

Attachment A

(APPROVED by Senate GenEd Committee 4/13/2020, SENATE APPROVED, WEB SITE)

5 General Education Essential Characteristics (followed by their current versions)

1) Essential Characteristics

Visual Literacy

Visual literacy is about the interpretation of visual media, its role in society, and how visual images can be used to convey messages and meaning. Visual literacy courses are primarily about analyzing or producing visual media and their roles in the presentation of ideas and/or concepts. Courses in visual literacy will include cultural, historical, and social contexts as they relate to visual artifacts. The course should promote an understanding of visual media as a means of understanding the world.

For these reasons, students are required as part of their General Education to complete a course in Visual Literacy. Such a course should enable students to:

1. Produce or critically analyze visual media and their roles in the presentation of ideas and/or concepts (such as photographs, sculpture, video, film, new media, presentations, paintings, or papers)
2. Identify cultural, historical, and social contexts pertinent to the visual artifact
3. Identify appropriate visual literacy vocabulary/terminology as it relates to course media

(Committee approved: 3/2020)

Current General Education website information about Visual Literacy

Increasingly, communication in the modern age depends less on speech and the written word and more on visual media. Images can be extremely effective tools for conveying information and mood, and it is important for today's college graduate to appreciate the power—for good and ill—of visual media. As part of the general education curriculum the demonstration of a basic understanding of the techniques, history, and interpretation of the conventions of visual culture will be by successful completion of a course that meets the following criteria:

- provides a foundation for a historical understanding of visual conventions, including both western and non-western cultures.
- introduces the grammar and expressive potential of visual forms, applies rigorous methodologies developed by social sciences, sciences, and humanities for the study of perception and interpretation of the visual world.
- requires students to be makers as well as interpreters, i.e. through the fabrication of visual essays and statements using new or traditional media.
- prepares the student to view and understand information presented in modes used in a variety of disciplines and areas.

Source: Adapted from Report and Recommendations, IUSB Task Force on General Education (March 2003).

Guidelines for Developing a Visual Literacy Course

Visual Literacy has been recognized within a growing number of academic disciplines as a necessary component of a comprehensive education. Of the seven literacies included in the IUSB General Education plan, "Visual Literacy" connotes the greatest variety of interpretations. A review of relevant terms is therefore useful here.

- Visual Culture is the field of study devoted to visual images and messages. It is "a community of cultural and social practices that communicates meaning via mediums like television, advertising, fashion, dance, architecture, scientific imagery, news, photography, painting, language, and so forth."
- Visual Literacy is the ability to understand meaning in a visual message/image. It becomes the student's "ability to read, perceive, understand, create/produce, use, and appreciate visual images in a variety of settings."
- Visual Communication refers to the techniques used to create these messages. More specifically, it is "the deliberate arrangement of visual images, with or without text, using the principles and elements of graphic design in order to communicate an intended, or unintended, message."
- Visual Media focuses on the media that transmit visual messages, including (but is not limited to) television, film, books, newspapers, advertising, dance, architecture, songs, computer programs (e.g., PowerPoint, Photoshop, etc.), and so forth.

General Characteristics

Visual representations that transmit data, communicate information, construct knowledge, and/or express emotion are subjects of study in many disciplines. Although courses that fulfill the requirement for Visual Literacy may be taught in a variety of disciplines under various course numbers, any such course must promote general skills acquisition through study of the role of images in a variety of disciplines or with reference to knowledge, forms, and practices familiar to a variety of disciplines. The course should promote an understanding of visual media as a means of understanding the world and should prepare students to apply methodologies derived from the study of visual literacy in future research, classroom activities, and everyday life.

2) Essential Characteristics Computer Literacy

Courses that fulfill the General Education Computer Literacy requirement focus primarily on aspects of technology. Technology is ubiquitous and integrated into every discipline and career. Using technology is a life skill that is critical to navigate increasingly technological lives and careers.

For these reasons, students are required as part of their General Education to complete a course in Computer Literacy. Such a course should enable students to:

1. Create basic steps for solving problems, using computational thinking
2. Identify basic computational tools (e.g. hardware, software) in various domains
3. Use productivity software for data analysis, presentation, and reporting
4. Identify examples of interactions among technology, humans, and society

(Committee approved: 3/2020)

Current General Education website information about Computer Literacy

In the 21st Century preparation for life beyond the university surely includes learning how to use computers for a variety of tasks. Some students begin their studies at IU South Bend with extensive experience in the use of computers, while others lack these skills altogether. Opportunities exist, e.g., through "start-up" classes offered by the Office of Information Technologies, as well as through classes offered for credit, for students to acquire these skills. As part of the general education curriculum the demonstration of competence in the use of computers for a variety of purposes, either through satisfactory performance on a proficiency exam or by the successful completion of a course that provides instruction in the following skills.

- knowledge of the basic terminology of computer hardware and software.
- ability to perform essential file manipulation functions using one or more modern computer operating systems.
- ability to utilize basic features of common packaged software programs, including word processors, spreadsheets, databases, web browsers, and presentation software.

Source: *Adapted from* Report and Recommendations, IU South Bend Task Force on General Education (March 2003).

3) Essential Characteristics Health and Wellness

Courses in this category are primarily about the role wellness plays in a successful life, as well as instruction in activities that will enhance a lifelong commitment to personal wellness. Students will develop the skills and knowledge necessary to incorporate the many dimensions of wellness into a well-articulated philosophy of health and well-being. These courses require students to demonstrate familiarity with the interwoven concepts and principles of physical fitness, healthful living, and the prevention of disease. A comprehensive approach to health and wellness prepares learners for life beyond the university.

For these reasons, students are required as part of their General Education to complete a course in Health and Wellness. Such a course should enable students to:

1. Identify wellness concepts.
2. Participate in the performance of activities that will enhance lifelong commitment to personal fitness and wellness.

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Current General Education website information about Health and Wellness

The goal of university education is to prepare students for life beyond the university. While this preparation rightly focuses primarily on students' intellectual growth and development, it must not neglect their physical and emotional well-being. The importance of physical and mental wellness to success in life, as well as instruction in activities that promote and maintain this wellness, are important components of general education. We recommend as part of the general education curriculum the successful completion of two credit hours of instruction in courses that contribute to students' understanding of the importance of physical and mental health, and that offer students the opportunity to acquire skills that will help them to achieve and maintain such health. Obvious examples are courses that involve students in athletic pursuits or instruct them on issues related to nutrition; but other examples could also be found. In order to apply to this requirement, a course should meet one or more of the following criteria:

- leads students to a demonstration of skills and knowledge of physical fitness concepts through the performance of activities that will enhance lifelong commitment to personal fitness and wellness
- imparts an understanding of holistic health concepts in a manner that invokes personal responsibility for health and wellness
- encourages and directs students to lifestyle changes geared toward the maintenance of healthy living and the prevention of disease and illness

General Guidelines

The instruction in health and wellness within these courses needs to be formal in some way, not just a matter of a few words of advice here and there. The course should address *at least ONE of the following goals*:

1. Students should be able to demonstrate skills and knowledge of physical fitness concepts (sports, exercise, dance, etc). The skills and knowledge may be demonstrated partly through physical performance; but the course must also include some academic instructional elements that ensure that these concepts become a familiar part of the students' thinking, thereby heightening their awareness of the benefits of a lifelong commitment to personal fitness and wellness.
2. Students should develop an understanding of holistic health concepts in a manner that promotes personal responsibility for health and wellness. The course must include academic instructional elements that ensure the students' command of these concepts. Students should learn the means of making lifestyle changes geared toward the maintenance of healthy living and the prevention of disease and illness. The course must include academic instructional elements that direct and encourage students in the understanding and accomplishment of these goals.
3. Students should learn the means of making lifestyle changes geared toward the maintenance of healthy living and the prevention of disease and illness. The course must include academic instructional elements that direct and encourage students in the understanding and accomplishment of these goals.

4) Essential Characteristics - Diversity in United States Society

Courses fulfilling this requirement focus on issues of difference and commonality in the United States, such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation, immigration status, indigeneity, nationality, disability, and/or religion. Special attention is paid to the intersectionality of these categories.

For these reasons, students are required as part of their General Education to complete a course in Diversity in United States Society. Such a course should enable students to:

1. Demonstrate specific knowledge of the history, values, politics, art, communication styles, economies, or beliefs and practices of one or more under-represented groups in the United States, as defined by factors such as race, ethnicity, immigration status, indigeneity, class, sex, gender, religion, disability, and/or sexual orientation
2. Recognize the ways multiple factors such as race, ethnicity, immigration status, indigeneity, class, sex, gender, religion, disability, and/or sexual orientation shape individual lives, experiences, challenges, and opportunities in society
3. Describe their own intersectional positions in society, and how their positions shape their own lives and their capacity to understand others, to empathize with others' experiences, and to communicate effectively with others

(Committee approved: 11/2019)

"Diversity in United States Society shall be retained in our General Education program, with the general characteristics updated as described below; and Global Cultures, as described below, shall be adopted to replace Non-Western Cultures."

Diversity in United States Society – The United States is a nation rich in diversity, and it is one of our greatest strengths and sources of pride. Nevertheless, it is surprisingly easy in the United States to live in virtual isolation from much of the rich diversity of social identities it contains, and even to be ignorant of the ways in which factors such as race, ethnicity, immigration status, indigeneity, class, sex, gender, religion, and sexual orientation shape an individual's place in and view of American society. In addition, we as a society are increasingly aware of various disabilities people have and the differences it makes to their lives. It is essential that a 21st-century university education addresses such issues. Students are thus required as part of the general education curriculum to successfully complete a course that focuses on diversity in United States society, in particular, diversity related to the factors listed above. Such a course should teach students to:

- recognize the ways in which factors such as race, ethnicity, immigration status, indigeneity, class, sex, gender, religion, disability, and/or sexual orientation shape individual lives, experiences, and opportunities, and how such factors can intersect with one another and affect both individuals' sense of identity and group identities
- demonstrate specific knowledge of the history, values, politics, art, communication styles, economies, or beliefs and practices of one or more groups in the United States, as defined in terms of the factors listed above
- recognize and describe the unique experiences of these groups and the expectations and/or challenges they experience or have experienced, in relation to other groups and to the broader society
- describe their own intersectional positions in the broader society, and how their positions shape their own lives and their capacity to understand others, to empathize with others' experiences, and to communicate effectively with others

(Senate approved: 11/2018)

Current General Education website information about Diversity in United States Society

The United States is a society of immigrants; and the diversity in ethnic, religious, and national influences that we enjoy as a result is one of our nation's greatest strengths and sources of pride. Nevertheless, it is surprisingly easy in the United States to live in virtual isolation from this rich diversity of cultures, and even to be ignorant of the ways in which race, class, gender, and sexual orientation shape an individual's view of American society. It is essential, at the beginning of the 21st century, that a university education address this most pressing of national issues. We recommend as part of the general education curriculum the successful completion of a course that focuses on the issues of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation in American society

Course Guidelines

To qualify as fulfilling the campus-wide general education requirement in Diversity in United States Society, a course will include five general approaches to understanding diversity explained below. Your responses should include specific references to assignments, lecture topics, activities and readings that address each approach.

1. **Definitional:** The course will impart an awareness of the ways multiple factors such as race/ethnicity, class, gender, religion, disability, and sexual orientation shape individual lives, how they are embedded in and have shaped our social institutions, and how they produce markedly different outcomes and opportunities for individuals and groups
2. **Personal:** The course will develop an awareness of students' own potential biases regarding diversity, the origins of those biases, and their implications for social, economic, and political interactions.
3. **Social:** The course will lead students to an awareness of their own position within a privilege-oppression continuum, and enable them to explore the implications of that position for their lives and for their responsibilities as citizens of a multicultural democracy. The course will develop an appreciation of the culturally constructed nature of distinctions based on several important diversity categories, such as race/ethnicity, class, disability, gender, religion, and sexual orientation, and of how they have varied historically.
4. **Historical:** The course will develop an appreciation of the culturally constructed nature of distinctions based on several important diversity categories, such as race/ethnicity, class, disability, gender, religion, and sexual orientation, and of how they have varied historically.
5. **Global:** Although the course may focus on a specific American minority culture, the course will impart an awareness of how United States culture has been and continues to be, influenced by diverse Asian, African, Middle Eastern, Oceanic, and Central- and South- American cultures, both historical and contemporary.

5) Essential Characteristics - Non-Western (Global) Cultures

Courses in this category focus primarily on cultures or societies outside of the United States and Europe. In the twenty-first century, we live in a richly interconnected world, with closely intertwined political and economic relations, widespread cross-cultural influences, and information flowing across national boundaries. Globalization is the new norm. As a result, we are all now in a significant sense "global citizens." It is impossible to work or plan effectively, or to adequately understand our own country and society, without knowledge of the diversity of global cultures world-wide, as well as the diversity within particular global cultures, and how these other cultures intersect with each other and with our own.

For these reasons, students are required as part of their General Education to complete a course in Non-Western and Global cultures. Such a course should enable students to:

- 1) demonstrate specific knowledge of at least one culture or society outside of the United States, specifically one or more non-European cultures (i.e., those originating from Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, or East or South Asia, the Pacific, or indigenous cultures outside the United States)
- 2) describe examples of how those cultures or societies studied intersect with or have intersected with other cultures (possibly including US or European cultures and/or a colonial legacy)
- 3) identify at least one specific aspect(s) of such a culture, such as its history, thought, customs, art, religion(s), economy, political institutions, colonialism, etc., and say how this aspect is related to other features that shape or have shaped that culture

(Committee approved: 11/2019)

Global Cultures – In the 21st century, we live in a richly interconnected world, in which political and economic relations are closely intertwined, cross-cultural influence is widespread, and information flows quickly and (to varying degrees) freely across national boundaries. Globalization is the new norm, and as a result, we are all in a significant sense "global citizens" as well as citizens of our own countries. It is now impossible to work or plan effectively, or to adequately understand even our own country and society, without knowledge of the diversity of world cultures, and how these other cultures intersect with each other and with our own. For these reasons, students are required as part of their general education to successfully complete a course in global cultures. Such a course should enable students to:

- demonstrate specific knowledge of at least one culture or society outside of the United States, specifically one or more non-European cultures, i.e., those originating from Central or South America, Africa, the Middle East, or East or South Asia, or indigenous cultures outside the US
- analyze in detail at least one specific aspect(s) of such a culture, such as its history, thought, customs, art, religion(s), economy, political institutions, etc., and say how this aspect is related to other features that shape or have shaped that culture
- describe examples of how those cultures or societies studied intersect with or have intersected with other cultures (possibly including US or European cultures)
- recognize the diversity in that culture, both internally, and as part of the world's cultures

(Senate approved: 11/2018)

Current General Education website information about Non-Western Cultures

In an international context, the 21st century can be expected to bring substantial changes in the global distribution of population, wealth, and political influence. The era of European dominance is past; and despite its current status as the world's sole superpower, the United States will see the influence of other countries and continents gain in the coming decades. In order to be prepared for this future, an educated American citizen should be familiar with the culture and politics of these emerging regions. We recommend as part of the general education curriculum the successful completion of a course that focuses on the history or present culture of one or more countries from the following continents or regions: Asia, the Middle East, Africa, or South or Central America. In order to satisfy this requirement, a course should meet the following criteria:

- acquaints students with the culture, society, and values of a non-Western people, or explores knowledge traditions grounded in non-Western cultural paradigms
- provides a framework for understanding and appreciating ideas and values of cultures different from those that we commonly identify as "Western"
- may focus on a particular dimension of a culture or culture-area (e.g., social institutions, artistic productions, religious beliefs, historical experiences) as an organizing principle, but that dimension must be placed in reference to others that also significantly shape the culture
- when comparative and cross-cultural in nature, must include in-depth study of at least two non-Western cultures or culture-areas
- may include an examination of the concept and practices of colonialism and its impact on contemporary cultures, including post-colonial and global economic dynamics

Guidelines for Non-Western Cultures Courses

To qualify as fulfilling the Non-Western Cultures requirement, a course must focus on the history or present culture of one or more countries from the following continents or regions: Asia, the Middle East, Africa, or South or Central America. A course in Non-Western Cultures that fulfills the campus-wide general education requirement will have the following characteristics:

1. The course will acquaint students with the culture, society, and values of a non-Western people, or explore knowledge traditions grounded in non-Western cultural paradigms
2. The course will provide a framework for understanding and appreciating ideas and values of cultures different from those that we commonly identify as "Western."
3. The course, if it primarily explores a specific dimension of one culture or culture-area (e.g., social institutions, artistic productions, religious beliefs, historical experiences), must include assignments that place that dimension in the context of others that also significantly shape the culture.

In addition, the following limitations will apply to specific kinds of subject matter:

1. Comparative and cross-cultural courses may take as one of the subjects of comparison a Western culture, but such courses must include in-depth study of at least two non-Western cultures or culture-areas
2. Courses that include an examination of the concept and practices of colonialism must focus extensively on its impact on contemporary cultures, including post-colonial and global economic dynamics. In courses on this topic, in other words, the experiences and perspectives of the colonized peoples must be a main focus of study and discussion.