

Catamount Core Requirements language submitted for Faculty Senate Approval in the Liberal Arts Category

These categories were approved at the May 2020 Faculty Senate Meeting and by the Board of Trustees. The specific language of the four Liberal Arts requirements are to be discussed and considered for vote on 9/21/20

Included here are descriptions and approval criteria for the following requirement categories:

6-credit Arts and Humanities Requirement

The General Education requirement is 6 credits overall; individual school or college curricula may specify that the requirements should be distributed across the subcategories in particular ways.

AH1: Arts and Literature

AH2: Humanities

6-credit Social Science Requirement

S1: Social Science

6-credit Natural Science Requirement

This includes subcategories as follows, but the University-level requirement is for at least 6 credits from either category. Colleges and Schools may still implement specific requirements or pathways to fulfilling these requirements.

N1: Natural Science (without lab)

N2: Natural Science (with lab)

3-credit Mathematics Requirement

MA: Mathematics

Arts and Humanities (AH 1 and AH2) General Education Requirement

Students will take six credits for the Arts and Humanities requirement. To assist students and faculty in understanding this broad field, and to create opportunity for the various colleges to develop more nuanced requirements, we have subdivided the criteria and objectives into two categories: 1) AH1: Arts and Literature and 2) AH2: Humanities. The General Education requirement is 6 credits overall; individual school or college curricula may specify that the requirements should be distributed across the subcategories in particular ways.

AH1: Arts and Literature

Definition:

Arts and literature focus on the understanding, analysis, and production of creative works in a variety of forms, including dance, multimedia, music, theater, visual arts, and writing, among others. 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.

Course approval criteria:

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.

Learning Objectives:

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: Humanities

Definition:

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.

Course Approval Criteria:

Courses meeting the Humanities requirement should do at least two of the following three things:

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.

Although individual courses will be evaluated on their own merits, faculty teaching Humanities courses are most likely to have advanced degrees in history, philosophy, religion, or political science with a focus on political theory.

Student Learning Outcomes:

After completing a course in the Humanities category of the Arts and Humanities General Education requirements, students should be able to do at least three of the following things:

- 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.

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 all three of the 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.

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.

Natural Science General Education Requirement

Students will take six credits for the Natural Science requirement, to be fulfilled by taking either N1 or N2 approved courses. Colleges and Schools may still implement specific requirements or pathways to fulfilling these requirements.

In natural sciences courses, students become familiar with scientific thought, observation, experimentation, and formal hypothesis testing. They develop the skills necessary to make informed judgments about scientific information and arguments related to the natural world. Students also gain the ability to assess the impacts of our expanding scientific knowledge and technology on the diversity of life on Earth, and the quality of life for our own species. All courses provide experiences with the methods of scientific inquiry used to develop new knowledge about the natural world.

N1 courses do not include a lab. N2 courses have a laboratory component.

Course Approval Criteria:

Both N1 and N2 courses must:

1. promote the observation of natural systems as a way of knowing, including the analysis of complex phenomena by isolating and studying their components in the field or under controlled conditions,
2. emphasize the process of generating working hypotheses based on both qualitative and quantifiable observations and present the evolution of hypotheses into theories and models that account for observable natural phenomena, and
3. illustrate the use of appropriate theories and models to predict change in natural systems over time.

In addition, to satisfy the N2 requirement, courses must:

1. offer a total of at least three credits integrating scientific theory and practice, typically combining a lecture component and a lab component,
2. have an experiential learning component dedicated to training students in the practice of isolating and studying natural phenomena in the field or under controlled conditions, and
3. engage students in, and demonstrate an understanding of, the scientific method through practical and written work.

Pure Mathematics (MA) Requirement

Students will take 3 credits to fulfill the Pure Mathematics Requirement, in courses approved as MA courses.

Familiarity with the language and concepts of mathematics fosters a full appreciation of our world, and is an integral component of the Liberal Arts; the phrase “Math is Everywhere” is true only to the extent that one knows where and how to look. The courses fulfilling this requirement help guide students in developing conceptual understanding of mathematics through engagement with the language of mathematics and processes of mathematical operations. In addition to illustrating the universality and beauty of mathematics, these courses will give student practice in constructing and critiquing arguments through mathematics.

Courses cannot have both an MA and a QD designation.

Approval Criteria for MA courses

To qualify to fulfill the Pure Mathematics requirement, a course must:

1. Be at least 3 credits,
2. Satisfy the Student Learning Outcomes listed below, and assess each outcome in at least one assignment (how these outcomes will be addressed and assessed must be detailed in the CourseLeaf submission for the course), and
3. Focus primarily on at least one theoretical or conceptual area of mathematics, with the primary emphasis on promoting mathematical thinking through solving mathematical problems and constructing proofs, rather than on practical applications of mathematics in other fields.

Student Learning Outcomes

At the completion of a course fulfilling the Mathematics requirement, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate an ability to understand aspects of the world through a mathematical lens;
- Give examples related to course materials that show how creativity is central to mathematical thinking;
- Be able to demonstrate facility with core mathematical concepts by completing work at the introductory college level or beyond in one area of mathematics.