

## **Proposed Changes to Catamount Core Curriculum Framework**

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The Catamount Core Curriculum – a campus-wide General Education curriculum – was adopted by the UVM Faculty Senate in November 2021. Since then, an ad-hoc committee comprised of members elected by Faculty Senate (to ensure unit-level representation) and jointly-appointed by Faculty Senate and the UVM Provost's Office (to add area expertise) has helped to develop systems, mechanisms and structures to support and administer this curriculum upon its launch in Fall 2023. A draft curriculum framework was adopted in Fall 2021 and during AY2021-2022 we have been working through submissions, approvals and revisions to individual courses, college-level distribution requirements, and alignment of majors and program pathways to the gen ed curriculum. Through this process we have identified a number of small changes we would like to see adopted for the Catamount Core Curriculum as follows:

1. Allow 1-credit sequences (stacked into a 3-credit progression) in the case of performance and music courses. These are already taken in a collective manner and should be recognized for the AH1 category.
2. Create an additional AH3 category for Literature to recognize the distinction within CAS between literature and humanities and to more easily map onto the CAS general distribution requirements.
3. Adjust the language of OC to indicate that 'presentation' of oral skills does not mean formal presentations but rather observable oral communication skills (as evident, for example, in a language instruction class).
4. S1 to include fourth category of competencies recognizing the value of applied social science courses, with associated expectations. Courses will be expected to meet 3 out of 4 competencies, to align with the options in other designation categories.
5. While there has historically been some ambiguity regarding experiential education, alternative options and utilizing entire programs to fulfill general education requirements, we would like to affirm that the CCC can only be completed through approved course-based pathways.
6. HCOL and other regularly offered (such as First Year Seminar) courses are currently reviewed on an annual basis which is inefficient and duplicative. The advent of a new numbering system should assist with this process (with courses provided with unique numbers). If courses are taught by different instructors (as is often the case with HCOL or FYS), we advise developing a 'topics-in' system by each gen ed category.

7. Courses submitted after the February 15 catalogue deadline can still be approved for the CCC and we will develop a process with the Registrar's Office to incorporate these into the system.
8. The Global Citizenship language as currently written is somewhat confusing. We propose some amendments and clarifications. GC1 (Global Systems and Problems) remains unchanged; GC2 (Developing Global Citizens) moves from 4 skills subcategories to 3, collapsing cross-cultural communication and language proficiency into one sub-category to better align with our existing foreign languages curriculum and avoid confusion. We have also better articulated the competencies expected in each skills subcategory rather than lumping them all together.

None of these changes are substantive; no new categories or designations are sought and none are being eliminated. Instead, these changes allow our existing and evolving curriculum to better align with the Catamount Core and take into account variations within disciplines, the needs of accredited programs and other needs as articulated by diverse members of our campus community including students, colleges, staff and faculty.

Attached to this proposal you will find specific language regarding proposed changes to the existing framework.

**Proposal: 1-credit courses in sequence to count for AH1**

While general education courses in the Catamount Core Curriculum are generally restricted to 3-credit courses, an exception will be made in the case of 1-credit sequences which are stacked into a 3-credit progression, as in the case of performance and music courses. These are already taken in a collective manner and will be recognized for the AH1 category. These sequences must be evaluated, approved and reviewed as a collective progression, not individually.

## **Proposed Language for AH Category**

### **AH1: Arts**

Arts focus on the understanding, analysis, and production of creative works in a variety of forms, including dance, multimedia, music, theater, visual arts, and creative writing, among others. (The analysis and interpretation of literary works is covered in the separate AH2: Literature requirement.) While some classes focus on the development of artistic practices within specific forms and genres, others use critical theories to examine the meanings, cultural contexts, and historical development of artistic works. Together they enable students to recognize different artistic traditions, examine individual art works closely using appropriate methods, express their creativity through the rigorous practice of a particular artistic mode, and think critically about artistic works as they relate to different aspects of society and history, including the examination of practices and problems.

### **Approval Criteria for AH1: Arts**

**Courses must meet at least *two* of these three criteria:**

1. Introduce students to one or more forms, genres, and/or traditions of artistic work.
2. Allow students to practice the creation of artistic works and/or the analysis of creative works, in each case using methods appropriate to the form and disciplinary or interdisciplinary approach of the course.
3. Use critical thinking to examine artistic works as they relate to different aspects of society and history, including the examination of social structures, identities, practices and/or problems.

In addition, the course must address and assess at least *two* of the student learning outcomes listed below.

### **AH1 Student Learning Outcomes:**

Students completing a course fulfilling the Arts and Literature requirement will:

- Learn to *recognize* selected forms, genres, and traditions of artistic work.
- *Practice* the creation of artistic works and/or the analysis of creative works, in each case using methods appropriate to the form.
- *Develop* critical thinking skills needed to *examine* artistic works as they relate to different aspects of society and history, including the examination of social structures, identities, practices and/or problems.

## **AH2: Literature**

Literature focuses on the understanding and analysis of creative literary works. Classes use critical theories to examine the meanings, cultural contexts, and historical development of literary works. They enable students to recognize different literary traditions, examine individual literary works closely using appropriate methods, and think critically about literary works as they relate to different aspects of society and history, including the examination of practices and problems.

### **Approval Criteria for AH2: Literature**

**Courses must meet at least *two* of these three criteria:**

1. Introduce students to one or more forms, genres, and/or traditions of literary work.
2. Allow students to practice the analysis of literary works, in each case using methods appropriate to the form and disciplinary or interdisciplinary approach of the course.
3. Use critical thinking to examine literary works as they relate to different aspects of society and history, including the examination of social structures, identities, practices and/or problems.

In addition, the course must address and assess at least *two* of the student learning outcomes listed below.

### **AH2 Student Learning Outcomes:**

Students completing a course fulfilling the Literature requirement will:

- Learn to *recognize* selected forms, genres, and traditions of literary work.
- *Practice* the analysis of creative works, using methods appropriate to the form.
- *Develop* critical thinking skills needed to *examine* literary works as they relate to different aspects of society and history, including the examination of social structures, identities, practices and/or problems.

### **AH3: Humanities**

The humanities involve the study of past and present human thought about the way the world works and how people should behave, exploring big questions with which human cultures have grappled for centuries. The study of the humanities helps students to understand what it means to be human and how the past has shaped the present, building skills in using primary source evidence to construct rational arguments, and expanding capacity to empathize with other people.

#### **Approval Criteria for AH3: Humanities**

**Courses must be at least 3 credits and meet at least *two* of the following three criteria:**

1. Expand students' knowledge of cultural constructs and past events and the vocabulary in which humanities scholars describe and characterize them.
2. Train students in the critical analysis of primary sources with an emphasis on how they illuminate broader contexts in which they were constructed.
3. Develop students' skills in the critical analysis of secondary sources to strengthen an understanding and appreciation of humanistic modes of inquiry, including appropriate research questions and use and citation of evidence.

In addition, the course must address and assess at least *three* of the student learning outcomes listed below.

#### **Student Learning Outcomes:**

Student completing a course fulfilling the AH2: Humanities category, should be able to do *at least three* of the following:

- Recall and apply basic information and scholarly vocabulary about the cultural constructs or past events that are central to the course.
- Read primary sources for basic comprehension of their contents.
- Read secondary sources in the Humanities for basic comprehension of their contents.
- Analyze a primary source via the application of methods taught or practiced in the course.
- Analyze a secondary source in the Humanities via the application of methods taught or practiced in the course.

## **Proposal: OC Requirement**

### **Oral Communication (OC) Requirement**

Students are required to take one 3-credit WIL2 (page 11-12) or one 3-credit OC course.

#### *Description*

Oral communication refers to how speakers create and use messages to generate meanings across a wide variety of contexts and cultures. This includes the use of verbal and nonverbal communication practices. The oral communication general education requirement aims to enhance students' ability to speak, listen, and interact with others effectively and ethically. Students will develop effective speaking skills, including crafting messages that are appropriately adapted to purpose, audience, context, and occasion. In addition, students will gain proficiency in practices of effective listening and the critical analysis of oral presentation. Furthermore, competency in oral communication will demonstrate students' abilities to understand and synthesize theories of human communication and how to utilize and apply these theories to crafting effective speaking and listening practices. Courses in this category provide students with an understanding of the form, content, effectiveness, and ethical dimensions of verbal and nonverbal communication. Courses are not required to be delivered in English; sign language courses that develop equivalent communication skills through a signed linguistic modality may also fulfill this requirement.

#### *Course Approval Criteria*

Courses approved to fulfill the OC: Oral Communication requirement must:

1. require at least three opportunities per course to develop and practice oral communication skills through a wide range of possible assignments.
2. emphasize faculty-supervised and -evaluated oral presentations.
3. provide as much opportunity as possible for students to practice and improve their oral communication, as well as opportunity to analyze that of others. For approval, the instructor should address how the course size and structure will enable sufficient practice for students to meet the outcomes.
4. emphasize comprehension as well as presentation skills.

In addition, the course must address and assess student learning in each of the learning outcomes listed below.

#### *Student Learning Outcomes*

- Demonstrate oral communication skills such as: appropriate selection of topic and materials; appropriate organization; effective presentation; the ability to adapt to audience, setting, and occasion

- Demonstrate critical thinking and problem-solving skills by discerning, describing and/or adapting to connections between audience, speaker, and occasion.
- Listen effectively and critically evaluate orally presented information and arguments.

## **Proposal: Social Science (S1) General Education Requirement**

Students will take six credits for the Social Science requirement, to be fulfilled by taking approved courses in the Social Science (S1) requirement.

The social sciences focus on how individuals, groups, and institutions affect and interact with each other. Through systematic investigation, social scientists generate explanatory frameworks for understanding human behavior, action, and social practices. Studying social science prepares students to examine past and present social problems; to think critically about individual, local, regional, and global contexts; and to improve societal well-being.

### **Course approval criteria:**

The faculty member must describe how the course accomplishes three of the four following, including points where student progress towards the Gen Ed Social Science Learning Outcomes will be assessed:

1. Students *develop an understanding* of how individuals, groups, or institutions affect and interact with each other.
2. Students *explore* theories of human behavior, experience, institutions, or social systems.
3. Students *learn about* systematic investigation in social science through the methods and processes of research, such as identifying research questions, data collection, analysis, and representation of findings.
4. Students *apply* social science approaches to the study of individual, group or institutional interactions to their understanding of specific cases, such as in a field study or similar applied contexts.

In addition, the course must address and assess student learning outcomes listed below.

### **Student Learning Outcomes:**

In the context of the course topic or field of inquiry, students successfully completing a course fulfilling the Gen Ed Social Science requirement will:

- Be able to draw on course topics, materials, and activities to *describe* how individuals, groups or institutions affect and interact with each other.
- Be able to *identify and demonstrate understanding of* theories of human behavior, experience, institutions, or social systems addressed in the course.
- *Recognize and evaluate* methods and processes of systematic investigation in one or more applied examples of social science research

## **Proposal: Clarification on Alternative Pathways**

The requirements of the Catamount Core Curriculum can be fulfilled only through approved course-based pathways and not through experiential or alternative options or entire programs, majors or disciplines.

### **Proposal: Regularly offered HCOL and FYS courses**

Regularly offered courses offered by entities such as the Honors College or First Year Seminar programs should seek approval through a 'topics-in' approach and course number specifically dedicated to each general education category. This will remove the need to have these courses reviewed on an annual basis unless the instruction and syllabus are changed.

## **Proposal: Catamount Core Curriculum and Catalog Deadline**

While new courses must meet the February 15 catalog deadline to receive designation, existing courses may be submitted, reviewed and approved after this date.

## **Proposed Language for GC Category**

### **Global Citizenship Requirement**

Students are required to take one 3-credit Global Citizenship course from either (GC1 or GC2) pathway.

The University of Vermont prepares students to live in an increasingly interconnected, diverse, and changing world. Global Citizenship courses help students understand the nature and implications of worldwide phenomena and challenges across local, national, regional, and cultural boundaries. Global citizenship courses also help students develop the skills they need to participate effectively and responsibly as citizens in our increasingly globalized society. To be effective, informed, and responsible members of a diverse and interconnected global community, students need to be able to effect change collaboratively, to communicate across cultural boundaries, and to think deeply and creatively about shared challenges, responsibilities, and injustices.

### **GC1 Pathway description: Global Systems and Problems**

Courses that address systems and problems that are global in scope. These courses will help students understand the nature and complexity of global phenomena. They may address cultural, political, economic, ecological, artistic, technological, human health, or other aspects of our increasingly interdependent world. They explore both the unique problems and the opportunities created by such interdependence and interconnectedness.

### **GC1 Course Approval Criteria:**

To be considered for meeting the GC1 pathway, a course must emphasize material (lectures, videos, readings, activities) and required significant student work (papers, exams, portfolios, etc.) that:

1. Address phenomena that are global in nature; and
2. Address these phenomena through at least one of the following lenses: artistic, cultural, ecological, economic, human health, political, or technological; and
3. Explore the opportunities and challenges created by the interconnectedness and interdependence of global phenomena outlined in #1.

### **Student Learning Outcomes:**

Courses approved for the GC1 must address and assess student achievement of at least two of the following learning outcomes:

- Students will understand major elements of global systems, including their historic and contemporary interconnections and the differential effects of human organizations and actions.
- Students will be able to plan, discern, and evaluate appropriate complex solutions to global challenges using multiple disciplinary perspectives (e.g., cultural, historical, or scientific).

- Students will be able to draw connections between worldviews, power structures, and experiences of multiple cultures in historical or contemporary contexts, as they apply to global challenges.

### **GC2 Pathway description: Developing Global Citizens**

Courses that develop skills necessary to participate effectively as a citizen in local communities and the world at large. To be effective and responsible members of a diverse and interconnected global community, students need to be able to communicate across cultural boundaries, to think deeply and creatively about shared responsibilities and injustices, and to collaboratively effect change. The courses in this pathway are therefore designed to impart at least one of the following core skills: language proficiency, ethical reasoning, and civic engagement.

### **GC2 Course Approval Criteria:**

To be considered for meeting the GC2 pathway, a course must emphasize material (lectures, videos, readings, activities) and significant student work (papers, exams, portfolios, etc.) that help students develop skills necessary to participate effectively as a citizen in local communities and the world at large. These skill sets can be in any of the following areas:

1. civic engagement
2. cross-cultural communication
3. ethical reasoning and decision-making

### **Student Learning Outcomes:**

To be considered for a GC2 course, it must achieve at least 2 of the criteria in the relevant skills category:

#### **Civic Engagement**

- Students will be able to analyze community contexts and community assets and identify and evaluate options for civic and social engagement.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to engage within community contexts and structures to further civic and social action.
- Students will be able to connect and extend disciplinary knowledge to active community engagement.

#### **Ethical Decision-Making**

- Students can understand different philosophical approaches to moral reasoning and apply abstract moral concepts or theories to concrete ethical problems, be they problems in personal ethics, vocational ethics, or social and political morality.
- Students can appreciate the moral complexity of difficult cases, understand how different approaches to moral reasoning yield different conclusions, and anticipate objections to their own perspectives drawn from other moral points of view.

#### **Cross-Cultural Communication**

- Students can demonstrate knowledge of a second language and an awareness of how language shapes culture.
- Students can demonstrate a complex understanding of cultural differences through verbal and nonverbal communication and can use this to broaden their perspectives on diverse ways of knowing and being.
- Students can recognize the influence of cultural norms, customs, and traditions on ways of knowing and/or being in the world and can use this understanding to inform their cross-cultural interactions.