A. GE component for which course is being proposed: Productions and Presentations

B. Submitted by _______ Paul Willis ____________________________

C. Ideally, submissions should be discussed by the entire department prior to submittal.
   - [X] Chair has reviewed and approved the course.

D. Course being proposed (please attach syllabus): ENG-142, Workshop in Creative Writing

E. This course
   - [X] Has not been modified, but is being submitted to check its suitability
   - [ ] Has had its syllabus rewritten to communicate the course’s contribution to GE
   - [ ] Has had its contents modified to address the relevant GE issues
   - [ ] Is a new course designed to fulfill the GE requirement

Note: ENG-142, Workshop in Creative Writing, is analogous to ENG-141, Creative Writing, which is already approved for Productions and Presentations, but ENG-142 is a single-genre course, as opposed to a multiple-genre course. In ENG-141, we typically cover both fiction writing and poetry writing—and sometimes the writing of plays and of creative nonfiction as well. In the ENG-142 course to be offered in Mayterm, I will cover only poetry writing. In the ENG-142 course to be offered in Spring 2011, I will cover only fiction writing. ENG-142 has been an approved course in the catalogue for several years, but Mayterm 2010 is the first time it will be offered.

F. This course is being submitted as
   - [X] A Template. Applicable to courses with multiple sections which require only general training in the discipline. The submission should come from the department chair and should clearly identify what course content and what elements of the syllabus the department has agreed will be common to all sections. Upon approval by the GE Committee, any course whose syllabus is determined by the department to meet the specifications of the template is approved to satisfy this area requirement. A copy of each syllabus should be forwarded to the G.E. committee for record keeping purposes.
   - [ ] An Individual Course. Applicable to courses requiring specialized training in the discipline or are typically offered by a particular instructor. The course should be resubmitted and reassessed in the event of a change in staffing or syllabus.

G. Statement of rationale:
(Include a list of the area objectives. After each objective, list several course activities (lectures, readings, assignments, etc.) that address it. If it is not completely obvious, explain how the activities relate to the objective. Please attach a copy of the syllabus which has been annotated to
Students will have an opportunity to learn:

1) How to write poems or short stories or plays or works of creative nonfiction.

2) How to read their creative work aloud to an audience or submit their work for publication.

Course activities to support these objectives include:

1) Reading of a text on the craft of writing in a given genre; reading of various works in that given genre; lecture and discussion and exercises emphasizing elements of craft; drafting of work in this genre; written and oral peer response to these drafts; written and oral instructor response to these drafts; a final portfolio of revised work in this genre. Emphasis throughout is placed upon writing and revising work suitable to be read to or by an audience.

2) Instruction and practice in reading their own creative work aloud. The students will hear a variety of professional writers present their work on film, and are also required to attend several literary readings in the community. One class day is taken up with guided practice in reading literary work aloud; each student chooses a poem or story from our text and reads the selection in front of the class. I offer a few comments and suggestions, and then the student reads the selection again—and again. On the next class day, each student reads a selection of his or her own work without comment from me; then the students take a secret ballot to select five or six readers to open for a visiting writer scheduled to present his or her work in Hieronymus Lounge.

3) The reading of their work aloud at an organized public event. The five or six readers selected by the class read two poems apiece as a preface to a reading from a visiting writer. At our most recent event of this type, last month, Hieronymus Lounge was filled with an SRO audience of 90: many students, some faculty and staff, and a fair sprinkling of visitors from the Santa Barbara community. Though it takes only 4-5 minutes to read a pair of poems, it must be remembered that this is an artistic presentation made without benefit of handouts, Powerpoint, or team assistance. The student presenter is most vulnerably alone; the experience is more akin to singing a solo than to making a conventional oral presentation. (The reading of an essay or story would of course take a little longer, but might be a bit less stressful for the student presenter.) Students not chosen for this on-campus experience typically take part in a formally arranged reading in the community. These usually involve presentations by featured readers that are followed by a structured open reading in which members of the audience may sign up to come to the microphone to read two or three poems. Students in my current creative writing class will be taking part in such readings in April at the Karpeles Manuscript Museum (hosted by a community group known as The Poetry Zone) and at the Santa Barbara Natural History Museum (hosted by the Green Poetry Project). Open readings in previous years have been organized by the current Santa Barbara Poet Laureate at Borders Bookstore. Audience size for all such readings will typically be 25-40. Whether taking part in a reading on-campus or off, students report the experience as one of their most challenging during their time at Westmont.

4) Instruction on strategies of submission of work to journals and publishers. I assign the students to find at least four different literary journals and to read several poems or stories or essays in each. Then they write up what they sense as being the differences between the work in each journal in terms of content, style, and quality. They share their findings in class, I add some observations, and then I explain the strategy and mechanics of submitting one’s written work for publication—always stressing that they first read the journals to which they submit.

5) Submission of their work to a literary journal. In most cases this will be the Phoenix, our college literary magazine, but students are also encouraged to submit their work to other magazines in both online and print format. I also encourage students to enter their work in the Conference on
Christianity and Literature Undergraduate Student Writing Contest—and occasionally we have had a winner in our midst.

Assessment strategies for these objectives include:

1) Saving copies of selected drafts and selected revisions and tracking improvement in some of the more measurable qualities of good creative writing. In poetry, for example, it is possible to determine improvement in a student’s ability to write metered verse. It may also be possible to in some sense measure a hoped-for increase in specific images that appeal to the physical senses and a hoped-for decrease in abstractions, clichés, and overt labeling of emotions. Less like Hallmark, more like Shakespeare.

2) Most students will satisfy the presentations requirement by reading some of their work aloud in a public venue, after having practiced reading their work aloud to the class. One way to assess their improvement in this area is to have them write a self-assessment of their performance in comparison to their first attempts. I will also have the students read their work aloud in class at the very end of the course. It would thus be possible to compare their earlier performance with their later performance in the class.

A few students will satisfy the presentations requirement by publishing their work in a print or online journal. If official acceptance of their work occurs within the time frame of the term or semester, this will count as satisfying the presentations requirement. These students will be asked to write out what they may have learned through the submission and publication process.