English 289:
*Topics in English* This course will cover topics in language, literature, writing, grammar or ESL. Prerequisite: sophomore standing. .5-3 cr. hrs.

**Multigenre Writing --**
**Self Expression in a Multimedia Age**
2 cr. Hrs.

**Course Description:**
How can the individual voice be heard in our multimedia society? This course explores multigenre writing, writing which is critical and creative, personal and academic, research-based and imaginative and welcomes students interested in creative writing, in new media, or in using multigenre writing in the language arts classroom as teachers. These students will write critical essays about examples of multigenre texts. And, in the workshopping portion of the course, students will be divided into two groups.

- Students interested in creative writing or communication via new media work with faculty to develop their own example of a multigenre work.
- Students engaged as professionals in language arts & communication teaching design a unit plan utilizing comics, ‘zines or ‘blogs as materials to be read or as genres to be produced by students.

**Course Objectives:**
Students will recognize multigenre writing (including recognizing the component genres which constitute it).

Students will recognize the rhetorical effectiveness of multigenre writing: why an author might choose a multigenre form and why a multigenre form may be most effective for expressing certain issues.

Students will attempt to use the multigenre essay to express a single issue or situation from a variety of perspectives, within a variety of literary forms. They will reflect on the strengths of the component genres and the special effectiveness of the multigenre essay as it unites the component genres.

For education professionals: Those taking this course with an eye toward pedagogical application will explore the uses of the multigenre essay and integrate it into their Language Arts & Communication classrooms.

**Textbooks Required:**
- *Blending Genre, Altering Style: Writing Multigenre Papers* by Tom Romano
- Sample Long Work: *The 42nd Parallel* by John Dos Passos
- Packet with excerpts from *The Multigenre Research Paper: Voice, Passion, and Discovery in Grades 4-6* by Camille Ann Allen and other Literary Texts Chosen by Instructor.

**Background for Curriculum Committee**

**What is Multigenre Writing?**
Tom Romano, author of *Blending Genre, Altering Style: Writing Multigenre Papers*, defines Multigenre writing as: [a text which] arises from research, experience, and imagination. It is not an uninterrupted, expository monolog nor a seamless narrative nor a collection of poems. A multigenre paper is composed of many genres and subgenres, each piece self-contained, making a point of its own, yet connected by theme or topic and sometimes by language, images, and content. In addition to many genres, a multigenre paper may also contain many voices, not just the author’s. The trick is to make such a paper hang together.
What are examples of Multigenre Writing?

Multigenre writing can be defined broadly enough to encompass much of the traditional canon of literature. We might trace it back to Blake: This image of the *Laocoon* is an integration of a number of different images and texts (even languages) into an aesthetic whole.

Here, for those unfamiliar, are the range of texts Blake integrated into this image (non-English languages are translated in brackets; location clues are italicized in brackets) [from http://www.squibix.net/blake/m/laocoon/text.html].:

**[Jehovah] & his two Sons Satan & Adam**

as they were copied from the Cherubim Of Solomon’s Temple by three Rhodians & applied to Natural Fact. or. History of Ilium

**[Above the father's head:]**

The Angel of the Divine Presence

**[Angel of Jehovah]**

**[Serpent-holder]**

He repented that he had made Adam (of the Female, the Adamah) & it grieved him at his heart

**[About the serpent and figure (? Satan) to the right:]**

Good

**[Lilith]**

Satans Wife The Goddess Nature is War & Misery & Heroism a Miser

**[About the serpent and figure (? Adam) to the left:]**

Evil

Good & Evil are

Riches & Poverty a Tree of Misery propagating Generation & Death

**[Remaining aphorisms, reading outward in thematic order:]**

What can be Created Can be Destroyed

Adam is only The Natural Man & not the Soul or Imagination

The Eternal Body of Man is The IMAGINATION. that is God himself [Yehua]

JESUS We are his Members

The Divine Body

It manifests itself in his Works of Art (In Eternity All is Vision)

All that we See is VISION from Generated Organs gone as soon as come [note]

Permanant in The Imagination; considered as Nothing by the NATURAL MAN

**HEBREW ART is called SIN by the Deist**

**SCIENCE**

The whole Business of Man Is The Arts & All Things Common

Christanity is Art & not Money

Money is its Curse

The Old & New Testaments are the Great Code of Art

Jesus & his Apostles & Disciples were all Artists

Their Works were destroyed by the Seven Angels of the Seven Churches in Asia. Antichrist Science

**SCIENCE is the Tree of DEATH**

**ART is the Tree of LIFE GOD is JESUS**

The Gods of Priam are the Cherubim of Moses & Solomon The Hosts of Heaven

The Gods of Greece & Egypt were Mathematical Diagrams See Plato’s Works There are States in which all Visionary Men are accouted Mad Men such are Greece & Rome Such is Empire or Tax See Luke Ch 2 v 1

Art Degraded Imagination Denied War Governed the Nations

Divine Union Deriding And Denying Immediate Communion with God

The Spoilers say Where are his Works That he did in the Wilderness

Lo what are these Whence came they These are not the Works Of Egypt nor Babylon Whose Gods are the Powers of this World. Goddess, Nature. Who first spoil & then destroy Imaginative Art For their Glory is War and Domination

Empire against Art See Virgils Eneid. Lib. VI v 848

Spiritual War

Israel deliverd from Egypt is Art deliverd from Nature & Imitation

What we call Antique Gems are the Gems of Aarons Breast Plate

Prayer is the Study of Art

Praise is the Practise of Art

Fasting & all relate to Art

The outward Ceremony is Antichrist

Without Unceasing Practise nothing can be done

Practise is Art & If you leave off you are Lost

A Poet a Painter a Musician an Architect: the Man Or Woman who is not one of these is not a Christian

You must leave Fathers & Mothers & Houses & Lands if they stand in the way of ART

The unproductive Man is not a Christian much less the Destroyer

The True Christian Charity not dependent on Money (the lifes blood of Poor Families) that is on Caesar or Empire or Natural Religion

For every Pleasure Money Is Useless

Money, which is The Great Satan or Reason the Root of Good & Evil In The Accusation of Sin

Where any view of Money exists Art cannot be carried on, but War only (Read Matthew CX. 9 & 10 v) by pretences to the Two Impossibilities Chastity & Abstinence Gods of the Heathen

Is not every Vice possible to Man described in the Bible openly

All is not Sin that Satan calls so all the Loves & Graces of Eternity.

If Morality was Christianity Socrates was the Saviour

Art can never exist without Naked Beauty displayed

No Secresy in Art
What are more examples of Multigenre Writing?
But Blake was doing something extraordinary for the time; we can find several examples of multigenre writing in the twentieth century – multigenre writing is a mode of communication whose time has arrived.

William Carlos Williams pioneered this form, in many ways, with Paterson: which “possesses all the essential ingredients that make Williams’ long poem so exciting and original and modern – fragments of verse interspersed with excerpts from old newspaper articles, letters to Williams from friends, including Ezra Pound, perceptions of the ever-changing countryside” (http://www.neilbaldwinbooks.com/nbb_other_wcw.html).

John Dos Passos also worked in a multigenre form in The 42nd Parallel: “The longest piece of each section forms the main story, and is basically a narrative about one of the main characters. Then there are newsreel sections, which contain headlines and clips from newspapers, often fragments of sentences as though what you read is an impression gained from flicking through a paper very quickly. There are also pieces summarising the lives of men and women who had a formative influence on their times, such as Thomas Edison. The most interesting pieces, though most difficult to take in, are the ‘Camera Eye’ narratives, which are also fragmented, and are basically stream of consciousness style snippets of description grouped together more or less randomly” (http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Academy/6422/rev0515.html).

John Berger expressed the complexity of his thought (philosophical, literary, art-critical) in And Our Faces, My Heart, Brief as Photos, which “emerges as a rather bewildering collage of ideas expressed in snatches of poetry, prose, polemical tract and autobiographical glimpses.” (http://www.und.ac.za/und/ccms/publications/criticalarts/v4n2a7.htm).

Sandra Steingraber’s Living Downstream: “the book is beautifully written. Steingraber (who has previously published a volume of poetry, Post-Diagnosis) has the rare gift of combining poignant, lyrical prose with scientific exactitude and clarity” (http://www.pmac.net/downstrm.htm) -- synthesizing the scientific and memoir genres.

There is no tradition in literary-critical studies more interesting, perhaps, than this history of marginalized experiments in literary form called multigenre writing. And, outside literary tradition, entire subcultures of alternative press have picked up this form for self-expression (in what is called “zine culture”). This is a mode at once ripe for critical reading and ripe for exercises in writing and integration into the middle and high school curriculum.

Long-Term Vision for this Course
This is a pilot for a potential series of courses offered at Pigeon Lake by tenure-line faculty in their “off-year” (years in which they cannot teach within the Department). As two credit courses, they are electives only; they cannot contribute to the English majors or minors except as electives and (as two-credit courses) they are inadequate to replace any existing courses on the books. The offering of this course at Pigeon Lake, then, is no threat to offerings in the Department in the school year or summer session.