

Suggested course deletion stirs controversy

By ELLEN WILLIAMS
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Students and lecturers will both lose if English 346K — a class required for all students — is discontinued after this semester, English teachers said Wednesday.

William Sutherland, chairman of the Department of English, said Tuesday he has recommended that the course be dropped because the department will not be able to adequately staff the class.

Next fall, students subject to 1983 catalog requirements would enter the class, swelling its enrollment. This will increase the number of classes needed from the current 82 to almost 150, Sutherland said Wednesday.

But lecturers in the Department of English said Sutherland has other motives.

"What Sutherland is trying to do

is fire all the lecturers and cheat all the students out of the writing classes they need," said David Beer, lecturer.

Lecturer James Skaggs said Sutherland's claim of inadequate staffing was "absolutely untrue," because many lecturers this semester had the number of courses they teach cut from four to three. The smaller course load also led to proportional pay cuts.

Robert Twombly, associate professor, said lecturers have no job security because they do not have tenure. "They are hired for low wages to teach a very heavy load," he said.

Both Skaggs and Beer said a split between the department's literature and composition teachers was another reason the course — Writing for Different Disciplines — may be eliminated.

"The purpose is to have a small,

cozy clique of literature scholars by themselves, without being bothered by grading writing," Beer said. "Their own literature studies are of little use to anyone, whereas composition skills are badly needed."

Neill Megaw, professor of English and past chairman of the department, said he was "horrified" by the recommendation. "This is a fantastic sellout of students who need help writing," he said.

Currently, students under the 1983 catalog must receive credit for English 306, 316K and 346K. If 346K were abolished, students could graduate without ever taking English composition courses, Skaggs said. Students can place out of 306, and 316K is a literature survey course.

Joseph Kruppa, associate chairman of the department and associate professor, said students are currently required to take two other

substantial writing component courses as well as the three English courses.

Eliminating the course would force other colleges to offer similar writing courses, rather than burdening the English department with every UT student, Kruppa said.

Sutherland said he did not want to commit the department to years of overburdened 346K classes. "Should we commit ourselves to it? Are we pleased with the course?"

Kruppa said lecturers who were not rehired by the English Department could find jobs teaching other substantial writing component courses in other UT colleges and departments.

Sutherland and Kruppa said they have not yet calculated how many lecturers would not be rehired if the class were abolished, but Skaggs estimated the number to be 40 to 50 teachers, many of them with doctorates.