Humanities General Education
Summer Working Group

Learning Outcomes and Implementation Plan
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UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON

where great minds get to work

Category Description and Rationale

The General Education Curriculum Proposal of March 2019 positions the Humanities in its Methods of Investigation and requires students to complete "**One** course in the humanities (including history)," offering the following rationale:

> University of Mary Washington graduates will live in a world that requires them to engage, appreciate, interpret, and understand the ideas and forces associated with our cultural and historical heritage. Human societies find clarity, compassion, and a richer understanding of the human experience through the study of cultures, history, and philosophical and religious thought. Courses that focus on the understanding of history, intellectual works, and human culture help students discover and appreciate the complexity of the human experience. Study of the humanities promotes the development of critical inquiry skills and historical perspective, which helps students be able to understand differing views and experiences while examining their own and others' beliefs. This understanding helps students to develop critical consciousness and acquire the tools necessary for engagement and responsible action in their lives and society.

The Humanities assess and use qualitative information drawn from sources reflecting cultural expressions. Courses in the Humanities will thus ask students to examine and interpret cultural expressions—texts, artifacts, actions, value systems, etc.—in order to address key questions about humanity articulated by the class. This working group anticipates that those key questions about the human experience will vary across disciplines and topics, and even among instructors tasked with teaching their own versions/sections of a single course. Courses in this category should thus consciously articulate such questions as clearly as they address the sources they work with, the information they convey, and the tools and methods they employ.

Learning Outcomes

In developing its early draft SLOs and assessment rubric, this working group consulted Humanities learning outcomes adopted at other institutions of higher education (see Appendix), as well as the Value rubrics developed by the Association of American Colleges and Universities. An early draft was shared informally with a number of faculty who teach classes likely to fulfill the new Humanities requirement, with a request for their input and sense of whether their existing classes would address those outcomes; the committee further revised the learning outcomes in response to that feedback from a wider range of Humanities faculty.

The Outcomes below are intended to be flexible enough to accommodate a range of humanistic inquiry, while still advancing a unifying approach to studying the world around us. The intent is that students will learn what cultural products the Humanities study, how they approach those sources, and what purpose that examination serves. Thus, in these classes, students (1) work with the sources that capture elements of the human experience; (2) gain knowledge that allows them to relate those sources to the human and non-human world they reflect and influence; and (3) apply that knowledge and those skills to a purpose by making an argument.

> Humanities Student Learning Outcomes
>
> - Materials: Students will use discipline-appropriate tools and methods to critically interpret both the form and content of a text, artifact, or other cultural expression.
> - Knowledge: Students will explain how historical, intellectual, or cultural contexts relate to human experiences—ideas, actions, and/or perspectives.
> - Application: Students will formulate arguments, draw logical conclusions, or support ethical decisions to engage key questions about humanity—our relation to nature, to society, and to ourselves.

The committee discussed a possible fourth SLO to address the diversity and contingency of perspectives and value systems within the broader human experience, but felt that while most courses in this category will naturally consider that range, elements of that desired outcome will already appear in more sophisticated analyses and treatments of context. This may be worth revisiting later.

Implementation

Because the revised General Education Curriculum distinguishes the Humanities and the Social Sciences as separate Methods of Investigation, the courses that formerly populated the Human Experience and Society category of the old curriculum will need to be reviewed for inclusion in these new categories, as will any proposals for new courses to fulfill the requirement. All courses identified as potentially fulfilling the Humanities requirement should be reviewed, with proposals should address the ways in which they accomplish the new Student Learning Outcomes adopted for this area. There should already exist on campus a sufficient number and variety of courses to satisfy student needs and provide them flexibility in selecting courses.

However, programs submitting courses for consideration should not simply transport all courses that fulfilled a previous category—even if they can conceivably make the argument that many/all of the courses within a department or program achieve the outcomes adopted for the category. One longstanding goal of the General Education Committee has been to pare the list of course offerings to streamline enrollment and assessment planning. Courses proposed to fulfill the Humanities General Education requirement should be those offered on a recurring and regular basis for the foreseeable future, so they are predictable for student enrollment and for assessment purposes. They should also generally be 100- and 200-level courses without prerequisites, and thus open to all students who wish to enroll. Courses foundational to a discipline or program would also be those identified as foundational to the Humanities, and thus most suitable for fulfilling the General Education requirement; those 100- and 200-level courses are designed to introduce disciplines' central tools and methods to begin examining key questions of the Humanities with which a given discipline is concerned—skills and pursuits developed further at the 300 and 400 levels for students wishing to go beyond introductory study.

The committee has included at the end of this report a proposal form specific to the Humanities to facilitate these reviews. It asks those submitting proposals to explain clearly how courses fulfill the Learning Outcomes and how those outcomes will be assessed in the class.

<u>Assessment</u>

While the Office of Institutional Analysis and Effectiveness (OIAE) will determine an overarching assessment plan and schedule, given this new category and learning outcomes, a more intensive period of assessment early in the implementation period might be useful. This would provide data helpful not only to set a baseline, but also input to evaluate and potentially revise learning outcomes and assessment tools. The OIAE can provide guidance to individual programs in determining an appropriate sampling method and timeline (sample size, courses selected, timeline/intervals, etc.).

Having consulted colleagues in the Humanities and perused their existing syllabi for courses that would potentially fulfill the Humanities requirement, we constructed a rubric breaking down various levels of achievement with regards to each learning outcome, which we have included below. That rubric should be adaptable to various disciplines and assignments; individual programs could certainly adjust it to be more specific to their needs. Individual programs and instructors are those in the best position to determine what instruments (essays, exams, etc.) best suit assessment in their discipline's courses; faculty teaching General Education courses may wish to coordinate with other faculty members teaching the same course, and/or collaborate with their program's Assessment Coordinator or Department Chair. Assignments to be assessed should be regular graded work to guarantee students' best efforts, and should reflect students' abilities at or near the end of the semester to allow students to develop proficiency in the course.

Outcome	Assessment-Not proficient-1	Assessment-Near proficient-2	Assessment-Barely proficient-3	Assessment-Proficient-4	Assessment-Proficient strong-5
Materials: Students will use discipline-appropriate tools and methods to critically interpret both the form and content of a text, artifact, or other cultural expression.	Does not consider form or content of sources as supporting evidence.	Summarizes content or describes form of sources rather than critically interpreting either using discipline-appropriate tools or methods.	Displays basic familiarity with tools and methods by applying them to sources. Treatment of form and content may be uneven, but both are addressed.	Uses tools and methods appropriate to the discipline to interpret both form and content of sources/evidence.	Demonstrates command of tools and methods by treating form and content in depth, and relating one to the other. May address efficacy of tools/methods.
Knowledge: Students will explain how historical, intellectual, or cultural contexts relate to human experiences—ideas, actions, and/or perspectives.	Does not use contextual information.	Acknowledges context but inadequately explains its significance--its relation to a given situation, question, or piece of evidence.	Provides limited context and associates it with human experiences.	Either addresses multiple contextual elements, or more thoroughly explains a single element, and explains context's significance for human experiences.	Thoroughly considers multiple aspects of context and explains how connections between those aspects relate to human experiences.
Application: Students will formulate arguments, draw logical conclusions, or support ethical decisions to engage key questions about humanity—our relation to nature, to society, and to ourselves.	Does not respond to prompts designed to consider key questions about humanity. May summarize related topics or information, but does not attempt to explain human experiences.	Responds to prompts with unsupported claims, or mentions a series of points related to key questions of humanity without connecting them in support of an argument, conclusion, or decision.	Explains evidence in response to prompts, but ideas lack development, argument is overly simplistic or unclear, and/or support is limited.	Develops logical support for a clear argument. Some examples or explanations may be less developed, or not address multiple/alternative perspectives.	Relates multiple examples and ideas to one another to systematically build support for an argument, conclusion, or decision.

A student must achieve at least 9 points to demonstrate overall proficiency. A well-rounded but limited student achieving "Barely proficient" in all three categories would meet this requirement, but any deficiencies in such limited work would prevent it from being proficient overall. However, a student lacking in one area but "Near proficient" could compensate for that shortcoming by displaying strengths beyond "Barely proficient" in another category. This also means a student "Not proficient" in any one area would be unable to attain the minimum 9 to be overall proficient, while a student "Near proficient" in two categories would need a "Strong proficient" in the third to be proficient overall, which seems unlikely.

<u>Appendix</u>

Individual committee members consulted assessment programs and learning outcomes from a variety of institutions and programs, not all of which were defined simply as "Humanities" but which did involve elements of the Humanities or combine the Humanities with categories that appear elsewhere in UMW's revised General Education Curriculum.

University of Maryland
Category: Humanities: Language, Culture, and Philosophy
- Investigate the variety of human culture and demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which cultures have changed;
- Understand and employ a wide range of humanistic, qualitative, quantitative, theoretical, or philosophical methods for recording and explaining human experience;
- Describe ways in which a given language reflects a way of thinking, cultural heritage, larger set of cultural values, or aspects of society;
- Identify and assess their own and others' values; identify the underlying premises in their own and others' arguments; and
- Use appropriate technologies to conduct research on and communicate about language, culture, and/or philosophy and to access, evaluate, and manage information to prepare and present their work effectively.

State University of New York
Category: Humanities
- Students will demonstrate: Knowledge of the conventions and methods of at least one of the humanities in addition to those encompassed by other knowledge areas required by the General Education program.

University of Minnesota
Category: Humanities
- Understand diverse philosophies and cultures within and across societies.

University of Wisconsin
Category: Humanities, Literature, and the Arts
- The humanities, literature, and the arts examine the world through many different lenses that help students interpret and think critically about creative and cultural expressions of what it means to be human. Some courses focus on the production and analysis of artistic, literary, and scholarly works; others help students learn about and compare religious and philosophical conceptions of humankind; still others study history and the peoples and regions of the world. All of these courses encourage students to analyze the range of creativity, cultural expressions, and ideas about and patterns in human existence— history, literature, art, culture, folklore—and to use that information to better understand humanity.

University of Georgia
Category: Humanities, Fine Arts, and Ethics

- Students can compare and contrast the meaning of major texts from both Western and non-Western cultures.
- Students recognize themselves as participants in a particular culture and see how this affects their experiences and values.
- Students have the ability to make informed judgments about art forms from various cultures including their own culture.
- Students have the ability to recognize the fine arts as expressions of human experience.
- Students have the ability to critically appreciate historical and contemporary fine art forms as they relate to individual and social needs and values.
- Students have the ability to apply knowledge of historical, social, and cultural influences to understanding a work of art.
- Students recognize that an ethical issue is present and can distinguish ethical choices from mere self-interest.
- Students are aware of the ways that culture shapes ethical views and can critically evaluate those views.

University of Nebraska, Omaha
Category: Humanities and Fine Arts
- demonstrate an understanding of the theories, methods, and concepts used to comprehend and respond to the human condition;
- recognize, articulate, and explore how various humanists/artists have responded to the human condition;
- comprehend and evaluate how humanistic/artistic expression contributes to individual and/or sociocultural understanding, growth, and well-being; and
- use relevant critical, analytic, creative, speculative and/or reflective methods.

University of Hawaii, West Oahu
Category: Humanities
- Demonstrate knowledge of the history, philosophy, arts, and/or literature of different cultures from different global regions and indigenous traditions including Native Hawaiian.
- Analyze contemporary issues from multiple cultural perspectives of global regions and indigenous traditions including Native Hawaiian.
- Demonstrate an understanding of different Humanities disciplines' concepts, methods, primary sources, and knowledge.
- Demonstrate well-organized and competent writing using relevant information in Humanities subjects, particularly in their discipline of study in Humanities.
- Deliver well-organized, competent oral presentations on Humanities subjects to relevant audiences.
- Analyze research questions, problems, and issues in Humanities subjects.

University of Wisconsin, Green Bay
Category: Humanities
- Students will acquire an understanding of what it means to be human by studying and analyzing important works and ideas in literature, philosophy, language, and history.

- Students will acquire essential life skills, including the ability to reflect critically on texts and artifacts, to recognize and appreciate nuance and complexity of meaning, and to express themselves in a clear, organized, and well-reasoned manner.
- Students will be transformed and given greater self-awareness by understanding the historical and cultural context for human values through the study of literature, philosophy, language, and history.
- Study of the Humanities imparts a fundamental understanding of:
  - the significance and chronology of major events and movements in World civilization;
  - a range of literature, representative of different literary forms and historical contexts;
  - the role of the humanities in identifying and clarifying individual and social values in a culture and understanding the implications of decisions made on the basis of those values.

University of Saint Katherine
Category: Arts and Humanities
- Students critically analyze cultural artifacts, historical events, and philosophical ideas. (Critical Interpretation)
- Students evaluate the historical development and modern forms of Western civilization (Historical Sensibility)
- Students practice synthetic and creative thought in original research, artistic composition, or interdisciplinary projects. (Creative and Integrative Thinking)

San Jose State University
Category: Humanities
- Demonstrate the ability to frame questions and pursue answers to aesthetic, social, cultural and global problems using interdisciplinary methods
- Demonstrate the ability to describe and compare the roles, impacts and ethical implications of ideas, texts, social movements, contemporary situations, and creations of the human imagination.
- Demonstrate skill in written and verbal communication, including argumentation.
- Demonstrate the ability to identify, select, use, and cite information sources appropriately.

Whitman College
Category: Humanities
- Read texts, be they literary, philosophical, artistic, religious, or material in nature, with precision and generosity
- Analyze and interpret texts with precision, assessing their form and content both on the texts' own terms and through critical lenses informed by other texts
- Understand how language, genre, cultural and historical context can shape a text and our interpretation of it
- Effectively communicate, through written and spoken words, insights drawn from the works they are reading and interpreting

- Recognize and appreciate the aesthetic, moral, and linguistic dimensions of complex problems

Northwest College (Wyoming)
Category: Humanities
- Demonstrate the ability to analyze and discuss humanities texts (including cultural artifacts and practices).
- Demonstrate an awareness of different moral and ethical points of view.
- Reason, present, and write clearly and persuasively about humanities topics.
- Describe how culture affects human interaction.

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
Category: Critical Thinking in the Humanities
- Identify fundamental concepts of the humanities.
- Analyze texts and other created artifacts using theories and methods of the humanities. Interpret texts and other created artifacts within multiple historical, intellectual, and cultural contexts.
- Synthesize multiple complex sources and create a coherent narrative or argument.

University of Idaho*
Category: Humanities
- Recognize and describe humanistic, historical, or artistic works within problems and patterns of the human experience.
- Distinguish, demonstrate competency, and apply terminologies, methodologies, processes, epistemologies, and traditions specific to the discipline.
- Perceive and understand formal, conceptual, and technical elements specific to the
- discipline.
- Analyze, evaluate, and interpret texts, objects, events, or ideas in their cultural, intellectual, linguistic, or historical contexts.
- Interpret artistic and/or humanistic works through the creation of art or performance.
- Develop critical perspectives or arguments about the subject matter, grounded in evidence- based analysis.
- Demonstrate self-reflection, intellectual elasticity, widened perspective, and respect for diverse viewpoints.

*Courses must meet 5 of 7 objectives.

University of Indiana, Bloomington
Category: Arts and Humanities
- knowledge of origins, varieties, and meanings of the expressions and artifacts of human experience, including (a) original written texts in various literary forms, (b) works of visual art and design, (c) musical compositions, and (d) dramatic performance (live theater, dance, film, video, digital, etc.);
- knowledge of the cultural, intellectual, and historical contexts through which these expressions and artifacts are interpreted;

- an understanding of the modes of symbolic expression and aesthetic and/or literary conventions that are used in these expressions and artifacts;
- the ability to develop arguments, ideas, and opinions about forms of human expression, grounded in rational analysis and in an understanding of and respect for the historical context of expressions and artifacts, and to express these ideas in written and/or oral form;
- the ability to create or reinterpret artistic works, as performer or as critic, through the development of skills of performance or skills of analysis and criticism;
- the ability to explain and assess the changing perspectives on the meanings of arts and humanities traditions;
- the ability to explore one's own identity within prior and current intellectual, aesthetic, and cultural frameworks.

University of Baltimore
Category: Arts and Humanities
- Using appropriate concepts and vocabulary, describe how a text, performance, work of art, or other artifact leads the audience to achieve insight(s) into the human condition.
- Explain how historical, intellectual, or cultural context influences the creation or interpretation of texts, artworks, or artifacts.

Category: Arts and Humanities—Ethics
- Identify moral and ethical issues as distinct from legal, social, economic and practical issues.
- Using appropriate concepts and vocabulary, provide reasoning and support for a moral and ethical conclusion.
- Using appropriate concepts and vocabulary, describe how a text, performance, work of art, or other artifact leads the audience to achieve insight(s) into the human condition.
- Explain how historical, intellectual, or cultural context influences the creation or interpretation of texts, artworks, or artifacts.

Stanford University
Category: Humanities
- The humanities can be described as the study of how people process and document the human experience. Since humans have been able, we have used philosophy, literature, religion, art, music, history and language to understand and record our world. These modes of expression have become some of the subjects that traditionally fall under the humanities umbrella. Knowledge of these records of human experience gives us the opportunity to feel a sense of connection to those who have come before us, as well as to our contemporaries.

GENERAL EDUCATION COURSE PROPOSAL—HUMANITIES
UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON

Use this form to submit new or existing courses for review to populate Humanities for the new General Education curriculum beginning Fall 2020. Submit this form and supporting materials to ABC at ABC@umw.edu.

Course discipline and number: _____

Course title: _____

Submitted by: _____ Date: _____

Frequency of offering: Fall   Spring   Yearly   Alternate years

Does this course have prerequisites?   Yes   No
     If yes, list them here: _____

Signature of proposer: _____Date: _____

Signature of department chair: _____Date: _____

This proposal consists of two parts: (1) a rationale explaining how the course contents satisfy all learning outcomes, and (2) samples of course assignments or questions that could be used to assess the learning outcomes. Proposals should include an attached copy of the course syllabus; they may include pertinent materials, such as assignment instructions.

(1) Rationale: Explain how the course contents satisfy all learning outcomes. This rationale should also identify/articulate the "key questions about humanity" the course engages.

(2) Assessment: Explain how each of the learning outcomes will be assessed, using sample assignments or questions.

Outcome 1: Materials: Students will use discipline-appropriate tools and methods to critically interpret both the form and content of a text, artifact, or other cultural expression.

Outcome 2: Knowledge: Students will explain how historical, intellectual, or cultural contexts relate to human experiences—ideas, actions, and/or perspectives.

Outcome 3: Application: Students will formulate arguments, draw logical conclusions, or support ethical decisions to engage key questions about humanity—our relation to nature, to society, and to ourselves.