

Liberal Studies Advisory Committee
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Criteria for LIBS Upper Division Integrative Courses

The following criteria originated in ALS faculty workshops held in fall 1998 and were refined during workshops in January 1999. Early discussions dealt with overall criteria that would apply to all Liberal Studies upper division integrative courses. Subsequent discussions by arts, humanities, science and math, and social science faculty focused on specific criteria for courses in each of the integrative areas.

General Criteria

- Courses should be consistent with the needs of students who are entering the teaching profession. They should expand student interest and understanding of the discipline and increase appreciation of the beauty and/or usefulness of the discipline. The courses should encourage students to seek ways to pass their understanding and appreciation on to their future students. In order to convey the value of course material to the career interests of students, instructors will be expected to encourage student thought in reference to the K-8 classroom experience, and this should be reflected in assignments, readings, group discussions, modeling questioning and other interactions.
- Courses approved for upper division GE credit may not be offered as a LIBS Integrative Inquiry courses similar to required upper division classes in other majors in this University.
- Courses should be of sufficient rigor to deserve upper division standing in the Liberal Studies major.
- Courses should cap enrollment between 24 and 40 students, unless a science lab is involved, in which case, enrollment must be capped at 48 (allows for two 24 seat labs with one lecture).
- Integrative Inquiry courses must be taught at least once every 2 academic years.
- Courses should model a variety of instructional strategies and guide students in selecting and applying the models contextually while engaging students in critical thinking to determine which models are most effective in which pedagogical circumstances.
- Courses should analyze and synthesize ideas and information within and across disciplines.
- Courses should require students to complete projects that reflect the learning goals of the courses. Projects might include oral presentations, research papers, poster sessions, portfolios, etc. These should not be lesson plans.
- Courses must have students interrelate ideas and information within and across major subject area and make connections between discipline subject matter and California K-8 Content Standards.
- Courses should articulate pedagogical reasons for instructional decisions and have students reflect on teaching practices as instructors promote discussion-based instruction, faculty-student face-to-face interaction, and hands on learning experiences. (This does not preclude the possibility of future program development using alternative delivery systems.)
- Courses encourage students to assess instructional practices in relation to principles of learning and observed effects of different practices.
- Courses should encourage student reflection on curriculum-based subject matter content in relation to significant developments in the disciplines of knowledge and pedagogical perspectives embedded in state-adopted academic content standards and instructional materials.
- Courses should promote lifelong learning.
- Syllabi will be reviewed for conformity to criteria by the LIBS Advisory Committee in three-year cycles.

Social Inquiry Integrative Criteria

Courses in this area should emphasize and develop an understanding of how social scientists approach the world. Courses should:

- make explicit links to contemporary issues.
- provide the methodologies for understanding global and/or local communities.
- include perspectives that reflect diversity, i.e. culture, gender, age, or ethnicity.
- require critical thinking, analysis and problem solving activity.
- encourage reflective connections between subject matter and the individual student.
- incorporate field experience or some relevant activity outside of the classroom.

Artistic Inquiry Integrative Criteria

Courses in this area should help students understand the value of the creative and fine arts (art, music, drama). These courses should also help develop in students a greater appreciation for artistic performance through engaging in at least one form of participation. Courses should:

- provide a rigorous approach to the development or understanding of creative potential.
- provide an activity-based classroom experience.
- incorporate observation and experience from the perspective of artist and audience.
- help students establish skills for gaining access to appropriate educational resources.
- focus on the important role of nonverbal and non-literal communication in the artistic experience.
- require prerequisite completion of six lower division general education units in the arts.

Scientific/Mathematical Inquiry Integrative Criteria

Courses in this area should demystify and build excitement and interest in science.

Courses should:

- emphasize the scientific method and problem solving activity.
- include an integrated lab component.
- provide students an opportunity to practice applying course material at an elementary level.
- focus on the relevance of course material to everyday life and to other disciplines.
- add to a resource base for future research, project ideas and/or experiments relevant to LIBS students.
- require prerequisite completion of all math and science requirements in the LIBS major sections 2A and 2B, with a grade of C- or better.
- include critical thinking and quantitative reasoning/formal reasoning applied explicitly to one or more of the natural sciences. (This would include chemistry, physics, biology, earth and space science, and any mathematics and computer science courses that address examples in one or more of the natural sciences.)

Humanistic Inquiry Integrative Criteria

Courses in this area should promote the joy of learning through reading, writing, speaking and listening. They should strengthen a student's desire and ability to share this experience with others. They should expand the motivational skills of students, including their versatility and understanding of themselves in relation to the surrounding world. They should emphasize the broadening of perspective, the cultivation of creative and effective approaches to problem solving, and the growth of skills and insights conducive to the enjoyment of life in a pluralistic society. The readings should have conceptual content. Students should be expected to engage abstract issues and concepts in a practical context.

These courses should facilitate:

- understanding of how a person's ideas and values affect the formulation and comprehension of the meaning of others.
- understanding of the impact of social structural forces (e.g., class, gender, ethnicity, environmental, economic, political and systemic factors).
- application of critical thinking skills on several levels of access and deliberation (as exemplified e.g., in Bloom's taxonomy of knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation).
- awareness of how the same piece of writing can be accessed on different levels (e.g., by showing how questions asked in different forms make people think differently and elicit different answers).
- understanding of words, concepts and the dynamics of language in reading, writing, speaking and listening.
- completion of culminating course project designed by the student.
- exposure to diverse approaches to teaching and learning.
- exposure to resources in the discipline conducive to adaptive learning and lifelong humanistic inquiry.

The course in this area should emphasize reading and writing assignments that demand careful analysis and reflection. These assignments should expand a student's capacity to decode context and meaning, to enter into dialogue with audiences, to appreciate different purposes of writing (e.g., to reveal ideas, to facilitate thinking and reading, or to write for an audience) and to develop the skills of editing, refining and clarifying. They should enhance the student's capacity to articulate ideas and questions in speech and to develop skills of effective listening.