

Preamble:

There are any number of laudable goals for an education. The bad news is that no program can make them all a focus; the good news is that, starting with almost any one of them, a good curriculum will eventually address them all. Focus, however, is important since we know that understanding the focus and intent of a program of study is a key factor in learning what is taught in the component parts. One criticism of our current program is that it lacks such focus, and student outcomes are affected negatively by our failure to communicate to students the aim of the program and what role each of its parts plays.

Addressing the various logistical problems raised by any curriculum was not our charge; rather, we were charged to set aside territorial issues and arrive at the best possible program for students. We believe that, as far as was within our abilities, we have done so.

The program will call on all of us for change, but that change we believe will be borne equally and equitably by all constituents of the university's academic program. While the nature of individual faculty work loads and the manner in which departments garner their FTEs will be affected, we believe that, with creative adjustments, most departments and programs will find their overall position and faculty strength unaffected by the changes in the long run.

The General Studies Roundtable Phase II is presenting a Liberal Studies program. This description suggests a focused as opposed to an unfocused or "general" set of studies. The curriculum being presented is gathered around the concept of a "curriculum for educated citizenship in a free and just society."

We intend this idea to encompass both academic citizenship during the years of the college experience and future citizenship both in professional/career roles (largely the domain of students majors), in personal lives and the values which constitute them, in enlightened contributions to our society, and in life-long learning. Moreover, we intend by this concept an affirmation of the key concepts of a democracy (freedom and justice) and their contribution to a progressive and peaceful world.

Philosophy:

Universities are in the business of creating intellectual capital, five aspects of which should be briefly noted.

- The capital we provide must, of necessity, be **selective**.

There is a vast store of knowledge from our past, not all of which is equally valuable, the total of which could not reasonably be presented. Moreover, knowledge is increasing at a rapid rate. The proper conclusion from that is not, we believe, to suggest that just anything one learns is suitable providing one is learning something. Rather, it is our responsibility to select the most valuable knowledge to convey. Fortunately, there is some broad consensus on of what that selected knowledge should consist.

- There ought to be **equality** of access to that capital.

Students come to us with great discrepancies in their previous educations, their income levels, and their personal and collective backgrounds. Ideally, we ought to honor their heritages and at the same time seek to provide a common core of knowledge, one that would balance the further diversity of their

eventual academic emphases in their majors. The truth is that intellectual capital is directly related to affluence and upward mobility, and we have an intellectual responsibility to “share the wealth.”

➤ Intellectual capital is at the heart of the creation of a **community** out of our diversity. Jefferson, Horace Mann, and John Dewey may have held diverse views of educational processes, but they were one in their belief that a common literacy was vital to the development of a common culture. Citizenship is the participation in the common good, and understanding of the common good is, we believe, an inescapable aim of a sound liberal studies program.

➤ **The idea of a university** is a crucial part of the intellectual capital we provide. It is not enough that students master facts and fields of knowledge. They should also gain an understanding of what a university is about, why universities exist, why the knowledge they create and disseminate is important to individuals and societies, and why it is in citizen’s interest to maintain and promote universities. While universities differ widely in many of their aspects, common core skills are necessary in all of them for mastering academic subjects and common modes or methods of knowing are at the heart of each of them. We have an obligation to share with students the idea and justification for what we do as an academy of advanced learning.

➤ Intellectual capital should encompass the **major ways our minds engage the world**. The academic taxonomy (humanities, sciences, etc) is addressed in our proposed program, but more importantly we should recall that this taxonomy addresses the major areas attracting human curiosity and investigation: knowing oneself, knowing how groups and communities function, understanding institutions and how they evolve, investigating the natural world in its several aspects, and grasping the “built” world and the several senses in which it is “constructed.”

For all the virtues of an eclectic program (sometimes called the “cafeteria”), it ultimately fails to address sufficiently (or at all) these five aspects; we believe the program we propose will address these aspects and do so in balance with disciplinary study.

### Overview:

Each element of the proposed program has both a preamble of explanation and an appendix with further overviews and objectives as well as sample courses. The courses are meant to be suggestive only, and it is our intent that responsibility for the delivery of the courses be shared by all those whose professional areas or professional practice lends itself to delivering a particular course. Obviously, in many areas, one department will enjoy a certain “pride of place” for both academic and practical reasons. No course, however, is the “domain” of a single department. The course nomenclature is a technical means of assuring the widest possible participation in course delivery.

The program is comprised of Core Studies (12), Historical Sources (3), Modes of Inquiry (15), Disciplinary Focus (13), and Capstone (2). Modes of Inquiry itself is comprised of a “portal” or “cornerstone” course (3) and examinations (12 hours) of modes of knowing. The portal introduces what the modes develop, which in turn is applied in the capstone.

To arrive at this proposed program, we have not relied on any one model of the many we studied. Rather we have attempted to take the best features of those that seemed to have the closest application to the shape of our institution and the nature of our mission. We were mindful in doing so of the claims made for various reforms by institutions whose reforms already have a track record, and we attended closely to the learning outcomes that were the consensus of Phase I of the Roundtable. These outcomes, as well, were drawn with attention to the models available.

We were guided in our study by *Greater Expectations: A New Vision for Learning as a Nation Goes to College*. National Panel Report AACU. We felt moved by their “Call to Action” (reprinted as an appendix to this proposal) and convinced by the section of the report on why “Distribution Requirements are not Enough.” The appendix to the AACU report and the AACU website cite the experience of fifty-some colleges and universities: Asbury, Assumption, Auburn, Boston U., Calvin, Christendom, CIT, Claremont McKenna, College of Charleston, Columbia, Eastern New Mexico, Fairleigh Dickinson, Gonzaga, Grand Valley, Grove City College, Gustavus Adolphus, Hampden-Sydney, Indiana State, Kalamazoo, Mary Washington, Miami U. of Ohio, Michigan State, Millikin, Millsaps, Morehouse, Notre Dame, Oglethorpe, Olivet, Pepperdine, Portland State, Providence, Rhodes, St. Anselm, St. John’s, St. Joseph’s, St. Mary’s, St. Olaf, St. Vincent, Sewanee, Syracuse, Thomas Aquinas, Thomas More, Trinity, UCLA, U Charleston, U. Chicago, U. Dallas, U. Delaware, U. North Carolina at Asheville, U. San Francisco, USC, Wagner, Washington State, and Yale. In a word, we sorted through “The exciting innovations . . . already flourishing on many campuses” that “attest to the academy’s potential to” answer the call for liberal studies reform. From these, we believe we have managed to draw a consistent program for UNK.

## *Essentials for Citizenship 45 hrs*

### **I. THE CORE 12 hours**

- We regard the core as providing the basic skills for Academic Citizenship, exposing students to the fundamentals that put their future studies and lives on a sound physical and mental footing.
- Students may test out of any of the following, choosing a more advanced course of a similar nature from a list provided.
- Honors sections should be made available.
- It is expected that students will take these courses in their first two semesters on campus.
- They are, as departments determine, prerequisite to most other course work.
- No existing course, as it now stands, will fill these requirements.
- Again, we do not intend in the course titles to imply any departmental ownership.

#### **ESC 101: Wellness**

**3 hours (2, 1/2, 1/2)**

See Appendix A

- This course combines the treatment of the five areas of wellness with half-hour segments of activity
- The list of activities will be expanded from current standards (golf, tennis) to add others (trekking, climbing, Zen meditation, etc) in which student surveys have shown an interest. Some will be actual “activities” while “others” will be mental exercises
- Students, depending on the physical capacity, will choose one “activity” and one “other”.

#### **ESC 102: Writing**

**3 hours**

See Appendix B

- This is a course in thematic writing over substantial texts and other materials
- It is meant to be taught at the current level of ENG 102.
- It is a text-based (including but not limited to literary, artistic, critical and analytic sources) course.
- It covers style, voice, structure, and research.

#### **ESC 103: Math for the Educated Person**

**3 hours**

See Appendix C

- As the title implies, this courses offers what the educated person needs to know (about numbers, statistics, graphs, and the evaluation of the information they convey) in order to make intelligently based choices.
- Members of the Math Department will design the course.

#### **ESC 104: Communications**

**3 hours**

See Appendix D.

- Covers the “rhetoric” of argument and persuasion, from the point of view of both the producer of discourse and the consumer of it, in their cultural contexts.

## II. Historical Sources 3 hours

### ESC 200: Historical Sources

3 hours

See Appendix E

- This course acquaints students with the foundations of literate (record-keeping) society.
- It allows access to the history of cultures and civilizations through events, representations, and ideas.
- Courses here are discipline-based and focus on a theme as opposed to a single area or period, making this a “history of ideas.”
- Themes will vary, addressing for example: the history of war and peace; constructions of race; the inter-relationships of the natural world, human culture, and character (national or personal); the development of imaginative representation, etc.
- Perspectives may vary from documentary (social or political) history or histories of art, literature, or philosophy (natural, social, and metaphysical).
- Each course will be text-based, with the expectations that students will grapple with a substantial text that calls on the student for analysis, introduces students to aspects of the traditions and developments on which modern societies are based, and makes students aware of moral issues.
- Students will be introduced to schools of interpretation and competing methodologies.
- Although focused on history, evidence from pre-history (anthropology, archaeology) is germane. [Though not restricted to offering by the History Department, clearly pride of place in this category goes to them.]

### III. The Portal Course 3 hours

#### ESC 204: Engaging Intellect

3 hours

See Appendix F

- Students come to universities not only to learn but to learn how to learn. Shaped by countless factors of which they are as yet mostly unaware, learning how to learn is the first step in developing the skills of critical thinking, that is thinking for themselves.
- In studying the first year experience of college students, researchers have clearly established the existence of a transition between high school and college. In our own student careers, we likely experienced the transition except as unstated obstacle that we were left to our devices to conquer. Then and now, to succeed at the university critical thinking replaced regurgitation. The truly successful were and are less likely to ask “what will be on the test” and accept the challenge of engaging texts as doorway to knowing. By directly passing on the academic values endemic in our culture and the academic skills that are possessed by the liberally educated, we should enhance the education of our students.
- Arriving at UNK they, for the most part, have difficulty reading a literate text\* of any variety; they therefore need to learn how to identify a text’s point of view, see how it develops an argument, and understand the kinds of support the argument depends on. This is not best done by extensive reading lists, but by frequently reading a text with someone who has already discovered in the text something of value (or has sufficient experience with texts to read with them something new).
- They arrive, sometimes knowing little, but believing knowledge is what others tell you. They need to know how knowledge is created, where and how we find out what we don’t already know. This is not best done by the standard freshman “research paper” (often both pointless and plagiarized), but by frequently being exposed to what constitutes research within a field of inquiry and how libraries, online references, laboratories, and field work make that research possible.
- Difficult as it is to say, many if not most of our students come from environments either ignorant of or hostile to intellectual endeavor. It is a delicate balance to affirm their own origins and yet assist them to establish an identity for themselves as students, separating them from that ignorance and hostility.
- A “liberal studies” curriculum exists for (indeed takes its name from) the purpose of effecting that separation and assisting students to develop independent intellects. Studies indicate that this curriculum (indeed any curriculum) works best when students are aware of its purpose and are helped to see what they will be doing before they do it (as well as helped then to apply what they’ve done). The portal course is our opportunity to apprise students of the purpose and methods of the program, to begin putting the burden of learning on the students themselves, and to introduce them to the principal modes of creating knowledge known in the academy by becoming practitioners of those modes.
- A portal (or cornerstone) course will serve multiple purposes while enhancing the intellectual lives of students. The portal demarcates the world of secondary education from which the student is leaving. A new set of expectations are required. There are fewer right and wrong answers. An interpretation of texts and events are contrasted through engaged discourse within a discipline, rather than by the narrow personal opinion from one’s limited life experience. Regurgitation is replaced by thought contemplation. Old simple answers become complex, sophisticated questions. A prism replaces a myopic view of events. Ultimately, each student will need to replace what they have been told is right, to a defense of what she or he believes is right.
- Upon entering the portal students need to acquire the academic values that motivate the thirst for knowledge and the academic skills that will facilitate the pursuit of knowledge. Through explicit discussion and reflection students can understand the academic culture and the value of a liberal arts education. Through active learning students can master the basic skills that they hone during the rest of their careers.
- Finally the portal open students to the exciting challenges they face as students and as lifelong learners. A portal course, then, will:
  - A. provide the opportunity to read (view, investigate) a substantial text together with a mentor;
  - B. engage the students in actively employing the appropriate mode of research;
  - C. help students discover the role played in the real world by the particular mode of inquiry under study.

#### IV. Modes of Inquiry 12 hours

- The sequence begins with the portal course, which is to prepare students for addressing the kinds of knowledge and challenges that the modes of inquiry courses will explore.
- The four modes mirror the Jefferson library/Library of Congress categories of knowledge
- Students will follow up their engagement of modes of inquiry with a capstone experience integrating modes of inquiry around a topic, issue, theme or problem
- 13 hours of disciplinary focus also follow the modes courses.

**ESC 300: Modes of Knowing: Perspectives of the Natural Sciences** 3 hrs. See Appendix G

**ESC 302: Modes of Knowing: Perspectives of the Social Sciences** 3 hrs. See Appendix H

**ESC 304: Modes of Knowing: Perspectives of the Humanities** 3 hrs. See Appendix I

**ESC 306: Modes of Knowing: Perspectives of the Arts** 3 hrs. See Appendix J

- We see these courses as establishing for students the various foundations of knowledge or modes of knowing represented in the university and showing the relationships of one to another. They also introduce student to issues and the kinds of responses citizens can make to them that have intellectual integrity.
- *At the outset, and until institutions that feed students to UNK can develop parallel courses (articulations), no transfer credits may be applied to this requirement.*
- Each of the courses in the Foundations of Knowledge category would focus on three aspects: the role the mode of inquiry plays in society, how knowledge is created by the mode of inquiry, and the crucial issues confronting individuals and society that pertain to the mode of inquiry. Challenges to the mode's method, philosophy, and product will be addressed. *To take only one area as an example, questions addressed could be, for example: What is DNA? What is the Human Genome Project? What is an embryonic stem cell? How many joules of energy can be extracted from an acre of corn and at what cost?*
- These courses focus on the ways we think and act, especially in a democratic polity, and students will engage in discussion of the roles people play in such a polity, as well as using a variety of sources to explore the type of thinking that characterizes particular branches of knowledge. The aim is for students to come to grips with arguments related to the construction of knowledge, criticism, and contemplation and how these contribute to essential (ontological) meaning. The courses in this category will ask: how might educated citizens best address challenges to individuals and society in the pursuit of freedom and justice?
- The courses are text-based, with the expectations that students will grapple with a substantial text that calls on the student for analysis; introduces students to aspects of the forces, conditions, and questions with which responsible citizens and communities contend; and makes students aware of moral issues. Students will be introduced to schools of interpretation and competing methodologies.
- Faculty will be drawn from all those whose own academic work (graduate training, subsequent recognition, or applied methodology) falls within the mode of inquiry. These courses would be taught by a single teacher. Some combination of summer workshops, ongoing roundtables, and brownbag discussions will be required to assist teachers to expand their understanding of the mode as it occurs outside their principal discipline.
- By "Perspectives" (in the descriptions below) we intend a broadening of sources for courses beyond departments and programs. Under concepts such as "Commerce," "Theory Building," and "Predictability" (just three examples from others that present themselves: Reasoning and Critical Thinking, Creativity, and Observation) there could be gathered perspectives from, respectively, Marketing/Economics/Accounting, or Geography/Political Science/Consumer Science, or Business/Statistics/Computer Science.

## V. Disciplinary Focus 13 hours

(See current disciplinary listings for GS in the catalogue)

- Students will choose four courses from Arts and Science, one of which must be a lab course in the natural sciences, and others that will be drawn from math, the social sciences, humanities, and arts.
- Choices within this distribution are to be agreed upon with the advisor or by departmental/college guidelines as most benefits the student's degree program.
- We anticipate these courses to be drawn from currently existing courses.
- *Students may transfer credits in these areas from previous colleges.*

## VI. Capstone 2 hours

**ESC 400 Applying Intellect**

**2 hrs.**

See Appendix K

- Courses or projects within the capstone will draw on at least 3-4 disciplines from 2-3 modes of inquiry to address a topic, engage students in solving a problem, or contextualizing field work.
- The capstone is premised on students having taking the earlier "portal" course, their "modes of inquiry" courses, and their coursework in the disciplines.
- The course project will integrate the elements learned in that experience, will include a writing component, and may take the form of a practicum or involve service-learning.
- Emphases may be on critical thinking, problem solving, and/or addressing contemporary challenges. In designing projects/courses of study for the capstone, attention should be given to the student's major interest, the ethical and moral dimensions of the topic(s), and the appropriate theoretical frameworks necessary for making meaning out of the relevant data, information, experiences, and phenomena.

## Epilogue:

It is the intent of the Phase II General Studies Round-table to propose a program of study that, pursued by faculty and students with diligence and creativity, will:

- Prepare students with the willingness and ability to act as educated citizens and life-long learners;
- Focus on the goal of contributing to and preserving a free and just society;
- Integrate knowledge and provide students with a rationale for their acquisition of knowledge;
- Fulfill the learning objectives outlined in Phase I;
- Constitute a unique curriculum for our university;
- Recognize students as persons and citizens, living in a global world, with lives and concerns beyond those addressed in their career education.

To these ends, by drawing on currently existing courses and through the development of new courses, we have proposed a program that, from its titles to its content, provides students with:

- ❖ The personal and academic skills necessary for university study;
- ❖ The opportunity to see how knowledge is created and applied;
- ❖ The means to address the persistent and perennial questions of life as individuals and communities;
- ❖ Experience of the disciplines of Arts and Science (broadly defined);
- ❖ Awareness of global perspectives and traditions;
- ❖ Appreciation for the various ways we keep record of, analyze, and represent the human experience.
- ❖ Practice in the fundamental skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking at a level required for a university degree and for living responsibly as educated citizens.

To the extent possible, we see this curriculum as text-based, interdisciplinary (not non-disciplinary), and rigorous. Its aim is not to repeat secondary-school work and not to be simply a smorgasbord of course-work. At the same time, we intend to open these fields of study to faculty and departments based not on departmental ownership but on academic credentials and interests. Subject areas as diverse as anthropology and consumer science, finance and administration should study the program seeking opportunities to develop and offer courses that meet the objectives set forth. The program gives our students a common core while at the same time allowing them areas of choice.

### Appendices

- A. Wellness Course
- B. Writing
- C. Math for the Educated Person
- D. Communications
- E. Historical Sources
- F. Portal Course
- G. MI: Perspectives in the Natural Sciences
- H. MI: Perspectives in the Social Sciences
- I. MI: Perspectives in the Humanities
- J. MI: Perspectives in the Arts
- K. Capstone Course
- L. AACU Call to Action
- M. Participants in Roundtable Phase I

N. Participants in Roundtable Phase II

## **Justification for the Wellness course in the revised General Studies Curriculum**

Based upon the conclusions from General Studies Roundtable Phase 1, one of the desired student outcomes was for the student to...

...experience personal growth...

Students will be able to:

- Recognize and apply the knowledge, skills, and behaviors which promote physical and emotional well being

### **The case for Health and Physical Activity courses in a General Education curriculum in Colleges and Universities**

A lack of a healthy lifestyle accounts for a large proportion of illness and morbidity in the United States

1. Between the years of 1980 and 2000, the prevalence of Obesity in the United States doubled. Currently, 60 million Americans (or ~30% of the population) are obese (1)
  - a. In 2003, the annual medical costs associated with excessive body mass were \$78.5 Billion, and the costs continue to increase every year.
    - i. Approximately half of these costs are paid by Medicaid and Medicare (2).
  - b. Adjusted analyses show positive trends in all-cause mortality and coronary heart disease incidence with increasing weight category. Much of the obesity-related mortality and disease risk is mediated by diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, and hyperlipidemia (3).
2. Overall, the number 1 or 2 cause of death for all American's (depending on which statistical data you read), regardless of gender or race, is heart disease
  - a. Heart disease is largely due to lifestyle related factors, such as smoking, obesity, and a lack of physical activity
3. Approximately 440,000 people in the U.S. die each year from smoking related illnesses. Nearly 1 of every 5 deaths is related to smoking. Cigarettes kill more Americans than alcohol, car accidents, suicide, AIDS, homicide, and illegal drugs combined (6).
  - a. 22.8% of the adult US population smokes, and more college aged adults smoke than do older adults
  - b. Based on data collected from 1995 to 1999, the Center for Disease Control estimated that adult male smokers lost an average of 13.2 years of life and female smokers lost 14.5 years of life because of smoking.
4. Suicide is the 11<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death in the United States. Approximately 31,000 people in the United States commit suicide each year, and 750,000 people attempt suicide (5).
  - a. A large number of those attempting suicide suffer from untreated depression. A large number of those attempting suicide also have lingering physical illnesses
5. "AAC&U and APTR agree that an understanding of public health issues is a critical component of good citizenship and a prerequisite for taking responsibility for building

healthy societies. Global health is increasingly becoming a cross-cutting interdisciplinary field integrating social and behavioral sciences. Course work in global health can be taught using a curriculum framework that includes the health-development link; health systems and their impacts on health; culture and health; human rights, ethics and global health; the burden of disease; and global institutions and cooperation to improve global health. Global health curriculum provides an opportunity to teach public health principles that illustrate global dependency as a contemporary and enduring real world issue. We need to educate our students beyond personal health but emphasize how their personal behaviors are impacting us globally through insurance costs, disease burden and longevity” (8).

### How do we fight this trend?

Provide culturally appropriate education about healthy eating habits and regular physical activity in order to prevent obesity and its related comorbidities (4).

Developing skills in problem solving, conflict resolution, and nonviolent handling of disputes can be crucial to the prevention of suicide and depression (5)

Education is a key factor in preventing smoking or helping people decide to quit smoking (7)

### **Citations.**

1. (<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/obesity/trend/index.htm>)
2. ([http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/obesity/economic\\_consequences.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/obesity/economic_consequences.htm))
3. (JAMA. 2006 Jul 5;296(1):79-86. Mortality and cardiac and vascular outcomes in extremely obese women. McTigue K, Larson JC, Valoski A, Burke G, Kotchen J, Lewis CE, Stefanick ML, Van Horn L, Kuller L.)
4. ([http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/obesity/calltoaction/fact\\_vision.htm](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/obesity/calltoaction/fact_vision.htm))
5. (<http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/suifacts.htm>)
6. ([http://www.cancer.org/docroot/PED/content/PED\\_10\\_2X\\_Cigarette\\_Smoking\\_and\\_Cancer.asp?sitearea=PED](http://www.cancer.org/docroot/PED/content/PED_10_2X_Cigarette_Smoking_and_Cancer.asp?sitearea=PED))
7. ([http://www.cancer.org/docroot/PED/PED\\_10\\_6.asp?sitearea=PED](http://www.cancer.org/docroot/PED/PED_10_6.asp?sitearea=PED))
8. (<http://www.aacu.org/issues/generaleducation/index.cfm>)

## Sample Wellness Course (based upon Roundtable 2 notes from November 17 and December 1)

One 2-credit hour seminar plus 2 half-credit academic and/or physical activity courses (Must take at least 1 physical activity course). This type of offering has its roots in the classical definition of an educated person.

**Wellness Defined:** Wellness refers generally to the state of being free from physical illness or a diagnosed disease, but also includes the incorporation of behaviors and values that prolong and enhance the state of being healthy, and by extension, the lifespan itself.

**Purpose of the Wellness Course:** The purpose of the wellness seminar is to help students understand what it means to be well (based upon the definition of wellness above) and provide information on obtaining and maintaining health in the 6 components of wellness not just on an individual level, but for society as a whole. The 6 components of wellness are:

- Social
- Emotional
- Spiritual
- Intellectual
- Physical
- Environmental

Possible Catalog Description: Wellness will provide the students with the knowledge, skills, and behaviors which promote well being in the areas of social, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, physical, and environmental health through the use of examples of wellness from current issues, scientific research, and through individual inquiry.

Possible Course Goals: Students will understand

- The role of personal choices in lifestyle related health and wellness.
- The role of government and social institutions in wellness promotion.
- The need for wellness awareness on the personal and social level
- The economic impact of wellness (or lack thereof)

Possible Text: Teague ML, Mackenzie SLC, Rosenthal DM, Your Health Today: Choices in a Changing Society, (1<sup>st</sup> ed). Hightstown: McGraw Hill, 2007.

With Online Learning Center  
(<http://catalogs.mhhe.com/mhhe/viewProductDetails.do?isbn=0073285072>)

Publisher “Sales Pitch”

This exciting new text presents personal health in the context of a changing social and cultural environment. Going beyond behavior change and individual responsibility, it

offers a broadened view of health that includes the impact of family, community, and society. It's a new way of looking at health: "It's not just personal..."

"Choice" is another key theme in Your Health Today. Emphasizing the importance of making informed health choices, this text demonstrates how these choices affect an individual's health--for today and for a lifetime.

#### Other Possible Sources of Course Material

- “Super Size Me” (movie)
  - In 2002, director Morgan Spurlock subjected himself to a diet based only in McDonald's fast food three times a day for thirty days and without working out. His objective was to prove why most of the Americans are so fat, with many cases of obesity. He began the shootings submitting himself to a complete check-up with three doctors, and along the weeks, he compared his weight and results of exams, coming through a scary conclusion.
- “And the Band Played On” (movie)
  - Story of the discovery of the AIDS virus. From the early days in 1978 when numerous San Francisco gays began dying from unknown causes, to the identification of the HIV virus
- Various position papers and information sheets from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
  - <http://www.cdc.gov/>
    - Preventing Chronic Disease
    - Youth Risk Behavior
    - Health-Related Quality of Life
    - CDC Public Health Law News

#### Possible Key Course Concepts:

Educating the students on how to obtain and maintain wellness will be accomplished through the use of classical and current examples of the definitions and measurements of wellness, as well as through inquiry based learning. The students will also learn the basis for behavior change in order to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Common misconceptions will be corrected. In particular, the course will emphasize

- Social Wellness
  - The need for an effective and healthy social support system, including family and friends
  - The role of wellness in social policy (e.g. why it is important for society to treat those in the prison or welfare systems for communicable diseases; why it is the role of government to advocate health)
  - The effects of wellness (or lack thereof) on society
- Emotional Wellness
  - Healthy and unhealthy expressions of emotion
  - How to identify and assist those who may be experiencing poor emotional wellness, whether it be for self or others

- Spiritual Wellness
  - No particular religious doctrine or system of religious practice will be advocated. However, those who have a belief system that answers questions such as “where did I come from” and “what is the purpose of life” experience greater wellness
  - Those whose actions are not in line with their beliefs experience poor wellness due to dissonance, and strategies to help bring actions and beliefs into agreement will be provided.
- Intellectual Wellness
  - Intellectual wellness is more than being “smart” or being a “good student.” Intellectual wellness is the application of the mind to experience growth and development.
  - Students will learn what it means to be a “lifelong learner”
- Physical Wellness
  - The need for regular physical activity will be emphasized and what types of physical activity can be used to enhance wellness will be discussed (particularly lifelong physical activity)
  - The need for healthy eating habits
  - The need to avoid unhealthy lifestyle choices, such as smoking, excessive alcohol consumption, or the use of illegal drugs.
- Environmental Wellness
  - The need to live in an environment that is conducive to health and enables a person to practice healthy behaviors is essential
  - How to recognize a healthy or unhealthy environment based on pollution or other environmental factors (e.g. are you a city person or one who might be happier in the country?)

Sample Possible Assignments:

- Using scholarly documents, explain how type 2 diabetes develops and why type 2 diabetes is a health issue in terms of public policy and personal choice. Explain the financial impact of type 2 diabetes on an individual and society.
  - Examples of Scholarly Articles include
    - Position papers from the American College of Sports Medicine, the American Diabetes Association, the American Medical Association, the American Dietetic Association
    - Peer reviewed research publications
    - Government documents, such as the Healthy People 2010 project, the Surgeon Generals Report, CDC Current Diabetes Data, etc

There will also be 2 - ½ credit hour “Applications in Wellness” courses required. One of these classes must be a physical activity class. The second ½ credit class may be in another area of wellness or may be a second physical activity class. Traditional physical activity classes, such as group aerobics, walking for fitness, and swimming will be supplemented with other courses such as archery, meditation, yoga, and other topics related to the 6 components of wellness.

## CORE COURSE: WRITING

This course introduces students to the consumption and production of academic discourse. While not focused exclusively upon strategies for reading and writing scholarly texts, the course has as its primary objective the student's informed and responsible entry into academic conversation. As such, students and faculty will explore the "why to" as well as the "how to" of negotiating the types of texts that learners can expect to encounter during their academic career.

Required Texts: This course requires the use of primary texts from multiple disciplines as springboards for discussion and writing topics. These texts will consist, for the most part, of nonfiction prose, though literary texts may provide alternative ways of considering a topic and/or a writer's strategy for presenting an argument. At least one text should offer a global perspective of the issue(s) under consideration.

Level of Instruction: Students in this course should demonstrate (in a placement essay) the following abilities upon entry:

- Accurate reading and interpretation of a text written for a general audience (Grade 10+)
- Composition of a multiple-paragraph essay with a clear beginning, middle, and conclusion
- Integration of a secondary text, even with a single reference, accurately and meaningfully into their own prose
- A rudimentary understanding of the connection between form and content

Students should demonstrate the following abilities/understandings at the end of the core writing course:

- Strategies for decoding and interpreting challenging texts
- Ability to discern a writer's argument and/or possible bias
- Meaningful integration of summary, paraphrase, and direct quotation
- Competence in common citation formats
- Respect for intellectual property and academic honesty
- Strategies for effacing or foregrounding one's authorial persona(e)
- Anticipation and accommodation of audience expectations, including thesis, thesis support, and mechanics
- Ability to locate and evaluate secondary sources
- Ability to perceive or forge connections among multiple texts
- Ability to express content within an appropriate form

Amount and Type of Required Writing: A writing course lends itself to many discursive forms—journals; response pieces; microthemes; exercises in summary, paraphrase, and direct quotation; brief or sustained arguments; research-supported essays or reports. Students should expect to produce at least twenty-five (25) pages of revised, edited writing throughout the semester. At least some, if not all, of this writing should demonstrate students' ability to join the academic conversation

through acknowledgement of existing scholarship over, and a response or addition to, a topic of personal and/or academic significance.

#### CORE WRITING COURSE AND PHASE I OBJECTIVES

One of the first points of agreement that emerged from the Phase I roundtable was the importance of effective communication. Though a writing course helps students achieve many of the Phase I student outcomes, the following are especially relevant:

A2, A3, B1, B2, D2, D3

#### CATALOG DESCRIPTION

[Core: Writing] focuses upon the reading and writing of academic discourse with emphasis on developing composing strategies that transfer across academic disciplines.

## Core Communication Course

Title: SPCH 100 – Speech Communication

### Course Description:

Speech communication is an essential skill in public and professional life as well as private life. This course is designed to provide students with practice in the fundamental skills necessary for speaking in a wide variety of situations and knowledge of the principles of communication necessary to understand and interpret oral arguments and information. Students will learn the principles necessary to become confident, articulate, and ethical speakers; develop effective argumentation and presentation practices; and become familiar with introductory rhetorical concepts.

### Key Goals and Objectives:

1. Discovery of Information: **(B1; D3)**
  - a. Students will find and use supporting materials.
  - b. Students will assess the quality of source materials.
2. Orderly Thinking: **(A1; B1; D1; F1)**
  - a. Students will design effective speeches for different purposes.
  - b. Students will organize and support ideas in a logical, coherent manner.
3. Accurate Evaluation of Arguments: **(B1,2; D3)**
  - a. Students will analyze and interpret oral and written messages.
  - b. Students will construct and deliver oral arguments.
4. Effective Oral Presentations of Arguments: **(A1,2,3)**
  - a. Students will effectively present oral materials (speak extemporaneously with effective verbal, nonverbal, and visual delivery).
  - b. Students will coordinate presentations with other students in group contexts.
5. Understand the Relation of Speech to Context: **(A3; C3,5)**
  - a. Students will interpret how speakers design speeches in response to and to influence situations.
  - b. Students will relate a position to an audience's interests and experiences.
6. Understand the Value of Free Speech in Society: **(B2; E2; F2,3,4)**
  - a. Students will explain the role of free speech in advancing human rights and practicing citizenship.
  - b. Students will develop speeches that address public concerns.

### Instructor Qualifications:

Speech communication instructors should have demonstrated competence as presenters and sufficient knowledge and/or experience to explain the principles of communication covered in the course.

### Sample Course (Dimock):

#### Unit 1: Basics of Public Speaking

- Content: Historical development of public speaking, the rhetorical canons, and basic principles of speech composition.
- Assignment: Speech of Self-Introduction.

#### Unit 2: Delivery

- Content: Principles of vocal communication, principles of nonvocal communication.
- Assignment: Interpretive Reading of Poetry.

#### Unit 3: Style (Language)

- Content: Elements of style, meaning in language, rhetorical strategies and effective language.
- Assignment: Composition and delivery of a fable.

#### Unit 4: Context

- Content: Aspects of context, rhetorical situation, types of speeches, influence of speech on context, outlining, inartistic proof (research).
- Assignment: Group analysis and presentation of great speeches in context.

#### Unit 5: Value

- Content: Types of claims, values, criteria, artistic proof (ethos, pathos, logos).
- Assignment: Speech of praise or blame.

#### Unit 6: Policy

- Content: Policy claims, stock issues (stases), public problems, audience analysis, visual aids, managing question-answer sessions.
- Assignment: Public policy speech (question-answer session)

# *Historical Sources*

## General Description

This course will rely on primary sources to develop historical perspective and an appreciation for historical inquiry. Its intention will be to examine a variety of issues and cultures over a significant time frame, with attention to social, economic, political, artistic and other historical developments. Specific attention will be devoted to the location and use of sources, the development of historical concepts and interpretations, and the application of historical methods.

## 1. Criteria

This course will employ historical sources and methods to examine past cultures and to explore critical issues in their historical dimension. By emphasizing the use and evaluation of original sources and secondary interpretations, the course will develop student skills in analysis and communication.

### Texts:

Primary reliance on original sources or documents  
Expected use of secondary material

### Level of Instruction:

Freshman/Sophomore Level  
Preferred section size, 20-30  
Both lecture and discussion approach  
Individual attention to writing assignments  
Library instruction (and possible tour)

### Required Writing:

Analysis/evaluation of primary text(s)  
Review of secondary material  
Essays to collect and synthesize information  
  
Total – 20 pages minimum (including exams)

### Possible Section Titles:

American Heritage  
European Civilization  
World Cultures

## 2. Rationale

This course seeks to fulfill many of the objectives of the current mission statement, including student ability to locate information, to develop critical reasoning and communication skills, and to appreciate the experiences of historically under-represented groups.

The course also will fulfill many of the objectives developed by Roundtable I, including the overall mission objective that students will “understand the accomplishments of civilizations and world cultures,” as well as developing other skills required of the informed citizen.

### Skills:

- \*develop effective writing skills
- \*locate and use appropriate sources to explore issues or problems
- \*develop ability to analyze and synthesize information

### Accomplishments of World Cultures:

- \*analyze historical dimensions of civilizations
- \*recognize contributions of diverse world cultures
- \*understand historical influences in human conduct
- \*examine diverse world views

### Lifelong Learning:

- \*identify historical origins of American heritage and democracy
- \*contribute to growth of ethical citizenship
- \*demonstrate community concern and respect for other groups

## 3. Course Description

Historical Sources: This course introduces students to the use and analysis of sources in historical study. It examines diverse world cultures and views in their historic settings, and explores issues critical to European civilization, American society, and other cultures.

Portal Course Proposal  
Daryl Kelley, George Lawson, Chuck Peek

Students come to universities not only to learn but to learn how to learn. Shaped by countless factors of which they are as yet mostly unaware, learning how to learn is the first step in developing the skills of critical thinking, that is thinking for themselves.

In studying the first year experience of college students, researchers have clearly established the existence of a transition between high school and college. In our own student careers, we likely experienced the transition except as unstated obstacle that we were left to our devices to conquer. Then and now, to succeed at the university critical thinking replaced regurgitation. The truly successful were and are less likely to ask “what will be on the test” and accept the challenge of engaging texts as doorway to knowing. By directly passing on the academic values endemic in our culture and the academic skills that are possessed by the liberally educated, we should enhance the education of our students.

Arriving at UNK they, for the most part, have difficulty reading a literate text\* of any variety; they therefore need to learn how to identify a text’s point of view, see how it develops an argument, and understand the kinds of support the argument depends on. This is not best done by extensive reading lists, but by frequently reading a text with someone who has already discovered in the text something of value (or has sufficient experience with texts to read with them something new).

They arrive, sometimes knowing little, but believing knowledge is what others tell you. They need to know how knowledge is created, where and how we find out what we don’t already know. This is not best done by the standard freshman “research paper” (often both pointless and plagiarized), but by frequently being exposed to what constitutes research within a field of inquiry and how libraries, online references, laboratories, and field work make that research possible.

Difficult as it is to say, many if not most of our students come from environments either ignorant of or hostile to intellectual endeavor. It is a delicate balance to affirm their own origins and yet assist them to establish an identity for themselves as students, separating them from that ignorance and hostility.

A “liberal arts” curriculum exists for (indeed takes its name from) the purpose of effecting that separation and assisting students to develop independent intellects. Studies indicate that this curriculum (indeed any curriculum) works best when students are aware of its purpose and are helped to see what they will be doing before they do it (as well as helped then to apply what they’ve done). The portal course is our opportunity to apprise students of the purpose and methods of the program, to begin putting the burden of learning on the students themselves, and to introduce them to the principal modes of creating knowledge known in the academy by becoming practitioners of those modes.

A portal course will serve multiple purposes while enhancing the intellectual lives of students. The portal demarcates the world of secondary education from which the student is leaving. A new set of expectations are required. There are fewer right and wrong answers. An interpretation of texts and events are contrasted through engaged discourse within a discipline, rather than by the narrow personal opinion from one's limited life experience. Regurgitation is replaced by thought contemplation. Old simple answers become complex, sophisticated questions. A prism replaces a myopic view of events. Ultimately, each student will need to replace what they have been told is right, to a defense of what she or he believes is right.

Upon entering the portal students need to acquire the academic values that motivate the thirst for knowledge and the academic skills that will facilitate the pursuit of knowledge. Through explicit discussion and reflection students can understand the academic culture and the value of a liberal arts education. Through active learning students can master the basic skills that they hone during the rest of their careers.

Finally the portal open students to the exciting challenges they face as students and as lifelong learners.

A portal course, then, will

- A. provide the opportunity to read (view, investigate) a substantial text together with a mentor;
- B. engage the students in actively employing the appropriate mode of research;
- C. help students discover the role played in the real world by the particular mode of inquiry under study.

#### Sample Portal Course A: (Lawson)

Course Title: Humanities Dream, the American Dream, and "I Have a Dream"

Course Outline:

- I. To engender respect for knowledge
  - A. Develop an appreciation of what we know
  - B. Explore how we discover new knowledge (modes of inquiry)
- II. Examine the role of Higher Education
  - A. What is an educated individual?
  - B. What is an academic culture?
  - C. Why is it important to be liberally educated
  - D. What role does critical thinking play in the process that an educated individual demonstrates in his/her worldly actions?
- III. Assist students to cross through the portal from acquiring knowledge to developing a thirst for knowledge, asking:
  - A. What skills does one need?
  - B. How does one acquire a thirst?

- C. How are the skills honed?
  - D. How do the skills relate to a career?
- IV. Consider the cultural artifact: “I Have A Dream” by Martin Luther King, Jr.  
Topics:
- A. King as a knowledgeable individual (background)
  - B. What was the mood of the time (setting)
  - C. What makes the speech a “great text”
- V. Explore issues from the speech...
1. History
  2. Democracy
  3. Economics/Finance
  4. Music
  5. Language style
  6. Images
  7. Symbolism
  8. Comparison and Contrast
  9. Repeating phrases
  10. The role of violence
  11. Respect of individuals
  12. Integration of Ideas

*Note:*

*Lawson used the form (numbering and lettering) of the Phase I student outcomes provided. The desired outcomes are placed in the margins of the copy of King’s speech provided. (See PDF files/Lawson email attachments)*

Sample Portal Course B: (Kelley)

Course Title: Academic Values and Knowing

Pedagogy

The dominant modes of inquiry will be group work and class discussion. Group work will be designed to have students practice higher order reasoning skills. Through class discussion and reflective exercises students will become acculturated to academe. They will be made aware of the general expectations and the value of a liberal arts education.

In addition to the discussion of texts, students would be exposed to academic life. Students would be required to attend the Student Research Day and be given an assignment. Upper level students may be invited to class to share in their research. These concrete experiences will help students create realistic challenges and expectations for their own careers.

The reading list is designed to meet the goals of introducing students to the liberal arts curriculum. The readings will begin with an introduction to the national discourse on

liberal education. In order to expose students to college reading, they will discuss the report in conjunction with ideas proposed by John Dewey. In order to replace “individualistic relativism” (“it is just my opinion and my opinion is as good as any other) with the rules of scientific investigation. They will discuss the difference between opinion and knowledge based on scientific evidence. Tuesdays with Morrie demonstrates the importance of mentoring and how liberal arts can add to the quality of life. After reflecting upon their lives, students will examine a global issue that will allow them to connect their lives with lives elsewhere.

National Panel Report. 2002. Greater Expectations. AACU.

Students will examine the manifest goals of a liberal arts education and reflect upon their own “greater expectations” at UNK. In addition to the goals in the report, students will discuss the goals of UNK’s program and how the goals will be met in the supporting courses.

John Dewey. 1997 Reprint. Experience and Education. Free Press.

In a world of soundbites and bottom lines, Experience and Education will allow students to wrestle with a scholarly text in seeking wisdom from one of America’s foremost educator and philosopher.

Through group work and class discussion, students will discover the power of applying Dewey’s notion of becoming through action.

Wolff-Mich Roth and Angela Barton. 2004. Rethinking Scientific Literacy. Routledge. Students will need to explicitly the nature of knowledge and intellectual discovery.

Mitch Albom. 2002. Tuesdays with Morrie. Broadway Books.

Tuesdays with Morrie is an excellent text to think about their lives. As Mitch’s mentor on life, Morrie Schwartz now serves as guide to countless students after his death.

Ishmael Beah. 2007. A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

#### Activities

1. Practice higher order reasoning skills through group and individual assignments.
2. Read and engage college level texts.
3. Wrestle with a meaningful problem.
4. Reading that focuses on higher education.
5. Use multiple perspectives.
6. Attend Research Poster Day. Followed up with such activities as summarizing a research poster from each College, a discussion of the challenge they have ahead, guest lecture of faculty member’s memorable mentoring experience as well as your own, etc.

#### Goals

1. Gain competency of the higher order reasoning skills demanded by a university education.
2. Be able to identify and assess a thesis statement. Identify the voice and other literary characteristics and engage in meaningful interpretation.
3. Able to identify the complexity of issues.
4. Can articulate the value of a liberal arts education and academic values
5. Can form arguments from different perspectives.
6. Understand and accept the challenge of a liberal arts education.

Notes:

### *Intellectual Engagement*

Students will experience the power of intellectual engagement. Through the study of texts and reflection on their lives, students will connect the notion of a life long learner to the liberal arts tradition. The values and skills of a liberal arts education will be examined. Students will reflect upon their lives and connect themselves to the world in which we live.

### *Relationship to the First Year Experience*

First Year Experience courses are to ease students through the transition from high school to college. In addition to the new intellectual challenges, students face a number of life issues. FYE covers the academic and life challenges. Moreover, students are acclimated to the campus through mandatory participation in campus events. The portal course that is presented here focuses on the academic transition only. The student life could be integrated if desired.

### Sample Portal Course C: (Peek)

Course Title: Engaging Intellect

The purpose of “Engaging Intellect” is for students to arrive at the idea of an education, to understand the forms knowledge (and the creation of knowledge) takes in the university and the resources available for investigation, and to see how they can engage in the development of their own intellects. The objective is to open a “portal” to higher and life-long learning. **(C 1, 2, 3, 4, 5; E 2)**

The course will be divided into two parts: introduction and application. During both parts of the course, students will make daily journal entries (some to prompts, some on their own initiative) in response to the material being studied. The journal entries will be catalysts for class discussion. There will be an essay examination at the conclusion of Part 1. Part 2 will issue in a researched paper in which each student articulates an intellectual problem and develops the information necessary to respond to that problem. Grades will be based on the journal, exam, and paper. **(A 1, 2, 3; B 1, 2)**

Part 1:

- A. Together with their instructor, students will read *The Odyssey* as an allegory of self-education (4 weeks) (C 1, 2, 3, 4, 5; D 1, 2, 3; F 3, 4)
- B. Prompted by chapters in Jonathan Kozol, the students will perform a critical review of their own past educations (2 weeks) (B 1, 2; C 3, 4, 5; D 2, 3; E 1, 2; F 1, 2, 4)
- C. Using Charles Homer Haskin's *The Rise of the Universities* (and examining the organization of Jefferson's library), students will examine the modes of inquiry typically found in a university. There will be guest lectures and a visit to a working laboratory. (2 weeks) (C 1, 2, 3, 4, 5; D 1, 2; E 2; F 2)

## Part 2

- A. Students will apply the modes, methods, and idea from Part 1 by examining the following:
  1. The iconography, aesthetics, and history of Grant Woods' "American Gothic" as a cultural study; there will be a visit to the Museum of Nebraska Art (2 weeks) (C 2, 3, 4, 5; D 2, 3; E 1, 2; F 2)
  2. The philosophy, construction, and significance of the state Capitol; there will be a field trip to Lincoln to visit the Capitol (and possibly Morrill Hall as well) (2 weeks) (B 1, 2; C 1, 3, 4; D 1, 2, 3; E 2; F 1, 2, 3, 4)
  3. the changing demographics of Nebraska's population (with a visit to a nearby IBP plant) (2 weeks) (B 2; C 2, 3, 4, 5; D 3; E 1; F 2, 3, 4)

[For all of the above, students will be responsible for bringing to bear on the topic all relevant contexts. For example, with "American Gothic," these would include a] how detail and perspective function both in Wood's aesthetic and those he challenged, the development of regionalism in cultural studies, the initial impact of the Great Depression and, in response, the search for a "usable" past, salient features of the 1890s and 1930s, the history of the painter and painting, and the controversy over the painting (including later parodies).] (B 1, 2; C 3, 4, 5; D 1, 2; E 2; F 1, 2, 4)

- B. Assisted by an orientation to the library, students will research and write an 8-10 page paper on one of the six topics above. Written in stages, each stage will be peer critiqued and used for topical discussions. Whatever topic or approach students choose, the paper must make use of at least one "mode of knowing" and must address the idea of an education. It should first articulate an intellectual problem and then gather sufficient information to address it. (2 weeks) (A 1, 2, 3; B 1, 2; C 1; D 2, 3; E 2; F 1, 2, 4)

### *Note:*

*Peek has used the "Mission Statement and Student Outcomes" from Phase I distributed at the outset of Phase II work. The major categories are lettered, the subheadings are numbered.*

## DRAFT – Science Mode of Inquiry

### Modes of Inquiry and Knowing – Natural Science Course:

Overview: The natural sciences seek to understand the world around us using empirical investigation and naturalistic explanation. The process by which science explores the world is the scientific method; however, this method varies within the natural sciences and even more so when compared to the social sciences. In an increasingly technological society, it is important for citizens to know and understand what natural science is and is not, what questions it can and cannot answer, and the capabilities and limitations of scientific investigation. It is also important to realize how science can affect society and how societal inputs can affect science. [The Natural Sciences are defined to include Chemistry, Physics, Biology, Geology, and Mathematics.]

### Course Goals and Objectives:

#### Goals:

To introduce students to the perspectives of the physical and life sciences

To help students understand the connections between science, society, and the world around them specifically: what is (should be) the role of science in society and how does (should) society influence science?

To help students understand the connections and differences between the scientific disciplines

To help students understand the process of science and the questions it can and cannot answer.

#### Objectives:

Students will read primary sources from the physical and life sciences (Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Geology) (e.g. Bacon, Watson/Crick, Einstein, Galileo, etc.)

Students will explore the methodology of the physical and life sciences both from the idealized scientific method view as well as more realistic processes with a focus on empirical investigation and naturalistic explanation (e.g. Kuhn, and modern scholarship)

Students will discover the commonalities and differences in the life and physical sciences

Students will analyze examples/case studies of good and bad science both in the field (e.g. development of evolutionary theory, “cold fusion”) and in society (e.g. development of radar and microwaves, crystals and magnets for healing)

Students will analyze ethical and societal aspects of scientific discovery (e.g. Frankenfoods vs. golden rice)

### Course Description:

[Name of Course] focuses on the methodology and societal impact of the natural sciences. Students will explore how the natural sciences create understanding of the world through empirical investigation and naturalistic explanations. Additionally, students will analyze the interplay of science and society

### Possible Course Topic:

Perhaps the best (most interesting) and encompassing theme for a natural sciences inquiry course would be an exploration of the development of evolutionary theory because it draws on all fields within the natural sciences. Discussion of the societal impact will also be highly relevant.

### One Possible Course Outline:

Section 1 (6-8 weeks): What is science?

How is science done generally? [Scientific Method, Naturalistic Explanation, Empirical Investigation]

Disciplinary Differences and Commonalities:

Science in Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Geology, Mathematics

Section 2 (3-4 weeks): Science and Society

What is the role of science in society? What is the role of society in science?

What should be the role of science in society? What should be the role for society in science?

Section 3 (5-6 weeks): Case Studies in Science

Pseudoscience claims:

Oxywater, magnet therapy

Ethics in Science:

Cloning and gene therapy, cold fusion

Current Societal Issues in Science

The Modes of Knowing course in the Social Sciences aims to provide students with an understanding of human behavior in scientific perspective, enabling students to appreciate the relevance of social science to their own lives and to contemporary social issues and problems. Students will examine classic and current literature, and current events in the social sciences.

This course will introduce students to the methods of study used by several of the social sciences. Students will be exposed to major questions relevant to human, social, cultural, and institutional behavior. Students will explore the major approaches of social science, with each approach being critically evaluated. Questions may be considered in a comparative manner using a cross-cultural comparison of major ethnic or other social groups, or institutions within world society.

#### General Objective

This course will provide students with an understanding of the scientific tools used to analyze human actions in the study of contemporary individual and social issues, and their own lives. It will be designed to foster critical understanding of human action and interaction. The course will emphasize the development of writing, critical thinking, and quantitative skills using the methods, theories, and applications relevant to social science disciplines.

#### Specific Objectives

- \* Develop and understanding of the contribution of the social sciences to our global society.
- \* Engage students in critical analysis of current events, issues, and literature relevant to the social sciences.
- \* Develop critical thinking and writing skills.
- \* Apply the scientific method and body of theories to analyze human actions.

## **Modes of Inquiry and Knowing – Humanities Course.**

[Phase I Mission Statement and Student Outcomes referenced by letter/number in bold type.]

Barton, Dimock, Peek

### Overview:

It is the role of the humanities to teach us how to use language to create texts and interpret and evaluate them, whether those texts be verbal, visual, tonal, or silent. What is reality and how do we represent it? What is legitimate in our representations and what representations suffer from bias or slanting? These are questions in the humanities. The world of the humanities is the world of stories, narratives, compositions, ideas, and images; it is the world of patterns to be perceived and validity to be ascertained. The Humanities, then, consist of the critical analysis of ideas, more specifically ideas created by the human imagination. Previous analyses are our guides and mentors, but no one can think critically for us. Developing our intellects to the point where we can think for ourselves, therefore, requires of students active engagement in their own learning. That means learning how ideas and images come together to make sense, and this cannot be accomplished only by seeing how others make sense; rather, it requires beginning to make sense ourselves. So then, making sense ourselves and making sense of ourselves (in all our complexity) is the province of the humanities.

### Course Goals and Objectives:

#### Goals:

- To introduce students to the perspectives of the humanities
- To help students understand the connections between education and the world around them (**C 2, 3, 4, 5**)
- To help students understand the connections between the academic disciplines (particularly in the humanities) (**D 1, 2**)
- To address the fundamental questions, Who am I (individual) and Who are We (communal) and the further question these entail: What is the dynamic between I and We, between the individual and society? How does culture inscribe itself in an individual or, conversely, how do individuals inscribe themselves in their cultures? (**B 1, 2**)

#### Objectives:

- Students will read primary sources from the humanities (Philosophy, Literature, Rhetoric, History) (**D 2, 3**)
- Students will analyze the meaning of the text(s) in terms of language, design, meaning, and argument. (**B 1, 2**)
- Students will analyze how the text responds to social and cultural contexts. (**B 1, 2; C 1, 3; D 2**)
- Students will analyze how the text addresses the nature of the individual and society, the good life, and the just society. (**E 2, F 1, 3, 4**)

Students will be able to explain and apply humanistic principles of interpretation and criticism, as demonstrated in oral discussion and written work. (A 1, 2, 3; C 5; F 4)

General Description and Pedagogical Requirements:

Each course offered in this area would choose a central text (or texts) proven to be influential (“a great work”) or is exemplary of an influential type of work. This text will be a work that allows students to spend a semester interpreting and analyzing it from a variety of perspectives. Typically these texts would be great works in the humanities, for example, Philosophy (e.g. Plato’s Republic), Literature (e.g. Heller’s Catch 22), or Rhetoric (e.g. Lincoln’s “Gettysburg Address”), but could also include works of art, drama, or other media studied from a humanistic perspective. (F 2 or globalization)

The course would be offered by an individual instructor with expertise in one or more areas of the humanities and the ability to examine the work from (minimally) philosophical, literary, cultural, and rhetorical (relating to questions of how the work makes a compelling argument).(B 1)

The course should involve critical thinking, discussion, writing and oral presentations. (A 1, 2, 3; B 1, 2)

Sample Course A: (Dimock)

Title: Arguing for Justice and Forgiveness

Central text: President Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address (F 2)

Secondary works – - Fredrick Douglass’ The Hypocrisy of American Slavery (F2: C3,4,5)  
- Declaration of Independence (F 2)  
- United States Constitution (F 2)  
- An address to the Loyal Citizens and Congress of the United States of America adopted by a convention of Negroes held in Alexandria, Virginia, from August 2 to 5, 1865 (F2: C3,4,5)

“As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master. This expresses my idea of democracy.” - Lincoln

Basic Description: (C1,2,3; E2)

Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address addresses some of the core issues of the humanities and society. The issues of equality and justice are clearly paramount, but along side these questions are the questions of how to regain unity. The issues of forgiveness and the renewal of a unified society allow students to explore issues in the United States, like civil rights, as well as international issues where there are many cases of nations that have to come together after division and

injustice (Iraq's reconstruction, the end of Apartheid in South Africa, and many others).

**Research and Writing Assignments: (A1,2,3; F1,2,3,4)**

Students will progressively develop two main papers over the course of the semester. The first will examine the principles of justice as they are expressed in the primary text and related to the secondary texts. The second project will require students to research an issue of conflict and explore the practices and/or possibilities for forgiveness. This will be a group project that will result in both a presentation and a paper.

Themes to be addressed:

**Historical Context:** Development of the United States, Civil War, Reconstruction, Civil Rights (F 2)

**Social and Political Concerns:** Principles of the Nation (equality, justice), Conflict and Restoration, Religion and Public Life (C 3, 4; F 2)

**Philosophic, Rhetorical and Literary Perspectives:** Nature of the Civil Society, Justice, Argument design, Audience Adaptation, Language Use (Style), Narrative Frame, etc. (D 1, 2, 3)

Sample Course B: (Peek)

**Title: Personal Lives in Public Spaces**

Using three texts, Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* ("my *Romeo and Juliet*"), and Bernstein's *West Side Story*, students in this course will draw on relevant contexts to assist them to discern and create meaning. The course will draw on literature, philosophy, music and art history, and cultural studies. (A 2; C 3, 4; D 2; **globalization and multiculturalism**)

Among the contexts requiring individual and group research will be:

Comparing and contrasting the conflicts (papist and puritan, Austrian and Italian, and ethnic) that lie behind the perils of the protagonists. This will entail some understanding of the Elizabethan Settlement, world attitudes regarding WW I, and developing ideas of race and multiculturalism, as per their respective societies). (B 1, 2; C 3, 4, 5; E 2; F 1, 2, 3)

Looking at representations of the representations (e.g. music and ballet based on the *Romeo and Juliet* story, such as Prokofiev and Tchaikovsky, and integrated into *West Side Story*), and seeing the stories themselves as alluding to or reworking previous stories (the allusions embodied in Hemingway's title, the materials Shakespeare had at hand, the intertextuality of the three). (B 1, 2; D 1, 2, 3)

Discussion, informed by appropriate critical sources, of how we construct our ideas of norms, ideals, and roles; of youth and age; of leadership and nurture; and how such constructions are affected by culture and society. (A 1, 2, 3; B 1, 2; C 3; D 2; E 1, 2; F 1, 2, 3, 4)

Discussion, informed by appropriate critical sources, of notions of the rule of law, how societies order themselves, the differing but appropriate roles of government, religion, and individual, drawing on philosophical discussions of the harmony or disharmony in such cultural “ecosystems.” (A 1, 2, 3; B 1, 2; C 3; D 2; E 1, 2; F 1, 2, 3, 4)

Understanding how differing conceptions of honor, death, and meaning affect our choices and actions. (E 1, 2)

Students will, then, read three primary texts, research and review relevant contexts and engage in discussion how those contexts affected the writing and affect our reading of the stories. Our aim will be to develop a fuller sense of what is meant by “personal lives” and “public spaces” and how the two interact with one another. Based on their study, students will be asked to create a representation that defines and describes their own lives and the public contexts affecting them. (A 3; B 1,2; C 2, 3, 4, 5; D 2, 3; E 1, 2; F 1, 2, 3, 4)

This “representation” may take the form of a researched term paper, a discursive essay, or something similar to a “case study.” It will be composed in parts, each subject to revision, and the whole will be the equivalent of 10-12 pages.

Course Description:

**Modes of Knowing/Types of Inquiry - Art Perspectives Course**

Kropp, Hartman, Trewin

Title: Arts Perspectives: Aesthetics, Imagination and Representation

Overview/Description:

This course will provide the necessary means to help students understand and appreciate the visual and performing arts. Topics will include aesthetic literacy, the creative process and the interpretation and analysis of selected artforms and movements. In service of the goal of appreciation the course curriculum will depend upon the direct exposure of students to the arts through attendance at performances and exhibitions. Course dialog will involve critical responses to these encounters in the form of classroom discussion and written assignments.

Course Goals and Objectives;

Goals:

To expose students to the arts

To help students develop sound critical perspectives

To aid students in their understanding of the creative process

To introduce students to the subject of Aesthetics

Objectives:

Students will attend performances and exhibitions. They will also experience art through secondary sources such as video or other documentation. They will provide written statements regarding their experiences and will locate and explore appropriate sources to support critical arguments within the statements. (skills)

Students will analyze and interpret the meaning of artworks representative of the disciplines of dance, music, theatre and visual art. This analysis will concern style, form, content and aesthetic response. (skills)

Students will analyze the socio-cultural context of artworks representative of each discipline. (accomplishments of world cultures)

Students will read primary sources from Aesthetics and connect the dialog from these sources with related artistic activity.

Sample Course A: (Hartman)

Title: From Jazz to Abstract Expressionism: Improvisation in the Arts of Modernism

Central Text: *The Creative Process (A Conversation With Gertrude Stein)*

Supporting Material; documents and footage of improvisational jazz musicians and abstract expressionist artists at work as well as modern dance and improv. theatre performances. (It will be a challenge to find local performances or exhibitions which are specific to the topics addressed in this type of class. Performers and visual artists could visit class to demonstrate and discuss improvisational activity.)

Topics:

The Context of Modernism: From Renaissance Humanism to the Bauhaus School.  
A historical inquiry into the sources and characteristics of Modernism.

Defining Improv.: Examples From the Visual and Performing Arts.

Establishing an understanding of the essential similarities and inherent differences between manifestations of intuitive expression in the visual and performing arts.  
Investigation into the nature of improvisation (intuition and "stream of consciousness" balanced by instinctual adherence to formal limitations)

Criticism and Judgement:

A study of critical and analytical methods proposed within the context of Modernist culture. Dealing with the apparently subjective connotations of the nature of improvisational creative activity. This could begin as an extension (more specific) of the above topic. The dialog could include introduction to the basic elements and principles that govern a given art form. Students could then consider how a performer or visual artist would be able to explore direct and intuitive expression in a given media while simultaneously, and perhaps subconsciously, adhering to a formal agenda.

The Cultures of Improv.: A Demographic Study.

Essentially a study of the affect of cultural differences in the history of improvisation. Why does the demographic differ between those who practiced modern dance and those who produced Jazz music. How is Abstract Expressionism an extension of the Euro-Centric/Avant Guard tradition while Improvisational Jazz is more connected to urban and minority American subcultures.

Requirements: TBA

## Capstone Course

A common definition for a capstone course is a course for undergraduates nearing the completion of their studies that builds on skills and knowledge acquired in previous courses emphasizing "real world" situations, and provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate competencies and communication skills.

In addition, we propose the following:

The capstone course at the University of Nebraska at Kearney is a 2-hour course or two 1-hour courses (1 or 2 instructors) that draw from multiple disciplines across the university, with each faculty member using their unique disciplinary foci. This course will address a topic, engaging students in solving a common problem facing citizens of our democracy and around the world. This course must include the following:

- A writing component
- Critical thinking and problem solving
- A component of the student's discipline (such as the final paper written by the student to include the connection to their own major/education focus)
- Ethical/Moral dimensions pertaining to issues related to the course
- Theoretical framework
- Capped at 10 students per hour
- Team teaching is not required

The course may include:

- Experiential learning component such as research projects, internships, field research, or service learning

This course should reasonably include the following student outcomes:

- ✓ Demonstration of skills that transfer across disciplines
- ✓ Engagement of logical and creative thought
- ✓ Provide experiences intended to enhance their ability to be lifelong learners, and ethical and responsible citizens.