General Education Core Course Proposals

The General Education Core comprises 6 areas of study:

   I. Linguistic and Numerical Foundations (9 credits)

   II. Physical and Natural World (6 credits)

   III. The Individual, Culture and Society (6 credits)

   IV. Humanistic Thought (6 credits)

   V. Artistic Expression (3 credits)

   VI. Advanced Study (6 credits).

The statements below establish criteria for determining whether a specific course qualifies as a general-education offering. Included are criteria applying to *all* general-education courses and separate sets of additional criteria applying to courses proposed for each of the six areas of the General Education Core.

Securing course approval requires submission of a General Education Course Proposal Form (attached) and the additional materials identified on that form. This procedure provides that each proposal will detail the general-education criteria the course is designed to meet and the methods by which fulfillment of these criteria is to be achieved and assessed.

Criteria for Evaluating Courses Proposed for Inclusion in
<u>Any</u> General-Education Area

- The course should provide a basis for life-long learning.

- The course should foster intellectual skills that transcend the boundaries of discrete disciplines. The course might fulfill this requirement by centering on a specific discipline or by being interdisciplinary or cross-disciplinary.

- From the course, students should gain both substantive knowledge and appreciation of different methodologies; they should also experience the integration of knowledge and method.

- The course should be appropriate for nonmajors and for students who are unlikely to take another course in the discipline. This requirement does not preclude the possibility that the course might also be appropriate for majors.

- In its content and its approach, the course should satisfy the goals and criteria of the general-education area to which it belongs.

- The course syllabus should have clearly stated goals focusing on student outcomes rather than on the instructor's intentions.

- The course syllabus should establish the relationships between course content and activities (assignments, modes of learning) and course goals and should also clearly indicate how accomplishment of the course goals will be assessed.

- Regardless of the General Education Core area in which it satisfies a requirement, the course should help students advance their understanding and mastery of skills in the Linguistic and Numerical Foundations area and should help prepare students for successful learning in the Advanced Study area.

- The course should require no prior knowledge of the discipline(s) in which the course is based, beyond what might reasonably be expected of a high-school graduate.

- Wherever possible, the course should make substantial use of primary sources.

I. Linguistic and Numerical Foundations

Linguistic and numerical foundations are requisite to thinking and communicating critically and creatively. Courses in this area teach students (1) to speak and write precisely, clearly, and persuasively; (2) to read and listen actively and with comprehension; and (3) to reason quantitatively as means of gaining and creating knowledge and drawing reliable conclusions. Every student's curriculum should be arranged so as to provide skills in each of these 3 areas. Because of their fundamental nature, courses in this area should be designed to be completed within each student's first 30 credits of enrollment.

Criteria for Evaluating Courses Proposed for Inclusion in the Linguistic and Numerical Foundations Area

- The course may be cross-disciplinary, specific to a discipline, or multi-disciplinary. In any case, it should include discussions which emphasize how core skills transcend disciplines: Developing skills which students may transfer or adapt to tasks inside and outside the university should be central to the course.

- The course should require students to develop and apply appropriate information-gathering skills. These should include, *inter alia,* traditional library skills, database searching, interviewing and surveying, and other data-generation techniques.

- Wherever possible, the course should enhance students' skills in writing, speaking, and numerical reasoning, though it need not focus equally on all of three areas.

- The course should emphasize the development of skills which allow students to construct arguments and rationales in a variety of contexts, and consider the arguments and rationales of others in a reasoned manner. Students should be expected to analyze information, synthesize their thoughts and beliefs into a comprehensive and persuasive argument or rationale, and evaluate their own and others' written, visual, and oral presentations in terms of appropriate contextual criteria.

- The course should enable students to become adept with using appropriate presentation tools in a variety of media.

- The course should focus on written, oral, and numeric applications which will enable the student to

  - Establish connections within and among disciplines
  - Think critically during the processes of identifying, formulating, and correctly solving problems
  - Analyze, display, and use data in a variety of formats
  - Reason properly in a variety of contexts, using deductive and inductive reasoning, and avoiding logical fallacies
  - Comprehend, develop, and appropriately use concepts, generalizations, abstractions, and relationships
  - Distinguish among fact, opinion, and personal preference
  - Adapt information and presentation methods to clearly defined audiences, in summaries and paraphrases of written, visual, and oral information, and in expressions of original thought.

II. Physical and Natural World

Understanding of the physical and natural world requires comprehension of the role of human intelligence and imagination in formulating concepts; the role of observation and inference in investigations; how theories are formed, tested, and validated; the limitations inherent to scientific inquiry; and the impact of science and mathematics upon intellectual history. Such learning fosters scientific thinking; knowledge of the physical and natural world; and understanding of the human, social, and political implications of theories and research.

Courses proposed for inclusion in the Physical and Natural World area should reflect the philosophy of science summarized in the following quotation:

> To do science is to search for repeated patterns, not simply to accumulate facts. . . . Doing science is not such a barrier to feeling or such a dehumanizing influence as is often made out. It does not take the beauty from nature. The only rules of scientific method are honest observations and accurate logic.

> —Robert H. MacArthur, *Geographical Ecology*

Courses should introduce the student to the scientific approach to the study of nature, and not consist simply of a list of unrelated, disjointed facts. Where possible, such courses should emphasize the interrelatedness of scientific disciplines and the interactions between scientific knowledge and other areas of human intellectual and artistic culture.

Criteria for Evaluating Courses Proposed for Inclusion in the Physical and Natural World Area

- The course will ordinarily originate in disciplines that deal with topics related to the physical and natural world. It is admittedly possible to approach the study of human cultures and societies using scientific methodology; however, because such manifestations of human behavior will be emphasized in other areas of the general-education program, the course will ordinarily *not* focus on topics conventionally covered in the other areas of the core. To ensure that students are exposed to aspects of the natural world beyond the narrow concerns of human beings, the course will ordinarily *not* deal exclusively with the biology or behavior of the human species.

- One of the major thrusts of the course should be an explanation of how scientific knowledge is developed. There should be explicit explanations of how observations are made, hypotheses formulated and tested, and theories developed, using the important organizing theories of the discipline(s) being taught as exemplars. Discussions of this kind should include consideration of how the important ideas of the area of study were formulated and tested, the persons responsible for the relevant ideas, observations, and experiments, and how the development of those ideas was influenced by, and in turn

affected, the overall intellectual environment of the times and places in which the theories originated. Furthermore, the course should explicitly consider the impact that ideas and discoveries of the area of study continue to have on human society.

- Wherever possible, the course should involve hands-on participation of students. This could involve data collection and analysis in the laboratory or the field, or the solving in the classroom of quantitative problems relevant to the topics of the course. The course should consider how observations and measurements are made and the limitations of data generated in such studies. The course should demonstrate how mathematical and statistical reasoning of the kind covered in the Numerical Foundations component of the core is important in formulating and testing hypotheses in the natural sciences.

- Whenever possible, the course should expose students to the kind of writing that scientists do. In addition to whatever textbook reading assignments are made, students should become acquainted with other kinds of writing relevant to the course topics, such as journal articles, reviews, and popular essays. Ideally, students should participate in scientific writing of their own, such as preparing laboratory reports, critically evaluating published articles, or summarizing the results of semester-long research projects.

III. The Individual, Culture and Society

Students must understand the nature and diversity of individuals, cultures and societies around the world. An exploration of behavioral, societal, and cultural processes forms the basis for that understanding. This understanding of diverse systems assists the student in overcoming provincialism; in developing the willingness, confidence, and sense of responsibility for making informed decisions; and in acquiring the ability to assess personal behavior and that of others. Such learning requires an historical consciousness; familiarity with components of social structure and social institutions; knowledge of basic behavioral processes; comprehension of the interplay among ideas, technology, and social organization; and appreciation of the complex dimensions of personal and institutional rules.

Criteria for Evaluating Courses Proposed for Inclusion in the Individual, Culture and Society Area

- The course should foster an appreciation of our multicultural society and the diversity of human behavior. It should familiarize students with different customs, traditions, and values.

- The course should provide information on social institutions and the processes developed by society for their functioning.

- The course should provide information about behavioral processes and the responses of individuals to the physical and social environment.

- The course should require critical analysis of the concepts and systems discussed. It should contrast cultures and societies under consideration with systems familiar to the student.

- The course should provide opportunities for students to enhance their effectiveness in critical thought and dialogue.

- The course should motivate students to consider the variety of experiences, individual personalities, perspectives, and persuasions that have impact on societies and cultures.

- The course should stimulate a life-long endeavor to nurture awareness of, understanding of, appreciation for, concern for, and respect for humanness and differences as individuals organize in groups.

IV. Humanistic Thought

Humanistic thought is the attempt to resolve such abiding issues as the meaning of life, the role of the arts in our understanding of what it is to be human, and the limits of knowledge. Humanistic inquiry assesses—across temporal, cultural, disciplinary, and theoretical divisions—how humans view themselves in relation to other humans, to nature, and to the divine. Studies in the humanities offer students the intellectual resources to develop mature self-concepts and heightened social consciousness.

Criteria for Evaluating Courses Proposed for Inclusion in the Humanistic Thought Area

- In its *content*, the course may focus on a single tradition or on more than one, may traverse centuries or be limited to a relatively brief span of time, may examine the works of canonized artists and thinkers or works by artists and thinkers outside of established canons—but should always emphasize the importance of understanding the specific historical and cultural context in which the artists/thinkers worked, in order to appreciate the significance of their work.

- In its *approach to the subject matter*, the course should lead students to reflect critically on the traditions that have shaped their values, beliefs, and aesthetic preferences, and to make meaningful comparisons between the traditions that have shaped them and traditions different from theirs.

- The course should treat issues that are of fundamental importance to developing a mature view of life and human endeavor.

- The course should recognize the importance of an interdisciplinary understanding, either by using materials and methods from more than one discipline, or by bringing

perspectives from other disciplines to bear on the materials and methods of a single discipline.

V. Artistic Expression

Artistic expression requires practicing the fine and performing, the literary, the popular, or the applied arts as a means of exploring and enlarging human sensibilities.

Criteria for Evaluating Courses Proposed for Inclusion in the Artistic Expression Area

- The course should require students both to create and to reflect upon the creative process—both to form and to express ideas.

- The course should introduce students to relativity of perspective, limitation of method, and distinctiveness of approach.

VI. Advanced Study

Building on Areas I-V, the advanced study requirement provides opportunities for synthesizing knowledge, preferably across disciplines. Advanced study courses are problem-oriented and require completion of a project. The requirement is fulfilled by completing two approved courses.

Faculty developing courses for this area are encouraged to think creatively. For example, internships and service learning courses, as well as more traditional upper-level courses and seminars, could be tailored to meet the advanced study requirement. In general, advanced study courses should include a larger than usual amount of interaction between the instructor and individual students, or between the instructor and student small groups.

Criteria for Evaluating Courses Proposed for Inclusion in the Advanced Study Area

Courses for Area VI may be proposed by any IPFW department or program, including those which did not submit course proposals for Areas I-V.

- The course should meet the general criteria that apply to courses proposed for inclusion in *any* general education area, except that some prior knowledge (such as that gained from completing general education requirements) will be assumed. The proposal should detail the general education criteria that the course is designed to meet and the methods by which fulfillment of these criteria is to be achieved and assessed.

- The proposal should state clearly what prior knowledge or skill is necessary for students to be successful in the course and how the students will use that knowledge or skill. Proposals for courses open to a broad range of majors are encouraged.

- The proposal should explain how the course will foster the ability to synthesize knowledge and how students will demonstrate that they are capable of that synthesis.

- Advanced study courses shall require attainment of B3 status and completion of the Area I requirement, or instructor permission.

General Education Course Proposal Form

Instructions

1. Complete the items on this form.

2. Attach (1) a course syllabus and (2) a statement on how the course fulfills two sets of criteria— both those applying to *all* general-education courses and those applying to its specific general-education area.

3. Transmit the form and attachments to the General Education Subcommittee.

_____

1. Check the general-education area to which the course belongs.

   ☐   I. Linguistic and Numerical Foundations

   ☐   II. Physical and Natural World

   ☐   III. The Individual, Culture and Society

   ☐ IV. Humanistic Thought

   ☐   V. Artistic Expression

   ☐ VI. Advanced Study

2. Supply the course prefix and number. _____

3. Supply the course title.

   _____

4. Supply the course credit hours. _____

5. Provide a course description of 150 or fewer words, to be used by academic advisors and
   prospective students.

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6. Identify the school/division and department responsible for the course.

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7._ Identify the academic session in which the course will first be offered as a general-education course._____

8._ Identify the frequency of scheduling of the course._____

9._ Identify the enrollment maximum. _____

10._ Identify the course instructor(s)._____

11._ Check the course status.

    ☐   Existing course that has not been modified to fulfill general-education requirements

    ☐   Existing course that has been modified to fulfill general-education requirements

    ☐   New course that has gone through the appropriate course-approval process

    ☐   New course that has not yet gone through the appropriate course-approval process

12._ Identify the person to be contacted by the General Education Subcommittee for further information about the course._____

13._ If resources not currently available are required for the course, identify them.

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Approval of Chair or Director in Charge of Course   Date

_____   _____

Signature of Dean   Date

_____   _____

Approval of General Education Subcommittee   Date

_____   _____

Received by the Vice Chancellor for Academic   Date

Affairs for Implementation

_____   _____

Received by the Registrar for Information   Date