

GENERAL STUDIES PROGRAM – Alternative Proposal (February 2008) – PLAN B  
“A Discipline-Based Curriculum with an Interdisciplinary Outcome”

45 hours

- I. Portal Course: English Writing (3 hrs; WI; pre-requisite: remedial Eng 100/101 if ACT/SAT threshold not met). *Includes introduction to GS Program; start GS portfolios; Introduction to Library/Information Literacy; Introduction to various forms of citation (MLA, ASA, Chicago Style etc.); Two papers (7-10 pages each) i) Text-based primary sources analysis; ii) Research Paper based on primary & secondary sources from at least two disciplines; GS Self-Assessment; GS Program Assessment (use Research Paper as a direct measure). \*Transfer Students who already have English Writing credits take a 1cr hr “Transfer Student Tutorial” at the Writing Center where their writing needs are assessed/supported and they set up GS Portfolio; write GS Self-Assessment).*
- II. Speech Communication (3 hrs)
- III. Modern Language (3 hrs; preferably at intermediate level) OR American Sign Language (3 hrs; Communication Disorders, COE)
- IV. Fine Arts (3 hrs)
  - a. Art
  - b. Art History
  - c. Dance
  - d. Music
  - e. Theater
- V. Literature (3 hrs)
- VI. History (3 hrs)
- VII. Economics (3 hrs)
- VIII. Social/Behavioral Sciences (6 hrs from 2 disciplines)
  - a. Criminal Justice
  - b. Geography
  - c. Political Science
  - d. Psychology
  - e. Social Work
  - f. Sociology
- IX. Mathematics/Statistics (3 hrs)
- X. Computer Science & Information Systems (3 hrs)
- XI. Natural Science (7hrs, from two fields; includes one lab class)
  - a. Biology
  - b. Chemistry
  - c. Geography & Earth Science
  - d. Physics & Physical Science

- XII. Wellness (2 hrs)
  - a. Health/Physical Education/Rec & Leisure
  - b. Family Studies/Interior Design
  - c. Safety Education
  
- XIII. Capstone/Keystone Course: Interdisciplinary Experience (3 hrs; WI). *Includes completion of GS Portfolio; Interdisciplinary Research/Writing Project; GS Self-Assessment Reflection Paper; GS Program Assessment (based on GS Portfolios and Research/Writing Paper); GAs from English can be assigned to assist in these classes). This class cannot be transferred. (300-level courses will need to be created).*
  - a. Ethnic Studies
  - b. Global Business (create from interdisciplinary international Business Minor)
  - c. International Studies (create from interdisciplinary International Studies program)
  - d. Philosophy
  - e. Special Topics (Can be team-taught and should involve *at least* two departments)
  - f. Study Abroad (with approval)
  - g. Women's & Gender Studies

Comments on Plan B:

1. The problem with the current GS Program is that it is not easily assessed. A student's ability to integrate and synthesize knowledge from different disciplines is assumed but not measured, and the controversial sub-categories embedded within the program make measuring student outcomes very difficult. There is no way to be sure our current GS Program teaches students to become intellectually engaged, independent thinkers and active, civic-minded citizens.
  
2. Plan B provides two assessment opportunities with the Portal Course on English Writing and the Capstone Interdisciplinary Experience. Both of these courses have specific interdisciplinary approaches to knowledge and student work can be assessed according to GS criteria established in the Phase I Roundtable (or other agreed upon criteria).
  
3. Student Self-Assessments are integrated into the whole GS Plan B. While students begin their GS self-assessments and GS portfolios in the Portal and complete these assessments in the Capstone course, they can also have a self-assessment task assigned in every GS class they take. This assignment asks students to reflect upon and make connections between Class X and two (or more) of their other GS courses. This self-assessment goes into their GS portfolio. Students will eventually reflect upon their own self-assessment reports in their GS capstone course.
  
4. Each discipline/department is responsible for creating GS courses that are innovative and up-to-date with the scholarship. Faculty development support should include adequate funding to attend discipline-based conferences once every two or three years for pedagogical renewal. GS Faculty should also attend GS Workshops (with a stipend) to become familiar with GS Goals and assessment needs as well as to discuss ways to create useful self-assessment assignments that will go into student's GS Portfolio.
  
5. Additional GS Requirements for students can include a FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE course (or a TRANSFER STUDENT TUTORIAL); One CSL or ADP (American Democracy Project) project; attendance at 10 (or 20? Or 100?) extra-curricula speaker/guest lecture/fine arts/cultural events on campus with reviews for GS Portfolio.
  
6. The descriptions and course objectives articulated in the Roundtable Study Plan A can be adapted as appropriate to the Portal/Capstone courses as well as the discipline-based content courses in Plan B.
  
7. This Plan B builds on the academic resources already established at UNK and allows all colleges, departments and programs to take part in offering General Studies required courses.