

## The General Education Curriculum To Take Effect Fall Semester 2005

### The Purpose of General Education: A Statement of Principles:

WVU aims to provide students with a foundation of skills and knowledge necessary to reason clearly, communicate effectively, and contribute to society. The General Education Curriculum is designed to ensure that students meet these goals through inquiry-based learning across the disciplines. In conjunction with a major field, and in consultation with their advisors, students will design programs of study that satisfy the GEC's Objectives. The Learning Objectives reflect the fact that, in an increasingly interdependent world, it is crucial that students learn to interact constructively with people from different cultures, to understand viewpoints different from their own, and to identify and resolve issues of personal and professional ethics. The GEC strives to help students become thoughtful participants in a democratic society and to achieve the intellectual integration and awareness they will need to meet changes and challenges in their personal, social, and professional lives.

### General Education Curricular Objectives:

#### 1. **Communication:**

*Communicate effectively in English.*

##### Rationale concerning Writing:

Effective writing skills are essential to success in every field of study and work. Therefore, all WVU students are required first to take a sequence of two composition courses followed by at least one other course, preferably in the major, that includes a substantial writing component and that evaluates the student's writing skills as part of determining the course grade. Such courses are identified in the GEC portion of the Schedule of Courses by a "W". Additional written work is expected within the Capstone Experience of each major field.

##### Rationale concerning Spoken Language:

One of the most critical skills in any discipline or human endeavor is the ability to speak effectively. The spoken word is a powerful tool for effectiveness and should be enhanced through the university experience such that a graduate of WVU will have skills in oral communication above and beyond that of someone who has not completed the university experience.

For the vast majority of students, the spoken language will be English. To that end, WVU commits that, through the general education experience as well as within the major, students will develop the ability to communicate using oral presentation. This occurs in all courses, major and otherwise, where a presentation, oral exam or other formal spoken communication is used as part of assessment within the course. The culminating project demonstrating the mastery of oral communication skills is expected to be a part of the capstone experience.

##### *Learning Outcomes:*

After completing requirements for this Objective, students will be able to:

- present well-organized and articulate written expression of critical thought on various subjects, including those in their major field.

- present well-organized and articulate oral expression of critical thought on various subjects, including those in their major field.

*Requirements:*

- Successful completion of English 101 and 102. 6 credits
- Successful completion of a “W” course, preferably in the major.
- Successful completion of written and oral component of the Capstone Experience

2. **Basic Mathematical Skills and Scientific Inquiry:**

*Use quantitative and scientific knowledge effectively.*

Rationale:

Scientific thought is an underpinning of modern society. A basic foundation of mathematics and an understanding of basic scientific method are essential in order to understand the complexities of many scientific issues and to think critically about their impact upon the world around us.

*Learning Outcomes:*

Consistent with developing this basic foundation, after completing requirements for this Objective, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate mathematical skills at a basic level.
- Understand the nature and application of natural or physical sciences at a basic level sufficient to:
  - conduct simple experiments
  - generate real data
  - present data for analysis (e.g. using charts, graphs, tables).
  - perform mathematical calculations appropriate for data analysis
  - use abstract reasoning to interpret data
  - formulate and test hypotheses with scientific rigor
- Understand the complexities of scientific issues sufficient to think critically about the mutual impacts of science, society, natural resources, and the environment.

*Requirements:*

- Successful completion of one course in mathematics or statistics. This course may also satisfy major course requirements. 3-4 credits
- Successful completion of two courses in the natural or physical sciences of which at least one course has a lab requirement. These courses may also satisfy major course requirements. 7-8 credits
- Successful completion of either one additional course in mathematics or statistics, one course in the natural or physical sciences, or one course in the areas of natural resources and the environment from a scientific or quantitative perspective. This course may also satisfy major course requirements. 3 credits  
13-15 credits

3. **The Past and Its Traditions:**

*Apply knowledge, methods and principles of inquiry to understanding the past.*

Rationale:

The study of human civilization from a historical perspective is essential to the development of a well-educated individual. The ability to apply knowledge, methods of critical thought, and principles of historical inquiry to an analysis of the past and its impact upon the present is an important skill.

*Learning Outcome:*

After completing requirements for this Objective, students will be able to:

- apply methods of critical thought to the understanding and analysis of issues related to the past.

*Requirement:*

- Successful completion of one course focused upon the historical, cultural, or intellectual development of society over time or on a particular period critical to that development. This course may also satisfy a major course requirement.

3 credits

4. **Issues of Contemporary Society:**

*Apply knowledge, methods, and principles of inquiry to contemporary problems, ideas, and/or values.*

Rationale:

Study of contemporary human civilization is pre-requisite to success in society today. The ability to apply knowledge, methods of critical thought, and principles of inquiry to contemporary problems, ideas, and/or values as seen from a humanistic or scientific perspective is an essential skill.

*Learning Outcome:*

After completing requirements for this Objective, students will be able to:

- demonstrate understanding of methods of critical thought and principles of scholarly inquiry concerning contemporary society as seen from a humanistic or scientific perspective.

*Requirement:*

- Successful completion of one course focused upon methods of critical thought and principles of inquiry concerning contemporary issues, ideas, and/or values as seen from a humanistic or scientific perspective. This course may also satisfy a major course requirement.

3 - 4 credits

5. **Artistic Expression:**

*Apply methods and principles of critical inquiry to the analysis of literary or artistic expression.*

Rationale:

Courses in the study of literature, theater, music, and the visual arts enable students to develop skills of critical thinking concerning human experience as reflected in various forms of artistic expression.

*Learning Outcome:*

After completing requirements for this Objective, students will be able to:

- apply understanding of methods and principles of critical inquiry to the analysis of one medium of artistic expression in art, dance, literature, music, or theatre.

*Requirement:*

- Successful completion of one course focused upon critical inquiry in art, dance, literature, music, or theatre. This course may also satisfy a major course requirement. 3 credits

**6. The Individual in Society:**

*Develop an awareness of human experience, including both personal and social dimensions.*

Rationale:

It is important that students develop an understanding of themselves as individuals and as members of social groups, which is facilitated by an understanding of the self, human rationality, and human social interactions.

*Learning Outcomes:*

After completing requirements for this Objective, students will be able to:

- function successfully within the academic community.
- demonstrate enhanced knowledge and/or skills in one of the following areas: personality, motivation, cognition, behavior, social interactions, critical reasoning, ethical judgment, psychological and physiological growth and development, health and well-being.

*Requirements:*

- University 101 or equivalent course 1 credit
- Successful completion of one additional course addressing at least one of the following: personality motivation, cognition, behavior, social interactions, critical reasoning, ethical judgment, psychological and physiological growth and development, health and well-being. This course may also satisfy a major course requirement. 3 credits  
4 credits

**7. American Culture:**

*Develop knowledge critical to the understanding of the issues that shape the culture of the United States.*

Rationale:

It is essential that students develop knowledge critical to an understanding of issues that have shaped the development of society in the United States in all its diversity.

*Learning Outcome:*

After completing the requirement for this Objective, students will be able to:

- demonstrate understanding of methods of critical thought and principles of scholarly inquiry concerning issues that have shaped the development of society in the United States including but not limited to issues of age, ethnicity, gender, race, region, religion, or social class.

*Requirement:*

- Successful completion of one course that explores issues that have shaped the development of society in the United States including but not limited to issues pertaining to age, ethnicity, race, region, religion, or social class. This course may also satisfy a major course requirement. 3 credits

8. **Western culture:**

*Analyze historical, cultural, and/or political issues of a Western nation in an international context.*

Rationale:

As much of this nation's culture and history connect it to other Western nations, it is essential that students acquaint themselves with the history, culture, and/or political experience of one or more Western nations in an international context.<sup>1</sup>

*Learning Outcome:*

After completing the requirement for this Objective, students will be able to:

- demonstrate understanding of methods of critical thought and principles of scholarly inquiry concerning historical, cultural, and/or political issues concerning a western nation in an international context.

*Requirement:*

- Successful completion of one course that explores historical, cultural, and/or political issues pertaining to a western nation in an international context. This course may also satisfy a major course requirement. 3 credits

9. **Non-western culture**

*Analyze historical, cultural, and/or political issues of a non-Western area or nation.*

Rationale:

As the United States engages increasingly with nations and regions other than those conventionally associated with the West, it is important for students to acquaint themselves with the history, culture, and/or political experience of non-Western peoples.

*Learning Outcome:*

After completing the requirement for this Objective, students will be able to:

- demonstrate understanding of methods of critical thought and principles of scholarly inquiry concerning historical, cultural, and/or political issues concerning a non-western region or nation.

*Requirement:*

- Successful completion of one course that explores historical, cultural, and/or political issues pertaining to a non-western region or nation. This course may also satisfy a major course requirement. 3 credits

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1. Western nations are defined as those located east of the Pacific coast of the Western Hemisphere, north of the Mediterranean Sea, and west of the Ural Mountains that divide Europe from Asia.

Summary of Distribution of Credits to Objectives  
within the Proposed General Education Curriculum

1.	<b>Communication:</b>	6 credits
2.	<b>Basic Mathematical Skill and Scientific Inquiry:</b>	13-15 credits
3.	<b>The Past and Its Traditions:</b>	3 credits
4.	<b>Contemporary Society:</b>	3-4 credits
5.	<b>Artistic Expression:</b>	3 credits
6.	<b>The Individual in Society:</b>	4 credits
7.	<b>American Culture:</b>	3 credits
8.	<b>Western Culture:</b>	3 credits
9.	<b>Non-Western Culture:</b>	<u>3 credits</u>
<b>Total credits for GEC:</b>		<b>41-43 credits</b>

Proposed Curricular Policies

1. Minimum number of credits for this curriculum: 41; maximum number 43.
2. Total number of credits satisfying Learning Outcomes 2 - 9 that may be taken in the major field: 9.
3. Maximum number of courses taken in one discipline outside the major to fulfill general education outcomes: 2.
4. Maximum number of Learning Objectives to be satisfied by one course: 1  
(Note: while most courses will satisfy two Objectives, the student will choose which of those Objectives that course will satisfy. In the interest of promoting a breadth of study, no course may satisfy more than one Objective).
5. Courses satisfying Learning Objectives 2 - 9 may also satisfy a course requirement for the major.

