

GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS 2011-2012

SPECIFIC DEFINING CRITERIA FOR FACULTY APPLICATIONS FOR GENERAL EDUCATION DESIGNATION OF COURSES

The following criteria are the principal guide used to approve courses for the General Education Program. The course proposal application requires faculty to demonstrate, point by point, how a course meets each of the following criteria. Departments and faculty members interested in applying for a General Education designator must complete the application and submit all requested materials as outlined on the form.

Application forms are available by clicking **Forms** from the Information for Faculty web site, http://www.potsdam.edu/academics/general_education/forfaculty/index.cfm or from Patty Stone, Administrative Assistant for General Education, Office of Academic Affairs, Raymond Hall 712, Ext. 2108. You will also be asked to demonstrate how you propose to assess student learning of the SUNY learning outcomes through your course.

General Education Foundations (GEF)

A. COMMUNICATION EXPERIENCE: (2 courses; minimum of 7 credits)

1. [FW] FIRST-YEAR WRITING (1 course, 4 credits)

Preamble: The FW course teaches the composition of sound and effective written arguments suitable for academic contexts. The course should encourage student writers to think critically as they develop logical, complex arguments, and to develop a repertoire of skills in invention, drafting, revision, and editing.

Knowledge Areas: Develop the following understandings about writers and writing:

- b. Writers make diverse choices, depending on audience, occasion, and experience.
- c. Writers consider the ways that language permits communication, shapes thought and changes over time.
- d. Discussion, debate, research, and inquiry can be a source of growth and challenge for writers.
- b. Most significant issues are complex and often contain competing perspectives, which must be weighed and considered when constructing written arguments.

Skills addressed: Strengthen the following abilities:

- a. Read using analytical and evaluative skills necessary for effective development of written argument.
 - read and respond to a wide variety of written texts that demand close attention; accurately represent the ideas and information in those texts through paraphrase, summary, and synthesis
 - raise questions, mark a text, take reading notes, and create outlines

- analyze, at a level appropriate for first-year students, how published writers construct arguments
- b. Use composing skills that support thoughtful planning, drafting, and revising.
 - apply a variety of invention techniques
 - create multiple drafts in order to strengthen both argument and language
 - revise for significance, focus, precision, conciseness, and liveliness
 - consider the responses of actual readers
- c. Use writing to construct, and to present, strong arguments.
 - frame and analyze problems
 - analyze and address the perspective of intended readers
 - develop and evaluate claims
 - develop evidence to support claims and properly document that evidence when appropriate
- d. Develop coherence in written texts.
 - establish a purpose for each written text that is clear and consistent throughout
 - create sentences and paragraphs that grow and build on each other in a logical progression
 - develop clear relationships among all points, striving for internal consistency
- e. Develop Information Literacy skills
 - use a general periodical database effectively
 - complete designated tutorials and quizzes linked off the College's Library website.
 - Practice using a Research Log
 - See http://www.potsdam.edu/academics/general_education/gef for details

Assignments:

- Complete at least four papers (3-5 pages each) incorporating elements of the writing process, with commentary from the instructor both in the working draft stage and on the submitted final draft. Peer critique is encouraged, as are opportunities to practice library research and the integration and documentation of source material.
- Complete online Information Literacy tutorials and quizzes (details at http://www.potsdam.edu/academics/general_education/gef).

Modifications to FS requirements in Final Report – January 28, 2004

2. [FS] SPEAKING, REASONING AND RESEARCH (1 course, minimum of 3 credits)

Knowledge area: Discipline based knowledge.

Skills: Improve students' ability to:

- a. develop clear and focused thesis statements that are appropriate for the time allocated, the audience, and the occasion;
- b. outline a speech with a clear thesis statement, main points, and sub-points;
- c. identify demographic and situational factors that a speaker needs to know about an audience;
- d. understand the role of evidence (facts, statistics, examples, testimony) in developing a logical argument;
- e. understand the role of speaker credibility (ethos) and emotional/motivational appeals (pathos) in building support for a speaker's ideas;
- f. communicate in both verbal and nonverbal dimensions of delivery;
- g. recognize the similarities and differences between informative and persuasive speaking;
- h. recognize the similarities and differences between written and oral communication;

- i. recognize and practice ethical oral communication (emphasizing intellectual integrity of ideas, their accurate presentation, and proper citation).
- j. use the library catalog.
- k. See http://www.potsdam.edu/academics/general_education/gef for specific outcomes and specific online tutorials to be completed.

Exercises:

1. Two five-minute speeches to the class (one informative, one persuasive). Each speech should be based on a formal, preparatory outline with bibliography, and delivered using brief speaker notes. At least one of the speeches should require students to cite outside sources in support of their ideas and/or arguments.
2. Annotated bibliography of at least two catalog sources used in their speech (details at http://www.potsdam.edu/academics/general_education/gef).
3. Faculty are encouraged to require additional graded or ungraded speaking experiences; to require a critical essay to help students understand the differences between oral and written communication; and to require students to incorporate presentational aids in at least one of their speeches.

B. QUANTITATIVE EXPERIENCE [FM] (*1 course, minimum of 3 credits*)

1. [FM] MATHEMATICAL

Knowledge Area: Introduces quantitative methods and strengthens reasoning skills needed to respond with greater sophistication in a complex technological world.

Students will show competence in the following quantitative reasoning skills:

- arithmetic;
- algebra;
- geometry;
- data analysis; and
- quantitative reasoning.

Skills: Strengthen students' ability to:

- a. collect, analyze, and interpret numerical data or information
- b. interpret and generate tables, graphs, and charts;
- c. understand that numerical data is open to multiple interpretations and that numbers are not "neutral" symbols.
- d. represent phenomena of the physical world in abstract, symbolic form;
- e. identify and use symbols and mathematical operations to algebraically represent a complex phenomenon of the physical world and to test the adequacy of the representation;
- f. use of abstract models to describe or explain phenomena, systems, or processes and to be aware that acceptance of a given model changes the perception of the physical world;
- g. estimate, approximate, and recognize the reasonableness of results;
- h. convert information into one or more formal notation systems and to manipulate elements within that notation system;
- i. understand logical and symbolic relationships;
- j. recognize appropriate and inappropriate uses of quantification and critically evaluate a number-based argument.

C. CRITICAL THINKING EXPERIENCE [FC]

1. [FC] CRITICAL THINKING (1 course, minimum of 3 credit hours)

An FC course may combine with a maximum of one Mode of Inquiry course, but may not combine with another First-year Experience course (i.e., FW, FS, FM); and may not combine with a course designated PE, WI, or SI.

Knowledge area: Discipline based

Introduces the standards of good reasoning and strengthens basic reasoning skills. Major course objectives shall include oral and written practice to develop the following abilities: (1) identify the main question, problem, or claim in discourse, and think through it in a critical, creative manner according to the standards of good reasoning, that is, the rules of argument; (2) model the critical thinking processes, or patterns, in the humanities, natural sciences, or social sciences; and (3) self-consciously apply the standards of critical thinking.

Skills:

1. Identify the issue or question.
 - Understand what considerations are relevant to the issue or question.
 - Know who bears the burden of proof.
2. Identify the logical structure of arguments:
 - Identify the conclusion.
 - Identify the explicit premises and the implicit premises or assumptions the argument requires for its conclusion to follow.
 - Identify the evidence offered to support the premises.
3. Evaluate arguments and counterarguments, competing hypotheses, or rival explanations:
 - Determine whether the conclusion follows from the premises.
 - Consider whether all the premises are true, and relevant.
 - Evaluate the supporting evidence, data, models, concepts, experimental design, or the reliability of the source providing evidence.
 - Develop skill in formulating counter-examples, alternative explanations, or conceptual models that may account for the evidence, data, etc.
 - Recognize informal fallacies.
4. Use the above standards to construct and evaluate one's own arguments.

Exercises:

1. Classroom exercises with oral practice involving as many students as possible.
2. Short written assignments, and
3. An assignment designed to develop the ability to distinguish and evaluate sources, particularly web sources (see http://www.potsdam.edu/academics/general_education/gef for details).
4. Complete online Information Literacy tutorials and quizzes (details at http://www.potsdam.edu/academics/general_education/gef).

THE MODES OF INQUIRY

Each eligible course must:

1. be guided by the Preamble to the "Potsdam Graduate";
2. be designed to stimulate and develop interest in the particular mode of inquiry;
3. demonstrate that its topics are treated in depth;
4. be designed to accomplish more than the transmission of information;
5. show distinctive qualities, strengths, and limitations of the mode of inquiry;
6. indicate levels of certainty and precision that characterize the knowledge claims;
7. teach students how to make judgments concerning claims in the area;
8. provide techniques of understanding in the area;
9. demonstrate how course contributes in specific ways to personal and career development.

NOTE: A student may count no more than two courses (up to 8 credit hours) from any one department to satisfy the Modes of Inquiry requirements. (A minimum of 28 credit hours is required to fulfill the Modes of Inquiry.)

AESTHETIC UNDERSTANDING

(2 courses-minimum 5 credit hours- in two different departments)*

[AC] AESTHETIC - CRITICAL AND DISCRIMINATIVE *(minimum of 3 credit hours)*

(This mode must be completed in a different department from AE)*

Teaches a critical and discriminative approach to the arts.

The course must:

- a. provide a historical context for the art form being studied;
- b. include substantive and explicit connections with the contemporary world;
- c. treat the subject within the context of its culture and period;
- d. include a discussion of form and style;
- e. include significant participation as an audience for the visual, performing, and literary arts;
- f. include the writing of critical essays or reviews.

[AE] AESTHETIC - EXPERIENTIAL *(minimum of 2 credit hours)*

(This mode must be completed in a different department from AC)*

The primary basis of the course is the development of formal or creative skill in the fine, performing, and literary arts by directly engaging in the creative or performance activity.

The course must:

- a. include critical analysis of form and content;
- b. involve group and/or individual critical discussion and evaluation of student work;
- c. investigate conceptual approaches applicable to the medium;
- d. may include exposure to contemporary and historical examples of work in the relevant medium;
- e. include creative problem-solving in the medium;
- f. require student to attend as audience members at least one artistic event outside of class (e.g., concert, play, exhibit, reading) during the semester course is taught.

*NB: For the purposes of General Education, Dance and Drama are considered two different departments.

SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY (2 courses - minimum 6 credit hours and one lab)

[SB] SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY-BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

(minimum of 3 credit hours)

[SP] SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY-PHYSICAL SCIENCES

(minimum of 3 credit hours)

[LB] LAB

Studies natural phenomena in the physical and biological sciences empirically and systematically. One course must be selected from each of these two general knowledge areas. At least one course must have laboratory experiences (laboratories, computer simulations, field trips, demonstrations).

The course must:

- a. introduce major scientific concepts;
- b. show that scientific investigation of a phenomenon progresses systematically with hypotheses, theories, and models being formed, challenged, defended, discarded, and revised;
- c. provide experience in forming and testing hypotheses;
- d. discuss limitations of a set of data and the possibility of alternative interpretations;
- e. distinguish causal and non-causal relationships;
- f. use quantitative measures, analyses, and models to present and evaluate data;
- g. suggest the limits of scientific investigations and its impact upon society and human existence;
- h. distinguish between science and the application of scientific knowledge as exemplified in technology.

[SA] SOCIAL ANALYSIS (minimum 3 credit hours)

Systematically studies human behavior, human social interactions and relations, and contemporary social institutions (those practices, conventions, groupings, and organizations which most significantly structure social life in the world today).

The course must:

- a. introduce the historical and philosophical origins and scope (boundaries) of the discipline or subject and consider how the discipline is evolving within a changing society;
- b. illustrate and evaluate several methods of data collections, interpretation, and analysis including quantitative methods where appropriate;
- c. explore alternative theoretical frameworks and consider their ability to explain the observations in question;
- d. consider a contemporary social issue from the point-of-view of alternative theoretical frameworks and consider their utility for making public policy decisions.

[PI] PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY (*minimum 3 credit hours*)

Engages in critical and systematic reflection on the root nature of a subject matter in a way that explores the most basic questions about it.

The course must:

- a. concentrate on and be primarily devoted to critical and systematic reflection upon one or more of the following:
 - 1) the meaning and significance of human experience (ontological questions);
 - 2) the nature and meaning of knowledge (epistemological questions);
 - 3) moral and ethical values of contemporary significance (moral questions);
 - 4) the nature and meaning of concepts fundamental to a given subject matter (analytical questions)
- b. include written and/or spoken exercises.

[AH] AMERICAN HISTORY (*minimum 3 credit hours*)

Studies significant portions of the narrative of American History, focusing on the political, economic, social and cultural, including an examination of unity and diversity in American society. Attention must be paid to common institutions in American society and to how they have affected various groups, as well as to developing an understanding of America's evolving relationship with the rest of the world.

The course must:

- a. examine at least one significant issue of unity and diversity in American society;
- b. examine common institutions in American society and their effects upon various groups within that society;
- c. examine some aspect of America's evolving relationship with the rest of the world;
- d. emphasize the process of identifying, selecting, and interpreting historical data;
- e. stress a sense of history by suggesting continuities and discontinuities in the development of the topic under study;
- f. introduce students to the use of primary sources;
- g. include written and/or spoken exercises which demonstrate an understanding of the issues and methodologies laid out in the preceding criteria.

WORLD CIVILIZATIONS (*2 courses, minimum 6 credit hours, one from each of the following areas*)

[XC] CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE (*minimum 3 credit hours*)

The comparative, holistic study of a people or peoples or ways of life not derived primarily from European civilization (hereafter, "the examined group,") such as the societies, civilizations, or cultural traditions originating in Africa, Asia, Oceania, or the Americas.

The course must:

- a. devote a majority of reading and class time to the study of the examined group;

- b. attend to the interconnections of several significant aspects of the examined group such as the political, historical, artistic, ideological, economic, technological;
- c. compare and contrast the examined group with other cultures;
- d. study the interaction of the examined group with other cultures;
- e. confront the problems raised by ethnocentrism and cultural relativism, and/or the tensions between nationalism and globalism;
- f. include written or spoken exercises about the examined group which demonstrate an understanding of the issues and methodologies identified in the preceding criteria.

NB: The XC requirement may double count with other General Education designators and Modes of Inquiry except AH and WC.

[WC] WESTERN CIVILIZATION (*minimum 3 credit hours*)

The developmental study of significant aspects of Western Civilization, defined as any civilization constitutive of or derived primarily from European Civilization.

The course must:

- a. take as primary subject the historical development of some significant theme or aspect of Western Civilization, excluding the U.S.;
- b. examine the development of the distinctive features of that theme or aspect, placing them into the broader context of the development of Western Civilization;
- c. relate the development of the theme or aspect to that of other regions of the world;
- d. stress a sense of history by suggesting continuities and discontinuities in the development of the theme or aspect under study;
- e. provide experience in the critical use of primary sources and the evaluation of evidence whenever possible;
- f. include discussion of the nature of historical inquiry and the limitation of scholarly authority;
- g. include written or spoken exercises which demonstrate an understanding of the issues and methodologies laid out in the preceding criteria.

NB: The WC mode requirement may double count with other Modes of Inquiry courses except AH and XC.

SPEAKING INTENSIVE AND WRITING INTENSIVE COURSES

[WI] WRITING-INTENSIVE COURSE

Each student must satisfactorily complete one course designated Writing-Intensive. This course may be a course in the major, a free elective, or a course offered in the Modes of Inquiry. To be designated Writing-Intensive, a course must require a minimum of 15 pages of out-of-class writing. At least 40% of each student's final grade in the course will be based on out-of-class writing. The focus of a WI course is on writing as an ongoing process of revision and not as a product. Therefore, the 15 pages will be submitted over the course of the semester and the instructor will give written comments (mandatory) and oral comments (recommended) on the drafts; a total of 15 pages must be revised and submitted in light of those comments. The 15 pages may be one paper or distributed over several different papers. There must be instruction in the nature of successful writing in the discipline.

Prerequisite: Freshman Writing [FW] or equivalent.

[SI] SPEAKING-INTENSIVE COURSE

Each student must satisfactorily complete one course designated Speaking-Intensive. This course may be a course in the major, a free elective, or a course offered in the Modes of Inquiry. To be designated Speaking-Intensive, a course must require students to participate in a semester-long series of structured oral communication assignments that will be critiqued by the instructor, and will constitute at least 40% of each student's final grade in the course. Assignments may take the form of group or panel discussions, debates, speeches, or other oral assignments appropriate to the course.

Students will be expected to understand principles of effective oral communication in the discipline, and to practice speaking in class regularly throughout the semester.

Prerequisite: Freshman Speaking [FS] or equivalent.

MODERN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

Every student must demonstrate proficiency in at least one modern language other than English. This requirement may be met by successfully completing a course numbered "103" in a SUNY Potsdam language sequence or its equivalent or by successfully completing any single 200-level language course within the Department of Modern Languages.

Students whose native language is not English, or who have successfully completed four years of high school study of the same language, or who have earned a score of three or higher on an advanced placement language examination have completed this requirement.

Detailed information concerning requirements appears in this year's General Education Manual for Students.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION / HEALTH EXPERIENCE

[PE] (4 courses, minimum 4 credit hours) – can count the same course twice and four semesters of varsity sports fulfills the requirement.

The physical education experience will develop the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes to live a productive lifestyle leading to the successful pursuit of personal and professional goals.

The graduate will achieve this outcome by:

- a. participating in physical education activities that develop specific skills appropriate to the course activity area;
- b. demonstrating a knowledge of the benefits of exercise, life long physical fitness, proper nutrition, stress management, and a lifestyle approach to physical activity;
- c. developing attitudes that incorporate physical activity as part of a life long healthy lifestyle.

SUNY Knowledge and Skills Areas	SUNY Learning Outcomes	SUNY Potsdam General Education Requirements
Mathematics	Students will show competence in the following quantitative reasoning skills: Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry, Data analysis and Quantitative reasoning.	FM
Natural Sciences	Students will demonstrate: Understanding of the methods scientists use to explore natural phenomena, including observation, hypothesis development, measurement and data collection, experimentation, evaluation of evidence, and employment of mathematical analysis; and Application of scientific data, concepts, and models in one of the natural sciences.	SB, SP, LB
Social Sciences	Students will demonstrate: Understanding the methods social scientists use to explore social phenomena, including observation, hypothesis development, measurement and data collection, experimentation, evaluation of evidence and employment of mathematical and interpretive analysis; and Knowledge of major concepts, models and issues of at least one discipline in the social sciences.	SA
American History	Knowledge of a basic narrative of American history: political, economic, social, and cultural, including knowledge of unity and diversity in American society; Knowledge of common institutions in American society and how they have affected different groups; and Understanding of America's evolving relationship with the rest of the world.	AH
Western Civilization	Students will: Demonstrate knowledge of the development of the distinctive features of the history, institutions, economy, society culture, etc., of Western civilization; and Relate the development of Western civilization to that of other regions of the world.	WC
Other World Civilizations	Students will demonstrate: Knowledge of either a broad outline of world history, or The distinctive features of the history, institutions, economy, society, culture, etc., of one non-Western Civilization.	XC
Humanities	Students will demonstrate: Knowledge of the conventions and methods of at least one of the humanities in addition to those encompassed by other knowledge areas required by the General Education program.	PI

The Arts	Students will demonstrate: Understanding of at least one principal form of artistic expression and the creative process inherent therein.	AE, AC
Foreign Language	Students will demonstrate: Basic proficiency in the understanding and use of a foreign language; and Knowledge of the distinctive features of culture(s) associated with the language they are studying.	ML
Basic Communication	Students will: Produce coherent texts with common college-level written forms; Demonstrate the ability to revise and improve such texts; Research a topic, develop an argument, and organize Supporting Details; Develop proficiency in- oral discourse; and Evaluate an oral presentation according to established criteria.	WI, SI FW, FS
Critical Thinking	Students will: Identify analyze, and evaluate arguments as they occur in their own or other's work; and develop well-reasoned arguments.	Infused in General Education Areas
Information Management	Students will: Perform the basic operations of personal computer use; Understand and use basic research techniques; and Locate, evaluate and synthesize information from a variety of sources.	Infused in FW and FS

Last updated: August 24, 2011