information and insights about the social world
3. Develop clear, appropriate and doable research topic or project plan according to discipline-specific expectations
4. Synthesize and critically evaluate concepts, data, and information from multiple sources (primary and secondary) into cohesive evidence-based argument/analysis
5. Use writing to think through questions, arguments, experiences relevant to the disciplines of sociology, anthropology, crime and justice studies
6. Work with iterative drafts and constructive feedback to further develop argument

**III. Effectively and professionally communicate findings**

1. Write clearly and organize presentation effectively in accordance with discipline-specific conventions and expectations
2. Understand principals of intellectual integrity, how to properly cite sources in order to respect intellectual property rights and accurately attribute authorship of words and ideas
3. Understand ethical issues related to using primary data on human subjects
4. Effectively communicate findings in oral/visual presentation venues
5. Communicate in venues/styles appropriate for particular kinds of audiences (scholarly, professional, public/popular, etc.)

The specific topics of this course will vary. But all will use case-specific material to support the content-related Departmental Learning Goals. These include developing an understanding of:

1. concepts of culture and society;
2. systems of inequality and the dynamics of local and global distributions of power;
3. the constructed nature of gender, race, ethnicity, class, and culture;
4. the basic theoretical arguments in sociology, anthropology, and crime & justice studies (as appropriate to student concentration);
5. social scientific approaches to basic research design and methodology and theories of knowledge production;
6. how to apply knowledge from discipline-specific research and theory to issues in their lives and communities.

**UNIVERSITY STUDIES LEARNING OUTCOMES**

* **Read with comprehension and critically interpret and evaluate written work in discipline-specific contexts**
* **Demonstrate rhetorically effective, discipline-specific writing for appropriate audiences**
* **Demonstrate, at an advanced level of competence, use of discipline-specific control of language, modes of development and formal conventions**
* **Demonstrate intermediate information literacy skills by selecting, evaluating, integrating and documenting information gathered from multiple sources into discipline-specific writing.**

## INTERMEDIATE WRITING COURSE CRITERIA

* **IW Course employ writing as a method for deepening student learning.** All instructors of *Thinking through Writing in Sociology and Anthropology* employ both informal/low-impact writing along with formal writing expectations; expect iterative writing that addresses feedback on key assignments; and utilize such best practices as peer review and online written discussion.
* **Faculty provide feedback, on-going guidance, and clear expectations for “effective” written response.** All instructors of *Thinking through Writing in Sociology and Anthropology* incorporate iterative writing into major assignments and utilize feedback forms such as peer review, group conferences, use of Departmental Peer Writing Tutors, and extensive modeling of expectations for written assignments.
* **Writing accounts for 40-60 percent of the final grade.** All sections of *Thinking through Writing in Sociology and Anthropology* use writing-based assignments to account for a minimum of 75 percent of the final grade.
* **Students must complete at least 20 pages of writing.** The class assignments require a minimum of 20-25 pages of low-impact writing (eg. short weekly class assignments, journaling) and 15-20 pages of formal writing (eg. analytic/comparative essay, literature review, audience-specific writing, research paper).
* **IW courses should have a lower number of students in the 20-25 range.** We are requesting a cap of 20 students to allow for writing-intensive assignments and on-going individualized attention to students.

## EXAMPLES OF ASSIGNED READINGS

The content-specific readings will vary course by course and be geared to sophomore majors.

**EXAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS**

A combination of these assignments (weekly class assignments or journaling; literature review; research paper; audience-specific writing assignment; research paper; comparative/analytic essay) will constitute at least 75% of the course grade.

All courses will include the requirement of an 8-10 page Research Paper (see example assignment).

**Short Class Assignments and/or Weekly Journaling:**

Short 2-3 page weekly assignments on course readings or short projects that are designed to help student understand and master the material as well as facilitate productive class discussions. This is a low-impact form of writing that encourages students to process reading content and key questions through writing.

**US Intermediate Writing Learning Goal**

* Read with comprehension and critically interpret and evaluate written work in discipline-specific contexts

**Example:**

Guidelines for response papers.

These are an important part of your work in this class and should be treated seriously.  Each paper should summarize some of the main themes of the reading assignments but should not be limited to a “rehash” of the readings.  Nor is the paper your emotional response to the readings. The response paper is a chance for you to critically engage with the author or authors assigned for this week, and to sharpen your analytical skills. You can take issue with the author or authors; if there is more than one reading, you might contrast the authors’ arguments. Or you can relate the reading to material presented in class.  Finally, you should raise some key points for class discussion.

* BE SPECIFIC.  General observations (“I couldn’t understand the article”) are not useful.  However, taking issue with how an author presents his/her argument is fine.
* AVOID USING THE FIRST PERSON. Don’t begin every sentence with “I think”, “I feel”, “It seemed to me.”  Rather, “The author argued that ….”
* BASE YOUR ARGUMENT ON EVIDENCE, NOT EMOTION. Refer to specific passages or concepts in the reading(s) to support your claims.
* You can think of the paper in as a chance for you to prepare yourself for participation in the class, so you can work your ideas out in advance rather than having to make them up on the spot.

Please write your response paper as an ESSAY, not a random assortment of thoughts.  Use proper grammar and organize your ideas carefully.  It should have a beginning, middle and end.  Each paragraph should raise a new idea, and everything in that paragraph should relate to that idea.  So it should be at least 3 paragraphs long.

Please check your grammar and spelling.

**Literature Review**

A 4-5 page paper that integrates the arguments from 5 academic sources on the student’s selected research topic.

**US Intermediate Writing Learning Goal**

* Demonstrate intermediate information literacy skills by selecting, evaluating, integrating and documenting information gathered from multiple sources into discipline-specific writing.
* Read with comprehension and critically interpret and evaluate written work in discipline-specific contexts

**Example:**

For this assignment you will each be completing a literature review related to the topic you have chosen. You will need to locate and review at least 5 academic journal articles on your topic and write a 4-5 page literature review on the articles you’ve selected.

A literature review is a critical, integrated account of what has been published on a topic by accredited scholars and researchers. It is a review of the literature directly related to the topic or problem under study, followed by an explanation of how your research question grows out of that review, showing how you identify your own research focus in relationship to previous research. The purpose of the literature review is to know what others have discovered before you begin your investigation of your own, to ground your study in a particular context of what is known about a subject in order to establish a foundation for the topic being researched.

**Essay Organization**:

INTRODUCTION: In the introduction, you should:

* Define or identify the general topic, issue, or area of concern, thus providing an appropriate context for reviewing the literature.
* Point out overall trends in what has been published about the topic; or conflicts in theory, methodology, evidence, and conclusions; or gaps in research and scholarship; or a single problem or new perspective of immediate interest.
* Establish your reason (point of view) for reviewing the literature; explain the criteria to be used in analyzing and comparing literature and the organization of the review (sequence); and, when necessary, state why certain literature is or is not included (scope).

THE BODY: In the body, you should:

* Organize research studies according to common factors such as similar research questions, common findings, qualitative versus quantitative approaches, etc.
* Summarize individual studies or articles with as much or as little detail as each merits according to its comparative importance in the literature, remembering that space (length) denotes significance.
* Provide the reader with strong "umbrella" sentences at beginnings of paragraphs, "signposts" throughout, and brief "so what" summary sentences at intermediate points in the review to aid in understanding comparisons and analyses.

CONCLUSION: In the conclusion, you should:

* Summarize major contributions of significant studies and articles to the body of knowledge under review, maintaining the focus established in the introduction.
* Evaluate the current "state of the art" for the body of knowledge reviewed, pointing out major methodological flaws or gaps in research, inconsistencies in theory and findings, and areas or issues pertinent to future study.
* Consider some key insights that you would like to explore in your research to contribute to the larger area of study.

**Research Paper**

An 8-10 page paper that integrates material from at least 5 academic sources. The paper-writing process will include iterative steps including: topic proposal, literature review (see above), iterative drafts, peer review, and final draft. Where appropriate, Departmental Peer Writing Tutors will be part of this process.

**US Intermediate Writing Learning Goal**

* Demonstrate rhetorically effective, discipline-specific writing for appropriate audiences
* Demonstrate, at an advanced level of competence, use of discipline-specific control of language, modes of development and formal conventions
* Demonstrate intermediate information literacy skills by selecting, evaluating, integrating and documenting information gathered from multiple sources into discipline-specific writing.

**Example:**

**Final Paper:** write an 8-10 page research paper on your selected topic. You will need to have a clear primary claim/thesis statement related to your research project that will serve as the focus for your paper. Address the following areas:

1. **Introduction.** This should include a context for your paper, including the research question your work addresses. Please be sure to write this as though a person completely unfamiliar with your topic will understand what is to follow. Please state your research question(s) clearly. You should also be very specific about what part of the research question your contribution addresses.
2. **Literature review.** Please use my comments on your literature review to edit and revise for the final paper. Please repeat the portion of the literature that your paper will address.
3. **Findings.** What does your research tell you, and us?
4. **Discussion and implications for the field.** Pull together your findings into a coherent discussion of what your new knowledge contributes to the research question, and to the field of literature you reviewed for your question. Synthesize your findings into a clear statement of why your findings matter—answer the question: So what?

**Audience-Specific Writing Assignment: Briefing Sheet for a Legislative Body or Other Deliberative Group**

This kind of assignment asks students to write about a sociological/anthropological issue for a specific non-academic audience. It might include, for example, writing an op-ed piece for public media, an informational text for school-age children, a memo for a professional (but non-academic) audience, etc. etc.

**US Intermediate Writing Learning Goal**

* **Demonstrate rhetorically effective, discipline-specific writing for appropriate audiences**

**Example:**

**Briefing Sheet for a Legislative Body or Other Deliberative Group**

A briefing sheet is a summary document used by a panel of advocates testifying before a deliberative committee or panel. It is usually in the form of a one-page structured description of a policy response such as an intervention, program, or project that seeks to address a social policy issue. It is prepared for decision-makers, budget committees, and others with the power of appropriation when a policy response is under consideration for funding. It is exactly what the name says: one sheet that gives a succinct but highly informative overview.

The briefing sheet provides the most important information that a deliberative body needs immediately to review, question, assess, and explore the issue. A successful briefing sheet should provoke the deliberative body to ask questions that reveal the importance of the proposed action, delve more deeply into likely implications and effects of the proposed policy, reform, or action, with enough data and analysis to provide a foundation for the request.

Statement of issue: Education and training are imperative for women who are coming out of prison or jail and need extra supports to get back into a productive and independent life.

Background:

* About 8 percent of all incarcerated individuals are women, and of those, about 80 percent are mothers. Every year (number of) women in (name of jurisdiction) are released from prison, and go back to the community, often to children who have been in the care of someone close to the mother or state-sponsored foster care.
* In many cases, children are returned to the mother only if she has made certain that she can provide them with safe and adequate housing, food, child care, and a healthy home environment.
* For life to begin again on the right foot, a decent job is imperative. For a decent job to be attained, the right education and training are imperative.

Policy reform proposal:

* We propose a policy reform for women released from prison. These women have just finished their sentence, and may be free to move back with their children, provided they have housing.
* They need a job, but because they have been in prison, they are unfamiliar with current education and training requirements.
* They wish to go back to school to get the education they need, but are also in need of childcare. These women will be permitted to attend school part time and also work part time to provide their children with food and shelter.

**Comparative/Analytic Essay**

Drawing on course readings, students are asked to write a 3-5 page analytic essay that either examines and critically assesses a particular argument or examines and analyzes a structured comparison of two cases.

**US Intermediate Writing Learning Goal**

* Read with comprehension and critically interpret and evaluate written work in discipline-specific contexts
* Demonstrate rhetorically effective, discipline-specific writing for appropriate audiences
* Demonstrate, at an advanced level of competence, use of discipline-specific control of language, modes of development and formal conventions
* Demonstrate intermediate information literacy skills by selecting, evaluating, integrating and documenting information gathered from multiple sources into discipline-specific writing.

Example:

**Comparative Essay Assignment**

Your comparative essay should analyze the relationship between media, education, and childhood comparing and contrasting at 2 theoretical frameworks from the readings (Buckingham, Postman, Meyrowitz, Kellner, Dewey) to discuss the differing functions of media and education in the social construction of childhood.

* COMPARE and CONTRAST concepts and examples from at least 4 of the readings from weeks 1-4
* Some issues you may wish to consider: How do the differing frameworks represent the relationship between the history of childhood, media, and education? How has this relationship evolved? Is childhood disappearing or simply changing? How so?

**TECHNICAL PARAMETERS**: Your essay should be at least 4 full pages in length plus the bibliography. It should be typed in 12-point font, double-spaced, with one inch margins all around. You should give your paper a title and number all pages. You must cite all sources using the APA or MLA style format and in-text citations.

**AUDIENCE and PURPOSE**: Your intended readers are other students at UMD who have not read the course readings and who have never encountered the term, “the social construction of childhood.” Your goal is to use the course readings as well class discussion to critically examine how childhood is changing and the role of media and education in this evolution.

**PAPER STRUCTURE**: Please make sure your paper includes the following organizational dimensions:

1. Title – Your title invites the reader and helps s/he understand specifically what is to come
2. Introduction – You introduction needs to include a **concise debatable thesis statement** as well as a clear definition of your topic. In addition, you will need to contextualize your thesis statement in terms of how your thesis/central claim relates to the theoretical frameworks that you are discussing
3. Body – You will need to build your comparative analysis using your own interpretations of the differing frameworks with evidence from 4 or more of the class readings
4. Conclusion – The conclusion needs to reiterate what is significant about your argument reconsidering your thesis statement as well as the key points of the paper. Also include some implications of your paper in terms of new questions or concepts for your reader to consider.

**SAMPLE COURSE OUTLINE**

Given that this is a new course and one that will vary topic by topic, this proposal does not include a sample course outline.