



***WESTERN
MICHIGAN
UNIVERSITY***

WMU Essential Studies

WES Overview and General Updates

- <https://wmich.edu/essentialstudies>
 - Foundations (Level 1)
 - Exploration and Discovery (Level 2)
 - Connections (Level 3)
- Initial assessment developed and collected
- All community college transfer guides have been updated
- WMU Essential Studies website has been updated to reflect summer and fall courses
- Ongoing technical support provided by WMUx

Preparing to move from student to professional can be daunting, but Western Michigan University has you covered. As a WMU student, you will complete 12 courses from WMU Essential Studies, a program that helps you develop the general education and intellectual **skills employers seek** most in graduates—demonstrated complex problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, emotional intelligence, judgment and decision making.

And, since WMU Essential Studies is **all about your choices**, the sequence of courses you select will help you succeed in your chosen major, minor, graduate degree and future career.

- Level 1 Foundations—Writing; Oral and Digital Communication; Quantitative Literacy; Inquiry and Engagement
- Level 2 Discovery and Exploration—Personal Wellness; World Languages and Culture; Science and Technology; Scientific Literacy with Lab; Artistic Theory and Practice; Societies and Cultures
- Level 3 Connections—Local and National Perspectives; Global Perspectives

Get ready. Anything is possible.



WES Key Point: Student Choice and Agency

- “Make WMU Essential Studies Work for You”
- WMU Essential Studies provides students with the opportunity to craft their course experiences within an area of interest.
- WMU Essential Studies provides an opportunity for WMU to differentiate us from other colleges and universities.
- Stories of students making WMU Essential Studies work for their interests, along with additional resources for students and a descriptive video: <https://wmich.edu/essentialstudies/customize>

Making Essential Studies Work For You

Do you have a particular interest that isn't a topic in your major? Or are you seeking to improve your skills and understanding of one of the areas as you pursue your professional goals? Then, this is the list for you.

Watch the short video and/or take a look at the examples below of how Western Michigan University students can make essential studies work. The possibilities are endless. What works for you?



Which areas would you choose? Explore some options.

- [Creative and Critical Thinking](#)
- [Diversity and Inclusion](#)
- [Ethical and Critical Thinking](#)
- [Global Awareness](#)
- [Increase Foundational Knowledge](#)
- [Information Literacy](#)
- [Intellectual Inquiry](#)
- [Language and Cultures](#)
- [Oral and Digital Communication](#)
- [Personal Wellness](#)
- [Planetary Sustainability](#)
- [Quantitative Literacy](#)
- [Scientific Literacy](#)
- [Work Independently and in Teams](#)
- [Written Communication](#)

Fall 2020 Assessment Data

- Over 80% of fall WMU Essential Studies instructors submitted assessments.
- Data gathered is aggregated by student learning outcomes.
- Average scores were high
32/46 student learning outcomes had average scores > 3.0

| | Total Student | Total Sections | Average Score |
|--|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| Quantitative data analysis | 378 | 52 | 1.86 |
| Understand different types of modeling techniques | 571 | 23 | 2.39 |
| Perform mathematical calculations in order to solve problems | 829 | 20 | 2.78 |
| Creative Thinking | 1410 | 54 | 2.80 |
| Students are creators of information | 1462 | 63 | 2.80 |
| Creative and Critical Habits of Mind | 3382 | 107 | 2.85 |
| Global and international knowledge | 330 | 13 | 2.85 |
| Interpret mathematical representations | 837 | 19 | 2.89 |
| Critical Thinking | 3173 | 103 | 2.89 |
| Global and international problem-solving | 332 | 13 | 2.92 |
| Global and international understanding | 332 | 13 | 2.95 |
| Data collection and interpretation process | 103 | 5 | 2.97 |
| Critical thought | 296 | 18 | 2.98 |
| Multiple Methods | 495 | 17 | 2.99 |



Next Steps

- Assessment Days, April 14 and 15.
- Continued faculty education and support on administration and collection of WMU Essential Studies Assessment.
- Development and Articulation of WMU Essential Studies Assessment Data.
- Ongoing collaboration with WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee to grow and build WMU Essential Studies course offerings to meet student trends.
- Continued discussion with community colleges for transfer articulations.
- Longer-term: Leveraging WMU Essential Studies as a student recruitment tool.