

# Some professors oppose dropping E 306

By DARRYL EWING  
Daily Texan Staff

Although the Department of English has voted not to offer English 306 during long sessions beginning in fall 1988, several professors in the department oppose the change.

Joseph Kruppa, associate professor of English, said a department committee proposed last fall that E 306, freshman composition, be offered only during summer sessions as of 1988. The Department of English approved the proposal and passed it on to Robert King, dean of the College of Liberal Arts, who also approved it.

Maxine Hairston, professor of English, said only 18 faculty members voted against the change.

"There's no question that the department wanted the change," Hairston said. "I just don't agree with it."

Under the new plan, students who do not take the summer course will be required to prove proficiency in the course by taking the English Competency Test or a non-credit writing course offered by the de-

partment, Kruppa said. Students also may transfer an entry-level English course from another university to fulfill the E 306 requirement, he said.

Hairston said E 306 teaches students to write on a college level. Students in the course learn different writing styles and learn to adapt their writing to different people and situations, she said. Students also learn to compose and support an argument, Hairston said.

Hairston said, "306 is a much-needed course. I think teaching students writing should be at the center of university education. Obviously my colleagues disagree."

John Ruskiewicz, director of the department's freshman office, said eliminating the course from the long session proves the department is ignoring its teaching role.

"The department has backed away from teaching writing, but instead is teaching 'examsmanship,'" Ruskiewicz said. "You don't help people improve their writing by helping students boost their scores on exams."

Kruppa said approximately 40 percent of all entering freshman place out of E 306 through credit by examination.

Ruskiewicz said the English Competency Test does not effectively evaluate students' writing skills through its multiple-choice questions on grammar and usage.

"The current placement test is not a good test," Ruskiewicz said. "We were going to change it but it seemed so pointless to do that with all this confusion."

Hairston said the test does not determine student writing proficiency because it does not contain a substantial writing component.

Alan Gribben, associate professor of English, said the department plans to add an essay-writing section to the ECT.

Gribben also said the English writing lab will be changed to a writing center that will offer six-to-eight hour non-credit courses to help students place out of E 306.

The center will be staffed by non-faculty tutors who will give diagnostic tests to spot students' writing

deficiencies, Gribben said.

But Ruskiewicz said the writing center will not be a practical substitute for E 306 because "an entire semester's work cannot be crammed into a single crash course."

Also beginning in the fall of 1988, the department plans to offer pilot or experimental sections of E 309, a new writing course that will be required of all students.

"As far as we're concerned, the course is approved," Kruppa said. "We're ready to start getting the pilot program underway."

E 309 will focus on topics such as popular culture in composition or composition in popular literary works, Kruppa said.

Ruskiewicz said E 309 is similar to E 307 and other courses the University used to offer. The course eventually will be teaching the same things as E 306, he said.

"You're not going to be able to substitute skills learned in one class with another by playing games," Ruskiewicz said. "You can't get around the basics of good writing."

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