

# editorials

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## viewpoint

### If you're going to require it, you ought to teach it

**T**he UT Department of English does something really stupid every once in a while. Like last spring, when the department dropped the E 346K requirement. That was the only course devoted entirely to writing that students still had to take at the University.

Still, you'd think the department would at least be smart enough not to require a course it doesn't teach. But that's exactly what a Department of English committee wants to do.

The E 346K committee, which has spent the summer evaluating what's left of the University's writing program, has developed a proposal that maintains the current nine-hour English requirement for students but lets the University get by with teaching only six during the fall and spring semesters. The first course — E 306, a freshman rhetoric and composition course — has to be taken somewhere else.

That would give the department a fair amount of flexibility with writing courses. Students would have to take either E 346K — which has been postponed for a year — or one of three new lower-division composition courses to round out the nine-hour English requirement. But to get the E 306 credit out of the way, students would have to place out of the course, take it during the summer or through a course offered through UT extension, or

take it at another school and transfer the credit.

In other words, there would be no basic writing course the University would have to offer every semester. Which doesn't do much for the image of the Department of English. As a matter of fact, it makes the whole department look pretty lazy.

And now, the excuses. Joseph Kruppa, E 346K committee chairman, says 40 percent of UT freshmen place out of E 306, and the education reforms in high schools should make that number go up as students get a more solid English background. Besides, Kruppa says, the department can't teach E 306, E 316K (the required literature course), and E 346K without hiring lots of temporary staffers.

By now, you've probably noticed the pattern. The department doesn't want to teach E 306 because it would be a lot of trouble for a course that many students place out of anyway. Problem is, most students don't. The education reforms won't change that overnight. So if the department stops offering a course 40 percent of the students don't need, 60 percent of the students will have to go out of their way to take a course they do need.

If E 306 is required for graduation, it must be an important course. The least the Department of English can do is teach it.

— David Nather