

At the December 7, 2017 meeting, the GSC approved the implementation of a GS Syllabi policy effective spring 2018. The policy outlines the information that ***must be*** included in the course syllabus. ***Beginning spring 2018, all GS course syllabi are required to comply with the GS Course Syllabi Guidelines (full document attached to this email).***

The impetus for the policy comes from program assessment results. The GSC surveyed faculty and students in spring 2016; results indicated that both faculty and students did not fully understand the purpose, goals, and learning outcomes of UNK's General Studies program. GS program assessment also includes reviewing course syllabi; results of the review revealed that information regarding the purpose, goals, and learning outcomes for General Studies are not always included in course syllabi. To increase the awareness and understanding of UNK's General Studies program, the GSC approved the implementation of the requirements outlined in the GS Course Syllabi Guidelines

All GS course syllabi must include the following information. Instructors may include additional information in their syllabi, but the following must be provided at a minimum.

Course identifiers:

- Course title
- Course prefix, number, and section
- Class meeting time and place

Instructor information:

- Instructor name
- Instructor office location and office hours
- Instructor phone number and email address

Course information:

- Required text / course readings (identify required textbooks, readings, viewings, or other course material; are these materials to be purchased or will they be available on Canvas?)
- Course Prerequisites
- Course description (from undergraduate catalog)
- Learning outcomes / objectives for course content (e.g., History, Economics, etc.); these learning outcomes should reflect the program / department outcomes.

GS course information:

- Statement identifying that the course is a General Studies course, including category and type (e.g., HIST 210 is a General Studies course within the Humanities distribution area)
- Purpose statement for General Studies (*see Appendix A*)
- Purpose statement for course's category (area) (*see Appendix A*)
- Identify which GS PROGRAM-LEVEL learning outcome(s) will be reinforced by this course (*see Appendix B*). These learning outcomes should be linked to appropriate assignments and activities that provides students opportunities to: 1) acquire knowledge / skills in the GS program-level outcomes and 2) demonstrate achievement of those GS program-level outcomes.
- Identify which CATEGORY learning outcomes will be met by this course (*see Appendix B*). These learning outcomes should be linked to appropriate assignments and activities that provides students

opportunities to: 1) acquire knowledge / skills in the GS category outcomes and 2) demonstrate achievement of those GS category outcomes

Other course information:

- Course outline – should include exam schedule and due dates of major assignments or events such as papers, projects, field trips, and presentations
- Grading information including: 1) general grading criteria and weighting for all course projects and other forms of student assessment and 2) grading scale for the determination of final course grades, including how many points or what percentage is required for each letter grade.
- Course policy / expectations on academic honesty / integrity, attendance, class participation, email communications, and conduct.
- UNK's Academic Dishonesty policy.
- University statement on disabilities and those who are pregnant.
- University statement on reporting student sexual harassment, sexual violence or sexual assault.

Appendix A: Purpose Statements (GSC approved 4/2017)

Purpose of General Studies: *The UNK General Studies program helps students acquire knowledge and abilities; to understand the world; to make connections across disciplines; and to solve contemporary problems. The GS program is intentionally structured to allow students to build necessary skills in the Foundational Core classes while making the transition to college level coursework and forming critical thinking skills in the Portal class. Students then explore a broad cross-section of academic topics in the Distribution Area and finally finish their GS program in the Capstone course that is designed to help students synthesize, through interdisciplinary instruction, their knowledge, skills, and experiences across the curriculum.*

Purpose of Foundational Core Courses: *The purpose of the foundational core is to ensure students have a basic skill set in written and oral communication, mathematics, and democracy that build into the critical thinking techniques introduced in the portal courses. These skills are necessary both for continued success in the Distribution Area of the GS program as well as within each student's major.*

Purpose of the Portal Course: *The primary purpose of the portal course in the GS program is to help students develop their critical thinking skills by engaging in a disciplinary themed course analyzing critical issues in that discipline as it affects both the individual and society with a unique global perspective. The portal course helps students to make the transition from high school to college level expectations in critical thinking and analysis of argumentation through written and/or oral discourse.*

Purpose of Distribution Area Courses: *Building on the fundamental skills developed in the Foundational Core and the critical thinking skills of the Portals, courses within the distribution area give students a broad exposure across a variety of disciplines in Aesthetics, Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Analytical & Quantitative Thought, and Wellness. True intellectual development is a powerful combination of the general and the specific - students need to explore multiple perspectives across disciplines and build a strong general foundation.*

Purpose of the Capstone Course: *The GS Capstone course serves as the culminating experience in the GS Program allowing students to participate in an interdisciplinary course requiring students to use their critical thinking skills developed from the beginning of the GS program in the Foundational Core, strengthened in the Portal course, and broadened in the Distribution Area.*

Appendix B: General Studies Learning Outcomes (SVCASA approved 4/2011)

PROGRAM-LEVEL OUTCOMES (GS courses must meet at least one program-level outcome)

Students can:

- 1) Evaluate information appropriate to the task.
- 2) Apply principles of critical thinking to demonstrate integrative learning.
- 3) Communicate effectively in spoken form.
- 4) Communicate effectively in written form.
- 5) Analyze cultural issues within a global context.
- 6) Evaluate in context significant concepts relating to democracy.

I. FOUNDATIONAL CORE

Written Communication outcomes (Courses must meet all outcomes)

Students can:

- 1) Discern a writer's argument or purpose.
- 2) Use appropriate sources responsibly.
- 3) Use context-appropriate conventions of written English.
- 4) Form and support a coherent position on an issue.
- 5) Write in a manner appropriate to the audience and context.

Math outcomes (Courses must meet all outcomes)

Students can:

- 1) Apply mathematical logic to solve equations.
- 2) Describe problems using mathematical language.
- 3) Solve problems given in mathematical language using mathematical or statistical tools.
- 4) Interpret numerical data or graphical information using mathematical concepts and methods.
- 5) Construct logical arguments using mathematical language and concepts.
- 6) Use mathematical software effectively.

Oral Communication outcomes (Courses must meet all outcomes)

Students can:

- 1) Evaluate appropriate sources.
- 2) Utilize effective verbal and non-verbal expressions.
- 3) Deliver effective speeches appropriate to the context.
- 4) Orally present a coherent position on an issue.
- 5) Assess oral argumentation as a critical consumer.

Democracy in Perspective outcomes (Courses must meet all outcomes)

Students can:

- 1) Explain the roles that democratic concepts, including individual rights, play in a just democracy.
- 2) Analyze how citizens engage in democracy.
- 3) Evaluate democratic practices across different contexts (such as settings, time, socioeconomic conditions, cultures, and political boundaries).

II. PORTAL

Portal outcomes (Courses must meet all outcomes)

Students can:

- 1) Analyze critical issues confronting the individual and society, including a global context.
- 2) Interpret an argument through engaged discourse within the discipline.
- 3) Construct a cogent argument pertaining to the course topic.

III. DISTRIBUTION (Distribution courses must meet learning outcome #1 and a majority of the remaining outcomes in their respective category.)

Aesthetics outcomes

Students can:

- 1) Articulate the relevance of the Aesthetics course to their general education.
- 2) Explain the significance of a work of art within its context (i.e. cultural, historical).
- 3) Identify the structure of a work of art by describing its elements.
- 4) Interpret a work of art using concepts appropriate to its medium.
- 5) Distinguish between works of art from various time periods and cultures.

Humanities outcomes

Students can:

- 1) Articulate the relevance of the Humanities course to their general education.
- 2) Analyze primary sources using methodologies appropriate to disciplines in the Humanities.
- 3) Create coherent positions based on the interpretation of primary sources.
- 4) Communicate effectively using the modes of discourse appropriate to the discipline.
- 5) Evaluate primary sources in cultural, historical, literary, or philosophical contexts.

Social Sciences outcomes

Students can:

- 1) Articulate the relevance of the Social Science course to their general education.
- 2) Describe basic concepts and methods used in a social science discipline.
- 3) Demonstrate how basic concepts and methods from a social science discipline explain individual or group behavior.
- 4) Evaluate the connection between social science research and social or political policy.
- 5) Apply concepts and methods from a social science discipline to social science research.

Natural Sciences outcomes

Students can:

- 1) Articulate the relevance of the Natural Science course to their general education.
- 2) Explain how knowledge of natural science is applicable to their lives.
- 3) Apply appropriate scientific methodology within one of the natural sciences.
- 4) Evaluate the validity and limitations of scientific theories and claims.
- 5) (Required for lab courses only) Analyze scientific data acquired through laboratory experiences in one of the natural sciences.

Analytical & Quantitative Thought outcomes

Students can:

- 1) Articulate the relevance of the Analytical & Quantitative Thought course to their general education.
- 2) Express formal relationships using various forms of analytical reasoning.
- 3) Define problems using techniques appropriate to the discipline.
- 4) Solve problems using techniques appropriate to the discipline.
- 5) Draw appropriate inferences from data in various forms.
- 6) Evaluate analytical results for reasonableness.

Wellness outcomes

Students can:

- 1) Articulate the relevance of the Wellness course to their general education.
- 2) Describe components of wellness.
- 3) Recognize the potential consequences of personal choices.
- 4) Analyze the roles of society in wellness promotion.
- 5) Develop an action strategy for wellness.

IV. CAPSTONE

Capstone outcomes (Courses must meet all outcomes)

Students can:

- 1) Evaluate information from more than one academic discipline.
- 2) Formulate logical connections between disciplines as they relate to the topic.
- 3) Employ the approach of more than one academic discipline in completing a Capstone project.
- 4) Synthesize knowledge related to the topic in completing a Capstone project.
- 5) Communicate effectively in the medium chosen for the Capstone project.