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## **Academic Program: Undergraduate Studies GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM**

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### **General Education Curriculum**

#### **Definition**

General education is a program of study which introduces students to a broad, liberal course of instruction in the major areas of knowledge (the arts and sciences). Its aim is to cultivate the intellect by educating students to reason logically, to think critically, to express themselves clearly, and to foster an understanding of the human condition and the role of value judgments in the human experience. As an integrated educational experience, the general education program helps to provide the foundation for further intellectual growth and holistic development. In addition to giving a sense of the various academic disciplines, and their interrelationships, general education serves as the common element for all degree programs leading to the baccalaureate.

#### **Purpose**

Consistent with Millersville University's mission to provide a liberal arts-based education, the purpose of general education is to provide breadth of knowledge as a balance and complement to the depth provided by the major. This is necessary for the holistic development of Millersville graduates as responsible citizens in a diverse and technologically complex, global community.

#### **Characteristics of the General Education Program**

The program is intended to exhibit an identifiable organization and coherence of course orientation and development. The interrelatedness of the areas of knowledge should be discernible to the students throughout the program, with the academic disciplines represented as interpretations of and contributions to knowledge rather than as self-

serving entities. Indeed, the program accommodates the design and implementation of course offerings outside the traditional departmental units of the disciplines constituting the arts and sciences.

The liberal arts component of a "general education" program is designed to prepare students to live, not simply to make a living. While a narrowly focused or highly technical program may provide for success in the marketplace and make competent technicians, the general education program provides broad competence which helps produce complete, mature, responsible leaders and citizens of the world; that is, the program is "practical" in that it helps students prepare for the wide variety of problems with which they must contend in a complex world. Its value resists obsolescence.

The program is meant to reflect the reality of a culturally pluralistic and interdependent world. The common survival of humanity in a world of finite resources demands an unprecedented level of understanding and positive engagement with peoples of diverse histories and communities. Our students must be made aware of the global perspectives which can enhance this understanding.

In a society compelled to emphasize technical specialization, the need for courses in the liberal arts becomes ever more important to assure the development of an educated person who can communicate, reason, and solve problems intelligently.

The General Education Program is intended to be characterized by:

1. Clear purpose that is well understood by all members of the university community and that is consistent with the MU mission and the specific learning needs of MU students.
2. Intentional alignment of the objectives, curricular structure, and assessment with the purpose of general education, the mission of Millersville University, and the learning needs of our students.
3. Coherence and connections between Gen Ed and majors.
4. Intellectual richness, setting appropriately high expectations for students' engagement that develop as students progress through their academic programs.
5. Academic community reaching beyond the Classroom, fostering interactions between and among students, faculty, and the larger Millersville University community.
6. Simplicity and flexibility, promoting ease of understanding and greater choice in meeting the Gen Ed requirements.

Furthermore, certain basic principles shape the curriculum of the general education program. The program is designed to ensure:

1. that the students possess the fundamental competencies:
  - a. Critical reasoning
  - b. Oral and written communication
  - c. Mathematical reasoning
  - d. Scientific reasoning
  - e. Information literacy
  - f. Technology literacy;
2. that there be a significant exposure to the liberal arts;
3. that the liberal arts core be protected from erosion on either side, such as the granting of credit in the liberal arts core for pre-college level work or for work in the student's field of specialization; that the number of 100 level courses

- students may take for general education be limited; and
4. that some specified courses at the 200 level or above which count for general education credit contain a significant writing component. Writing is central to the academic process; therefore, the general education curriculum should provide opportunity for students to develop the skill of writing throughout their academic careers, both horizontally (across the curriculum) and vertically (at all levels of study).

### **Objectives of General Education**

Students, working with advisors, and taking into consideration prior knowledge and experience, purposefully select courses in the general education curriculum that meld with required courses, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, and courses in the major to achieve the following objectives:

#### *FOUNDATIONS FOR LIFELONG LEARNING*

Students will think, speak, and write clearly. This is evidenced by:

- a. the clear presentation of ideas in formal spoken, written, and media forms.
- b. the use of effective communication for ongoing dialogue.
- c. the ability to find appropriate sources of information, evaluate that information, and integrate that information into a final product.
- d. the use of statistical methods and other techniques of mathematics to analyze and solve problems.

#### *CRITICAL THINKING ACROSS THE LIBERAL ARTS*

Students will demonstrate foundational knowledge of the important ideas and methods of different ways of knowing as follows:

Courses in the arts and humanities (G1 category) challenge students to examine, analyze and critically evaluate artifacts of the human intellect and imagination to illuminate the complexity of the human experience. Through exposure to multiple voices, insights, objects, and other creative works, students explore and interpret questions of meaning, fact and value. Ultimately, this engagement expands knowledge, deepens empathy and encourages collaboration between diverse individuals and communities.

Courses in the sciences and mathematics (G2 category) develop students' understanding and knowledge of scientific and mathematical reasoning and of strategies for logical problem solving. Students are challenged to recognize that scientific explanations offer falsifiable predictions, that claims must be supported by evidence and logical reasoning, and that the nature of scientific discovery and knowledge is fluid. Courses emphasize that the scientific meaning of fact, theory, and law are not a hierarchy, and give students an appreciation of essential creative aspects of scientific process and discovery.

Laboratory courses in the sciences (L) should provide ample experience with the scientific process as well as thorough hands-on training in the tools, methods, and subject matter appropriate to the discipline.

Courses in the social sciences (G3 category) focus on the intricate relationship between human behavior and social institutions. Through qualitative and/or quantitative methods of inquiry, students discover and ascertain how human beings behave and are expected to behave, within certain contexts. This interaction allows students to comprehend and

articulate the relationship between behavior and context across people, cultures, time, and place.

### *CONNECTIONS AND EXPLORATION*

Students will connect important ideas and methods of inquiry from different disciplines as a means of becoming holistic and responsible citizens in a diverse and technologically complex, global community. Students will:

- a. demonstrate civic and social responsibility.
- b. grow in their engagement with peoples of diverse histories and communities, both inside and outside the United States.
- c. build the foundation for a lifelong process of understanding, developing, and monitoring healthy lifestyle behaviors in all dimensions of wellness, including physical, social, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, and environmental wellness.
- d. gain personal enrichment by developing new interests that can be enjoyed throughout a lifetime.

### **Criteria for General Education Courses**

The criteria for evaluating courses to be counted in the Critical Thinking across the Liberal Arts component of general education are:

1. The course must demonstrate how one or more of the general education objectives stated above are satisfied.
2. In each course the major concepts and principles that epitomize the liberal arts discipline must be the primary focus.
3. The process of inquiry and analysis commonly employed in the discipline must be emphasized and applied.
4. The course must not be primarily a technical, professional or career-oriented course.
5. A general education course from a given department may require a maximum of two prerequisites from that same department.

### **General Education Course Review and Recertification Procedure**

#### **New Courses**

Any new or existing course seeking to meet a specific general education requirement (i.e., G1, G2, G3, L labels or AW, D, P, W labels) shall complete the appropriate certification form (available on the General Education website) and follow the course approval procedures approved by Faculty Senate.

#### **Approval of FYI (UNIV 103) Courses**

The First Year Inquiry Seminar UNIV 103 was officially approved in the spring of 2008. New sections of FYI courses may be proposed by departments. Non-instructional departments or units may also propose FYI sections once special approval is granted by Faculty Senate. Since UNIV 103 is an approved course, those units seeking a new section of UNIV 103 follow an expedited review process outlined below. The department proposing the course must demonstrate how the new FYI section will meet each of the specific criteria defining the course as outlined in the approved UNIV 103 Course Proposal (available on the General Education Program website). Once the course has been approved by the department, the department will submit to the chair of UCPRC (electronically) the following documents for each course:

- a. The FYI Course Proposal form that asks how the course meets the criteria.
  - b. A course syllabus.
  - c. Supporting documentation the instructor/department feels is needed to support the course proposal form.
2. The chair of UCPRC distributes the submitted certification documents to the FYI Sub-committee of UCPRC for review. Proposal representatives are expected to meet with the FYI Sub-committee.
3. The FYI Sub-committee of UCPRC reviews the certification documents and makes one of three recommendations to UCPRC:
  - a. Approval of the FYI course as presented.
  - b. Approval of the FYI Course subject to certain amendments agreed to by the department spokesperson. Such amendments shall appear at each stage as attachments to the original proposal unless they are purely editorial.
  - c. Disapproval. Reasons for disapproval must be clearly stated in writing to the proposal spokesperson. Revised certification documents must undergo the complete certification review process (e.g. Departmental then UCPRC approval).
4. The chair of UCPRC communicates final decisions regarding each course to the departmental spokesperson.

### **Recertification of General Education (AW, D, FYI, P, and W) courses**

Once approved, Advanced Writing (AW), Cultural Diversity and Community (D) courses, First Year Inquiry (UNIV 103) seminars, Perspectives (P) courses, and Writing (W) courses are subject to a five-year re-certification process. If a department wishes a course to retain the General Education label, the department must submit each existing labeled course to UCPRC during the fall of the year designated for recertification of its courses. Recertification of a department's courses with general education labels occurs in the same year as the department's PASSHE Five-Year Program Review. The Associate Provost for Student Success or their designee will send a reminder to Department Chairs about the need to submit courses for recertification. Failure to submit courses for review during the academic year will result in the General Education label being removed in the following academic year.

#### *Recertification Process*

1. For an existing course that is to retain a general education label, the department offering the course must demonstrate how it has met each of the specific criteria defining the label as outlined in the Governance and Policies. The department will submit to the chair of UCPRC (electronically) the following documents for each course:
  - a. A brief evaluation form that asks how the course meets the criteria.
  - b. A course syllabus.
  - c. Supporting documentation the instructor/department feels is needed to support the evaluation form. These documents should include a syllabus, assessment data and/or student work that demonstrates:
    - i. That the course meets stated guidelines and objectives as outlined below.
    - ii. Successful students have met the appropriate competencies.
2. The chair of UCPRC distributes the submitted certification documents to the

- appropriate Sub-committee of UCPRC for review.
3. The Sub-committee of UCPRC reviews the certification documents and makes one of three recommendations to UCPRC:
    - a. Approval of the label for the course as presented.
    - b. Approval of the label subject to certain amendments agreed to by the department spokesperson. Such amendments shall appear at each stage as attachments to the original proposal unless they are purely editorial.
    - c. Disapproval. Reasons for disapproval must be clearly stated in writing to the proposal spokesperson. Revised certification documents can be resubmitted to the full recertification process.
  4. The chair of UCPRC communicates final decisions regarding each course to the departmental spokesperson. In addition, the chair of UCPRC advises the Faculty Senate at each full Faculty Senate meeting of courses that have been approved to meet the general education label requirements.

### Structure of the Program

To meet the objectives of General Education, the general education program is organized into a structure with three components: Foundations for Lifelong Learning, Critical Thinking across the Liberal Arts, and Connections and Exploration.

General Education Structure (Minimum 48 credits)

1. *Foundations for Lifelong Learning*<sup>1</sup> (Four courses – minimum 12 credits)
  - a. ENGL 110: English Composition - 3 credits
  - b. COMM 100: Fundamentals of Speech - 3 credits
  - c. General Education MATH Course (3-4 credits)
  - d. Advanced Writing (3 credits)
    - i. Must be chosen from an approved AW course.
    - ii. At least 60 credits (Junior standing) required
2. *Critical Thinking across the Liberal Arts* (Nine courses – minimum 27 credits)
  - a. Humanities and Fine Arts (G1): Three courses totaling a minimum of 9 credits.
  - b. Science and Mathematics (G2): Three courses totaling a minimum of 9 credits. At least two of the three courses must come from Biology, Chemistry, Earth Sciences, and/or Physics including one which has a Laboratory (L) component.
  - c. Social Sciences (G3): Three courses totaling a minimum of 9 credits.
  - d. Courses must be taken from at least two departments within each G1, G2, and G3 block.
  - e. At least 3 courses taken throughout blocks G1, G2 and G3 must be at the 200 level or above.
  - f. Courses in a student's primary major discipline cannot fulfill the Critical Thinking across the Liberal Arts requirement; courses from a minor, a second major, or up to six courses required for the major from departments outside the major can fulfill this requirement.
  - g. No more than two courses can be taken from any one department throughout the Critical Thinking Across the Liberal Arts blocks (G1, G2, and G3).
3. *Connections and Exploration* (Three courses - minimum 9 credits)
  - a. First Year Inquiry seminar or Open Elective - 3 credits
  - b. Approved Wellness course - 3 credits

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<sup>1</sup> "Foundations for Lifelong Learning" requirements may not double-count for "Critical Thinking across the Liberal Arts" or "Connections and Exploration" requirements below.

- c. Perspectives (P) course - 3 credits
  - i. May be in General Education, the major, the minor or general electives
  - ii. At least 60 credits (Junior standing) required
  - iii. The English Composition and Fundamentals of Speech competency must be satisfied prior to enrollment in "P" courses.
- 4. *Cultural Diversity and Community (D) course*
  - a. One course required – 3 credits
  - b. May be in General Education, the major, the minor or general electives.
- 5. *Writing (W) Courses* – 3 courses required
  - a. May be in General Education, the major, the minor or general electives.
  - b. The English 110 competency must be satisfied prior to enrollment in "W" courses.

## **Guidelines and Competencies for General Education Courses**

### **Definitions of significant oral and written communication**

Many general education courses require a significant oral and written communication component to help facilitate students' practice and mastery of oral and written communication. FYI (UNIV 103), Cultural Diversity and Community (D), and Perspectives (P) courses all require significant oral and/or written communication.

To have a meaningful oral component, the teaching and learning strategies adopted by the course should involve students in active speaking and listening roles, including such tasks as student oral presentations (individually or in groups), oral exams, debates, and classroom discussions. Students should be in roles that place them in interaction with an audience of their peers so that communication is interactive, reciprocal and synchronous. The assessment of student learning through these roles should contribute to students' overall course grades.

To have a meaningful writing component, the teaching and learning strategies adopted by the course should involve students in writing activities, such as research papers, analytical essays, position papers, lab reports, personal journals, and the like. The assessment of student learning through these activities should constitute a substantial portion ( $\geq 20\%$ ) of students' overall course grades.

### **Foundations for Lifelong Learning**

#### *English Composition*

All students must successfully complete English 110, or its equivalent (see listing below), preferably during their freshman year. The equivalent includes:

1. Achieving a combined score of 1100 in the verbal portion of the S.A.T. and the CEEB English Composition Achievement Test.
2. Achieving a score of 3 or higher in the Advanced Placement (AP) test in English Composition.
3. Achieving a satisfactory score in the CLEP general examination in English composition.
4. Passing the English Composition Competency Examination administered by the English Department at the beginning of each fall and spring semester.

#### *Fundamentals of Speech*

All students must successfully complete Communication 100, or its equivalent,

preferably before the junior year. Students who earn a grade of C- or higher in a competency examination administered by the Communication & Theatre department will also successfully meet this requirement.

### COMM 100 – Fundamentals of Speech Competencies

Upon successful completion of COMM 100 or its equivalent students will be able to:

- i. Creatively research, analyze, organize and synthesize a variety of reliable source materials into effective individual presentations and/or successfully collaborative group presentations.
- ii. Demonstrate ethical responsibility and cultural sensitivity toward their audience in regard to issues of diversity, as well as demonstrate an ability to negotiate with other differences of opinion, belief, or value.
- iii. Utilize critical thinking and evaluative skills, as both speakers and listeners, to assess the appropriateness and effectiveness of presentational strategies (especially with regard to persuasion and argumentation).
- iv. Overcome any speech anxieties and fears and, thus, enhance their self-image and project a sense of self-confidence.
- v. Adapt their delivery and messages to a variety of contexts, occasions, and audiences.
- vi. Conceive, develop, and deliver effective, articulate, and engaging presentations. This includes mastering all facets of speech writing, demonstrating skill in verbal and nonverbal delivery, and making effective use of language, evidence, and forms of expression.
- vii. Demonstrate adequate knowledge of various communication theories/concepts and processes.

### *Advanced Writing*

Students who successfully complete their English composition requirement, will take one of the courses listed below or another approved Advanced Writing course during their junior or senior years. Individual departments with programs which offer a significant advanced writing course, such as senior thesis or advanced foreign language composition, may petition through the appropriate academic channels to have such a course accepted as an alternate to the upper division writing course in English.<sup>2</sup>Advanced Composition Courses English 311: Advanced Composition English 312: Technical Writing English 313: Journalism  
English 316: Business Writing

### Advanced Writing Competencies

Upon successful completion of an Advanced Writing course, students will be able to:

- i. Demonstrate flexibility in applying the writing process to a variety of communication contexts.
- ii. Understand rhetorical situations and multicultural contexts and respond to the demands of both in the preparation of texts.
- iii. Demonstrate enhanced fluency and distinctiveness in writing style.
- iv. Apply rhetorical principles to real-world situations in the academy, at work, and in the community.

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<sup>2</sup> Currently, the following alternatives have been approved: History 406 (Senior Seminar) passed with a grade of B or above and Honors Theses in the following Departments (check with Departments for specific rules that may apply): Biology, Elementary Education, Mathematics, and Music. Honors Theses for students in the Honors College also satisfy the Advanced Writing requirement.



- v. Effectively employ technologies to create and support texts.

## **Connections & Exploration Courses**

### **First Year Inquiry Seminar (UNIV 103)**

The FYI seminar (UNIV 103) is specifically designed for first semester freshmen and offered in a seminar format, typically linked to a foundations course (either ENGL 110 or COMM 100) as part of a learning community. A major function of these FYI seminars is to introduce a process of critical inquiry applied to important social, cultural, scientific, technological, and/or aesthetic problems. Each FYI seminar will introduce multiple perspectives related to the understanding and resolution of these problems. A second function of these FYI seminars is to support students' transition into the college experience academically, socially, and personally.

First Year Inquiry Seminar (UNIV 103) Criteria:

1. Involves 3 credit hours at the 100-level.
2. Encourages students to consider multiple perspectives in advancing their understanding of the importance of social, cultural, scientific, technological, and/or aesthetic problems.
3. Introduces and supports (i) the development of critical inquiry skills and (ii) the exchange of ideas in a seminar format.
4. Supports the students' successful transition into college life by fostering connections between and among students, teachers, and the college community.
5. Provides intellectual richness through its assignments and assessments.
6. Strengthens students' information literacy.
7. Has meaningful oral and written communication components but may not carry a "W" label.
8. Fosters an appreciation of the importance of civic engagement and promotes participation in service-learning activities.
9. Promotes an understanding and appreciation of the liberal arts tradition and the General Education program at Millersville.

### **Perspectives "P"**

A major function of Perspectives courses is to apply analytical and critical thinking abilities in resolving major social, cultural, scientific/technological, and/or aesthetic problems. They are interdisciplinary in content and require a high level of educational maturity, knowledge, and thinking. Perspectives courses encourage undergraduate students to make independent and responsible value judgments and decisions.

Perspectives courses integrate the knowledge acquired throughout the baccalaureate experience. For example, Perspectives courses nurture and extend the basic communications skills developed in the Foundations for Life-Long Learning component of general education. Moreover, Perspectives courses demonstrate how different areas of knowledge gained in the Critical Thinking across the Liberal Arts component of general education are complementary.

Students who complete an academic fall or spring semester abroad as part of a baccalaureate degree will be considered to have fulfilled the Perspectives requirement. International students studying at Millersville will also be considered to have fulfilled the Perspectives requirement. In addition, those students who complete professional experiences abroad such as internships, student teaching field placements, or social work field placements that meet the departmental baccalaureate requirements will also

be considered to have fulfilled the Perspectives requirement regardless of whether those experiences occur in fall, spring, or summer. This waiver does not cover credit hours. A student employing this waiver will be required to satisfy three credit hours of general education courses in lieu of the waived three credit Perspectives course. This is in addition to any other Open Elective requirements of the student.

**Perspectives Course Criteria:**

1. Must be 3 credit hours at the 300 level or above.
2. Must have meaningful oral and written communication components but may not carry a "W" label.
3. Must be interdisciplinary in content.
4. Requires students to identify, critically analyze, and resolve complex problems (social, cultural, scientific/technological, and/or aesthetic) that require the application of knowledge from two or more academic disciplines.
5. Must enable quality interaction.
6. May not have more than two prerequisites from a single department.
7. May not count in the Critical Thinking across the Liberal Arts (i.e. may not carry a "G" label).
8. Perspectives courses must be designed to be accessible to non-majors as well as majors. Appropriately prepared students from outside the major must be capable of benefiting from the course on an equal basis with students from within the major.

**Perspectives Course Competencies:**

Upon successful completion of a Perspectives course students will be able to:

- i. Demonstrate awareness of multiple disciplinary rules, practices (methods of investigations) and biases.
- ii. Demonstrate understanding of how members of different disciplines raise questions, examine questions, and evaluate conclusions.
- iii. Demonstrate an ability to suspend judgment and explore similarities and differences across disciplines.
- iv. Articulate how knowledge of other disciplines informs one's own disciplinary interpretation.
- v. Participate in speaking and listening roles.

**Wellness Courses**

The Wellness requirement is designed to assist students in making positive lifestyle changes that reduce their health risks, modify their consumer behavior, and enhance their personal well-being and productivity.

**Wellness Course Criteria:**

1. Must be a 3-credit course.
2. Requires students to participate in a weekly physical or experiential component.
3. Must be a comprehensive approach to wellness employing a variety of cognitive, behavioral, and social learning strategies to encourage and assist students in accepting responsibility for their own wellness.
4. Engages students in critical thinking about wellness.
5. Emphasizes the development of life-long holistic learning.

**Wellness Course Competencies:**

Upon successful completion of WELL 175 or its equivalent students will be able to:

- i. Specify and demonstrate benefits of a comprehensive wellness lifestyle including the various dimensions of wellness: emotional, environmental, intellectual,

- interpersonal, physical and spiritual.
- ii. Identify potential barriers to wellness and produce a plan to overcome those barriers.
- iii. Illustrate the health-related components of physical fitness and explain the importance of each to the student's overall fitness and health.
- iv. Develop and implement a personalized fitness program.
- v. Explain and critique the influences that impact wellness on both a personal and global scale.
- vi. Provide evidence-based approaches that address and potentially remedy identified influences.

### **Cultural Diversity and Community “D”**

Cultural diversity and community courses align with the University's mission to foster in students an appreciation for cultural diversity. Here, “cultural diversity” refers to the differences among people in terms of beliefs, customs, values, politics, and experiences. In essence, culture is a worldview; it is both learned and evolved. The following factors are seen as underlying these differences: age, economics, education, gender, geography, language, nationality, occupation, physical ability, race and ethnicity, religious affiliation, and/or sexual orientation among others. A Cultural Diversity and Community course is more than a mere survey or exposure of the students to different cultures; rather it teaches students to think critically about the basis for intercultural differences.

Students who complete an academic fall or spring semester abroad as part of a baccalaureate degree will be considered to have fulfilled the Diversity requirement. International students studying at Millersville will also be considered to have fulfilled the Diversity requirement. In addition, those students who complete professional experiences abroad such as internships, student teaching field placements, or social work field placements that meet the departmental baccalaureate requirements will also be considered to have fulfilled the Diversity requirement regardless of whether those experiences occur in fall, spring, or summer. For all other study abroad experiences, a student may request to fulfill the Diversity requirement by successfully completing an outcomes paper. The outcomes paper will be evaluated through the Office of Global Education. This Diversity waiver does not cover credit hours. A student employing this waiver will be required to satisfy three credit hours of general education courses in lieu of the waived three credit Diversity course. This is in addition to any other Open Elective requirements of the student.

#### **Cultural Diversity and Community Course Criteria:**

1. Involves 3 credit hours at the 100-level or above.
2. Is intercultural and/or cross-cultural, with culture being a worldview that reflects beliefs, customs, values, politics, and experiences as shaped by age, economics, education, gender, geography, language, nationality, occupation, physical ability, race and ethnicity, religious affiliation, and/or sexual orientation among other factors.
3. Examines historical and environmental (e.g., social and/or physical) factors that underlie cultural differences.
4. Examines the potential global, regional, or local factors that underlie cultural differences.
5. Helps students to identify, critically analyze, and apply scholarship and experience related to cultural diversity.
6. Provides academic structure in support of students' positive engagement with peoples of diverse histories and communities.

7. Challenges students to evaluate their own personal worldview.
8. Has meaningful oral and written communication components.

#### Cultural Diversity and Community Course Competencies:

Upon successful completion of a Cultural Diversity and Community course students will be able to:

- i. Demonstrate awareness of one's own cultural rules and biases.
- ii. Demonstrate understanding of the complexity of cultural elements through various lenses such as history, values, politics, communication styles, gender, economy, or beliefs and practices.
- iii. Demonstrate the ability to interpret events and/or actions in a manner that recognizes the worldview of oneself and other cultural groups.

#### **Significant Writing Component Guidelines "W"**

Courses carrying a "W" designation are designed to develop skills and habits of writing to enable students to communicate confidently and effectively in print and/or new media environments. The courses expose students to expectations appropriate to specific discipline, while encouraging the use of clear language, credible and relevant sources, and awareness of context and purpose in the development of well-reasoned texts.

Writing courses are designed to lead students to more fully appreciate the writing process, a process which includes writing, rewriting, editing, and revision. Courses with a 'W' designation must continue to demonstrate the importance of writing in both individual learning and group communication.

#### Writing Course Criteria:

1. Students practice forms of writing typical of the field. Writing assignments are designed to develop their content knowledge and enhance their communication skills.
2. Students are required to submit at least 2500 words of graded analytical/persuasive writing (about 10 standard double-spaced pages). Some examples of how this requirement might be met include:
  - a. a research paper in which the student is required to define a problem, select, organize, and synthesize information around a stated thesis.
  - b. short analytical essays that explore a topic with reasoned evidence and informed opinion.
  - c. position papers prepared by students that address pros and cons of controversial topics.
  - d. micro themes that ask the student to find academic sources, organize ideas, develop a thesis and show evidence, but condense the final paper to a single page or two.
3. Because W courses assume that writing is a process, students will be given opportunities to develop and revise papers through more than one draft. Assignments will be structured and sequenced in ways that help students improve their writing through practice and revision. Instructors' feedback on students' writing will contribute to effective revision and encourage students to develop effective self-assessment.
4. Writing intensive courses work best when they include a combination of informal and formal writing experiences for students. In addition to the 2500 words of revised graded analytical/persuasive writing, instructors are encouraged to assign expressive, reflective and/or observational writing tasks. The purpose of these assignments is to bring out the student's perceptions informally, and to increase writing practice.

Writing Component Course Competencies:

Upon successful completion of a Writing course students will be able to:

- i. Articulate ideas clearly in writing.
- ii. Demonstrate the ability to find, evaluate and integrate appropriate sources into formal written work.
- iii. Apply inferences or causalities to informal written works.
- iv. Use appropriate critical reasoning strategies in developing content.