

# UMass Amherst General Education Handbook

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Message from Randall Knoper, Chair of the General Education Council:

What follows is a revision of "General Education Requirements, University of Massachusetts Amherst, September 1, 2002, Office of the Provost." I updated it to include the changes made since then in the R1/R2 requirements and the Interdisciplinary designation (from I to SI and I). These revisions were based on: 1) The SPECIAL REPORT of the RULES COMMITTEE concerning THE UNDERGRADUATE GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENT; Revised May 10, 2001; Revised February 24, 2005. Presented at the 638th Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate, February 24, 2005; 2) SPECIAL REPORT of the GENERAL EDUCATION COUNCIL concerning PROPOSED NEW GENERAL EDUCATION DESIGNATION: "SCIENCE INTERDISCIPLINARY" OR "SI"; Presented at the 626th Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate December 18, 2003.

Randall Knoper  
March 15, 2009

#### I. GENERAL EDUCATION: INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

The goals of a General Education curriculum for college students in this century have been the subject of extensive discussion. Modest proposals in faculty meetings and imposing statements by prestigious foundations all reflect a desire to know what the "common learning" should be and how that learning should best be imparted.

The Faculty recognizes that students come to this campus with diverse backgrounds and interests. We also are aware that no firm consensus exists on what a well-educated person should know. Finally, we recognize that the state of human knowledge perpetually evolves. While these facts make it difficult--maybe impossible--to prescribe a detailed course of study for all students, they do contain an imperative for us to suggest *some* commonalities we think appropriate for all.

The Faculty believes that General Education courses should encompass some reasonable fraction of the totality of human knowledge, insight, and interpretation. The Faculty believes that a person's General Education should include some knowledge of the historical development of society, and some awareness both of one's own society as it exists today and of societies other than one's own. The Faculty believes that an appreciation of science and the scientific method is advantageous for survival and participation in the modern world. The Faculty believes that the ability to reason mathematically and quantitatively and the ability to express one's thoughts in writing are essential and basic skills. Finally, the Faculty believes that every reasonably well-educated person must have some appreciation of literature and the arts--fields of activity that explore, interpret, and evaluate the life of the imagination.

Breadth of knowledge as reflected in General Education is not the only goal of a University education. Depth of knowledge in selected fields is equally important, and to acquire this, students choose major fields of study, and, in some cases, minor fields as well. It is our expectation that the combination of a major curriculum, General Education courses, and electives will provide both breadth and depth within an entire undergraduate program.

No combination of General Education, major, and elective courses will, in and of itself, produce a fully and finally educated person. Learning is a life-long process; the best a student can expect from an undergraduate course of study is to learn how to learn and appreciate the value of learning. Students who leave our University with the feeling that their education is somehow complete do themselves a great disservice.

## II. RATIONALE FOR THE GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

Prior to the institution of the General Education program described in this document, the campus's system of distribution requirements allowed a proliferation of courses that fulfilled these requirements (distribution courses exceeded 1,000). This proliferation reflected a lack of clear goals, objectives, and rationales for what is meant by general education. The previous requirements allowed students to graduate without ever reading fiction, plays, or poems; without engaging in a scientific laboratory experience; without any understanding of history, government, society; and without knowing about non-western cultures or the problems faced by groups other than white, male North Americans or Europeans. Although no set of requirements will remedy all these deficiencies for all students, a General Education program should at least address the problem by assuring exposure to many of these areas.

Another major problem with the past system was advising. While advising problems are not unique to the lower division, the old distribution requirements exacerbated such problems because they lacked coherence and clearly articulated rationales. It is a telling point that the official undergraduate catalogue, which should be an important resource for advising, has not offered an explanation or rationale for the distribution requirements

Yet, the publication of a General Education program and its justification in the official undergraduate catalogue is not enough. The Faculty recognizes the vital importance of advising to General Education and urges departments, colleges, and schools to play a more direct role in helping students choose General Education courses that will expand their knowledge and enrich their understanding and appreciation of the world in which they live.

## III. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

**Areas of Knowledge:** General Education should enable students to learn how natural scientists, social scientists, humanists, and performing artists think about their disciplines and how they view their work in relation to both history and contemporary society. While most General Education courses will come from departments in the colleges of Arts and Sciences, scholars in the natural sciences, social and behavioral sciences, humanities, and the performing arts exist across disciplines and administrative divisions.

**Instructional Quality:** General Education courses should do more than impart information and provide the skills deemed necessary to social or economic success. They should involve critical or analytic thinking and should provide contexts for questioning the larger society and the student's relation to it. The capacity for critical thought also includes the ability to imagine the consequences of one's choices, to articulate those consequences, and to increase understanding of one's relation to the world of nature, work, and politics. This relates to a basic goal of all General Education Programs: the development of an intelligent citizenry.

## IV. GUIDELINES

Consistent with the above principles, all General Education courses should adhere to the following guidelines:

A. Courses should emphasize critical thinking. This means that writing and problem solving would be the norm rather than the exception and will be reflected in the evaluation and examination procedures.

B. To promote the goals set in the preceding paragraph, faculty offering large General Education courses of more than fifty students should be provided with teaching assistants to help with the grading of essays and papers and the teaching of laboratories or discussion sections.

C. In order to limit the number of General Education courses, no more than 25% of the regularly taught courses of a department or program may have General Education designations. "Regularly taught courses" shall be defined as courses from the approved master course list taught at least once every three years excluding seminars, independent study, internships, practica, and laboratory or discussion sections. Since this limitation may pose problems for some departments or programs (especially small ones) because of the number or type of course offerings, it may be appealed to the General Council by departments seeking justified exceptions. [Note: The General Education Council in 1988 voted to remove from the calculation of the "25% limit" those courses which satisfy a Literature, Historical Studies, or Social & Cultural Diversity requirement.]

D. Both major and non-major courses may be accepted for designation.

E. Upper level courses may be approved for General Education designation when they meet the criteria articulated for the designation.

F. Both permanent course offerings and experimental courses may be approved for General Education.

G. It should be possible for students to complete the requirements in each division of the General Education program through courses that are self-contained (that is, courses that do not require prerequisites or follow-up courses).

#### V. RESTRICTIONS

In support of the general principles outlined above, the rationale for the General Education program, and the guidelines applied to courses, the following restrictions apply to students' application of courses toward completion of General Education requirements:

A. No General Education requirement will be fulfilled by a course for which a "Pass" grade (P) is recorded.

B. Students may count no more than *one* course in their major department (as recorded at graduation) toward General Education requirements, except that: If a student satisfies one curriculum area requirement with a course from the major department which does not carry a Social and Cultural Diversity designation, the student may also use a course in the department which does have a Diversity designation to satisfy one of the Social and Cultural Diversity requirements.

C. Students will not be allowed to use a single course to satisfy more than one General Education requirement, except that a course which carries a Social and Cultural Diversity designation and is also designated as a Social World or Interdisciplinary course may be applied to another General Education requirement (as appropriate) in addition to one of the Social and Cultural Diversity requirements.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

### **GENERAL OVERVIEW**

The General Education Curriculum has four principal divisions: the Social World, the Biological and Physical World, Basic Math Skills and Analytic Reasoning, and Writing. These divisions reflect categories of knowledge rather than implying departmental boundaries. Departments may have course designations in more than one area.

There are three curriculum areas within the Social World: Arts and Literature, Historical Studies, and Social and Behavioral Sciences. Students must take six courses in these curriculum areas, distributed as follows: two courses in the Arts and Literature, at least one of which must be in Literature; one course in Historical Studies; two courses in the Social and Behavioral Sciences; and one additional course which can be from any of the Social World curriculum areas. The Social & Cultural Diversity component of the General Education program is also under the aegis of the Social World requirements; all students must take two courses that carry Diversity designations, one designated "United States diversity" (U) and one designated "Global diversity" (G). One or both of these may be courses which also carry a Social World or Interdisciplinary designation; or one or both of these may be courses which fulfill only a Diversity requirement and carry only a Diversity designation.

The Biological and Physical World has two curriculum areas: Biological Sciences and Physical Sciences. Students must take three courses in the Biological and Physical World, with at least one course from each subdivision.

To meet the Basic Math Skills requirement, students must demonstrate competency in basic mathematics at the college level, either by successfully completing one course so designated, or through exemption from the requirement by examination. Analytic Reasoning requires students to take at least one course in mathematical, quantitative, numerical, analytic or formal reasoning.

The University Writing requirement has two components: The Freshman Writing requirement and the Junior Year Writing requirement. The freshman requirement is fulfilled by completing the course College Writing (ENGLWP 112). The Junior Year requirement is fulfilled by completing a course within the major which is part of the Junior Year Writing program.

In addition to the principal divisions, there is an Interdisciplinary category. Its purpose is to provide an incentive and a structure for faculty to develop alternative curricular approaches for General Education. Students may satisfy up to three General Education requirements by taking courses bearing the interdisciplinary designation.

### **THE SOCIAL WORLD**

A general education program should broaden students' understanding of humanity. The Social World division brings together fields which are traditionally separated. The unifying focus of the Social World is the fields of knowledge devoted to gaining insight into a world created by human beings with important consequences for their activities as individuals and as members of larger groups.

The classical Aristotelian doctrine that an intellectual activity is scientific when its aim is to ascertain the truth, and aesthetic when its goal is poetic creation, is very difficult to sustain today. Social scientific theories often involve an act of creation and are sometimes described as elegant if not beautiful. The arts, literature, and history are not simple flights of imagination, but derive from life, and are meant to teach us something lasting and profound about human behavior. The arts, history, and the social sciences use diverse paradigms and perspectives but share the common aim of understanding the Social World that we have created and which constitutes our own social reality.

Within the Social World division, students are required to take six courses, with two courses in the Arts and Literature (one of which must be Literature), one course in Historical Studies, two courses in the Social and Behavioral Sciences, and one additional course which can be either a course from any of the Social World curriculum areas, or an Interdisciplinary course. The requirement that students take two courses dealing with Social and Cultural Diversity is part of the Social World.

In keeping with the Faculty Senate's commitment to incorporating writing throughout the undergraduate curriculum, all courses in the Social World area of the General Education program should require writing. Regular practice in writing encourages clear thinking and clear expression. Preferably, paper assignments will be included in Social World courses, but essay examinations will be considered acceptable if the instructor responds to them with written comments on both content and composition.

### **The Arts and Literature**

The arts do more than imitate life; they interpret and explain it. The Arts and Literature area of General Education is made up of courses which consider the production, performance, function, and aesthetic evaluation of the arts--visual, aural, verbal, and plastic--in relation to one another and to the societies that have and will produce them. Although departments in the College of Humanities and Fine Arts traditionally teach courses satisfying this definition, so do some other units of the University.

Two courses are required in this area. One must be in literature, and the other may also be in literature, or may instead be in one of the visual or performing arts. Courses in the Arts and Literature area of the General Education curriculum should be designed to provoke comparison and critical acuity and should encourage verbal expression through writing exercises. They may provide participatory experiences such as projects, performances, and attendance at plays, concerts, galleries, etc., although courses aimed primarily at the learning of a skill or performance do not qualify. They may treat foreign literatures, either in translation or in the original language.

### **Historical Studies**

We learn from the past. All aspects of human existence, including our social, political, and economic systems, have evolved from the past and help to illuminate and shape our present and future lives.

Courses in Historical Studies should enable students to learn about significant historical developments and processes and to gain an awareness of and appreciation of a historical perspective. Such courses necessarily focus on human interaction in specific situations developing through time. Such courses should cover a sufficient breadth of scope and time to consider the development of significant social, political, or economic institutions or ideologies. While a broad, historical survey course would meet this criterion, a course on a particular historical event or a narrow period of time might be included if it had a

sufficiently broad perspective. For example, a course on the Civil War might be appropriate if it considered pre-war causes and conditions as well as post-war ramifications; it would not be appropriate if it analyzed only the military strategies of particular battles. Some Historical Studies courses might also encourage students to "do" history by enabling them to consider their personal, family, or community histories as an introduction to broader historical events and processes.

In general, a course shall satisfy the Historical Studies requirement if its primary purpose is to expose students to historically important events, developments, or processes as a way of teaching them to understand the present and direct their futures. The History Department, obviously, offers many courses that meet the intent of the Historical Studies requirement; other departments do as well.

### **Social and Behavioral Sciences**

Scholars and practitioners in the Social and Behavioral Sciences attempt to interpret and understand human behavior and the evolution, structure, and functions of human social organizations, institutions, and cultures. Their work investigates the behavior of individuals, the relationships among individuals, and the larger social environments in which humans live.

The Social and Behavioral Sciences have taught us that people are both creatures and creators of their own societies. Educated individuals should have some understanding of this reciprocity, and they should appreciate the diversity that exists in human societies. When we fail to grasp the variations among human cultures and social arrangements, we often perceive our own social milieu as both "natural" and "fundamentally right." Insights about the explanations for and causes of human behavior, the nature of human societies, the structure of social relationships, and the ways in which people and societies change should help students think more clearly about their own human nature and the social worlds in which they live. These insights may help them plan more effectively for their futures and may help shape the future of our own society in positive ways.

Courses in the Social and Behavioral Sciences should meet the following guidelines: they should introduce students to theory, methods, and results of systematic and critical inquiry about individual and social life; they should demonstrate the dynamic nature of both individuals and societies, leading to an understanding of change as a natural process; and they should stress the systematic quality of individual and social life, leading to an understanding of the complex relationships among individual behaviors, human situations, and social institutions.

### **Social and Cultural Diversity Component**

Students must take two courses devoted to specific study of diversity in human cultures and societies. One of these must focus on diversity in the United States, the other on diversity from a global perspective.

It is important that General Education address the complex ways in which societies and cultures differ from one another. Educated individuals should be guided by attitudes which value cultural differences. Their perspectives on and communication with people of different cultures, both within their own society and in other societies, should emanate from an understanding of cultural diversity rather than from applying ethnocentric stereotypes. The purposes of the requirement are: (1) to emphasize the need for educated citizens to understand that different cultures and societies provide unique contexts for human

experience; (2) to analyze and appreciate the ways in which norms and values differ across cultures and societies; and (3) to encourage pluralistic perspectives.

Courses satisfying this requirement shall reach beyond the perspectives of mainstream North American culture and the Western tradition. They may focus on the peoples of Africa, Asia, Latin America, or the Middle East; the descendants of those peoples living in North America; other minorities in Western industrial societies; and Native Americans. Since a sensitivity to social and cultural diversity is advanced by an understanding of the dynamics of power in modern societies, courses that focus on the differential life experiences of women outside the mainstream of American culture, minorities outside the mainstream of American culture, and the poor also come within the scope of this requirement.

Courses within the US Diversity (U) designation meet most or all of the following criteria: promote awareness of the various dimensions of human identity, including but not limited to issues of race and ethnicity, social class, gender, age, language, religion, sexual orientation, disability and nationality; examine the ways in which diverse cultures, communities, histories, and peoples define and express themselves in US society; discuss how historical, social, political, and/or economic forces have shaped US diversity and the contexts for equality/inequality; explore differences in human experiences, perspectives, and expression in US society; examine theories, concepts, and issues that have influenced the histories and traditions of the US.

Courses within the Global Diversity (G) designation meet most or all of the following criteria: create awareness of the various dimensions of human identity, including but not limited to issues of race and ethnicity, social class, gender, age, language, religion, sexual orientation, disability and nationality; critically analyze one's own culture and place it in comparative perspective to other cultures; explore pluralistic perspectives and diverse ways of knowing, thinking, and reasoning in populations and cultures; examine the ways in which cultures define themselves and have been defined within a world context; discuss how global forces have shaped and are shaping ideas, practices, organizations, and the world; integrate understanding of peoples and cultures into the broader general education curriculum/program to prepare students to live and work in a diverse society and world.

A course which carries a Social and Cultural Diversity designation may also be designated as a Social World or Interdisciplinary course, in which case it may be applied to another General Education requirement (as appropriate) in addition to one of the Social and Cultural Diversity requirements. A course may also be designated as fulfilling only a Social and Cultural Diversity requirement.

## **THE BIOLOGICAL AND PHYSICAL WORLD**

A general education program should insure that students develop an awareness of the world around them. An important component of such a curriculum is exposure to the world of nature. A well educated person should have some knowledge of the biological and physical sciences and the theories that have been developed to explain and understand in a coherent way the great diversity of nature. With rapid advances in the sciences profoundly influencing all aspects of our lives, some knowledge of the sciences is advantageous for participation and survival in the modern world. Since the sciences are based on facts from which theories are constructed and tested, students should, ideally, be provided the opportunity to do experiments, make observations, record facts, and evaluate and interpret data.

Within the Biological and Physical Sciences division, students are required to take three courses, with at least one in a Biological Science and one in a Physical Science. In most cases, the category to which a course

will be assigned will be obvious. The Biological Science courses are those dealing with living organisms and their functions and activities; the Physical Science courses deal with inanimate materials and processes. In borderline cases, such as some courses in biochemistry and molecular biology, assignment will be made after consultation. Each course will be assigned to one area or the other; no course may be assigned to both.

Courses in this category of General Education should meet the following guidelines: (1) they should include some historical material showing the evolution of the science and how its fundamental theories were formulated; (2) they should illustrate the scientific method, giving some indication of the most fundamental facts and observations and how these are used to build general principles; and (3) they should address the relevance of the science and its impact on society.

### **BASIC MATH SKILLS AND ANALYTIC REASONING**

A general education program should provide all students with some enhanced capacity for analytic reasoning. Increasingly, the world is full of numerical information that every educated person must learn to process, evaluate and understand. Without certain basic skills in quantitative or analytical reasoning, full participation in modern society is difficult; indeed, an adequate appreciation of the information content of a daily newspaper often requires certain numeracy skills.

To insure that all students possess these skills, two levels of this requirement must be fulfilled: (1) the demonstration of basic competence in college level mathematics; and (2) one course in analytical, formal, mathematical, quantitative, or numerical reasoning. The basic competence requirement is known as Basic Math Skills (with a course designation of R1) and the additional requirement Analytic Reasoning (with a designation of R2).

#### **Basic Math Skills**

Students may satisfy the Basic Math Skills requirement (the "R1 requirement") in either of two ways: (1) by passing the Basic Mathematical Skills Exemption Examination offered by the Department of Mathematics and Statistics; or (2) by passing a course bearing an R1 or an R1/R2 designation. A course bearing the R1/R2 designation can be used to satisfy both the R1 and R2 requirements simultaneously. Courses eligible for the R1 designation (either alone or in combination with the R2 designation) are those that offer instruction in or presuppose prior knowledge of basic math skills. Advanced courses in mathematics or statistics are usually eligible for R1 designation.

Entering students (transfer students included) are encouraged to take the Mathematics Placement Examination. On the basis of the examination, students will be assigned to one of five levels of entering mathematical ability, with Level I indicating the highest level of entering mathematical ability and Level V the lowest. For students who score at Level IV or V on the Mathematics Placement Examination, the Department of Mathematics and Statistics recommends that they take either MATH 100 or MATH 101-102. Students who score at level III are ready for MATH 104, the one-semester version of MATH 101-102. Students who score at levels I or II are ready for calculus. More detailed placement recommendations are available from the Department. Completion of any of these courses will satisfy the R1 requirement.

## **Analytic Reasoning**

In addition to the demonstration of basic competence, the University requires one course in mathematical, quantitative, numerical, analytical, or formal reasoning.

Analytic Reasoning courses may, but need not, be in mathematics. Courses in formal logic, formal linguistics, computer programming or applications, statistics, quantitative research methods, data analysis, etc., can also be used to satisfy the Analytic Reasoning requirement. In general, a course is deemed adequate to satisfy the Analytic Reasoning requirement if it is demonstrably useful in: (1) advancing a student's formal or mathematical reasoning skills beyond the level of basic competence, or (2) increasing the student's sophistication as a consumer of numerical information, or (3) providing computer literacy; or, of course, any combination of these. Normally, Analytic Reasoning courses will also indicate something of the limits of formal, numerical, quantitative, or analytical reasoning, and will also discuss the potential for the abuse of numerical arguments.

In practice, most courses at the 100 level or higher in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics, and most courses at the 100 level or higher in the Department of Computer and Information Sciences, will satisfy the Analytic Reasoning requirement. Many course offerings in departments other than these will also satisfy the requirement. Courses whose primary purpose is remediation of high school mathematics will not satisfy the Analytic Reasoning requirement.

## **WRITING**

The purpose of the General Education writing requirement is to help students acquire the skills they will need to cope with the writing tasks they will perform in their academic work, in their lives and in their careers. The Writing Program requires (1) a writing assessment test; (2) completion of a first year writing course, English Writing 112, College Writing; and (3) completion of a junior year writing requirement, usually satisfied by an advanced writing course within the student's major department. Because the Junior Year Writing requirement is administered by individual departments, there is no General Education designation on courses satisfying the requirement. Each department, college, or school determines the kinds of writing skills its majors need for work in that specific field and for thinking and learning overall. The various aspects of the University Writing Program are described in detail below:

### **Individual Assessment**

The University administers a writing assessment test to every entering first year student (usually at the summer orientation). The test consists of a substantial writing sample, which is read and evaluated by experienced writing instructors who are trained to evaluate such tests. Based upon these readers' recommendations, students are advised as follows:

1. Students who demonstrate an ability to express themselves in written English with a competence faculty should expect from a first or second year student are exempted from the first year writing requirement described below. In addition, students are administratively exempted from this requirement through high test scores on the Critical Reading and Writing sections of the SAT.

2. Students who demonstrate a command of basic English usage and some ability in writing are placed in English Writing 112, College Writing.

3. Students whose writing indicates either a lack of practice or an unfamiliarity with elementary written English take the Writing Program course Basic Writing (ENGLWP 111), which provides practice and review in written English. This course does not satisfy the first year writing requirement; students must complete ENGLWP 112 following ENGLWP 111.

### **First Year Writing Program**

The University requires the successful completion of a three-credit course in the Writing Program, ENGLWP 112, College Writing, ordinary taken during the student's first year. Students may be exempted from the First Year Writing requirement only by the circumstances described above under "Assessment." The objective of College Writing is to enable students to write with greater clarity and logic, and with a confidence based on improved knowledge about the elements of prose style—language choices, correct grammar and spelling, strategies for organization, appropriate development, effective tone. Primary emphasis is on the students' writing rather than lectures, grammar exercises, or the analysis of prose models. The course does not attempt to introduce students to specialized intellectual disciplines as that can be done more effectively in introductory courses offered by various departments and in upper level writing courses offered by faculty and graduate assistants in departments. Specialized methods of research, including specialized vocabularies and systems of notes, can be taught better in the context of specific disciplines. College Writing may not be taken on a pass/fail basis.

### **Junior Year Writing Program**

The University requires completion of the Junior Year Writing course offered by the student's major department. Students do write better when they are expected to write better; they are likely to develop the habit of careful writing when this expectation is satisfied in various intellectual contexts over a number of years. Based on these assumptions, all students, including transfers and those exempted from the first year writing course, will complete the department-based Junior Year Writing program. The course may not be taken on a pass/fail basis. There is no exemption from the Junior Year Writing requirement.

### **Additional Work in Writing**

In addition to the required courses described above, writing should be incorporated in other parts of the undergraduate curriculum. As previously stated, all courses in the Social World division should require writing. In addition, departments are encouraged to offer fourth year elective courses which include advanced writing in their disciplines.

## **INTERDISCIPLINARY COURSES**

The General Education curriculum as described in the foregoing pages is organized mainly along the existing disciplinary structure of the University. Some faculty, however, have interests in offering entirely different kinds of courses, and some students are interested in taking them. Some of these courses are experimental, multi-disciplinary, and issue focused, and, by their very nature, speak to the basic integration of (many) fields of human study. To create a mechanism whereby such courses can be offered on something other than an episodic basis, an Interdisciplinary aspect has been added to the General Education curriculum. In general, the point of this mechanism is to encourage pedagogical innovation and to provide multi-disciplinary undergraduate offerings.

An Interdisciplinary General Education course may be developed and taught by a single instructor or by a team of faculty from different disciplines. Another approach to interdisciplinary education would be to propose a cluster of courses which would be offered by faculty from different disciplines and be related to each other by a central topic or issue; the courses might be two or three, each of which could satisfy a different General Education requirement.

One example might be a course or courses organized around the topic of evolution. Scholars in astronomy, biology, and sociology with a special interest and expertise in evolution might develop and offer a course or cluster of courses on the origin and evolution of the universe, the evolution of life, and social institutions. Another example might be a course or cluster of courses on the topic of cognitive science where a team of interested faculty in psychology, linguistics, and computer science would offer a course or cluster of courses in information processing, the semantics and syntax of language, and artificial intelligence. A third example might focus on major revolutionary movements of our time: feminism, Marxism, and black nationalism taught by faculty members in Women Studies, STPEC and Afro-American Studies. The course or cluster of courses would explore the similarities and differences among these movements. Clearly, the number of multidisciplinary topics and issues that might be offered by a faculty member or a team of faculty is boundless and limited only by creativity and imagination.

The distinguishing characteristic of all the courses sketched above is that they are recognizably different from usual undergraduate course offerings; they are focused mainly on issues or topics rather than on academic disciplines, and are deliberately interdisciplinary in nature. Courses of this sort, with the right mix of faculty and students meeting under the right conditions, could well be highpoints in a student's undergraduate experience, and they deserve encouragement.

Students may satisfy up to three of their General Education requirements by taking interdisciplinary courses. Courses that are interdisciplinary across the areas of the Social World have the "I" designation. Courses that are interdisciplinary between the Social World and the Biological/Physical Sciences and/or Analytic Reasoning have the "SI" (for Science Interdisciplinary) designation. Substitution of interdisciplinary courses for General Education requirements is restricted as follows: 1) No substitutions may be made for College Writing, Basic Math Skills, or Analytic Reasoning; 2) All students must take at least one course in each of the following areas: Literature, Historical Studies, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Biological Sciences, and Physical Sciences; 3) An interdisciplinary course with the "I" designation can be substituted for the second Arts course (AL or AT), the second Social & Behavioral Sciences course (SB), or the sixth Social World course (AL, AT, HS, or SB); 4) An interdisciplinary course with the "SI" designation can be substituted for the second Arts course (AL or AT), the second Social & Behavioral Sciences course (SB), the sixth Social World course (AL, AT, HS, or SB), or the third Science course (BS or PS); An Interdisciplinary course will fulfill a Social and Cultural Diversity requirement only if it carries both an Interdisciplinary designation and a Diversity designation (IG, IU, SIG, or SIU).

### **COURSE REVIEW PROCEDURES**

There are two review procedures: an initial review of General Education course proposals and a periodic review of existing General Education courses. To conduct both reviews, the General Education Council maintains a subcommittee for each designation: the Arts and Literature; Historical Studies; Social and Behavioral Sciences; Social and Cultural Diversity; Biological and Physical Sciences; Basic Math Skills and Analytic Reasoning; and Interdisciplinary. The membership of each subcommittee should include at least

two members of the General Education Council and three faculty members affiliated with the appropriate core area and selected by the Council.

Courses proposed for the Social and Cultural Diversity designation as well as a curriculum area designation are reviewed by both the Social and Cultural Diversity Subcommittee and the appropriate curriculum area subcommittee (Historical Studies, Arts and Literature, Social and Behavioral Sciences, or Interdisciplinary). Courses proposed only for the Social and Cultural Diversity designation are reviewed only by that subcommittee.

### **I. Review of Courses Proposed for General Education**

A. The General Education Council has developed course proposal forms which require the attachment or description of course syllabus and outline, reading assignments, examination procedures, and other relevant information. Each completed proposal is to be submitted to the appropriate subcommittee for review; the subcommittee makes recommendations to the Council for ratification.

B. Faculty who want to propose a cluster of courses must receive approval of the General Education Council to submit the courses as a cluster. The faculty involved must submit to the Council a preliminary proposal describing the focus of the cluster, identifying the courses which will comprise the cluster and the disciplines from which each will be drawn, and the proposed designation of each course in the cluster.

C. All courses approved for General Education designation by the General Education Council will be sent to the Faculty Senate for official confirmation.

### **II. Quinquennial Review of Courses Previously Designated**

In order to maintain the quality of instruction and integrity of designation in General Education courses, each course is reviewed and evaluated every five years. In addition to information which will confirm that the course is meeting the guidelines of the designation articulated above, evaluative materials (examinations, assignments, etc.), information such as student evaluations and grade distributions, and information on how the course has been modified and improved may be solicited.