

General Education: Category Criteria

GEC will use the following lists of category-specific criteria in evaluating proposals for course inclusion in General Education. The infusion of technology to enhance teaching and learning in General Education courses will be encouraged. For further information, see the catalog description of the program, the table of categories and courses, and the criteria for Communication-Intensive courses.

Category 1: Literature

Main Student Objective: To read major literary works critically with appreciation and understanding.

Category 1 courses will thus:

- offer practice with strategies of close reading and analysis of texts
- consider a range of ways of responding to texts (which may include discussion of aesthetics, values, and ethics as they relate to texts)
- consider texts' historical contexts (e.g., of production, reception, etc.)
- introduce students to a range of genres (e.g., fiction, poetry, drama, etc.) or to a single genre examined over an extended period of time
- consider literature from multiple cultures (within or across national contexts; may draw on literature in translation or in a foreign language)
- meet or exceed all of the criteria for communication-intensive courses

Category 2: Arts

Main Student Objective: To appreciate the arts; to understand the arts as a vehicle for human expression.

Category 2 courses will thus:

- study and practice one art form or study multiple art forms or study one art form's development over an extended period of time
- consider differing concepts of "aesthetic value"
- consider a range of ways of creating art and of responding to art
- consider the relationships among values, ethics, and art
- consider art within its historical context
- consider art from multiple cultures (within or across national contexts)
- include practice in written and/or oral reflection on art

Category 3: Numerical Understanding

Main Student Objective: To understand and manipulate numeric data; to respond to arguments and positions based on numbers and/or statistics.

Category 3 courses will thus:

- develop skills in mathematical reasoning by introducing students to methods of logic common in the academic community (e.g., algebraic, geometric, statistical, algorithmic, etc.)
- consider practical applications of the methods described above, including practice in responding to arguments based on numbers and statistics
- develop abilities of problem-solving and abstract reasoning
- include practice in the written and/or oral reporting and analysis of methods and conclusions

Category 4: Natural Sciences

Main Student Objective: To understand basic scientific concepts; to appreciate how these concepts are verified through experimentation and observation; and to become knowledgeable and responsible citizens in dealing with the challenges of a sophisticated technological society.

Category 4 courses will thus:

- consider different ways of experiencing and acquiring knowledge through the scientific method
- study the structure and order of the natural world
- develop abilities in problem-solving and abstract reasoning
- consider the ways in which technological societies affect individual values and ethics and the ways in which individual values and ethics function in technological societies
- include practice in the written and/or oral reporting and analysis of methods and conclusions

Students must take courses from two different disciplines to fulfill Category 4 requirements; at least one of these courses must be a laboratory course.

Category 5: Historical and Philosophical Understanding

Main Student Objective: To identify and analyze the significant ideas and events of human history by understanding cause and effect relationships through historical and philosophical investigation, narration, and synthesis.

To fulfill this objective, Category 5 courses will:

- introduce students to diverse ways of experiencing and acquiring knowledge

- include practice in interpreting and evaluating evidence (considering both primary and secondary sources)
- consider methods for treating conflicting knowledge claims
- consider the ways in which individual and group values and ethics shape actions
- consider the effects of culture and cross-cultural interaction on ideas and events
- include practice in the written and/or oral reporting and analysis of information

Category 6: Social Sciences

Main Student Objective: To analyze and interpret social, economic, and political phenomena and human thought processes using the techniques and procedures of the social sciences.

Category 6 courses will thus:

- introduce students to diverse ways of experiencing and acquiring knowledge; specifically, introduce students to descriptive, analytical, and empirical research methods as used by the social scientist
- consider a range of methods of studying individuals and groups
- consider a range of human thought processes (including physical and social factors that shape such processes)
- consider the development of individual values and ethics
- consider the effects of culture and cross-cultural interaction on ideas and events
- include practice in the written and/or oral reporting and analysis of information

Category 7: Social Institutions

Main Student Objective: To identify, describe, and understand the workings of important social, economic, and political institutions and the relationship of individuals to these institutions.

Category 7 courses will thus:

- introduce students to diverse ways of experiencing and acquiring knowledge; specifically, introduce students to the study of social institutions using a range of methods
- consider institutions' historical contexts
- consider the ways individual values and ethics shape and are shaped by institutions
- consider the effects of culture and cross-cultural interaction on institutions, ideas, and events
- include practice in the written and/or oral reporting and analysis of information

Category 8: International Systems

Main Student Objective: To understand the nature of significant international systems and to step outside of the constraints of one's own society.

Category 8 courses will thus:

- study one or more significant international system (social, political, economic, cultural, language, etc.)
- consider relationships between international systems
- consider the ways individual values and ethics shape and are shaped by culture, nationality, and other variables
- introduce students to diverse ways of experiencing and acquiring knowledge in an international context
- include practice in the written and/or oral reporting and analysis of information

Category 9: Oral Communication

Main Student Objective: To develop greater proficiency in English or a foreign language in general and discipline-specific settings.

Category 9 courses will thus:

- develop communication knowledge and skills for sharing meanings more effectively; require that each student complete intensive speaking activities in a variety of forms and in multiple assignments which include appropriate feedback
- include interactive and/or collaborative planning and response activities and discussion of same; give and receive feedback in ways that promote greater understanding and perception
- include critical reading, viewing, and/or listening to several modes of communication
- develop skills necessary to identify premises, assumptions, and arguments from a range of perspectives (foreign language may be exempted from this criterion)
- transfer understanding of knowledge and skills in communication to the social contexts experienced in everyday life

Category 10: Written Communication

Main Objective: To develop greater proficiency in writing effective, researched academic texts in the English language.

To fulfill this objective, Category 10 courses will:

- develop abilities in a range of written and oral modes of academic discourse, with an emphasis on developing the ability to construct coherent, well-documented arguments in the presence of a wide range of perspective and experiences
- refine students' abilities to consider audience and to employ rhetorical strategies which communicate appropriately; introduce students to issues in written communication

- include critical reading, viewing, and/or listening to several modes of communication with attention to developing skills necessary to identify premises and assumptions in complex arguments made from a range of perspectives
- require critical use of library and internet resources
- refine students' abilities to incorporate cited materials responsibly and effectively (including introducing students to various documentation formats--APA, MLA, etc.)
- require attention to both process and product in instruction and evaluation
- extend and refine students' editing skills
- require the use of computer-based technologies in the creation of written text
- include interactive and/or collaborative reading and writing activities and discussion of same
- require that each student complete a minimum of 20 double-spaced pages of formal writing and the equivalent of 20 double-spaced pages of drafts and informal writing (such as posts to email dialogue groups, responses, journals, etc.) divided into multiple assignments which include appropriate feedback
- require that each student engage in significant speaking activities (in a variety of forms) which include appropriate feedback

Communication-Intensive (CI) Courses

Successful completion of Composition I (English 111) or its equivalent (obtained through testing, transfer, etc.) will be prerequisite for enrollment in all communication-intensive courses.

Communication-intensive (CI) courses will, at minimum,

- develop abilities in a range of written and oral modes of academic discourse, with an emphasis on developing the ability to construct coherent, well-documented arguments in the presence of a wide range of perspective and experiences
- refine students' abilities to consider audience and to employ rhetorical strategies which communicate appropriately
- include critical reading, viewing, and/or listening to several modes of communication with attention to developing skills necessary to identify premises and assumptions in complex arguments made from a range of perspectives
- require critical use of outside resources appropriate to the course content, such as library and internet resources
- refine students' abilities to incorporate cited materials responsibly and effectively
- require attention to both process and product in instruction and evaluation
- extend and refine students' editing skills
- require that each student complete a minimum of 10 double-spaced pages of formal writing and the equivalent of 10 double-spaced pages of drafts and informal writing (such as posts to email dialogue groups, responses, journals, etc.) divided into multiple assignments which include appropriate feedback
- require that each student engage in significant speaking activities (in a variety of forms) which include appropriate feedback

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