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WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

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# **General Education Policy**

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This policy is based upon the  
Report of the Senate Ad Hoc Committee to Revise General Education  
and is  
Approved by the Faculty Senate, Provost, and President\*

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\*Amended and approved by the Faculty Senate on 13 May 1993; amended by the Faculty Senate on 7 September 1993; approved with revisions by President Haenicke and Provost Barrett on 3 December 1993.

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## Comparison of Current and New General Education Requirements

Pre-Fall 1996

### Distribution Program

Area I	Humanities and Fine Arts
Area II	Social and Behavioral Sciences
Area III	Natural Sciences and Mathematics
Area IV	Non-Western World
Area V	Optional Electives

TOTAL: 35 hours

[Physical Education: 2 hours]

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Beginning Fall 1996

### Proficiencies

1. College-level writing
2. Baccalaureate-level writing
3. College-level mathematics or quantitative reasoning
4. Advanced proficiency in one of seven optional areas

### Distribution

Area I	Fine Arts
Area II	Humanities
Area III	The United States: Cultures and Issues
Area IV	Other Cultures and Civilizations
Area V	Social and Behavioral Sciences
Area VI	Natural Sciences with Laboratory
Area VII	Natural Science and Technology: Applications and Implications
Area VIII	Health and Well-being

TOTAL: 37 hours

## INTRODUCTION

The rationale for a general education requirement for graduation is based on the educational goals of Western Michigan University. We review these goals before stating the goals of undergraduate general education:

### **Educational Goals of Western Michigan University**

To assist each student to develop the ability to think critically and objectively, to find and evaluate information, and to speak and write clearly and effectively; to introduce each student to knowledge and insight essential for participation in our interdependent and complex world; to insure that each student examines the central role of ethics and values in shaping meaningful lives; to help each student appreciate and understand the importance and consequences of our diverse cultural and ethnic heritage; to instill in each student a lifelong love for learning; and to enable each student to gain mastery of a field of inquiry or a profession sufficient to understand its methods, its subject matter, and its potential for development. *Undergraduate Catalog, 1993-94, p. 8*

An additional basis for the general education requirement is the statement of goals for Western Michigan University contained in the report of the University Committee on Undergraduate Education, published in October 1971:

### **Goals of Undergraduate Education**

The major concern of Western Michigan University is the education of its undergraduate students, and it is committed to provide the environment and the means to enable these students:

1. To assume primary responsibility for their own growth and education, to achieve a genuine sense of competence, and to develop the motivation and ability to perceive and pursue learning as a continuous process.
2. To acquire the knowledge, skills, and will to examine critically [human] experience, especially as that experience relates to contemporary life and illuminates the future.
3. To gain an understanding of the persistent values of their own and other cultures and the ability to respond critically, sensitively, and sympathetically to cultural differences and change.
4. To achieve greater self-knowledge and self-esteem, increased understanding [and] empathy with others, and an enhanced ability to relate positively to their fellow human beings.  
C.U.E. Report, 1971, p. 13.

## Goals of General Education

A bachelor's degree should signify that the individual to whom it is granted has had a broad and balanced education, as well as concentrated studies in at least one discipline or area of knowledge. It should also signify that the individual has acquired intellectual skills that are applicable across a wide range of endeavors, as well as those narrower skills appropriate to a specialization.<sup>1</sup> Thus the University requires structured plans of study leading toward both a specialized and general education.

Specialized education – the primary objective of concentrated study in majors, minors, and curricula – normally restricts the scope of concern in order to ensure a detailed, specific competence in techniques and subject matter. It seeks to accomplish these ends through a program of study comprising a number of segments (courses) taught by specialists and planned to contribute to the whole; the intended result is a person with particular information and a set of skills and abilities usually shaped by specific job demands and descriptions. Often the goals of specialized education are determined or strongly influenced by external agencies, e.g., accrediting bodies or professional field demands, as much as by the stated goals of the University.

General education, on the other hand, is concerned with the breadth and balance of learning, and with the versatility that comes with proficiency in intellectual skills that have universal application. General education should develop each student's knowledge, capacity for expression and response, and critical insight to help the student become a capable, well-informed, and responsible citizen of a culturally diverse society in a complex world. To this end, the University's general education program aims to improve the student's competence in mathematics and language, both oral and written, and to foster the will and ability to think clearly, critically, reflectively, and with as much precision as the subject allows. While requiring a degree of proficiency of everyone, the University's general education program enables a student to master foundational intellectual skills through a sequence of related courses.

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<sup>1</sup> The terms "skill," "competency," and "proficiency" are used interchangeably in this document, in their ordinary and almost synonymous senses. Distinctions must be made, however, to clarify which skills (i.e., competencies or proficiencies) are within the scope of general education. Intellectual skills (i.e., competencies or proficiencies) divide into two types and three levels, as in the diagram below.

Types and Levels of Intellectual Skills (Competencies, Proficiencies)		
LEVEL	TYPES	
	Widely Applicable	Specialized
Baccalaureate Level	In General Education	Not in General Education
College Level	In General Education	May Occur in Distribution
Entry Level	Not in General Education	Not in General Education

The types are (a) widely applicable skills, for example those related to the use of language, which are valuable in a variety of disciplines, and (b) specialized skills. The levels are (i) entry level, skills that freshmen should have upon entry into the University, and which they must remediate usually without college credit if they do not have them; (ii) college level, skills that are appropriately acquired for college credit; and (iii) baccalaureate level, more advanced skills to be acquired before the award of the baccalaureate degree. Only two of the resulting six subdivisions are part of general education as skills, namely, the widely applicable skills at the college and baccalaureate levels. At Western Michigan University, the term "skill" is frequently used to refer to entry level skills, and recently the term "proficiency" has been used to refer to college-level skills. These local connotations of the terms should not be imputed to this document's use of them.

General education also seeks to extend the undergraduate learning experience beyond particular academic or professional concentrations. It aims to acquaint the student with essential subject matter and methods of knowing in the arts and humanities, the social and behavioral sciences, mathematics, and the natural (including applied) sciences. Moreover, it aims to enable the student to use technology appropriately, and to understand the value of individual health, fitness, and well-being. These aims are based on the belief that such learning enriches human experience and fosters understanding of oneself, others, and the world.

While the two kinds of education can thus be distinguished, they are essentially complementary, not antithetical, elements of an undergraduate education; and courses in each type often contribute to fulfilling the goals of the other. Study in depth can reward the student with a sense of competence and the sobering awareness of how much is yet to be learned in any field, while the broader perspective and the habit of seeking interrelationships enhance the benefits of specialized study. Furthermore, just as specialized programs mandate some breadth in a student's education, so should the general education program allow some study in depth.

## **STRUCTURE OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM**

This general education program incorporates the University's college-level and baccalaureate-level writing requirements, eliminates the physical education requirement (University requirement no. 8, p. 31 of the *1993-95 Undergraduate Catalog*), and lets the University computer usage (literacy) requirement continue in force separately.

The program has two parts, proficiencies and distribution. What follows describes these elements of the program. However, all descriptions of course content and structure presuppose the individual professor's freedom to teach the course according to personal professional judgment. Stated requirements are not intended to impinge upon academic freedom, but only to specify a range of content within which the course should be structured. Matters of interpretation and pedagogy are the sole prerogative of the individual professor.

### **General Education Requirements**

#### ***Proficiencies***

The general education program requires each student to develop proficiency in writing and mathematics or quantitative reasoning and, beyond that, to enhance one of these proficiencies or to develop another foundational skill. Each student must:

1. complete a college-level writing course;
2. complete a baccalaureate-level writing or writing-intensive course in one's major or curriculum;
3. complete a college-level mathematics or quantitative reasoning course beyond MATH 110 (not satisfied by MATH 111), not limited to courses in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics;
4. complete a course or courses in one of the following categories:<sup>2</sup>
  - a. advanced writing, 3-4 hours
  - b. mathematics or quantitative reasoning, 3-4 hours
  - c. critical thinking, 3-4 hours
  - d. oral communication, 3-4 hours

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<sup>2</sup> One of these options may be required by the student's major and/or curriculum.

- e. American Sign Language, 3-4 hours
  - f. computer programming and applications, 3-4 hours, or
  - g. courses to advance proficiency in a foreign language to at least second semester, college-level, 6-8 hours
5. satisfy both the college-level writing (no. 1 above) and college-level mathematics or quantitative reasoning (no. 3 above) proficiency requirements before registration in any upper-division-level course. Upper-division-level courses are defined as those courses with a course number of 300 or above.

### ***Distribution***

The general education program defines a comprehensive and balanced distribution of eight content areas and requires that a student take a course from each area:

Area I	Fine Arts, 3-4 hours
Area II	Humanities, 3-4 hours
Area III	The United States: Cultures and Issues, 3-4 hours
Area IV	Other Cultures and Civilizations, 3-4 hours
Area V	Social and Behavioral Sciences, 3-4 hours
Area VI	Natural Sciences with Laboratory, 4-5 hours
Area VII	Natural Science and Technology: Applications and Implications, 3-4 hours
Area VIII	Health and Well-being, 2 hours

### ***Other Requirements***

In addition to meeting the proficiencies and distribution requirements, the following requirements apply to the general education program:

1. Course work must total a minimum of 37 hours, not counting the baccalaureate-level writing course except for designated majors.<sup>3</sup> If a student completes all requirements by completing fewer than 37 credits hours, the remaining required credits may be selected from any course approved for general education.
2. A minimum of six hours must be taken from 300- or 400-level courses in the distribution areas.
3. No more than two courses from any one department may be used to satisfy distribution requirements.

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<sup>3</sup> Typically, the baccalaureate-level writing course is to count toward the student's major or curriculum requirements, as it does now. However, in majors that do not count the course, e.g., majors in languages, the baccalaureate-level writing course will count toward the 37 credit-hour minimum. Or a student may count a writing-intensive course at the baccalaureate level toward the 37 hours, if the course also fulfills a distribution area requirement, according to the provisions for double counting contained in this policy. (See page 5.)

## **The Committee to Oversee General Education**

There shall be a standing committee of the Undergraduate Studies Council (USC) named the Committee to Oversee General Education (COGE). The COGE and the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC), each a standing committee of the USC, will review and approve all course proposals concerning general education credit. To facilitate the filing of proposals for approval, all those involving general education credit first will be reviewed by the COGE, which will make its recommendations to the UCC. As provided in the University's Curriculum Review Process, these course recommendations will be placed on the UCC agenda *only* at the request of one of its members; otherwise, the COGE's recommendations will be handled administratively by the chair of the UCC. (University Curriculum Review Process Policy Statement, approved October 1992, section E, p. 6.)

The UCC may endorse or reject the recommendations of the COGE. Appeals concerning the UCC's action will be heard by the USC. In addition, revisions of the General Education Policy will be considered by the USC, upon recommendations from the COGE.

The COGE membership shall include faculty from the Colleges of Business, Education, Engineering, Fine Arts, Health and Human Services, and three faculty from Arts and Sciences, one from each of its three divisions. The eight faculty members of the COGE shall be elected by the members of the USC from two recommendations submitted by each dean (six recommendations from the Dean of Arts and Sciences). The Office of Academic Affairs may appoint an additional member. Elected faculty members shall serve three-year terms that expire in April. Initial terms, when the COGE is first convened, will be for two or three years, as determined by the USC, to achieve a staggered sequence.

The COGE shall approve for general education credit those courses which in its judgment meet the course criteria stated elsewhere in this policy. The COGE shall consider courses after they have been approved by the respective departmental and college curriculum committees. The COGE's precise position in the curriculum review process is defined in the University's Curriculum Review Process Policy, approved October 1992.

The COGE shall recommended for general education credit: a) new courses, b) existing courses that have not previously carried general education credit, c) existing courses that are being re-approved, and d) courses to be continued after regular review. The COGE shall call for review of all general education courses at least once within a seven-year cycle as determined by the Committee. The registrar shall provide grade distribution reports for general education courses, when requested, to the COGE.

With the approval of the USC, the COGE shall decide on accommodations and exceptions to the General Education Policy that other programs may need. (See the next section.) It also shall assist the University community in carrying out its responsibilities to the General Education Policy. Most importantly, the COGE shall evaluate the success of the general education program in meeting its goals and recommend improvements to the USC.

## **Accommodating Credit-Hour Intensive Curricula**

The program proposed in this policy will consolidate four requirements that are separate at present: the college-level and baccalaureate-level writing requirements, the health and fitness requirement, and general education. Any comparisons of the program's requirements to the

current credit hour requirements must take account of this consolidation. This program does *not* increase the credit hour minima from their current levels.

The 37-credit hour minimum combines the 2 credit hours for the health and fitness requirement and the 35 credit hours currently devoted to general education.

If 3-credit courses are available in all proficiencies and distribution areas, except Area VI where the minimum is 4, a student could satisfy all proficiency and distribution requirements in 33 hours, and would have to take 4 more credit hours of general education courses. But if a student chooses only 4-credit and 5-credit hour courses to satisfy requirements in this program, the number of hours needed will rise to 43 (12 in proficiencies, excluding the baccalaureate-level writing requirement, and 31 in the distribution areas) or even more than 43, if the student elects a foreign language.

This program contains features to accommodate any student enrolled in a curriculum that prescribes large amounts of credit hours and leaves little flexibility or room for student-chosen electives. A partial remedy that is available now will continue: Departments will continue to have the discretion to count general education courses toward their majors. (See page 34 of the *1993-95 Undergraduate Catalog*, item 5 under "Major and Minor Requirements.") In addition, the COGE will have broad discretionary powers in this area. Among the provisions it will implement on this matter are:

1. When an academic program demonstrably includes content in the proficiencies or distribution areas, with the approval of the USC, the COGE may exempt students in that program from the comparable general education requirement. The minimum number of hours of general education should be reduced concomitantly for them.
2. Students may count a course in the distribution area as fulfilling a proficiency requirement as well, if the COGE determines that the course meets the criteria for a proficiency.
3. When a variance from the University General Education Policy is required in order for a program to meet external accreditation requirements, the COGE may grant such an exemption subject to the approval of the USC.

## **CRITERIA FOR SELECTING AND EVALUATING GENERAL EDUCATION COURSES**

The Committee to Oversee General Education (COGE) shall apply these criteria in fulfilling its charge.

### **Criteria Applicable to All Courses**

1. Courses should further the goals of general education articulated in the introduction to this document. Courses may be those specifically designed for general education, or they may be introductory or intermediate courses in a major sequence so long as they conform to the goals of general education. Advanced courses may be offered for proficiencies 2 (baccalaureate-level writing), 4a (advanced writing), and 4b (optional mathematics or quantitative reasoning).
2. Courses at the 500-level do not count towards general education. Courses with prerequisites may count towards general education.

3. Grading and the amount of work required of students should be as rigorous in general education courses as in courses for majors. However, course work and teaching methods should be designed to open the discipline(s) to nonspecialists.
4. All courses included in general education should have syllabi detailing course content, amount of student work, and grading procedures. Syllabi and other related course materials should be made available to the COGE on request.
5. Departments that offer courses in multiple sections should demonstrate that all sections meet the standards of general education and are comparable with one another.
6. In the case of variable topics courses which may be taken more than once for credit when the subject matter is different, the different course subtopics should be reviewed for general education credit, and not simply the basic courses.
7. Students may receive credit by examination in place of coursework in the proficiencies, but not proficiencies 4a – 4g, if the department offering the course provides for credit by examination, and the COGE approves. Placement in a foreign language at a second-year level does not waive the fourth proficiency requirement.
8. Courses approved for general education credit should, if possible, be offered at least once every two years.
9. If a department seeks approval for a course that is other than three credit hours, it should explain the basis for the difference in credit-hour requirements.

### **Criteria for the Proficiencies**

#### ***Writing Courses (Proficiencies 1 & 2)***

Writing courses which satisfy proficiency requirements should work to develop students' ability to express themselves effectively in writing. Specifically, college-level writing courses should develop the ability to think critically and reflectively about written material, an awareness of the process of composition, the ability to employ appropriately, though not necessarily faultlessly, the grammatical and mechanical conventions of standard written English, and the ability to organize materials and to develop and support ideas and arguments and express them clearly.

Baccalaureate-level, advanced, or writing-intensive courses should reinforce the skills acquired in college-level courses and should promote maturity as a writer. They should further the ability to analyze and evaluate writing, the ability to construct and develop a point or idea, the ability to develop organized paragraphs and use appropriate transition devices, and the ability to employ the grammatical and mechanical conventions of standard written English. Papers in every course approved for baccalaureate-level writing must be substantial in nature and length. Instructors and departments will be responsible for determining the format, modes of presentation, technical vocabulary, and research or bibliographic conventions appropriate for writing in their respective disciplines.

These descriptions do not supersede criteria stated in the current University baccalaureate-level writing requirement.

### ***Mathematics or Quantitative Reasoning Courses (Proficiency 3)***

Each student must either:

- complete a college-level mathematics or quantitative reasoning course requiring MATH 110 (not satisfied by MATH 111), or its equivalent, as a prerequisite, or
- place into MATH 122 (calculus) or higher on the Mathematics Placement Exam.

Courses which satisfy this requirement may be offered in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics or in other departments that offer courses satisfying the described criteria and requiring the use of the skills of MATH 110 as part of the course content (MATH 111 does not satisfy this requirement). These skills are those derived from the study of arithmetic foundations of algebra, properties of real numbers, linear equations and inequalities, and systems of linear equations. Courses satisfying the proficiency must significantly advance students' mathematical skills and competencies beyond the level of one year of elementary algebra.

### ***Courses that Enhance a Proficiency or Develop Another One (Proficiency 4)***

#### *Writing*

Advanced writing courses should promote *mastery* of the mechanical, rhetorical, or aesthetic conventions of writing.

#### *Mathematics or Quantitative Reasoning*

The second course in mathematics or quantitative reasoning that students may take for general education credit should build upon the skills developed in their required quantitative reasoning course or its equivalent. Courses may be selected from statistics, discrete mathematics, general topics in mathematics, foundational calculus, or other related approved courses.

#### *Critical Thinking*

Critical thinking is the art of reasoning, which may be defined as reaching reasonable and reflective judgments focused on what to believe and do, or on how to interpret others' words and deeds. Courses in this area should help students become more expert in reasoning when they listen, read, think, evaluate, write, speak, and when they carry out plans of action. To this end, the courses should have at least two of these four goals:

- Courses should help students become more skilled in making several kinds of distinctions: between arguments (chains of reasoning) and other information, between conclusions and premises, between the different patterns of arguments, between complete and incomplete presentations of arguments, between strong and weak arguments, and between cogent and ineffective ways of exposing weak arguments.
- Courses should help students become more skilled in resolving differences of opinion by locating common ground, by marshalling arguments, and by becoming sensitive to fallacies and other pitfalls of disputes.
- Courses should sensitize students to methods of overcoming differences that obstruct agreements to cooperate, so that the parties may come to an accord on how to interact with a minimum of dissatisfaction and a maximum consideration of the merits of each side.

- Courses should help students become more skilled in planning tasks involving choices and uncertainties. To develop these skills, students should learn techniques for analyzing and operationalizing the tasks, e.g., formulating objectives, flow-charting, programming, and assessing probabilities.

### *Oral Communication*

Courses in oral communication should promote a breadth of skills in listening and clear expression in interpersonal or public speaking situations. Courses that satisfy this proficiency should foster the ability to use appropriate listening and expressive skills, to inform and persuade, and to analyze and synthesize for problem solving in interpersonal or public settings.

### *American Sign Language*

Courses should enable students to recognize, describe, and produce under appropriate conditions the basic grammatical features and vocabulary of American Sign Language with the aim of achieving conversational fluency. Courses should also enable students to recognize and describe the essential features of the culture, education, and communication strategies of deaf people.

### *Computer Programming and Applications*

The level of programming and applications required should be beyond the University's requirements for computer usage (literacy). Courses are not limited to those offered by the Department of Computer Science.

### *Foreign Language*

Foreign language courses should develop facility in understanding, speaking, reading, and writing a language other than one's own. Additionally, these courses should introduce salient features of the culture from which the language derives or in which the language flourishes. Two semesters of college-level foreign language study will satisfy this requirement; students entering the University with college-level knowledge of a foreign language will be allowed to satisfy this requirement by taking two more advanced language courses or by taking two semesters of yet another foreign language.

## **Criteria for Courses in the Distribution Areas**

### ***Area I, Fine Arts***

Courses, which meet the fine arts requirement, should provide experiences and develop skills that promote awareness of the imaginative and inventive capacities of the mind and of the aesthetic qualities of works of fine art. To achieve this goal courses should:

- deal with the arts in a direct, experiential manner, and whenever possible, include attendance and/or involvement in live performances, exhibitions, or arts events;
- entail formal or historical study of an art form or forms through reading, lecture, or discussion, and writing to develop the knowledge and perceptual skills that make for critical response, discernment, and informed evaluation; and

- be designed for the layperson rather than the skilled practitioner.

Courses may focus on the role of an art or the arts in a culture or on the enhancement of life they provide the individual. Courses may introduce students to the practice of an art so long as they meet the three criteria cited above.

### ***Area II, Humanities***

Humanities courses should offer the opportunity to study some of the forms by means of which human beings have reflected upon and represented human experience and the varieties of the human condition. These forms are mostly linguistic – literary, philosophic, historiographic, and religious. Sources studied in the humanities courses should be presented in ways that develop appreciation for their intellectual and aesthetic integrity and their imaginative scope. They should be studied in ways that require effort of response and reflection, and expand the students' critical and empathic capacities.

### ***Area III, The United States: Cultures and Issues***

The United States has always been, and will continue to be, a nation of great cultural and human diversity, its citizens deriving from many different religious, racial, and social groups. As the United States, increasingly multicultural and aware of the claims and rights of its diverse citizenry, strives to include all groups fully into the national life, a multi-cultural perspective needs to be incorporated into a student's general education. Courses that fulfill this requirement:

- should address the subject within the larger context of United States history and culture;
- should afford students the opportunity for informed reflection upon the cultural and human diversity of the United States. They should develop awareness of the national dimensions of cultural and human diversity and of critical social issues affecting component cultures of our society;
- may focus on one or more of the cultures that comprise our society, studying that culture (or those cultures) in ways that promote an understanding of the perspectives of the group or groups in the national context;
- may reflect upon issues that cut across constituencies, such as those stemming from age, class, disabilities, gender, race, or the dynamics of discrimination;
- may focus on a specific issue such as race relations or the psychology of difference; on a specific perspective such as that provided by women's writing or the arts of a cultural group; or on distinctive features of one cultural tradition such as musical forms developed by Blacks/African Americans or historic and contemporary institutions of Native American culture; and
- may focus on the ethical, legal, and institutional aspects of the fact of diversity in United States history and culture.

#### ***Area IV, Other Cultures and Civilizations***

Undergraduate education is based almost entirely on the Greco-Judaic-Christian tradition, commonly referred to as Western culture. Western achievements – especially in the realm of science and technology – have been overwhelming. In recent centuries, Western powers built vast overseas empires whose impact has been far-reaching and varied, sometimes devastating. As part of this legacy, our perceptions regarding the human condition are dominated by the world-view of the West. Students should be made aware that the Western experience forms but a part of the human experience. Courses in this area should enable students to understand the Western impact, diverse perceptions of the human condition, and the bases of different world-views. Courses in this area should comply substantially with the following criteria:

- deal systematically with the cognitive and pedagogical challenges of presenting and understanding a culture other than one's own;
- attempt to acknowledge and utilize multidisciplinary insights of scholars devoted to the study of cultures and civilizations;
- provide an opportunity to step outside the Western frame of reference by considering human experience and the potential for human achievement from a nonwestern perspective;
- emphasize the adaptive nature of a culture or civilization as it responds to the challenges of its physical environment, international environment, and internal social dynamics;
- examine the history, literature, arts, religion, ideas, and institutions of other cultures and civilizations to bring out their wholeness – their integrity as self-conscious entities grappling with problems;
- stimulate reflection on the comparison and contrast between the culture of the student and the culture or cultures being studied;
- stimulate reflection on the interaction of cultures and nations in an increasingly interdependent world; and
- explore alternatives to the Western view of modernization.

#### ***Area V, Social and Behavioral Sciences***

The courses in the social and behavioral sciences should provide students with an understanding of human society, its cultures and environments, or of the dynamics of individuals and groups. The courses may:

- provide a theoretical, empirical, or experimental analysis of the economic, political, communicative, psychological, and other kinds of behavior of individuals and institutions;
- work toward descriptions adequate to the complexity of human beings and their institutions;
- examine the policy implications and service applications of social science in ways that promote critical reflection; or

- focus analytically and critically on the history or prehistory of societies, particularly those not covered in distribution areas III and IV.

#### ***Area VI, Natural Sciences with Laboratory<sup>4</sup>***

Laboratory courses in the natural sciences which meet the general education requirement require students to interact with objects of nature and to use instruments that permit careful examination of natural phenomena. They require students to use scientific methods to collect and analyze data and to report results. These courses have a laboratory period of at least one hour and fifty minutes per week. Courses must carry at least 4 hours but no more than 5 hours of credit. The laboratory component of an approved course must:

- be based on direct observation;
- deal with objects of nature and employ appropriate instruments to observe or measure these objects;
- employ scientific methods; and
- have a designated period for laboratory work.

General purpose laboratory courses which instruct in scientific methods independent of a particular science discipline are not eligible for satisfying the general education laboratory sciences requirement. Only discipline-specific courses in the areas of physical sciences, earth sciences, or life sciences satisfy this requirement.

#### ***Area VII, Natural Science and Technology: Applications and Implications***

If students are to understand contemporary life, they should understand the implications of natural science and technology as applied to health, social and economic welfare; the storage, transfer, and processing of information; and the management of society's impact on the environment with sensitivity to ecological interconnections. Courses in this area should help students attain this understanding and should promote the ability to evaluate and participate in the decisions of society regarding science and technology. Criteria for these courses are:

- A substantial portion of the course work must be devoted to the teaching of the relevant science and technology. Techniques and skills acquired without learning an underlying natural science do not meet this criterion.
- The courses should also explore the costs and benefits of society's decisions regarding the uses of the sciences they teach.
- A substantial portion of the course should prompt reflection on responsible choices between competing values and interests.
- Although courses will contain a core of natural science, computer science, or the technology based on these sciences, they will explore practical applications and implications by examining some of the following:
  - sciences relevant to informed judgment about social and environmental costs and benefits;

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<sup>4</sup> [The criteria for this area are based on the recommendations of the ad hoc Laboratory Science Requirement Committee of C. A. Hesselberth, Nickola Nelson, Alan Poling, Joseph Stoltman, Thomas Straw, M. Walker, and E. B. Ehrle, accepted by the Undergraduate Studies Council on 14 February 1989.]

- salient history of science and technology;
- assessments, systems analyses, and other quantitative tools;
- considerations of law, rights, ethics, and the political process;
- global challenges (e.g., population growth, climate and atmospheric change, loss of biodiversity, and resource management) involving more than one science and technology; or
- content from the social and behavioral sciences, humanities, and fine arts.

Courses in this area lend themselves to a multi-disciplinary approach, and may be the sole responsibility of individual instructors with wide competencies, or may be team-taught, or may be offered by a group of instructors, each assuming responsibility for a module of the course.

### ***Area VIII, Health and Well-being***

Courses which satisfy this area must advance students' knowledge and ability to influence their own health. Course content should examine national health priorities regarding the reduction of preventable death, disease, and disability among students and must include material on HIV/AIDS, and alcohol and substance abuse.

Courses which satisfy this requirement should improve a student's capacity to make healthy lifestyle choices. Single-topic courses may not be used to satisfy the requirement, and course content must address a minimum of four areas of health-related issues such as substance abuse, stress-related issues, grief and loss, development of healthy relationships, sexually transmitted diseases, lifestyle related diseases (primarily heart disease and cancer), and the principles of a healthy lifestyle.

Courses may be drawn from any department within the University. This area requirement supersedes all but the last sentence of University requirement no. 8 on page 31 of the *1993-95 Undergraduate Catalog*. [The sentence reads: "A maximum of eight hours of general physical education may be counted toward graduation."]