

UGEC Revision Proposals (11/10/21)

Robert Brown (with input from Trey Shirley, Stephanie Hamm, and Autumn Sutherlin)

Summary

I propose the following:

Cornerstone

Cornerstone should have the same level of detail as the rest of the proposal, including outcome mapping.

- Trey Shirley provided the original statement on the course syllabus and helped map the original outcomes to our new learning outcomes.
- Trey expressed a desire to keep to the original wording if possible, but accepted that a shortened version may be necessary.

Outcome C

Outcome C4 should be revised to clarify that students are modifying their own understanding, rather than that of their field.

- New wording could be as follows:
 - “Integrate new data into *their* existing knowledge and practice”
- I have spoken with Autumn Sutherlin, and this minor change maintains the original intent of the committee.
- I personally prefer the wording “Integrate new data into their existing understanding of the world and how they interact with it”.
- Also possible, though perhaps too combative: “Use new data to update their understanding of the world and correct misconceptions.”

Outcome B

Outcome B should be revised to clarify B1 and B2:

- My take:
 - B1 should include wording to emphasize the connection to diverse perspectives.
 - B2 tries to encompass many different ideas (difficult to assess), and should be split:
 - Interconnectedness -> implies humans both affect one another and share experiences
 - Posture of humility -> student’s opinion should not be automatically preferred
 - Celebrating difference -> in tension with interconnectedness, recognition that not all experiences are shared, and celebration of that fact
- Stephanie Hamm input:
 - “For B2, the point is to hold these in tandem of grasping connectedness while celebrating difference. The operative word being *while*. It is not measurable, per se, however what can be measured is the exposure and opportunity for students to understand.”
 - “In terms of B1, diverse perspectives are assumed to be inherent in demonstrating competent discourse. Perhaps it should not be assumed, and additional terminology would add clarity.”

Menu: Cornerstone (3 hrs)

Detail: Cornerstone (3)

Cornerstone exists to equip students to think and communicate in an interdisciplinary way. As such, it provides a foundation for the rest of a student's liberal arts education at ACU.

The specific goals are grouped into two areas:

Critical-Thinking Objectives:

As a result of successful completion of the course, you will be able to:

- 1. Define and give examples of critical thinking from multiple disciplines [C:1];*
- 2. Think critically about important topics related to faith and culture [D:3];*

Skills Objectives:

As a result of successful completion of the course, you will be able to:

- 1. Apply multi-disciplinary thinking to specific topics [C:1];*
- 2. Identify and describe strengths and weaknesses of various sources of knowledge and disciplinary approaches [C:2];*
- 3. Communicate ideas through the various media that will be used in other courses [A:1, A:3].*

Courses satisfying this menu are as follows:

- 3 hours: CORE 110 or CORE 115

C. Gather and Use Information to Address Problems:

Students will:

1. Evaluate widely disparate sources of information and competing evidence to form their own reasoned positions;
2. Analyze quantitative data, published writing, or observable phenomena to draw informed conclusions;
3. Interpret mathematical and/or logical models such as formulas, graphs, tables and schematics, and draw inferences from them.
4. (option 1) Integrate new data into their existing knowledge and practice.
4. (option 2) Integrate new data into their existing understanding of the world and how they interact with it.
4. (option 3) Use new data to update their understanding of the world and correct misconceptions.

Examining, creating, and sharing knowledge forms the very heart of higher education. The world provides never-ending streams of discovery through various fields of study, but responsible learners will carefully assess and expertly handle the offerings of the agora. Applying these critical skills to all genres of knowledge positions graduates to innovate and contribute to a better society.

Although the evaluation, analysis, interpretation, and integration of knowledge is specific to fields of study, students must be provided with a foundational understanding of unique epistemologies. Diverse courses in the sciences, mathematics, and the language arts, together with the on- and off-campus research opportunities often accompanying them, such as the annual Undergraduate Research Festival, provide students with these encounters.

B. Examine Diverse Perspectives (Original Text with Tracked Changes)

Students will:

1. Demonstrate competent discourse in global, historical, and cultural experiences of diverse populations, and how those experiences lead to diverse perspectives.
2. Understand ~~the interconnectedness of the human experience with a posture of humility~~ how the human experience connects us and is shared worldwide ~~while celebrating difference~~ appreciating the value of diversity in enriching both local and global communities.
3. Interrogate one's internal and external views and values with a posture of humility for greater self-awareness.

Rationale Behind Changes

"Interconnectedness" is not a commonly used word (0.00037% from Google's Ngram viewer). I feel we should be more explicit by saying "connects us and is shared worldwide".

"Celebrating difference" seems difficult to assess. "Appreciating the value of diversity" may or may not be easier.

The phrase "with a posture of humility" is somewhat loaded, similar to "interconnectedness", but "while not applying undue bias towards one's own views" is a bit wordy. I feel the intended meaning is better implied in B3 than in B2.

B. Examine Diverse Perspectives (Proposed):

Students will:

1. Demonstrate competent discourse in global, historical, and cultural experiences of diverse populations, and how those experiences lead to diverse perspectives.
2. Understand how the human experience connects us and is shared worldwide while appreciating the value of diversity in enriching both local and global communities.
3. Interrogate one's internal and external views and values with a posture of humility for greater self-awareness.

The ability to engage in competent discourse, understand interconnectedness of diverse peoples, and interrogate one's own internal processes is challenging, courageous work; it is essential to ACU's mission of service and leadership domestically and globally.

Knowledge of diversity and equity is an excellent partner to the many activities on campus that expose one to difference. These courses address not only the beauty of difference, but history and current relevance of diverse voices, thought, and experiences. Within this general education category, students might encounter diversity particularly in social sciences, art, humanities, and Biblical studies.