KINGSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
The City University of New York

CURRICULUM DATA TRANSMITTAL SHEET

DEPARTMENT___Foreign Languages_____   DATE___16 September 2014_____

Title of Course or Degree Change: _Heb 1 & 2; Arb 1 & 2; Chi 1 & 2_____

Change(s) Initiated: (Please check)

☐ **Letter of Intent**   ☐ **Proposal**
☐ **Closing of Degree Program**   ☐ **Proposal (Letter of Intent sent previously)**
☐ **New Course***   ☐ **Change in Degree Requirements**
☐ **New 82 Course**   ☐ **Change in Degree Requirements (adding concentration)**
☐ **New Certificate Program**   ☐ **Change in Discipline Code**
☐ **Change in Pre/Co-Requisite**   ☐ **Change in Description**
☐ **Deletion of Course**   X☒ **Change in Course Titles, Numbers, Credits &/or Hours**
☐ **Other (please describe):** __Change hour load from 3 to 4_____

PLEASE ATTACH PERTINENT MATERIAL TO ILLUSTRATE AND EXPLAIN ALL CHANGES

I. **DEPARTMENTAL ACTION**
Action by Department and/or Departmental Committee, if required:

Date approved_16 September 2014___Signature, Committee Chairperson:_____

Signature, Department Chairperson: _____

II. **PROVOST ACTION**
Provost to act within 30 days of receipt and forward to College-wide Curriculum Committee
exercising one of the following options:
A. **Approved** ☐   B. **Returned to department with comments** ☐

Recommendations (if any): _____

Signature, Provost: _____ Date:_____

III. **CURRICULUM SUB-COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS** (*FOR NEW COURSES ONLY*):

A.   **Approved** ☐   B.   **Tabled** ☐ (no action to be taken by Curriculum Committee)

Recommendations (if any):_____

Signature, Sub-Committee Chair: _____Date:_____

IV. **COLLEGE-WIDE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE ACTION**

Committee to act within 30 days of receipt, exercising **one** of the following options:

A.   **Approved**   ☐ (forwarded to Steering Committee)
B.   **Tabled**   ☐ (Department notified)
C.   **Not Approved** ☐ (Department notified)

Signature, Chairperson of Curriculum Committee_____Date:_____

Revised/Winter 08

Becoming fluent in a language is quite difficult, even if you do already display an aptitude for languages.

The Foreign Service Institute (FSI) of the US Department of State has compiled approximate learning expectations for a number of languages based on the length of time it takes to achieve General Professional Proficiency in Speaking and General Professional Proficiency in Reading. Chinese, Arabic and Hebrew are rated as some of the most difficult languages to learn for people whose native language is English. A quote attributed to William Milne, London Missionary Society minister sent to China, states that learning Chinese is

> a work for men with bodies of brass, lungs of steel, heads of oak, hands of springsteel, hearts of apostles, memories of angels, and lives of Methuselah.

Several major difficulties stand out in the learning of these three languages:

1- Characters

In Chinese, the *Chart of Common Characters of Modern Chinese*, promulgated in People's Republic of China, lists 2,500 common characters and 1,000 less-than-common characters, while the *Chart of Generally Utilized Characters of Modern Chinese* lists 7,000 characters. The 17th-century Protestant theologian Elias Grebniz, said that Chinese characters were not of this world, as they were "introduced by the devil."

In Gautier's novella *Fortunio*, a Chinese professor from the Collège de France, when asked by the protagonist to translate a love letter suspected to be written in Chinese, replied that the characters in the letter happen to all belong to that half of the 40,000 characters which he has yet to master. Like Chinese, Arabic has an alphabet where non-Latin characters are used. There are 28 letters, which are written and read right-to-left. Most of the letters have four different forms, depending on whether they stand alone or come at the beginning, middle, or end of a word. But in Arabic, as in Hebrew, people don't include most vowels when writing. When you're struggling with comprehension to begin with, it's a daunting task to learn these characters and achieve comprehension.

2- Tones

Additionally, Chinese has four different tones, any of which could make the same word acquire a different meaning. Arabic and Hebrew have several sounds that are completely alien to an English speaker. The sounds are tough, but the words are tougher. An English-speaking student learning a European language will run across many familiar-looking words, but English-speaking Chinese, Hebrew and Arabic students are not so lucky.

The State Department estimates that it takes 80 to 88 weeks (roughly a year in the classroom full-time and a year in-country) to get to a level 3 on a 5-point scale in these languages. Even if we lower the bar for Kingsborough students, the job of getting them to a barely acceptable level of proficiency is overwhelming. Achieving proficiency in a European language in 3 hours a week is practically mission impossible (this is a topic for a future conversation), doing so in Chinese, Arabic or Hebrew is even more

challenging. There is an immediate need to increase the number of hours required for Foreign Language courses, particularly these three.

3- Grammar and Syntax

The grammar and syntax in these three languages is extremely complex. In Hebrew, for example, changes in the vowels or their omission affect word meaning, e.g., the root K-T-V produces katav 'he wrote', ktav 'writing', katuv 'written', and miktava 'desk'. Prefixes and suffixes are added to roots to modify word meaning and express grammatical relations. Hebrew verbs are constructed very differently from verbs in Western European languages. All Hebrew verbs are formed from three- or four-consonant roots that define the basic concept expressed by the verb. The roots are assigned to one of seven constructions that are called *binyan*. Most roots can be assigned to more than one *binyan*, so that more than one verb can be formed from a typical root. As a result, different verbs share the same basic meaning but differ in voice, valency, aspect, or any combination of these features. In Arabic, nouns and adjectives are declined according to case, state, gender and number, and personal pronouns have 12 forms: In singular and plural, the 2nd and 3rd persons differentiate gender, while the 1st person does not. In the dual, there is no 1st person, and only a single form for each 2nd and 3rd person. Prepositional usage is also extremely demanding, and some very common prepositions — including the proclitic preposition li- 'to' (also used for indirect objects) — have irregular or unpredictable combining forms when the enclitic pronouns are added. In Chinese, the concept of words and the boundaries between them is not always transparent, and the Chinese script does not use spaces between words. Grammatically, some strings of characters behave as single words in some contexts, but are separable in others.

It is unreasonable to expect students to achieve acceptable, standard proficiency within the three-hour format. Consequently, there is an immediate need to increase the hour load in Foreign Languages, particularly in the case of these three. Additionally it is essential, in view of the disservice we are doing to the students, to reverse the ill-advised change from four to three hours that was essentially decreed by the designers of the Pathways arrangement some semesters back.

The ARB 100 and 200 courses have always run at 4 contact hours, which, aside from the recent changes at CUNY, is the very minimum Arabic and other non-Latin based languages are taught in universities around the country (Most often it is 4 days of instruction + lab, often it is 5 days of instruction + lab). This standard of best practice is in place because the process over time of learning to work with a non-Latin based alphabet, along with diacritic vowel markings, written from the right to the left, with very specific rules regarding which letters can be connected, can not be obviated. In addition, Arabic is so different from English in terms of its grammar and lexicon, that the US State Department's Foreign Service Institute, which routinely teaches over 70 languages to US diplomats and staff, and has ranked Arabic in the absolute hardest category of languages for an English-speaking student to learn. As can be seen below, the class time reflects this reality.

The reduction of class time by 25% for the Arabic 100 and 200 courses at Kingsborough Community College occurred because of an administrative/technical contradiction. The technical mechanism for submitting courses to Pathways did not allow for 3/4 classes to be submitted into the CUNYfirst system except for limited exceptions in science and math. On the other hand, the Chancellor did in fact state in February 2012, that 3/4 Pathways classes in all disciplines were allowed, and the Chancellery's February 3, 2014 memorandum has now reaffirmed this policy.

Since the Chancellor did unequivocally state at the time Pathways was passed that 3 credit 4 hour classes were allowed (the record of this is below), as faculty coordinator of the Arabic courses, I submitted the courses to the Pathways Core Submission Form as 3 credits 4 hours:

<u>Record of Chancellor's Statement (at the time Pathways was passed)</u>

From: Sandi.Cooper@csi.cuny.edu
To: UFS-NEWS@LISTSERV.CUNY.EDU
Sent: 2/29/2012 2:04:25 P.M. Eastern Standard Time
Subj: Contact hours, credits and college practice

Dear Colleagues

Please circulate this widely --

Following a conversation with the Chancellor, and in accordance with the last memo issued by the OAA, colleges which have the practice of scheduling FOUR hours for THREE credit classes

AND for giving faculty teaching credit for FOUR hours, are not prohibited from keeping this practice.

A fourth hour for conferences with students, for instance -- IF currently the practice -- is "allowed" but the Chancellery plans to do a study across CUNY of the wide variation in this practice.

I do not know what this means for the problem of lab plus lecture in the sciences.

Sandi Cooper

Sandi E. Cooper, Chair
University Faculty Senate -- CUNY
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212 794 5538

CUNY Common Core
Course Submission Form

Instructions: All courses submitted for the Common Core must be liberal arts courses. Courses may be submitted for only one area of the Common Core. All courses must be 3 credits/3 hours unless the college is seeking a waiver for a 4-credit Math or Science course (after having secured approval for sufficient 3-credit/3-hour Math and Science courses). All standard governance procedures for course approval remain in place.

College	Kingsborough Community College
Course Number	ARB 00100
Course Title	Elementary Arabic I
Department(s)	Foreign Languages
Discipline	Global Languages and Literatures
Subject Area	Arabic
Credits	3
Contact Hours	4 (Provided that the Provost honors the Chancellor's statement (enclosed), made subsequent to the 2/24/2012 revision of this form. The 2/29/2012 statement allows for this three credit course to be maintained at four contact hours. We believe the statement was made with the realization that there is no established national precedent for teaching introductory and intermediate foreign language courses at three contact hours a week.

The disallowing of 3/4 courses in the instructions section of the Core Submission Form was either due to a mistake or to confusion at the time, and we were told by Dean DiLorenzo that she had no choice but to input the course in the system as 3/3.

Despite the aforementioned ambiguity which caused the classes to be listed as 3/3 on students' schedules, the non-Latin based language classes continued to run at 4 hours a week, because the Provost understood that a reduction by 25% time per week, to 3 contact hours was not feasible. This is evident both in terms of documented course syllabi and content, and the professor's listed schedules and documented compensation. In light of the confirmation by the Chancellery on February 3rd 2014, and smoothing out of problems with the university's CUNYfirst system, it now seems possible to rectify the problem caused by the system that previously did not allow the courses to be officially listed as meeting 4 hours a week.

Evidence of the standard practice of teaching introductory and intermediate Arabic courses at US universities at 4 or more hours a week:

NYU

http://www.nyu.edu/registrar/listings/

MEIS-UA 101 Elementary Arabic I

Builds basic skills in modern standard Arabic, the language read and understood by educated Arabs from Baghdad to Casablanca. **Five hours per week of instruction** and drills, stressing the proficiency approach, plus work in the language

MEIS-UA 102 Elementary Arabic II

MEIS-UA 102
Session: 1 01/27/2014 - 05/12/2014 | **Section:** 002

Mon,Tue,Wed,Thu 11.00 AM - 12.15 PM at 194M 303

Notes: PREREQUISITE: MEIS-UA 101 OR ARABL-AD 101 OR PERMISSION OF DEPARTMENT.

University of Nebraska

http://bulletin.unl.edu/undergraduate/courses/search?q=Arabic&submit=Find

ARAB101

Beginning Arabic I

This course will lay the foundation of modern standard Arabic; the grammar,

syntax, vocabulary, and structure of the language.
This course is a prerequisite for: ARAB 102

Credit Hours:	5
Course Format:	Lecture 5
Course Delivery:	Classroom

ARAB102

Beginning Arabic II
> *Prereqs:*
> *ARAB 101.*
> This course will lay the foundation of modern standard Arabic; the grammar, syntax, vocabulary, and structure of the language.
> This course is a prerequisite for: ARAB 201

Credit Hours:	5
Course Format:	Lecture 5
Course Delivery:	Classroom

UCLA

http://www.registrar.ucla.edu/schedule/catalog.aspx?sa=ARABIC+&funsel=3

1A. Elementary Standard Arabic (5)

Lecture, six hours. Course 1A is enforced requisite to 1B

1B. Elementary Standard Arabic (5)
Lecture, six hours. Enforced requisite: course 1A.