

Working Definitions and Essential Considerations for General Education Courses

Preamble:

- All courses must have Academic Affairs approval before being considered by the General Education committee.
- Courses are excluded from consideration if they focus on a single discipline-specific aspect, if they intend only to deepen a student's knowledge within a narrowed topic area, or if they treat the material within an applied professional orientation.
- Courses with a temporary number ('99) are not eligible for General Education approval.
- Courses should have no pre-requisites. The only prerequisites for general education courses must be other general education courses.
- Courses should be designed for a general audience (both majors and non-majors).

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Communication

Approved Definition: Communication is the clear, precise, and purposeful exchange of information in a variety of contexts, using written and oral means.

Elaborated Definition: None offered.

Essential Considerations: None required, effectively course specific.

Quantitative Reasoning

Approved Definition: An organized set of quantitative methods used to solve problems or extend knowledge. Quantitative methods are a set of principles and procedures that could be used to manipulate numerical data.

Elaborated Definition: None Offered.

Essential Considerations: Manipulation of numerical data or concepts based on numerical data.

Science and Technology

Approved Definition: An organized body of knowledge, including principles and procedures based on scientific methods, used to explain physical and biological phenomena.

Elaborated Definition: Science and technology courses emphasize objectivity (observation, experimentation), methodology, and application. For general education, these courses have as a goal the development of an understanding of how scientific principles are utilized in the modern world and of the impact of science on society and the human health and well-being of individuals.

Essential Considerations: Any course that does not discuss the applications and implications of the field's knowledge based on society should be excluded.

Humanities and Fine Arts

Approved Definition: Systematically explore cultural and intellectual forces shaping events, individual expression, and social values. Fine Arts, as an integral component of the humanities, promote the appreciation of aesthetics and the expression of creativity.

Elaborated Definition: Humanities courses emphasize coherent overviews of cultural and intellectual currents of the past and present. For general education, such courses must emphasize background, interpretation, and comparison; this may be from historical, philosophical, aesthetic, and ethical perspectives.

Essential Considerations: Overview and Breath—A course should be excluded that focuses on the deepening of a student's knowledge within a narrowed topic area. This would exclude, for example, a course which focuses exclusively on a single, discipline-specific, aspect of a humanities subject vs. the overview of a discipline: for example, French phonetics, advanced English grammar, a course in writing for specific purposes, or a narrowly focused literature course.

Social and Behavioral Sciences

Approved Definition: Use scientific methods to analyze the behaviors, structures, and processes of individuals and groups.

Elaborated Definition: The principle objective of general education courses in the social and behavioral sciences is to explain through empirical investigation and theoretical interpretation the behavior of individuals and various groups in societies, economies, governments and subcultures. Courses in these social sciences will identify significant patterns of human behavior and provide means of inquiry by which these patterns may be explored.

Essential Considerations: (a) The course should not be specialized within a professional, or vocational preparation, (b) the course should not be teaching a skill, as opposed to a knowledge base, (c) the information taught in the course should be based on empirical and theoretical information.

Global Perspectives

Approved Definition: These courses focus on analysis of worldwide issues illustrating the interdependence of the world and its people.

Elaborated Definition: None offered.

Essential Considerations: A course in this section should revolve around worldwide issues or problems.

Cultural Diversity

Approved Definition: These courses focus on the social, personal, and interpersonal effects of variety and differences among cultures.

Elaborated Definition: Courses focused on cultural diversity in which students learn to comprehend how the behaviors, perspectives, and values of the cultures of various groups differ. Examples of cultural comparisons include, but are not limited to, those based on ethical systems, ethnicity, gender, languages, nationality, race, religion, sexual orientation, spirituality, and worldview.

Essential Considerations: The focus of the course should be on the comparison between two or more groups as defined above.

Wellness

Approved Definition: Wellness is a dynamic and integrative process of becoming aware of healthy lifestyles, of learning to make informed choices, and of developing a balanced approach to living. The course must cover two of the following four topics: emotional well-being, nutrition, physical activity, and psychological development.

Elaborated Definition: None offered.

Essential Considerations: Two of the four topics must be covered.