A. **Division:** **Instructional**

Effective Date: September 2003

B. **Department /** **Language, Literature and**
Program Area: **Performing Arts/**
PRINT FUTURES

Revision	X	New Course	

If Revision, Section(s) D, F, G, M to R
Revised:
Date of Previous Revision: November 20, 1997
Date of Current Revision: March 3, 2003

C: **PRFU 102** **D:** **Research Skills for Professional Writings**

> **on the primary research process, on critical thinking skills, on secondary sources of information such as libraries and archives, on fact finding through interviews, on the use and abuse of statistics, on the organization of research data, and on research ethics. They will develop a practical perspective by conducting a simple primary research project and compiling a secondary research portfolio.**

G: **Allocation of Contact Hours to Type of Instruction / Learning Settings**

Primary Methods of Instructional Delivery and/or Learning Settings:
Lecture
Seminar
Laboratory

Number of Contact Hours (per week / semester for each descriptor):
2 hours lecture per week
1 hour seminar per week
1 hour laboratory per week

Number of Weeks per Semester: 15 weeks

H: **Course Prerequisites:**
Acceptance into program or permission of the coordinator

I: **Course Corequisites:**
None

J: **Course for which this Course is a Prerequisite:**
CMNS 218

K: **Maximum Class Size:**
40

L: PLEASE INDICATE**:**

Non-Credit

M: Course Objectives / Learning Outcomes

Students will be introduced to a wide variety of primary and secondary research resources available to them in a broad range of formats. They will develop a critical awareness of the information world, its formal and informal rules, and its practical application in writing assignments. They will also develop skills in gathering and managing information to prepare for researched writing tasks.

N: Course Content

1. An Introduction to Research and Critical Thinking

Successful students will:

a) identify the basic categories of research (e.g., primary and secondary; qualitative and quantitative) and the range of related techniques (e.g., surveying, interviewing, observing, database searching)
b) learn that information is meaningless without critical evaluation
c) learn how to improve their analytical skills

2. Gathering Information Through Interviews

Successful students will:

a) understand the impact of bias and pre-judgment in interviewing
b) know how to prepare for an information-gathering interview
c) examine the issues of comprehensiveness and credibility in interviewing

3. Time Management and the Research Process

Successful students will:

a) analyze reports of various research projects in terms of realistic goals, budgets, and priorities
b) review the pitfalls of faulty time management and the unrealistic scheduling of tasks
c) understand the role of time-saving communication techniques and technologies in conducting research
d) review basic ethical concerns and procedures for researchers
e) conduct a simple primary research project

4. Analysis of Statistical Data

Successful students will:

a) learn the basic terminology of statistical measurement: mean, median, mode, standard deviation, levels of significance, and significant difference
b) investigate effective survey design and the limitations for interpretation, including how broadly results can be generalized
c) understand the purpose of experimental and control groups
d) understand the difference between causality and correlation

5. An Overview of Information Resources

Successful students will:

a) learn about the information cycle (e.g., creation and distribution, storage and preservation, and retrieval of information) and its significance for writers
b) survey various kinds of libraries and information centres: public, academic, special
c) review how libraries function and the role of information specialists

6. Issues in the Use of Information Resources

Successful students will:

a) learn how to develop appropriate search strategies
b) survey the use of bibliographic, statistical, full-text databases, and Web sites
c) learn how to judge the quality of information (e.g., currency, authority, reliability, suitability)
d) examine examples that clarify ethical problems (e.g., misinformation, fraud, plagiarism)
e) prepare a secondary research portfolio (i.e., construct a research portfolio in preparation for a written task using a variety of information resources)

O: **Methods of Instruction**

This course will be based on lectures, seminars, and laboratory work. Students may be required to collaborate on specified assignments.

P: **Textbooks and Materials to be Purchased by Students**

A list of recommended textbooks and/or materials will be provided on the instructor's course outline, available to students at the beginning of each semester. Typically, this course requires reading of materials on reserve