The Common Curriculum

Through the Common Curriculum, students will develop the breadth of knowledge and flexibility of mind needed to participate in meaningful conversations relevant to particular disciplines, the Academy, local society, or the global community. Students will do so by achieving the following learning outcomes across the breadth of Liberal Arts represented in the Common Curriculum requirements.

Category Descriptions

Literature (HUL)

A Literature course will provide instruction and guidance through which students:

a) Read and interpret primary written works of Literature throughout the course; defined as short- and long-form written works of prose and/or verse including short stories, novels, plays, poetry, and mythologies.

b) Learn and practice the literary analysis and criticism of works of Literature (as defined above), including questions of structural choice, formal choice, literary and rhetorical devices, historical and cultural allusions and commentary, the history and evolution of genres, the relationship of an author's biography to a work, the relationship of language to power, the history and evolution of language.

c) Courses in Music, Film, or Media Studies must demonstrate that works of Literature (as defined above) constitute the clear majority of content in the course and are subjected to literary analysis and criticism identified in b) above.

Arts and Humanities (HUM)

Arts and Humanities courses will provide instruction and guidance through which students:

a) Understand literary or philosophical texts and traditions and works and styles of art.

b) Comprehend meaningful contexts, credible interpretations, and the pursuit of questions arising from the act of interpretation for such works.

Languages and Culture (LCC)

Languages and Cultures courses or advanced foreign-language training will provide instruction and guidance through which students:

a) Learn and demonstrate methodologically- and disciplinary-grounded approaches to the study and analysis of cultural diversity and complexity

b) Acquire a conscious and respectful recognition of cultural diversity and complexity within an understanding of our shared humanity.

c) Be enabled and empowered as citizens of a global community to act across cultural boundaries justly, disinterestedly, and on the basis of human equality.

Natural Sciences with Lab (SCLB)

A Natural Sciences with Lab course will provide instruction and guidance through which students:

a) Understand how science and the scientific method work.

b) Comprehend the difference between a hypothesis and a theory, how data are interpreted, and how hypotheses are formed.

Quantitative and Mathematical Reasoning (QMR)

A Quantitative and Mathematical Reasoning course will provide instruction and guidance through which students:

a) Comprehend problems and express solutions using the language of mathematics, quantitative reasoning, and problem solving that requires rigorous logical demonstrations with multiple steps.

b) Make use of symbolic and abstract representations and adapt non-trivial algorithms.

Science, Engineering, and Technology (SET)

A Science, Engineering, and Technology course will provide instruction and guidance through which students:

a) Develop an understanding of how foundational principles and methodologies in science, engineering, or technology are used to analyze and manipulate the natural and physical world.

b) Evaluate evidence, results, and claims related to the impact of science, engineering, or technology on broader human or societal issues.

The SET requirement can be met through any of the following:

a) A course in the natural sciences (with or without lab).

b) A course in engineering or computer science.

c) A course not in the natural sciences, engineering, or computer science that is designated as SET by approval of the Gen Ed Board. Such courses will have significant science or engineering content and/or be designed to foster an understanding of technology. **Courses in this category must be taught by or team-taught with a faculty member from Center 2.**

Social Sciences (SOCS)

A Social Science course will provide instruction and guidance through which students:

a) Analyze the human experience (the behavior of and interactions among individuals, groups, institutions, societies, or the natural environment) past and present.

b) Develop an understanding of theories, concepts, methods, and ethical practices characteristic of particular disciplines in the social sciences.

Learning Outcomes

A – Communicate Critical and Analytical Thinking

Students will examine, evaluate, and apply problem-solving techniques to evidence, data, objects, artefacts, arguments, and theories according to the diverse analytical traditions of the Liberal Arts; students will communicate clearly and correctly the results of such analysis.

This learning outcome emphasizes the need to learn and practice critical thinking in the breadth of disciplines and analytical traditions in the Liberal Arts.

Instructors will assess student learning in this outcome by evaluating a representative sample of assignments.

Learning Outcome A encompasses the following learning goals and assessment of it should incorporate those goals:

- Union students will graduate with the skills needed to communicate clearly and effectively, work both independently and collaboratively, have developed information, technological and visual literacy, be prepared to live and work in a culturally-diverse world, and understand ethical considerations and act upon them.

- Union students will learn through a combination of theory and practice, using both critical thinking and expertise.

B – Make Connections or Original Contributions

Through their writings, theories, problems, designs, objects of art, and other projects students will make connections or original contributions to questions and concerns relevant to a particular discipline, multiple disciplines, the Academy, local society, or the global community.

This learning outcome emphasizes the importance of deliberately using students' coursework to engage issues, debates, schools of thought, and the like relevant to particular disciplines as well as the Academy, local society, or the global community.

Instructors will assess student learning in this outcome by evaluating a representative sample of assignments.

Learning Outcome B encompasses the following learning goals and assessment of it should incorporate those goals:

- Union students will develop an attitude of inquiry: they will ask questions that matter, and develop the capacity to engage complex challenges with skill, creativity, and confidence.

- Union students will engage in disciplinary, interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches, and will have opportunities to learn at the intersection of fields of study.

- Union students will develop a diverse set of skills that can be applied across a spectrum of disciplines and future careers.

C – Reflect on their Learning

Students will demonstrate the ability to link their experiences in the Common Curriculum with their intellectual development as lifelong learners, including possible career and life paths.

This learning outcome may be viewed as asking the students to draw together the practical, intrinsic, and idealistic value of the Liberal Arts as they relate to being a life-long learner and reflecting on a meaningful life.

The Gen Ed Board assesses learning outcome C indirectly through a student reflective essay and student interview; instructors provide direct assessment of this learning outcome **IF** it is observed in their classes.

Learning Outcome C encompasses the following learning goals and assessment of it should incorporate those goals:

- Union students will discover lifelong intellectual interests and strive to excel in them.

- Union students will develop a sense of themselves as a "whole person," with skills necessary for the pursuit of life-long learning, global citizenship and the ability to effectively work with others, through co-curricular programs that complement the academic mission.